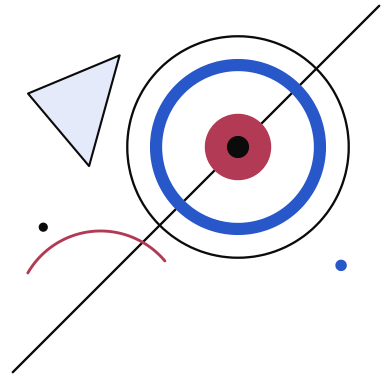




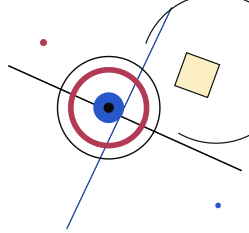
A blunt note from a guy who's done this more times than he can count...

The Art of Idea Extraction

The Repeatable Path to Profitable Products

The entire business-building process in four moves, stripped of the fluff and jargon that keeps you broke and busy. Read it in 10 minutes. Use it for the rest of your life.

Fair warning: nothing in here is complicated. That's the problem. You will be tempted to make it harder than it is, because hard feels like progress. Read it anyway. Then do the orders at the end of each part.



A Confession

When I started in entrepreneurship, I was determined to make my idea work.

It didn't. Neither did the next one. After failing enough times, I stopped putting so much weight on "my idea."

Then I found myself on a call with a real estate broker who was struggling with transaction management. I didn't pitch him what I thought was cool. I asked him what he needed. Down to every single detail.

Then I built it for him. That company still exists 17 years later. It let me retire at 27.

It's simpler than we can imagine, if we let go of our need to be right, our need to be validated, and our habit of loving our idea more than our customers do.

Once I realized the gold was in **asking** the question, I never stopped. **That's idea extraction.** *Everything in this guide is about asking.*

THE WHOLE BOOK

One Page. Four Moves. No Excuses.

THE PROMISE

Every business you could build from scratch comes down to four moves, each with two steps. You already know how to do all eight. The rest of this book is proof.

This is the part everyone skips. Don't.

MOVE 1

Extract An Idea

Find Painful Moments → Ask For The Dream

MOVE 2

Sell The Idea

Ask For Value → [Ask For Money](#)

MOVE 3

Build The Idea

Find Your Expert → Profit Share Plan

MOVE 4

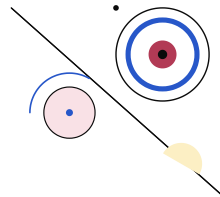
Get Customers

Take First Customer → [Tell Their Story](#)

THE ENEMY:

The guru industrial complex wants you to believe only people with credentials can come up with a great idea. **WRONG.** You don't need an MBA, a Ph.D., a master's, or even a college degree to discover something of value. You do not need to be the expert to build a successful business. It takes a conversation. Everything that makes it feel harder than that is someone selling you the hard version.

Your only real challenge is to let it be easy instead of making it hard.



You Don't Need a Good Idea. You Need a Pissed-Off Customer and One Question.

IF YOU REMEMBER ONE THING

The holy grail of sellable, powerful, profitable ideas is found in creating something called "dreamflows" for people. You don't invent them. You ask for them.

The transformation you're about to encounter is so profound you will never see the world the same again. I'm going to get straight to the point: **idea extraction** is asking questions until you find someone's **painflow**, then asking for their **dreamflow**.

PAINFLOW

Their current situation. What it's doing to them, what they've tried, and how it's blocking the outcome they want.



DREAMFLOW

Their ideal solution. How they'd solve it if they could.

Their dreamflow doesn't need to be perfect. You can fill in the gaps. **But the painflow must be known.**

Dreamflow: take a pain-in-the-ass workflow and make each moment a dream come true.

Even Blockbuster was a dreamflow once

This is applicable everywhere. Even in the video rental business.

PAINFLOW

VHS Tapes

Cost \$20+

Clutter your house

pain relief



pain relief



DREAMFLOW

Blockbuster

Cost \$3-ish

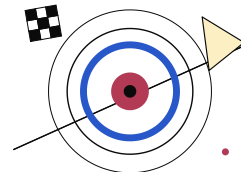
No clutter at home

You could have invented Blockbuster with three idea extraction questions.

- 1 "What tasks are you responsible for, day to day?" Then listen.
- 2 "Tell me how you go about doing that one." Then stop and listen for 60 seconds.
- 3 "If you could wave a magic wand and do anything related to it, what would it be?"

The first two give you the painflow. The third gives you the dreamflow. Notice there is no "brainstorm" step. There never is.

You don't have to come up with ideas. You just have to ask.



Same move, different market: parrots

We're going to build one business from here to the last page. A course for parrot owners. Yes, parrots. Stay with me.

Step 1: Find Painful Moments → Step 2: Ask For The Dream

PAINFUL MOMENT

Parrot Owners

Bird poops all over

Bites friends

Swears like a sailor

the dream
→

the dream
→

the dream
→

DREAM

Parrot Course

Poop fixed

No longer bites

Speaks nicely

Every painful moment gets its own dream. The dreams, together, are the product.

No one to ask today? Go to page 12 and run it on yourself first.

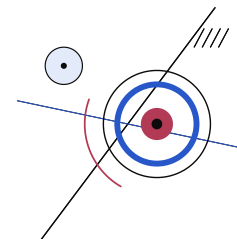
Stop making this more complicated than it needs to be.

PART 2 · SELL THE IDEA

How to Get Paid Before You've Built Anything (Yes, Really)

THE PROMISE

Once you know each dream moment, you ask what it's worth, then ask if they'd pay. Then you take the money. There is no step where you build something first.



Step 1: Ask For Value → Step 2: Ask For Money

Let's stick with the parrot course and briefly look at how you would sell it.

PAINFUL MOMENT Parrot Owners		DREAM Parrot Course		ASK FOR VALUE What's it worth?
Bird poops all over	the dream →	Poop fixed	ask →	"What value would this have for you?"
Bites friends	the dream →	No longer bites	ask →	"What about this?"
Swears like a sailor	the dream →	Speaks nicely	ask →	"And this one?"

Don't guess the number. Do the math with them. If a problem eats 12 hours a month and their time is worth \$50 an hour, that's \$600 a month of visible value, before you count the stress.

Then ask the only question that matters: "Would you pay for that?"

Once you have the value for each specific dreamflow moment, you ask them if they'd be willing to pay. For the parrot course, that's **\$49**. Say the number. Then shut up and let them answer. Then take the money.

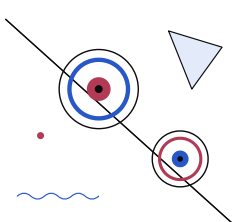
Most people never ask this question. That's the entire reason they're broke.

THE \$270 LESSON

Before he ever asked a customer a question, David (you'll meet him on page 11) spent 20 hours building an online course. Launch day, he sat refreshing the checkout, doing imaginary math with imaginary money. Final total: \$270. Twenty hours building. Zero minutes asking. That's idea generation. This book is idea extraction.

Enthusiasm is encouragement. Money is evidence.

Your only challenge now: let it be easy, instead of making it hard.



Why You Should Never Be the Expert in Your Own Business

THE PROMISE

You don't need to know how to fix a parrot. You need to find someone who does, show them the dreamflow, and offer them a share. You own the customers. They own the teaching.

You don't have to be the expert. You find one, and you make them a deal.

Step 1: Find Your Expert

The expert is the easiest hire you'll ever make. Experts already exist. They're in parrot shops, on Amazon author pages, running meetup groups. They have the knowledge and none of the customers. You're not asking them for a favor. You're bringing them the thing they can't get on their own.

Experts are everywhere and most of them are broke. You're offering them customers.

GO WHERE EXPERTS ARE

Call parrot shops

• Email authors

• Message leaders of
meetup groups

Step 2: Profit Share Plan

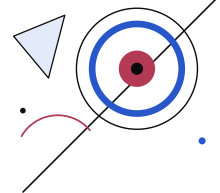
Share the dreamflow and ask if they can solve each moment. Then you say:

"I'll get customers, do all the tech, and make the platform. You just teach."

"Would you teach these things for 20% of the profits?"

THE ENEMY:

"I should learn this myself first." That's the expensive road. By the time you're the expert, someone who asked the question has already sold the course.



Make your product

It's actually quite simple. Ask your expert to solve the painful moments and make them a dreamflow.

PAINFUL MOMENT		DREAM		EXPERT SOLVES
Parrot Owners		Parrot Course		The Lessons
Bird poops all over	the dream →	Poop fixed	expert solves →	Bird stops pooping
Bites friends	the dream →	No longer bites	expert solves →	Stops biting
Swears like a sailor	the dream →	Speaks nicely	expert solves →	Stops swearing

One expert. One profit-share plan. That's the build.

Build the destination, not the vehicle

A founder we know spent tens of thousands of dollars building a slick marketing-data platform for moving companies. Nobody wanted it. He'd grind for a month to close one customer at \$200 a month, and they wouldn't stay.

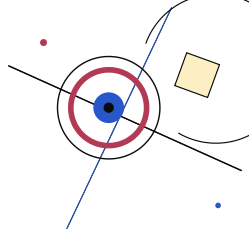
So he got asked one question: forget the platform, what does the moving-company owner actually want?

"Honestly? They want the phone to ring."

He tested it. The next day he closed a moving company at \$3,500 a month, in thirty minutes. Four months later he was doing \$65,000 a month.

Same market. Same technology. Different destination. Have your expert build what the customer asked for, not what you think is cool.

Again, stop making this more complicated than it needs to be.



Nobody Cares How Cool You Are. Here's What They Care About.

THE PROMISE

You need one customer, one win, and one story. Put that story in front of people like them, and invite them in. That's the entire marketing plan.

Stop showing off how cool you are. The very best thing you can do to get customers is tell stories of how cool your customers are.

Step 1: Take First Customer

All you need is one customer, one win, and one story. Have the customer implement what the expert teaches, and get them a win.

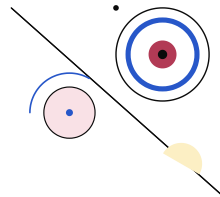
PAINFUL MOMENT		DREAM		EXPERT SOLVES		WIN
Parrot Owners		Parrot Course		The Lessons		The Customer
Bird poops all over	the dream →	Poop fixed	solves →	Bird stops pooping	the win →	Clean floors
Bites friends	the dream →	No longer bites	solves →	Stops biting	the win →	No more pain
Swears like a sailor	the dream →	Speaks nicely	solves →	Stops swearing	the win →	Ears feel nice

The oldest advertising framework in the world still works

Just use the oldest advertising framework of all time. Before, during, and after.

BEFORE YOU		DURING		AFTER YOU
All this pain	→	It leaves	→	Pain free!
Tide: stained shirt		Tide: just pour!		Tide: stain gone!

This may seem unique to you, but I assure you I stole it from Tide.



Step 2: Tell Their Story

Make it dramatic and real. Here is the parrot owner's story in three lines.

BEFORE	Her parrot pooped on the couch, bit her sister, and told her mother-in-law exactly where to go.
DURING	She worked through the course, one painful moment at a time.
AFTER	Last Sunday her mother-in-law came for dinner. The bird looked her dead in the eye and said, "Hello, gorgeous."

Boring stories are the ones that leave out the pain. Keep the pain in.

Notice where that story ends. Not on a feature list. On one moment, five seconds long, where everything is different. **That moment is the ad.**

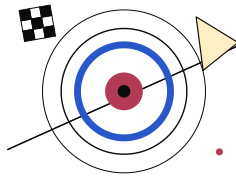
How experts sell (don't do this)

EXPERTS DO THIS		YOU DO THIS
Talk about themselves		Tell customer stories
"I'm so great"	instead →	Before you
"Look at my credentials"	instead →	During you
"Be like me"	instead →	After you

But what do you do with these stories?

- 1 Find people like the one in your story.
- 2 Put the story in front of them.
- 3 Invite them to join.

This is honestly all that's required to start a business where you're not an expert, and grow it. Go enjoy your life, because you don't have to work so hard at making business harder than it needs to be anymore.



Oh. You Want More? Fine. Here's a Company Doing 1,000 Homes a Month With It.

I'm an investor in a company called Powur. They sell residential solar for your home. Here's what I suggested they do to grow their business.

BEFORE

Utility bill high

DURING

→ **Sit back & experts install**

AFTER

→ **Utility bill gone or lower!**

So it would look like this...

- 1 Install solar on a home.
- 2 Get a photo of the family smiling out front.
- 3 Run a Facebook ad to similar people.
- 4 Invite them to see if they're a fit for solar.

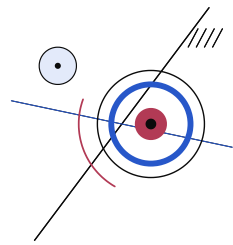
1,000+

homes a month. That's a lot of ads, my friends. I honestly don't know why more companies don't do this.

THE ENEMY:

Your credentials. Your logo. Your "about" page. Nobody is reading them. They're reading the story of the person who had their problem and doesn't anymore.

Come on now, stop making it more complicated than this.



Think Parrots Are a Cute Example? Fine. Here's a Guy Who Did It With Accountants.

David Cristello was a social worker making eleven dollars an hour and living with five roommates. No business degree. No idea. Then he came through The Foundation and ran the four moves on accounting firms.

1 Extract An Idea

He didn't pitch anything. He ran idea extraction. He sat in a tiny office subleased inside a medical practice, across from an accounting-firm owner named Wil, terrified, and asked where the week hurt. Wil had five hundred clients and thousands of recurring deadlines. He'd tried Trello, Asana and Basecamp.

Then Wil said it: **"I just want to know what needs to get done, when it needs to get done and where my team is stuck."** That was the dreamflow.

2 Sell The Idea

So David asked if he'd pay for it. No product. No developer. Not even a company bank account. Wil took out his checkbook and wrote **\$2,500**, payable to David personally, because there was no company.

David walked out, climbed into his beat-up 1988 Saab, shut the door and screamed. Ten firms paid before the product existed, from \$150 up to Wil's \$2,500.

3 Build The Idea

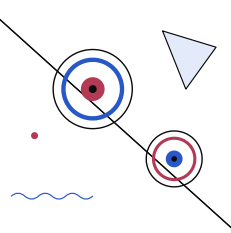
Then came the next thought: now I have to build it. So he made his first customers the experts. Nobody knew an accounting firm's workflow better than the firms themselves, so they guided the product. In return they got a discount for life, and some bought lifetime access outright.

4 Get Customers

Wil didn't pay because David knew accounting, could code, or showed up with a brilliant idea. He paid because David understood his problem. That check became one of the first sales of Jetpack Workflow. Four years later it was a million-dollar software company, built by a psych major who never took a business class.

[PLACEHOLDER: the first firm's win as one before, during, after moment.]

Four moves. One question asked over and over.



You're the Cheapest Customer You'll Ever Interview.

THE PROMISE

Before you ask anyone else, map your own day. Find the moments that make you swear. Ask yourself the dream. Put a dollar figure on it. You'll never doubt the method again.

Here's mine. I hate making content.

I hate the process of making social media content. The only part I loved was shooting the content; everything else was a PIA. This below would be a dream.

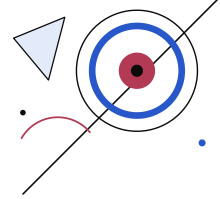
PAINFUL MOMENT		DREAM		ASK FOR VALUE
Creating TikTok Content		A SaaS Tool		What I'd pay
Come up with ideas	the dream →	AI helping	worth →	\$25 a month
Record them	the dream →	Special app or device	worth →	\$50 a month
Edit them	the dream →	Edit in the same tool	worth →	\$50 a month
Review them	the dream →	No review at all	worth →	\$25 a month
Post them	the dream →	A bank of content that posts over time	worth →	\$25 a month & up

\$175 / month

From one annoyed guy, for a tool that doesn't exist yet. Multiply by the number of people who hate making content.

And who builds it? Not you. Same move as Part 3. The expert here is a developer. Show them the dreamflow and offer the same deal: you bring the customers, they write the code, you split the profits.

Once you do a workflow on yourself, you'll start to see how you can reach out to others with more confidence.



Two Ways to Find the Next Idea

1. Put on the green idea glasses

Pretend you've put on a pair of green idea glasses. They let you walk into any business and see where life could be easier, faster, more fun, and more profitable.

Poor ideas flow, good ideas flow. The key is everything flows.

I was driving to volunteer at hospice with mine on, just for fun. At a stoplight I looked over at a park bench with an empty spot for an ad. It said: "Call to reserve this bench and advertise your business."

Call? Why not a website where you reserve the bench, get the artwork made and pay by card? A few bucks a month per bench, and there are a lot of park benches.

But I don't build it. I extract. The bench has a phone number on it. I call, and I ask what their problems are.

2. Watch for tolerations

What you tolerate today, you'll pay to escape tomorrow. What used to be a dreamflow can become painful, because tolerations become painful as innovation happens.

"Be Kind, Rewind"

toleration



Drive to the store and back

toleration



Late fees!

now a pain

Who wants to keep doing those things? No one. And then, you have competitors emerge.

PAINFLOW

Blockbuster

Drive to store

Rewind, drive back to store

pain relief



DREAMFLOW

Netflix

Go to mailbox

Go back to mailbox

pain relief



DREAMFLOW, EVENTUALLY

Netflix

pain relief



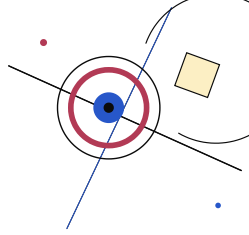
Log in to a website

pain relief



No going to mailbox

Tolerations become pains over time. That's where the next business is.



Remember

- 1 **Stop making this more complicated than it needs to be.** Let it be easy.
- 2 A **dreamflow** is a pain-in-the-ass workflow where each moment becomes a dream come true.
- 3 **Extract An Idea:** that's idea extraction. You don't come up with ideas. You ask until you know their painflow, then ask for the dream.
- 4 **Sell The Idea:** get the value of each dream moment, then ask if they'd be willing to pay. Then take the money.
- 5 **Build The Idea:** find an expert, share the dreamflow, offer a profit share. You just get customers and run the platform.
- 6 **Get Customers:** stop showing off how cool you are. Tell stories of how cool your customers are.
- 7 **Before, during, after.** The oldest advertising framework there is. It works for Tide and it works for solar.
- 8 **One customer, one win, one story.** Put it in front of similar people and invite them to join.
- 9 **No one to ask yet?** Do it on yourself first. Then you'll reach out to others with confidence.
- 10 **Tolerations become pains over time.** That's where the next business is.

Take a pain-in-the-ass workflow and make each moment a dream come true. That's the whole book.

Want to implement this in a group setting?

Join The Foundation. Visit TheFoundation.com to apply.

DO THIS NEXT

- 1 Ask one person: "What would your dream be here?"
- 2 Ask what it's worth, then ask: "Would you pay that?"
- 3 Show one expert the dreamflow and make the offer.
- 4 Get one customer a win. Write their story in three lines.

P.S. If you read this and thought "that's too simple," re-read the first line of Part 1. That thought is the problem. It is the only problem.

P.P.S. You have everything you need to ask one person one question today. If you close this PDF without doing that, you didn't read a business book. You read a bedtime story.