

A GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Build Your Online Salesperson This Weekend.

Get found by more people, build trust, and sell faster to the ones ready to buy.

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It's Tuesday. The phone rings while you're in the middle of something.

You stop what you're doing. You wipe your hands. You answer.

It's someone who saw your work somewhere. A friend told them. They have a project. They have questions. The same questions you answered yesterday for somebody else, and the day before that, for somebody else.

You walk them through it. You explain what you do. You explain how it works. You give them your best guess on price without seeing the job. They say they'll think about it. You hang up and walk back to the bench, trying to remember where you left off.

That was forty minutes. You'll do this three or four more times this week.

You're good at what you do. That's not the problem. The problem is everything that surrounds the doing. The same questions. The same explanations. The same conversations with people who, half the time, were never going to buy anyway.

And then there's the other side of it. The people who would have bought, who never found you, because nothing about your business is visible to anyone who isn't already in your circle. Word of mouth got you here. It can't get you where you want to go next.

You've thought about it. You've wished you could be in five places at once. You've wished there was a way to share what you know without having to say it out loud one more time. You've wished the right people would just show up, ready, knowing what you do and why you're worth a conversation.

That's what this guide is about.

We're not building a marketing department this weekend. We're not redesigning anything. We're not spending money you don't have on tools you don't need.

We're building one thing. A digital salesperson. Something that works while you're in the shop, on the truck, on a job, or having dinner with your family. Something that finds the right people, answers their questions the way you would, and helps them decide whether you're the right fit. So when the next real conversation happens, they're ready. And so are you.

Six simple tips. Done in order. Each one builds on the one before it.

You won't need a developer. You won't need a budget. You'll need a quiet Saturday morning, a cup of coffee, and an honest look at how your business actually sells.

Let's get started.

Imagine your week, but different.

The phone still rings. But when it does, the person on the other end already knows what you do.

They've seen your work.

They've read your answers to the questions they had.

They've figured out, on their own, that you're probably the right fit.

They didn't call to interview you.

They called to hire you.

That's what a digital salesperson does.

It's not a fancy website. It's not expensive software. It's a small set of pieces working together to do the same job a good salesperson would do if you could afford to hire one.

It finds the right people. The ones looking for what you sell, in the place you sell it, at the time they're ready to buy. It introduces you before you ever pick up the phone. It answers the questions every buyer asks, the way you would answer them in person. It helps the wrong-fit people figure out they're a wrong fit, so they don't waste your time or theirs. And it tells the right people exactly what to do next.

Picture what that does for your week.

Fewer phone calls that go nowhere. Fewer first-time explanations of what you do. Fewer hours lost to people who were never going to buy. More time in the shop, on the truck, with your hands on the work that pays. More conversations with people who already trust you enough to be ready.

That's not a fantasy. It's what happens when the right pieces are in place.

The six tips that follow are how you build it.

They're in this order on purpose.

Each one builds on the one before it.

THE SIX TIPS

TIP ONE

Get Clear on Who You're Selling To

Before you can build a digital salesperson, you have to know who it's selling to.

Why it matters

Everything that follows in this guide depends on this one thing.

The way you write.

The questions you answer.

The way you explain what you do.

The path you show people to buy.

All of it gets sharper, faster, and more useful when you can picture the person on the other end of it.

Most business owners skip this. Not because they don't know their customers, but because they know them so well it feels obvious. It isn't. The knowing lives in your head.

The work we're doing this weekend needs it on the page.

What this does for you

When you're clear on who you're selling to, your digital salesperson stops talking to everyone and starts talking to someone. That's the shift. Everyone is a crowd. Someone is a person. People respond to being spoken to like a person.

It also makes every other decision in this guide easier. What to write. What to answer. What to show. You're not guessing. You're answering for the person you already have in mind.

Try this

Pick the last three or four customers who were a good fit. The ones you'd take again tomorrow. Write down what they had in common. Not their names or their projects. The patterns. What kind of work they needed. What they cared about. What they were worried about. What made them a good fit instead of a bad one.

You're not building a marketing persona. You're describing the people you already know how to help.

What you might find

You'll probably notice you've been trying to be the right fit for too many kinds of customers. Or that the customers you enjoy working with share more in common than you realized. Or that the ones who waste your time tend to look the same from the outside, which means you can start spotting them earlier.

Where to start

Write a short description of your best-fit customer in plain language. Not a list of demographics. A few honest sentences that describe who they are, what they need, and why they end up working with you.

That description is the audience for everything that comes next.

THE SIX TIPS

TIP TWO

Write for an Audience of One

Before we get to what you'll write, let's talk about how you'll write it.

Why it matters

A few of the tips that follow are going to ask you to write some things.

Pages.

Answers.

Descriptions.

The stuff people will find online when they look for what you do.

That's called content. It's a word that gets used a lot, and it makes people nervous, especially if they've never thought of themselves as a writer.

Here's what I want you to know. You don't have to be a writer. You just have to know your business and be able to answer questions. I already know you can do that. You do it on the phone every week.

Before we get into what you're going to write, I want to talk about how you're going to write it. That's what this tip is about.

What this does for you

Most business writing tries to talk to everyone. It's polished. It's careful. It covers all the angles. And because it's trying to cover everyone, it speaks to no one.

When you write for an audience of one, that changes. You're not writing to a crowd. You're writing to that person you described in Tip One. The one sitting across from you. The one asking the question you've answered a hundred times. That person.

When you write that way, two things happen. The right reader feels like you're talking to them, which is the start of trust. The wrong reader moves on, which saves you both time. That's not a side effect. That's the whole point.

Try this

Picture the person you described in Tip One sitting across from you. Not a crowd. Not a market. One person. Now imagine they've asked you something about what you do. How would you answer them? Not in writing. Out loud. Across a table.

That's the voice you're going to use. Plain. Honest. Specific. The way you'd talk to a friend who needed to understand what you do.

You're not going to write anything yet. We'll get to that in the tips ahead. For now, just hold that voice in your head. It's the voice everything that follows will be written in.

What you might find

You've probably read writing like this before. Generic. Sanitized. Words that sounded fine but didn't really connect. The kind of copy that feels like it came from a marketing bot, not a real person. You finished reading it and didn't feel anything. You didn't trust it. You didn't remember it.

That's what we're avoiding.

What we want is the opposite. Authentically you, talking in a meaningful way to a real person. The same way you'd do it in real life if they were standing in front of you.

If you want an example of what that sounds like, you're reading one right now. This guide isn't written to a crowd. It's written to you. The way I'd talk to you if we were sitting across a table working on this together. That's the voice. That's what you're going for when you write your own.

Where to start

Don't write anything yet. Just commit to the voice. The next time you find yourself answering a question for a customer in person or on the phone, pay attention to how you say it. That's the voice we're using.

THE SIX TIPS

TIP THREE

Be Clear About What You Do

If someone asked you across a counter what you do, could you answer them without leaving them more confused than before?

Why it matters

Most business owners think they have this answer ready.

They don't.

What they have is a version that's been polished over the years into something safe. Something broad. Something that won't accidentally exclude anyone.

The result is an answer that technically describes the business but doesn't actually tell anyone what you do.

A digital salesperson can't work with that. It needs an honest, specific, plain-language answer to the question every prospect is asking when they land on you for the first time. What does this person do? Is it for me?

If they can't tell, they leave.

What this does for you

When you're clear about what you do, three things happen at once.

The right people recognize themselves immediately. They see what you make, who it's for, and the problem you solve, and they think "that's me." That's the start of a sale.

The wrong people recognize themselves too. They realize this isn't for them and they move on without wasting your time. That's a gift to both of you.

And the people in the middle, the ones who weren't sure, get enough information to ask a smarter question. The conversation starts further down the road than it would have otherwise.

Try this

Pretend someone just asked you, in person, "What do you do?" Not at a networking event. Not on a sales call. Across a counter. A real human asking a real question.

Now answer them, out loud, in one or two sentences. Pay attention to what comes out.

Was it specific? Did it name what you make or do, who you do it for, and the problem you solve? Or did it come out vague? Did it use words like “solutions” or “services” or “help businesses” without saying what kind, for whom, or how?

Here's the test. After you said it, would the other person have to ask a follow-up question to actually understand? If the answer is yes, you're not clear enough yet.

What you might find

The polished version of your answer probably doesn't pass the test. It sounds professional. It feels safe. But it leaves people guessing.

You might also notice that the clearer the answer gets, the more it sounds like something a customer would actually say. Not industry language. Not marketing language. The kind of plain words a buyer would use when telling a friend about you.

That's the voice you're going for. Plain. Honest. Specific. Hard to misunderstand.

Where to start

Write one or two sentences that describe what you do, who you do it for, and the problem you solve. Say it out loud. Test it on someone who doesn't know your business. If they understand it without asking follow-up questions, you've got it.

Those sentences are the foundation for everything that follows.

Go Deeper

*If this tip resonated and you want to learn more about the thinking behind it, read *Story Brand* by Donald Miller.*

THE SIX TIPS

TIP FOUR

Show People How to Buy and How to Be Ready

Many businesses assume buyers know how to buy. They don't.

Why it matters

When someone decides they want what you sell, what do they actually do next?

Do they call?

Fill out a form?

Request a quote?

Schedule a visit?

Pay a deposit?

You know the answer because you've been doing this for years. They don't.

And the longer they have to figure it out, the more likely they are to give up and call someone else.

There's a second piece most businesses miss entirely. What does the buyer need to have ready to make that first conversation useful? Measurements? Photos? A timeline? A budget range? An idea of what they want? The more prepared they show up, the faster you can give them a real answer and the less time you waste on back-and-forth.

When people know what to do and what to bring, the whole process gets easier for both of you.

What this does for you

This is one of the quietest, most underrated pieces of a digital salesperson, and it does two big jobs.

It removes friction for the right buyer. They see the path, they see what they need, and they take the next step with confidence. No guessing. No hesitation. No wondering if they're doing it right.

And it filters out the wrong buyer. The people who aren't really serious won't gather the information or take the steps. That's not a bug. That's the point. The ones who do the prep are the ones who are ready.

You stop having phone calls that go in circles because the person doesn't have any of the information you need to actually help them. You start having phone calls with people who've already done the thinking.

Try this

Write down the actual steps a customer takes to buy what you sell. Start with the moment they decide they're interested. End with the moment the work is done or the product is in their hands. Don't skip anything because it feels obvious. Obvious to you isn't obvious to them.

Now do the second list. What does a customer need to have ready or thought through to make the first conversation useful? Measurements. Photos. A timeline. A budget range. A decision-maker on the call. Whatever it is.

Both lists should be short. Both should be honest. Both should be written in plain language.

What you might find

You'll probably realize you've been doing the prep work for them. Asking the same questions on every first call. Helping them figure out things they could have figured out before they reached out. That's hours of your week you've been giving away without meaning to.

You might also notice that the prep list is a quiet trust signal. When a business tells you what to bring to the first conversation, you walk in feeling like they know what they're doing. The opposite is also true. When there's no guidance, you walk in unsure of whether you're working with a real operation.

Where to start

Get both lists down on paper. Keep them short. Keep them honest. Write them in the same plain voice you've been using throughout this guide.

These two lists are going to do real work for you. We'll talk about what to do with them at the end.

THE SIX TIPS

TIP FIVE

Answer Every Question They Will Think To Ask

The questions buyers ask you over and over are the most valuable content you'll ever create.

Why it matters

Every business has them. The same questions, asked by buyer after buyer, week after week.

How much does it cost?

How long does it take?

What's the difference between this and that?

Do you do this?

Do you not do that?

What happens if something goes wrong?

You've answered these questions hundreds of times. In person. On the phone. In emails. The answers live in your head and come out fresh every time someone asks.

That's the problem. They should live somewhere a buyer can find them before they ever reach out to you. When they don't, two things happen. You spend your week giving the same answers to one person at a time. And the buyers who didn't reach out, the ones who needed the answers but weren't going to make a call to get them, went somewhere else.

A digital salesperson can answer these questions for you. Every day. At any hour. Without ever getting tired of saying the same thing.

What this does for you

When the questions buyers ask are answered honestly and publicly, your business changes in a few specific ways.

The right buyer shows up to the first conversation already informed. They've read the answers. They know what you do, how you do it, and roughly what to expect. The conversation starts further down the road. The sales cycle shortens. Sometimes dramatically.

The wrong buyer doesn't reach out at all. They read the answers, realize you're not what they need, and they go look somewhere else. That's a gift. Every wrong-fit conversation you don't have is time you get back.

And the buyer who's still on the fence gets a quiet sense of trust. A business that answers the hard questions honestly looks different from one that hides them. Trust is built before you've ever met.

Try this

Make a list. Every question you can think of that buyers ask you. The easy ones and the hard ones. The ones about price. The ones about process. The ones about timeline. The ones about what could go wrong. The ones you wish people didn't ask but they do.

Don't filter. Don't decide which ones are good questions. If a buyer has ever asked it, it goes on the list.

When the list is done, sit with it for a day. You'll think of more. Add them.

Then, one at a time, answer each one. The way you'd answer it if the person you described in Tip One was sitting across from you. Honestly. Thoroughly. Without spin. If the answer is "it depends," say what it depends on. If the answer is uncomfortable, give it anyway. If the answer is bad news for some buyers, that's exactly the answer they need to hear.

This is the most work in the whole guide. It's also the most valuable.

What you might find

You'll probably be surprised how long the list gets. Most owners think there are ten or fifteen common questions. There are usually fifty or more.

You'll also notice that some questions make you uncomfortable to answer in writing. Price questions. Comparison questions. Questions about things that have gone wrong. That discomfort is a signal. The questions that feel risky to answer publicly are usually the most valuable ones to answer publicly. The buyers who needed those answers will trust you for giving them. The ones who don't are not your buyers anyway.

And you'll probably find that the act of writing the answers down sharpens how you think about your own business. The fuzzy spots get clearer. The places you've been giving slightly different answers depending on the day get consistent. Your team, if you have one, ends up with a shared script for the first time.

Where to start

Get the list down first. Don't try to answer anything yet. Just the list.

Once the list feels complete, pick the five questions that come up the most. Answer those first. Save them somewhere. Move on to the next five.

Don't try to do all of them this weekend. Start with the ones that would save you the most time and build the most trust if buyers could find them on their own.

Go Deeper

If this tip resonated and you want to learn more about the thinking behind it, read [Endless Customers](#) by Marcus Sheridan.

THE SIX TIPS

TIP SIX

Build Your Own Audience

The most valuable list in your business is the one you own.

Why it matters

When a business runs an ad, here's what's actually happening. They're writing a check to rent someone else's audience. Television rents you their viewers. Radio rents you their listeners. Online platforms rent you their users. You pay, you get attention for a moment, and when you stop paying, the attention disappears.

There's another way. Build your own audience. People who already trust you. People who already bought from you. People who already know what you do and have opinions about how you do it. That audience never has to be rented. You already own it.

Most businesses overlook this because it sounds too simple. Just collect contact information. Just stay in touch. That's it. But the businesses that do it consistently end up with something more valuable than any ad campaign they could ever buy.

What this does for you

When you have a list of people who already trust you, your business gets steadier in a way most owners never experience.

You have somewhere to announce something new. A product. A service. An availability. Without paying anyone for the privilege.

You have somewhere to ask for help. Referrals. Introductions. Reviews. From people who already have a reason to say yes.

You stay top of mind. Not in a marketing way. In a real way. When the person who bought from you two years ago hears about someone with a need, they remember you because you've been a quiet, occasional presence in their inbox the whole time.

And you stop being dependent on word of mouth showing up on its own. You give it a nudge. Regularly. Without being pushy.

Try this

Make a list of every person who has bought from you in the last few years. Names, emails, phones, social handles, whatever you can find. Don't worry about being complete. Start with the ones you remember.

Then commit to a way to capture this going forward. Every time someone buys, their contact information goes somewhere you can find it later. Doesn't have to be fancy. A spreadsheet works fine. So does a notebook.

That's the list. That's your audience. The one you own.

What you might find

You'll probably realize you already have a list. It's just scattered. In your email. In your phone. In old invoices. On scraps of paper. Pulling it together in one place takes an afternoon and gives you something most of your competitors don't have.

You might also notice you've been thinking about marketing as something you have to go out and do. Going out and finding people. Going out and convincing them. Going out and paying for their attention. Building your own audience flips that. The work isn't going out. The work is staying in touch.

That's a quieter kind of marketing. It's also a much cheaper one.

Where to start

Pull together what you already have. Get it into one place. Then put a simple system in place for adding to it every time someone new buys from you.

That's the start. The staying in touch can come later. The list comes first.

A note before we wrap up

You've covered a lot of ground. Six tips. Each one a piece of the digital salesperson you're building. By itself, none of them is the whole answer. Together, they are.

Before you close this guide, let's talk about what to do with everything you just worked through.

You've may be wondering what to do with all of this.

That's a fair. You've spent this weekend thinking about your customer. Writing in your own voice. Getting clear on what you do. Mapping how people buy. Answering the questions buyers ask. Starting your list.

What you've just done is the homework most businesses skip when they build a website, design a brochure, send an email, or post on social media. You'd be surprised how many thousands of dollars get spent on materials that focus only on color, looks, and appearances. Not the stuff that actually goes in them. Not the thinking that makes any of it work.

You did the opposite. You focused on the substance first. That's the smart move.

Here's what that content actually does for you

When it lives somewhere buyers can find it, the work you did this weekend goes to work for you in four ways.

It attracts the right buyers. Search engines and AI tools look for clear, honest, helpful information when someone asks a question. The answers you wrote feed those tools. The right buyers find you because you said something useful, not because you paid to be seen.

It serves buyers on their schedule. The people interested in what you sell don't have to wait for a phone call to get answers. They can read what you wrote at ten o'clock at night, on a Saturday, on a job site. They get what they need when they need it, without you having to be there.

It shortens the sales cycle for the right buyers and shortens the conversations with the wrong ones. The right buyer arrives informed and closer to ready. The wrong buyer figures out they're not a fit before you ever get on a call. Both outcomes save you time.

It helps the people who already trust you spread the word. Your customers, your past clients, your friends, your referral sources, they all want to help. When they have something real to share, they share it. A link. An answer. A page that explains what you do better than they could in a quick conversation. You give them ammunition.

Where this content lives

If you have a website, get this onto it. The clarity about what you do. The path to buying. The questions and answers. Put it where buyers can find it.

If you don't have a website, build one. Seriously. There are free and low-cost ways to do it. You don't need anything fancy. You don't need a designer. You don't need a developer. You just need a place where the work you just did can live.

You've done the hard part. The thinking. The honesty. The plain-language answers. The part that most businesses skip and pay dearly for skipping.

Don't let that work sit in a drawer.

NICE WORK

If you worked through those six tips, you're further along than most business owners ever get.

That matters.

Your digital salesperson isn't the whole picture. It's one piece of how customers find you, decide to trust you, and choose to buy from you. The same kind of thinking applies to the rest of it.

Can I help you with the goals you have? We can find out. It starts with a single conversation. We sit down together, look at where you are, what's working, and what's getting in the way. From there we build a clear picture of what to focus on first and what moving forward actually looks like.

Simple as that.

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Who wrote this

I'm Cary Weston.

I'm an independent marketing coach and consultant. I work with small business owners and marketing directors who know they need to do something with their marketing but aren't sure where to start.

You can find out more about what I do and how I help businesses get more from the time, talent, and money they spend on marketing on my website www.caryweston.com.