

SIDE HUSTLE

FROM IDEA TO INCOME IN 27 DAYS



CHRIS GUILLEBEAU

AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER *The \$100 Startup*

ALSO BY CHRIS GUILLEBEAU

The Art of Non-Conformity

The \$100 Startup

The Happiness of Pursuit

Born for This

SIDE HUSTLE

FROM IDEA TO INCOME IN 27 DAYS



CHRIS GUILLEBEAU



Copyright © 2017 by Chris Guillebeau

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Crown Business, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

crownbusiness.com

CROWN BUSINESS is a trademark and CROWN and the Rising Sun colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin Random House LLC.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data is available upon request.

Hardcover ISBN 9781524758844

Ebook ISBN 9781524758851

International Edition ISBN 9781524762438

Illustrations by Peter Arkle

Cover design by Evan Gaffney and Tal Goretsky

*Cover photographs: (motorcycle side car) dpa picture alliance/Alamy Stock Photo;
(money bag) t.kimura/E+/Getty Images*

v4.1

ep

Contents

Cover

Also by Chris Guillebeau

Title Page

Copyright

Your 27-Day Plan

The Way of the Hustle

Week 1: Build an Arsenal of Ideas

Day 1: Predict the Future

Day 2: Learn How Money Grows on Trees

Day 3: Brainstorm, Borrow, or Steal Ideas

Day 4: Weigh the Obstacles and Opportunities of Each Idea

Day 5: Forecast Your Profit on the Back of a Napkin

Week 2: Select Your Best Idea

Day 6: Use the Side Hustle Selector to Compare Ideas

Day 7: Become a Detective

Day 8: Have Imaginary Coffee with Your Ideal Customer

Day 9: Transform Your Idea into an Offer

Day 10: Create Your Origins Story

Week 3: Prepare for Liftoff

Day 11: Assemble the Nuts and Bolts

Day 12: Decide How to Price Your Offer

Day 13: Create a Side Hustle Shopping List

Day 14: Set Up a Way to Get Paid

Day 15: Design Your First Workflow

Day 16: Spend 10 Percent More Time on the Most Important Tasks

Week 4: Launch Your Idea to the Right People

Day 17: Publish Your Offer!

Day 18: Sell Like a Girl Scout

Day 19: Ask Ten People for Help

Day 20: Test, Test, and Test Again

Day 21: Burn Down the Furniture Store

Day 22: Frame Your First Dollar

Week 5: Regroup and Refine

Day 23: Track Your Progress and Decide on Next Steps

Day 24: Grow What Works, Let Go of What Doesn't

Day 25: Look for Money Lying Under a Rock

Day 26: Get It Out of Your Head

Day 27: Back to the Future

Kitchen Sink

Appendix 1: Side Hustle Starter Kits

Appendix 2: How to Validate an Idea with \$10 and a Facebook Account

Appendix 3: Write a Letter to Your Ideal Customer

Appendix 4: Buy a Rental Property with a \$1,575 Down Payment

Page for People Who Read the Notes at the End

Resources and Free Stuff

About the Author

YOUR 27-DAY PLAN

WEEK 1: BUILD AN ARSENAL OF IDEAS

A side hustle has many benefits, but it all starts with the right idea. This first week of hustling will teach you how to generate hustle ideas that actually work.

DAY 1. PREDICT THE FUTURE

The path from idea to income begins with your answer to an important question: Twenty-seven days from now, what will be different about your life?

DAY 2. LEARN HOW MONEY GROWS ON TREES

Some hustle ideas are better than others. Learn the three qualities of a great idea and how to find ones with the most potential.

DAY 3. BRAINSTORM, BORROW, OR STEAL IDEAS

Using what you've learned about high-potential ideas, brainstorm, borrow, or steal at least three possibilities for your hustle.

DAY 4. WEIGH THE OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EACH IDEA

Now that you have several ideas, examine them more closely to understand their pros and cons.

DAY 5. FORECAST YOUR PROFIT ON THE BACK OF A NAPKIN

To estimate the profit of your side hustle, you don't need a finance degree or a scientific calculator. You just need a napkin, a pen, and the

power of observation.

WEEK 2: SELECT YOUR BEST IDEA

Once you have multiple ideas, you need to be able to identify the best ones. Learn how to instantly rank and compare ideas so that you'll have confidence to proceed with the highest possible odds of success.

DAY 6. USE THE SIDE HUSTLE SELECTOR TO COMPARE IDEAS

Once you start thinking about side hustles, the ideas don't stop. This tool will show you how to apply "Tinder for Hustling" logic to pick the best one at any given time.

DAY 7. BECOME A DETECTIVE

As you move forward with an idea, study what other people are doing. Then, do it better or do it differently.

DAY 8. HAVE IMAGINARY COFFEE WITH YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

There's one person out there who meets your profile as the perfect customer. What can you learn from them?

DAY 9. TRANSFORM YOUR IDEA INTO AN OFFER

Once you have a great idea and a specific idea of who it's for, you need to transform that idea into an offer. An offer includes a promise, a pitch, and a price.

DAY 10. CREATE YOUR ORIGINS STORY

Like a comic book superhero, your side hustle needs a history. Don't just give 'em the facts; tell them a story.

WEEK 3: PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF

You've settled on your idea, you've transformed it into an offer, and you know who your ideal customer is. This week you'll learn how to help that person understand why they can't live without your offer, without getting bogged down in unimportant details.

DAY 11. ASSEMBLE THE NUTS AND BOLTS

Resourcefulness is your most valuable hustle skill. Get all the logistics out of the way so you can focus on more important things.

DAY 12. DECIDE HOW TO PRICE YOUR OFFER

Pricing can be a challenge even for experienced hustlers. Use the cost-plus model and follow two easy guidelines for much higher odds of success.

DAY 13. CREATE A SIDE HUSTLE SHOPPING LIST

Your hustle will require specific tools, resources, and deliverables. Learn to find, gather, or create everything you'll need to bring your offer into the world.

DAY 14. SET UP A WAY TO GET PAID

You've got a lot more than just an idea now—you're well under way to a real-life side hustle. Before proceeding, make sure you've also got a real-life way to get paid for it.

DAY 15. DESIGN YOUR FIRST WORKFLOW

You're almost to launch week. By listing out your next steps in an ordered fashion, you'll prevent mishaps and feel more confident.

BONUS STEP

DAY 16. SPEND 10 PERCENT MORE TIME ON THE MOST IMPORTANT TASKS

Many new hustlers get caught up in mundane details. Avoid that trap from the beginning, and keep your focus on just two things.

WEEK 4: LAUNCH YOUR IDEA TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE

After careful planning, you're all set to take your offer into the world. The time is now! Learn everything you need to know about marketing, testing, and showing up to the battlefield in a tank.

DAY 17. PUBLISH YOUR OFFER!

When's the best time to get your offer out in the world and see what happens? Usually before you feel totally confident.

DAY 18. SELL LIKE A GIRL SCOUT

Even with a great product or service, and a great offer to make your pitch, magic money doesn't usually fall from the sky. Channel your inner Girl Scout and make some sales!

DAY 19. ASK TEN PEOPLE FOR HELP

No man is an island, and few side hustles thrive without the help of friends and supporters. As you begin hustling, don't hesitate to ask friends, family, and maybe even your mail carrier to join your cause.

DAY 20. TEST, TEST, AND TEST AGAIN

When you're beginning a new hustle, you don't usually know which approach will be the most effective. To find out, try different things and keep a record of results.

DAY 21. BURN DOWN THE FURNITURE STORE

There's a very good reason why most of us will go out of our way to buy something that's on sale. Master the benefits of deals, discounts, and special offers—then put them to work for you.

BONUS STEP

DAY 22. FRAME YOUR FIRST DOLLAR

Take time to celebrate your initial achievements. There's more work to be done, but small victories can be disproportionately satisfying.

WEEK 5: REGROUP AND REFINE

Your hustle is out in the world! Congratulations—now let's see what you can do to raise the game.

DAY 23. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS AND DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS

As you learn more about the response to your hustle, take note of the most crucial metrics—then take action on what you learn.

DAY 24. GROW WHAT WORKS, LET GO OF WHAT DOESN'T

As your hustle grows, there are countless options to expand. Don't get distracted—identify what's working and do more of that.

DAY 25. LOOK FOR MONEY LYING UNDER A ROCK

If everything's going well, consider adding another version of it to better serve your customers. After all, if you saw a million dollars on the side of the road, wouldn't you pick it up?

DAY 26. GET IT OUT OF YOUR HEAD

Every hustle has key systems. Yours are probably stored in your head—and that's not always wise. To make significant improvements (and save more time) as you expand your hustle, systemize wherever you can.

DAY 27. BACK TO THE FUTURE

You've come to the end of the road...or is it the beginning? Decide whether to part ways with your first idea and try something else, keep

growing it, or simply turn it into an ongoing source of income.

KITCHEN SINK

APPENDIX 1: SIDE HUSTLE STARTER KITS

APPENDIX 2: HOW TO VALIDATE AN IDEA WITH \$10 AND A FACEBOOK
ACCOUNT

APPENDIX 3: WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

APPENDIX 4: BUY A RENTAL PROPERTY WITH A \$1,575 DOWN PAYMENT
RESOURCES AND FREE STUFF

THE WAY OF THE HUSTLE

When a British man who managed a construction company wrote a series of fish tank reviews for an obscure website, he included links to several Amazon product listings at the end of the reviews. He knew he'd earn a small commission if visitors clicked through from the reviews and made a purchase, but he was so busy with his day job that after he posted the reviews, he promptly forgot about the whole thing. A few weeks later, a check arrived in the mail...for \$350. His partner didn't believe it was real money until he took her out to a nice dinner with the proceeds.

At the time, he had no idea that this small project, created in a weekend, would go on to make hundreds of dollars. He also didn't know that *several years later* those same reviews would still be earning him an average of \$700 a month, without any further work on his part. It wasn't retirement money, but it sure was nice.

Similarly, when a San Diego government employee offered to photograph a friend's wedding, he didn't know it would lead to an extra \$3,500 every month. This employee didn't want to be a full-time wedding photographer, but the option to shoot an occasional wedding whenever he wants provides him with security and savings. He takes the jobs that accommodate his schedule and turns down the ones that don't, all while continuing to receive a steady paycheck from his "real" job.

When a Pennsylvania oil and gas sales rep started posting images on Pinterest, she wasn't a celebrity and didn't have a "revenue model." In addition to the day job, she was also a mom and a yoga teacher and active in her local community. Within a month, she had earned more than \$1,000—much to her shock and happy surprise. After three years, she'd taken in

more than \$40,000, all while uploading photos whenever she had a break from her busy day.

These stories, all true, represent the way of the side hustle: defined as a moneymaking project you start on the side, usually while still working a day job. In other words, it's a way to create additional income without taking on the risks of going full throttle into the world of working for yourself.

Sure, for some people the thought of quitting their day job and striking out on their own is exhilarating. For many others, however, it can be terrifying. After all, whether or not you have a family to support or a mortgage to pay, a job that produces a steady income and provides health insurance is difficult, if not impossible, to give up.

But what if you could get a profitable idea off the ground with just a minimal investment of time, money, and effort—and you could make that happen *alongside* your stable and steady job? This book shows you how to do exactly that, with a step-by-step guide that takes you from idea to implementation in just twenty-seven days. The guide is designed for the busy and impatient. It's a detailed road map that will allow you to brainstorm, select, launch, and make money in under a month.

But a side hustle isn't *just* about putting extra cash in your pocket. In today's environment, where the idea of a business having any sense of loyalty to its workers has all but disappeared, the side hustle is the new job security. It affords you the ability to decide. When you receive multiple paychecks from different sources, you are no longer dependent on the whims of a single employer.

More income means more options. More options mean more freedom.

In the pages ahead you'll read many more stories like the ones mentioned above. Entertaining as they are, they also have a greater purpose. They're here to show you that *anyone* can build a fast track to freedom by increasing their income—using the skills they already have. No matter what it is you do in your day job, or whether you want to identify as an “entrepreneur” or not, you need a side hustle. If you follow this plan, you'll have one in less than a month.

What will your story be?

THE MONEY TREE

Did you ever hear the saying that money doesn't grow on trees? Parents sometimes say this to their kids when the kids want to buy everything in sight. These parents are only half right. Money *does* grow on trees—you just have to plant the right seeds, in the right soil. In each short chapter of this book, you'll read a story of someone who found a money tree and made it blossom—simply by putting an idea into action. Along the way, you'll learn how to uncover and unlock a replicable process you can tailor to your own hustle.

I hope you find these stories inspiring, but more than that I hope they inspire you to take action. There's a money tree out there waiting for you, too. In the next twenty-seven days, you'll learn how to find and nurture it, and then watch it grow.

Whether you're no stranger to side hustles or you're brand-new to the concept, this book will help you get up and running with a profitable project in a short period of time. All the details are in the next 250 pages, but here's what you need to know right now:

1. Everyone should have a side hustle. Even if you love your job, having more than one source of income will give you more freedom and more options.
2. It's not that hard to start one. You can do so in less than a month by following the lessons in this book.
3. To be successful at hustling, you first need to understand how to generate profitable ideas and then choose which one is best at any particular time. You'll learn both of these skills in the first half of the book.
4. Side hustles are all about action! You need to launch your idea, usually before you feel totally ready, then regroup and refine after seeing the initial results. You'll learn how to do this in the second half of the book.

WHAT YOU NEED AND WHAT YOU DON'T

There are very few prerequisites to side hustling. To be successful in using this model, mostly you need:

- **The right frame of mind.**

Specifically, you need a willingness to learn *and* experiment. Even if you're a longtime serial hustler, some of what you'll learn here will be new to you. To get the most out of these lessons, you'll need to be willing to open your mind to a different way of thinking.

- **The willingness to act.**

Even though I've tried to write a very practical book, merely reading it won't do much for you. You must be willing to follow the instructions and attempt the exercises. Modifying them is fine—they have to work for you—but if you want to be successful, you can't skip them entirely.

As you can see, the list of prerequisites is pretty basic. The list of what you *do not* need is far longer. This is important, because many people think that the ability to earn money outside of their day job is out of their reach. Luckily, these people are wrong. Let's get this out of the way right from the start:

- **You don't need much money.**

Put away your credit cards (at least the ones with high limits) and don't worry about needing to raise capital or ask someone for a loan. The process I'll show you in the days ahead, along with the vast majority of ideas and stories you'll read about, do not require a large amount of money—and in some cases, no money at all is required.

- **You don't need much time.**

To be fair, you'll need *some* time. But the time required to start a hustle should be minimal. The twenty-seven-day plan is designed to be doable alongside your existing commitments and take no more than one hour a day. If you want to work faster, or build your project to a higher level right away, that's fine and you can spend more time doing so—but you won't *have* to.

- **You don't need a business degree, or any kind of specialized education.**

Most business education teaches people how to be a corporate manager, which is fine if that's what you do for your day job. But with a side hustle, you're starting your own business, not running someone else's. You don't need an MBA. You won't have to use complicated software or spreadsheets. Your financial forecasts can be written on the back of a napkin—and in fact, that's exactly what you'll learn to do on Day 5.

- **You don't need employees, assistants, or business partners.**

You may want to get help at some point, but not right away. The initial goal is to start on your own, using your own skills and effort.

- **You don't need experience starting a business.**

You don't need to be an “entrepreneur” to start a side hustle. Even if you have zero experience working for yourself, with the advice in this book and a little resourcefulness of your own, you'll have no problem taking your hustle from idea to profit.

In fact, some of these things (the money, the abundance of free time, even education) can actually be *detrimental* to your plan. If you have money to spend, you'll spend it. If you have an abundance of free time to waste, you'll waste it. Whatever you learned about business in school can sidetrack or prevent you from taking the simple steps you need to turn your idea into action. Last, at some point it may be wise to expand your team, but when you have to do everything yourself, you'll have to stick to what's essential. This plan will show you how.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

I've been starting and operating side hustles my entire adult life. In fact, it's the only occupational path I've ever known. For more than twenty years, I've made a good living doing everything from importing coffee to building

websites. Somewhere in that time, I also spent several years as an aid worker in West Africa, then pursued (and finished) a quest to visit every country in the world. If you asked me how to be a better employee, I wouldn't know what to tell you. But if you want to know how to create a new source of income, I can guide you each step of the way.

You can learn the way of the hustle, too. Once you acquire the skill of idea generation, you'll have no problem coming up with ideas whenever you need. Then, when you master the skill of making ideas happen, you'll be able to convert those ideas into income-producing assets.

It's like alchemy, except it's not magical. It's practical.

The sole purpose of this book is to help you increase your income *and* your security, giving you more options and allowing you to do more of what you want. If you accept this mission and commit to seeing it through, I promise to do everything I can to support you along the way.

HOW TO USE THE 27-DAY PLAN

Side hustle skills are not taught in school. Unless you were especially fortunate, you probably didn't learn them from your parents, either. There's nothing wrong with classroom knowledge, but it won't help you much here. The only way to master side hustle skills is by *doing*.

The other day I talked with someone who was in the process of starting her first hustle. She's a classic example of whom this book is written for. She has a good job and doesn't necessarily want to strike off on her own—but she also wanted to build something for herself outside her daytime work hours. In this case, her idea was to create a pop-up art show to sell her illustrations. Since she didn't know much about starting a business, she pursued what seemed like a normal course of action and signed up for an eight-week entrepreneurship class at a local college. Unfortunately, the class led mostly to frustration. “About 15 percent of what I learned was helpful,” she told me. “But the rest was about things that were either mostly or completely irrelevant to my goals.”

Consider this book to be a different kind of school. Instead of teaching you to write lengthy business plans and borrow money, it will show you a

complete process of planning and action, condensed into a twenty-seven-day timeline.

And instead of showing up for class at a prescribed hour every day, you can learn these lessons on your own schedule, and on your own time. Nevertheless, you'll want to follow the general outline below, which shows how all the steps build together to bring you to a profitable hustle.

Each week focuses on a theme and is divided into five steps, with bonus steps in Weeks 3 and 4. Don't get hung up over how long any particular step takes you—some can be quickly completed, and some may take you longer than an actual day. The key point is to move through these stages in sequence.

Here are the objectives for each week:

WEEK 1: Learn to generate profitable ideas

WEEK 2: Select your best idea (not all ideas are created equal!)

WEEK 3: Prepare to share your best idea with the right group of people

WEEK 4: Launch—probably before you're ready—and track your results

WEEK 5: Regroup and refine

WEEK 1: BUILD AN ARSENAL OF IDEAS

Day 1: Predict the Future

Day 2: Learn How Money Grows
on Trees

Day 3: Brainstorm, Borrow, or Steal Ideas

Day 4: Weigh the Obstacles and
Opportunities of Each Idea

Day 5: Forecast Your Profit on the
Back of a Napkin

WEEK 2: SELECT YOUR BEST IDEA

Day 6: Use the Side Hustle Selector to Compare Ideas

Day 7: Become a Detective

Day 8: Have Imaginary Coffee with Your Ideal Customer

Day 9: Transform Your Idea Into an Offer

Day 10: Create Your Origins Story

WEEK 3: PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF

Day 11: Assemble the Nuts and Bolts

Day 12: Decide How to Price Your Offer

Day 13: Create a Side Hustle Shopping List

Day 14: Set up a Way to Get Paid

Day 15: Design Your First Workflow

Day 16: Spend 10% More Time on the Most Important Tasks

WEEK 4: LAUNCH YOUR IDEA TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE

- Day 17: Publish Your Offer!
- Day 18: Sell Like a Girl Scout
- Day 19: Ask Ten People for Help
- Day 20: Test, Test, and Test Again
- Day 21: Burn Down the Furniture Store
- Day 22: Frame Your First Dollar

WEEK 5: REGROUP AND REFINE

- Day 23: Track Your Progress and
Decide on Next Steps
- Day 24: Grow What Works,
Let Go of What Doesn't
- Day 25: Look for Money Lying Under
a Rock
- Day 26: Get It Out of Your Head
- Day 27: Back to the Future

YOUR TURN: LET'S GET TO WORK!

By now you should have an idea of whether the hustling life is right for you or not. Here's a quick test:

- ✓ Do you like the idea of having more than one source of income?

✓ Are you willing to devote at least thirty minutes a day to building your hustle, for at least the next twenty-seven days?

If you answered “Yes!” to those two questions, this plan is for you. Just one warning: Throughout the book, I’m going to be fairly direct in showing you what to do. I’ve hustled for more than twenty years, and I’ve worked with thousands of people starting their first hustle. I know what works and what doesn’t. I want you to succeed, and I don’t want to waste your time. Trust the process.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS: FREE TOOLS

Last, while everything you need to succeed is in these pages, I’ve created some additional tools for those who want a little extra help in going through the model. The first is a free task-tracker to help you keep up with your progress. Sometimes it helps to have a visual reminder of how you’re doing. Second is an online community where side hustlers like you can join up with other people who are all undertaking the challenge. You don’t *have* to do this with a group, but many people find it beneficial.

Finally, I’ll be posting additional resources online: just head to SideHustleSchool.com to register your copy of the book and get access to them.

Whether you love your job or can’t stand it, everyone should have more than one source of income. And since you’re the one making the decisions, it can also be fun—only unlike other things you do for fun, this form of entertainment actually *brings* you more money every month. Remember, a side hustle is the new job security. There’s no downside, and the possibilities are unlimited.

Now let’s turn this idea into your reality.

WEEK 1

BUILD AN ARSENAL OF IDEAS

A side hustle has many benefits, but it all starts with an idea. This first week of hustling will teach you how to generate business ideas that actually work.

WEEK 1: BUILD AN ARSENAL OF IDEAS

- Day 1: Predict the Future
- Day 2: Learn How Money Grows on Trees
- Day 3: Brainstorm, Borrow, or Steal Ideas
- Day 4: Weigh the Obstacles and Opportunities of Each Idea
- Day 5: Forecast Your Profit on the Back of a Napkin