Kasi Business Playbook

A practical guide to starting and operating a successful business in the township



21 short chapters, one step at a time. Pick a business the street needs, earn trust, say one clear message, ask for the sale without fear, and keep customers coming back.

Includes a one-page offer worksheet you can print.

Mendi Taukwena

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Start with your street

All 21 chapter texts approved.

The stories are teaching examples. Named fictional characters and scenes are explained in each chapter. The Seipati / Missy Nails cameo is an invented teaching scene, not a report, portrait or endorsement.

Use the book one step at a time. Chapter 20 includes a printable offer worksheet. The library references point you towards the next useful guide, without replacing the rules that apply to your business.

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CHAPTER 1

Pick a Business the Street Actually Needs

Opening - Before You Open

Bra Vusi had a plan. He had saved R3,000 from his piece jobs, rand by rand, the way a tap fills a bucket. Then one night he watched a video online: "Beanies sell fast, my friend. Winter is coming. Everyone is making money from beanies."

Vusi did not sleep. He found a supplier, paid for two hundred beanies, and waited for winter to make him rich. There was only one problem with the plan. It was October. In Soweto. By December he had sold four beanies: three to his cousin (family discount, still unpaid) and one to a gogo who thought she was buying a doek. The other 196 beanies are in a suitcase under his bed. His children call him Bra Beanie.

Vusi is not stupid, and he is not lazy. He saved real money and he took a real chance. His only mistake was this: **he picked his business from a video, not from the street.**



Now meet Sis Palesa

Sis Palesa also wanted to start something, but she didn't know what. For two weeks her friends said she was doing nothing. Ha. She was doing the most important work in business: **she was watching.**

At the taxi rank in the morning, she saw the queue at the vetkoek lady fifteen people deep by seven o'clock - and by eight the vetkoek was finished and hungry people were walking away. At the shops, she heard two aunties complaining they must pay taxi fare to town just to print one document. After school, she watched learners walk past four streets carrying nothing, because there is nowhere nearby to buy a decent kota.

Palesa didn't spend one rand. But by the end of those two weeks, she had something Vusi never had: **a list of businesses the street was already asking for.**

The street is talking. Are you listening?

Watch the queues. A queue is the street pointing at money. Where people stand in line every day, something is selling. Either there is space for one more seller, or the people in that queue are complaining about something the seller doesn't do - and that complaint is your door in.

Listen for "all the way". When someone says, "Eish, we must go all the way to town for this," they are handing you a business plan for free. Every "all the way" is a shop that is missing in your street.

Count what travels. If people in your area travel far to buy it (printing, fresh bread, phone repairs, a proper haircut), ask yourself why nobody sells it here yet. Sometimes there is a good reason (and you need to know it). Most times, nobody has simply bothered.

Talk before you spend. Ask ten people one question: "What do you wish was closer to home?" It costs nothing. No app, no fees, no consultant. Just your mouth, a pen, and the courage to ask.



Here is the good news for your pocket: this first step of starting a business is free. You don't need money to start - you need eyes. Watch the street long enough, and it will tell you what to sell. Later in this book (Part 1) we go deeper into why people buy at all. For now, your only job is to look.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Take one morning. Sit near the busiest spot in your area (the rank, the mall entrance, the school gate). Count what people are buying and carrying. Write it down.

2. This week, write down three complaints you hear about things people must travel far to get.

3. Ask ten people: "What do you wish was closer to home?" Write every answer, even the funny ones.

4. Look at your list and circle the one that makes you say, "Hao, even I would buy that." That's your first suspect. We test it properly in the chapters that are coming.

Bra Vusi and Sis Palesa are made-up characters. The suitcase of beanies is, sadly, a true story in many streets.

CHAPTER 2

Start With What You Have

Opening - Before You Open

Bra Themba has a beautiful business. It has a name, a logo, business cards, and a business plan with laminated pages. He has been "about to start" for three years now. The plan is a car wash with an industrial machine, proper bays, the works. He is just waiting for one small thing: the funding. Every month he tells the guys at the corner, "Once the money lands, it's over for these other car washes." So far the money has not landed, and Bra Themba has not washed a single car. Not one. The dust on his sign is the only thing growing.

Two streets away, **Katlego** was sitting with his late father's old bakkie - the one that only starts when it feels like it. No logo. No plan. One day a neighbour asked, "Eish, can your bakkie move my couch? I'll give you R150." The bakkie felt like it that day. Then a gogo asked him to take away her broken fridge. Then a family moving to a new room called him. He painted a sign on the side with his own hands: "SIYA THUTHA - WE MOVE ANYTHING." Crooked letters. Paid petrol.

Three years later, who owns a business? Not the man with the laminated plan. **The man with the crooked sign.**



What is already in your hands?

Look at your things first. The bakkie, the stove, the sewing machine, the toolbox, the spare room, the phone in your pocket. People are paying rent on shops right now to do work that your kitchen table can do for free. Gogo Mapula down the road didn't wait for a bakery. She had a stove, a bag of flour and a corner where people pass. That was the whole shop.

Your hands are stock. Can you braid? Fix a tap? Cut hair? Cook? Teach a child maths? A skill costs nothing to carry and nobody can repossess it. The salon that everyone knows started as one chair, one mirror and a girl who could do cornrows on her mother's stoep.

Small and real beats big and on paper. One paying customer this week teaches you more than a perfect plan for next year. While your business is small, your mistakes are cheap. A wrong price on five kotas is a lesson. A wrong price on five thousand is a funeral.

Grow from the till, not from debt. Let the first sales buy the next stock. Katlego's first trips paid for petrol. The later trips paid for proper signwriting. The bakkie still only starts when it feels like it, but now there is money for a mechanic - earned, not borrowed.



Here is the truth that frees people: you are not waiting for money to start. You are waiting for permission - and nobody is coming to give it. What you have right now is enough for the first step. Not the whole business. The first step. The rest of this book shows you how to grow it, customer by customer.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Take a page and write down everything you already have that could earn money: things, skills, a space, even people who could help you.

2. Circle the one that could bring in its first rand this week. Not next year. This week.

3. Do one small job or sale with it before Sunday. Any size. One couch, one plate, one haircut.

4. Write down what you earned and what you learned. That page is the first record of your business. Keep it.

Bra Themba, Katlego and Gogo Mapula are made-up characters. The crooked signs are real - look for them on your next taxi ride, they are some of the hardest-working businesses in the township.

CHAPTER 3

Know the Ground You Stand On

Opening - Before You Open

Bra Sbu found the perfect spot for his shisanyama. A quiet side street. Cheap rent for the stand. And best of all, he told everyone, "No competition, my friend. Not one braai stand in sight." He was right about that. There was no competition because there were no customers either. The street was quiet the way a library is quiet. On a good day, six people walked past, and four of them were going to catch a taxi somewhere else. Sbu had fire, meat and seasoning. The only thing missing was people.

Meanwhile, at the taxi rank two streets away, there were already three braai stands. Three! And all three were busy, with smoke going up and a queue at each one. Mama Dorah, who ran the middle stand, was not stressed about the other two. "People come to where the smoke is," she says. "One stand is a risk. Three stands are a destination."

Six months later, Sbu moved his stand next to Mama Dorah's. His rent went up slightly. His customers went up slightly more than slightly. He now eats.



Where the feet go

Quiet is not a location. A cheap, empty spot is expensive, because you pay rent on it every month while it feeds nobody. Feet are the location. Before you count the rent, count the people who pass on a slow Tuesday, not a busy Saturday.

Competition is a signpost, not a wall. When you see four fruit sellers at one rank, the street is telling you where the buyers walk. All four of them eat, because buyers come to where the choosing is. Your job is not to run from them. Your job is to stand among them with something the queue is complaining about: the fresher tomatoes, the faster queue, the change always ready.

Learn the heartbeat of your spot. Every piece of ground has a rhythm. The rank wakes up at five in the morning and again at five in the afternoon. The school gate explodes at two o'clock. The church corner belongs to Sunday. The same street that is dead at ten in the morning can be a river at lunch. Trade where you are, yes - but first learn when your spot is actually alive.



Same ground. Different hour. Know your street's heartbeat.

The rules of the street

There are two sets of rules. Learn both. The first set is unwritten. That corner where you want to put your table? Someone's uncle has traded there for fifteen years. Greet him. Ask him how the street works before you plant anything on it. The street has a memory and a pecking order, and a trader who respects it gets shown the ropes. A trader who doesn't gets shown the door.

The second set is written down - and it changes from town to town. In South Africa, municipalities can set local trading rules through by-laws under the Businesses Act of 1991, and what applies to you depends on where you trade and what you sell. Some councils require a permit to trade on municipal property. Some streets or corners have been

declared no-trading areas. The rules in Johannesburg are not the rules in Polokwane, and the rules in one township can differ from the next. "I didn't know" does not bring back a confiscated table. One visit or phone call to your local municipal offices before you set up is the cheapest insurance you will ever buy. Ask them plainly: where may I trade, and what do I need? Write down what they say, with the date and the name of the person who said it.

If you trade in Johannesburg, read our companion book, *Rules of the Street***:** the City's informal trading by-laws written in plain SBD language. It is a free download, same as this one. Trading somewhere else? Ask your municipality which rules apply to your spot.

Here is the short version of this chapter: a business does not stand on a product. It stands on a piece of ground, at certain hours, among certain people, under certain rules. Know all four before you spend, and the ground starts working for you instead of against you.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Go to the spot you are dreaming about at three different times (morning, midday, evening). Count the people who pass in ten minutes each time. Write down the numbers, not your feelings.

2. List everyone already trading there and what pulls people past: the rank, the school, the church, the mall door. Your neighbours are part of your location.

3. Ask one trader who has been there longest: "How does this street work?" Then listen more than you talk.

4. Phone or visit your local municipal offices and ask: what are the rules for trading at my spot, and do I need a permit? Write down the answer, the date and the person's name.

Bra Sbu and Mama Dorah are made-up characters. The empty "perfect" spot, sadly, is real - every township has one, and every year someone new pays rent on it. Trading rules differ from place to place: what is written here is the general picture, so check the current requirements with your municipality before you trade.

CHAPTER 4

Why People Really Buy

Part 1 - Understand Your People

Sis Bontle sold beautiful muffins. Soft, fresh, proper butter. Her sign said "FRESH MUFFINS R8" in neat letters, and her table sat there from six in the morning while the whole street hurried past to the taxis. By nine o'clock she had sold three. She nearly packed up.

Then she looked properly at the people rushing past. Nobody was browsing. Nobody was even walking slowly. They were half-running, half-buttoning shirts, children in tow, and not one of them had eaten. They were not looking for muffins. They were looking for breakfast, and the taxi was not going to wait while they found it.

The next morning she adapted the whole offer to that need: muffins pre-bagged for grabbing, a cup of juice next to them, and a new sign - "BREAKFAST IN ONE HAND - muffin + juice R15. You can eat it in the taxi." She sold out by eight. Same muffins, same table, same street. But now the offer and the words matched what people were actually rushing to find. **Nobody buys bread. They buy breakfast.**



The real reason behind every purchase

Learn to look past the item to the benefit it carries. Most of the time, people are not buying the thing - they are buying what the thing does for them. Watch what people actually walk away with. The man buying airtime at nine at night is not buying airtime - he is buying a conversation with his family in Limpopo. The gogo buying a big bag of maize meal is not buying flour - she is buying the end of "what will we eat?" for two weeks. The item is the vehicle. The reason is the passenger.

People buy to stop a pain or to keep a good thing going. Look at any busy stall and you will see it. Hunger, thirst, a dead phone battery, school shoes that are finished, boredom in a long queue - the rand moves when the reason is strong enough. And in the township the rand is careful. It has been disappointed before. Your job is not to push it. Your job is to stand exactly where a real reason already exists.

The customer is also buying how you make them feel. Watch the queues again. The vetkoek lady who greets everyone by name has the longest line, and her vetkoek is not ten times better than the next one. People return where they are seen, greeted and respected. That is not decoration on your business. That is the business.

Sell the after, not the item. Bontle's first sign described the muffin. Her second sign described the customer's morning. Uncle Fana, who repairs phones by the rank, understands this completely. He does not say "screen replacement R450". He says, "By six o'clock your phone is back - photos, WhatsApp, everything." Nobody buys a screen. They buy their whole life back. **One warning, and it matters:** the after you sell must be true. Fana can promise six o'clock because he has never missed it, and when photos cannot be saved, he says so before he takes the money. A promised "after" that never arrives costs you the one thing a township business cannot replace - the street's trust. We get there properly in chapter 6.



Here is the good news: you do not need a psychology degree for this. You need eyes. Your neighbours' days are playing out in front of you every morning - what they rush to, what they worry about, what makes them smile at a stall. Watch that long enough and you will know your market better than any report could tell you. The next three chapters stay right here, inside the customer's head: the last ten seconds before they pay, the trust that makes them choose you, and the fear you must help them put down.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down what you sell. Now finish this sentence: "People buy it because it gives them ___." That second answer is your real product.

2. Ask five customers: "What made you buy today?" Write down their exact words, not your translation.

3. Look at your sign, your price list, your WhatsApp status. Do they name the item or the after? Rewrite one of them to say the after.

4. For one day, watch your own buying. With every rand you spend, ask: what did I actually buy? You will never look at your product the same way again.

Sis Bontle and Uncle Fana are made-up characters. The two signs carry an old street lesson: naming the benefit on your sign can do more for the queue than naming the product.

CHAPTER 5

Needs vs Wants at the Till

Part 1 - Understand Your People

Mme Naledi is standing at Bra Sipho's spaza counter with R100 in her hand. It is the 24th of the month - not the good 24th, the other one. On the counter in front of her: bread, polony and eggs on one side. On the other side, a two-litre cold drink and a big packet of chips for the kids. Nobody is rushing her, but you can almost hear the calculator in her head. Ten seconds pass. The cold drink and chips go back on the shelf. "Next time, Sipho," she says, and takes the bread, polony and eggs home.

Sipho tells this story without embarrassment, because it taught him something that month-end teaches every township seller: **the customer does the real maths in the last ten seconds** - and by then, all your marketing is finished. What decides is which shelf your product sits on in her head: the need shelf or the want shelf.



Which shelf are you on in her head?

One useful way to look at your counter: some things are bought with the head, some with the heart - and the same item can switch sides. Airtime is a small treat in a quiet week and an urgent need when there is family to reach or work to chase. Nobody should feel clever or guilty either way. The point is not to judge which one you sell. The point is to know which one your customer thinks you sell - because that decides how she shops for it, how often, and what she compares your price to.

The last ten seconds belong to the wallet, not the wish. When the money is counted out, the question in the customer's head is usually not "do I want this?" but "what can I not go home without?" You cannot argue with that moment, but you can prepare for it. Clear prices. Change ready. And a size of your product that fits a thin week (at a price that still covers your costs), so a need-buyer never has to walk away with nothing.

The calendar changes the answer - and it is your customers' calendar, not a generic one. Watch any busy counter through the month: when money lands in the area (paydays, grant days, busy Fridays after piece jobs), the wants tend to move. When the month has stretched everyone, the needs take over, and the same customer who bought the big packet is counting out singles. Your area has its own dates and its own rhythm. Learn those, and your stock and specials will know what week it is even when you forget.

Never shame the want. The customer who puts back the cold drink today is the same customer who will buy it with a smile on the 1st. If she feels judged in the hard week, she takes the good week somewhere else. Sipho learned to say, "It will be here waiting for you," and to make sure it actually is.



Here is the useful part: you cannot control which shelf you are on in the customer's head, but you can serve both. The need needs to be easy to buy when money is tight (small sizes, clear prices, no embarrassment). The want needs to be worth waiting for when money arrives (visible, fresh, a little bit exciting). Serve the same person in both her weeks, and you stop being a shop she visits and become a shop she plans around. And the

thing that makes her trust you with both? That is the next chapter - because around here, trust is the real currency.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down your product or service. For your typical customer this month, is it a need or a want? Both are fine. Not knowing is the problem.

2. Watch the last ten seconds at your till (or any till) this week. What gets put back first? Write it down.

3. Create a "thin-week version" of your offer: a smaller size at a price that fits a thin week but still covers your costs. Small is fine. A loss is not.

4. Find out when money lands for your customers (paydays, grant days, busy weekends) and mark those weeks on your calendar. Decide now what you will lead with when money is fresh and what you will lead with when it is not.

Mme Naledi and Bra Sipho are made-up characters. The last ten seconds at the till are real - stand near any counter at month-end and you will see the maths happen for yourself.

CHAPTER 6

Trust Is the Real Currency

Part 1 - Understand Your People

Thabo's car started coughing on a Wednesday. It still moved, badly, and every trip felt like a gamble. The funeral was in Limpopo on Saturday. Two mechanics were available. The new guy on the main road quoted R800 over the phone: "Bring it, we'll sort it, no problem." He could not say what the problem was, but he was very sure it would be no problem. Then there was Bra Jabu, whose yard is hard to find and whose sign has been fading since 2019. Jabu looked at the car for ten minutes and said, "It sounds like the injector. If it is, R1,200. But I will open it first, and if it is something smaller, you pay for the smaller thing."

Thabo drove past three shiny panel-beater signs to get to Jabu's dusty yard. Not because Jabu was cheap - he was not. Because two years ago, Thabo brought the same car in convinced the brakes were finished, and Jabu told him: "Your brakes are fine. Don't let anyone take your money." That sentence earned Jabu no money that day. It bought him every car Thabo will ever own, and half the cars in Thabo's family.

Around here, trust is not a nice extra. It is the currency the whole township runs on. Money moves where trust has already arrived.



How trust is actually built

Trust is built in the moments that cost you. Watch how the shops people swear by behave. The mechanic who says "you don't need the expensive one." The tailor who says, "I cannot finish by Friday; rather collect on Monday." The seller who tells you the tomatoes at the back are yesterday's and charges you less for them. Each of those sentences chooses a smaller, honest sale over a bigger, shaky one. That is not throwing money away - it is a deposit in the only account that keeps paying out: the street's memory of you.

Trust is consistency people can set their watch by. Same quality. The price on the sign is the price at the till. Open when you said you would open. It is not glamorous, and that is the point. A customer should never have to wonder which version of your business is showing up today. The boring promise kept every single day beats the big promise kept sometimes.

Trust shows itself when something goes wrong. Every business makes a mistake eventually: the wrong order, the bad batch, the job that must be redone. The seller who fixes it quickly, without a fight and without making the customer feel like a criminal for complaining, gets talked about more than the seller who never slips. People do not expect perfection. They expect to be safe with you when things go wrong.

You cannot buy trust with advertising. You can only borrow against it. A trusted shop's sign means something because of a hundred kept promises behind it. A stranger's sign is just paint. This is why chapter 4's warning matters so much: the "after" you sell must be true. One promised result that never arrives can spend trust that took years to save.



Here is the hard, hopeful truth: trust is slow to build and quick to spend, and there is no shortcut that survives contact with the street. But that is also the good news, because it means the big players cannot buy their way past you. Your hundred kept promises are a wall money cannot climb. There is one more thing working against your customer before they ever meet you, though: they have been burned before. The next chapter is about that fear - and how to make your shop the safe choice.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down the three promises your business makes every day (your price, your quality, your time). Which one slips most? Fix that one first.

2. This week, when a customer asks for more than they need, recommend what they actually need - even when it is the smaller sale. An honest "you don't need that" is worth more than a hollow yes.

3. Write your "when things go wrong" plan before you need it: how fast you respond, what you offer, how you close it. Keep it where you can see it.

4. Ask your three oldest customers: "Why do you come here?" Write down their exact words. That is your trust, in their language. And if you want those words on your sign or your status, ask their permission first - praise is personal property.

Thabo and Bra Jabu are made-up characters. The mechanic who tells you "your brakes are fine" exists in every township. Find yours and hold onto him - and in business, be him.

CHAPTER 7

The Fear of Being Cheated

Part 1 - Understand Your People

Lebo does not trust anyone anymore, and she has her reasons. During the dark weeks of load shedding, a friendly man at the rank was selling generators. "Original, sisi. Two weeks guarantee. For you, special price." The generator worked for nine beautiful days. On day ten it died, and so did the friendship: the man's table, his stock and his special prices were gone, leaving only a chalk square on the pavement and a sign that said "BACK SOON". He is still back-soon, three years later.

Now Lebo checks everything twice. She asks for receipts. She Googles the serial number while the seller watches. Some sellers get offended when she does this. The smart ones understand: **she is not difficult. She is experienced.** And she is not alone - the whole township has a Lebo story. Your customer has been burned before, maybe by someone who looked a lot like you. That is the water your new business must swim in.



Two weeks guarantee. He lasted nine days.

How to be the safe choice

Respect the check. When a customer tests your product twice, reads the receipt line by line or asks "and if it breaks?" before paying - that is not an insult. That is a person spending money that was hard to get. The seller who welcomes the inspection ("Check it properly, sisi. Plug it in. I'll wait.") tells the customer more than any sign can.

Make yourself easy to verify. Sis Kea sells gas stoves two streets from where the generator man used to stand. Before you pay, she connects the stove and lights it in front of you. Then she writes a receipt: her full name, her number, her stall, today's date. She has stood in the same spot, same hours, for two years. Lebo bought her stove from Kea. She checked everything twice, and Kea smiled through all of it - because a customer who can verify you today becomes a customer who defends you tomorrow.

Put the promise in writing before the sale, not after. "If it breaks, bring it back" means nothing from a stranger with no address. A written line on a receipt - what happens when something goes wrong, and where to find you - turns your guarantee from words into something a customer can hold. It costs you a pen. It buys you the one thing the fly-by-night can never offer: somewhere to come back to.

Never borrow the tricks of the burners. "Original" when it is not. "Only today!" pressure. Deposits that evaporate. These tricks work exactly once per customer, and the street has a long memory and a fast WhatsApp. Every shortcut is a withdrawal from the trust account we spoke about in chapter 6 - and the burners already left that account overdrawn for all of us. Visible honesty is how you pay the balance down.



Here is the reframe that frees you: the fear in your customer's heart is not your enemy. It is your opening. In a market full of "BACK SOON" signs, the seller who is findable, checkable and written-down is not just another option - she is the relief. And when a relieved customer goes home, she does not go quietly. She talks, and that is exactly where we go next: word of mouth moves faster than a taxi.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down what a suspicious first-time customer would want to check about your business. Can they check it easily, today, in front of you?

2. Make one proof visible: the product working before payment, or a written receipt with your name, number and where you trade.

3. Put your promise in writing before the sale: what happens when something goes wrong, and where to find you. A pen is cheaper than a reputation.

4. Be findable: same spot, same hours, same face. If you must move, tell your customers before they come looking for you.

Lebo, the generator man and Sis Kea are made-up characters. The chalk square on the pavement is real - every street has known a seller who was "back soon", and every honest trader trades in his shadow.

CHAPTER 8

Word of Mouth Moves Faster Than a Taxi

Part 1 - Understand Your People

Bra Moss had one bad Friday, and the whole street knew about it before sunset. A customer, Musa, opened his kota and found it was not fresh. That was already a mistake, and food is not something a seller gets to shrug about. But the bigger mistake came next: when Musa complained, Moss was tired and said the words a seller can never afford: "If you don't like it, go to the mall." Musa did not go to the mall. He went to the street WhatsApp group, with a photo. By the time Moss locked up, the news had visited streets Moss has never traded in. Monday's queue, which used to bend around the corner, was three people long.

Two corners away, **Gogo Tshidi** had her own bad day once - a batch of atchar that was not up to her standard. When a customer brought it back, she did three things the queue did not expect: she apologised in front of everyone and refunded the customer on the spot. Then she pulled the whole batch off the table until she could check it properly. Only when she was sure the next batch was right did she offer the customer a fresh tub, on the house. The customer posted about it in the same WhatsApp group. That post did more for Gogo Tshidi's table than a year of flyers could have. **One unhappy customer tells the whole street. One happy one brings the street.** The network is the same. The story is your choice.



The street is always listening

The street has a broadcast network with no off switch. A complaint with a photo travels faster than any flyer you will ever print, and it does not wait for your side of the story. You cannot outrun it. You can only answer it - and the best answers are made before the complaint ever happens.

A complaint handled well in public is worth ten compliments. Watch any queue when a customer is unhappy: everyone pretends not to listen, and everyone is listening. The queue is a jury. They are not judging whether you made a mistake - they already know businesses are run by humans. They are judging what kind of human is running yours. So handle it in a way that protects the customer's dignity: personal details go aside, and nobody's bad day becomes a show for the crowd.

Speed beats perfection - but speed means acknowledging, not guessing. Gogo Tshidi's response worked because it came immediately: no arguing, no "come back tomorrow". A fast "bring it, let me look at it right now" saves the story. Then she did the slow part properly: checking the batch before one more tub left her table. Fix or refund once you know what went wrong - a quick promise of a remedy you have not checked can be its own second mistake. Silence lets the story write itself, and the story writes itself badly.

Happy customers need a small reason to talk. People repeat what is remarkable: the free extra they didn't expect, the seller who remembered their name, the mistake fixed double. You cannot script what the street says about you - but you can behave in a way worth repeating, and then let the street do what it does.



And that closes Part 1. You now know the person on the other side of your counter: why they really buy (chapter 4), how they decide in the last ten seconds (chapter 5), why trust is the currency (chapter 6), what they fear (chapter 7), and how fast they talk (this chapter). Understanding them is half the work. The other half is saying it so they listen - and that is where we go in Part 2, starting with the words on your sign.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Decide now, before you need it, how you will answer a complaint: fast, no fighting, fix or refund. Write it down. The worst time to invent your answer is in front of the queue.

2. The next complaint you get, remember the queue is watching how you treat the person, not just the problem. Protect their dignity - take personal details aside, and never turn anyone into a spectacle.

3. Give your happy customers one thing worth repeating this week: a small extra, a remembered name, a mistake fixed double. Don't announce it. Let them.

4. Find out where the street talks about businesses like yours (which WhatsApp group, which corner, which church bench). You cannot join every conversation, but you should know where your name travels.

Bra Moss, Musa and Gogo Tshidi are made-up characters. The WhatsApp group is real, it is always on, and it has no off switch. Ask anyone who has ever been posted in it.

CHAPTER 9

One Clear Message - If You Say Everything, They Hear Nothing

Part 2 - Say It So They Listen

Welcome to Part 2. Part 1 was about the person on the other side of your counter. Now we turn what you sell into words that land - on a sign, a WhatsApp status, a price board, a poster. And the first rule of words is the one most sellers break on day one: say one thing.

Bra Kgosi saved up for a proper sign, and he was not going to waste a single centimetre. He is a welder, and his new board said so, beautifully, at the top. Underneath it also said: burglar bars, security gates, carports, palisade fencing, gate motors, repairs, installations, free quotes, quality guaranteed, cheap cheap, since 2015, and a phone number in two places in case you missed the first one. Fourteen messages on one board. He stood across the road admiring it. His nephew stood with the customers, and counted: people glanced at the sign the way you glance at a taxi rank wall - and kept walking. When the nephew asked three of them what the man across the road sells, one said "burglar proofing or something", one said "gates, I think", and one said "he does everything, ne?" Everything, ne. Which is another way of saying: nothing anyone remembered.

Down at the rank, **Ntombi** fixes phones from a table smaller than Bra Kgosi's sign. Her board has seven words: "Screen cracked? Fixed while you wait." That is the whole sign. She also charges batteries, sells covers, transfers data and unlocks networks - none of it is on the board. It does not need to be. The cracked screens bring the people to the table, and the table is where she mentions the rest. Her board gets read. Kgosi's gets admired by Kgosi.



Why one message wins

Work on the three-second rule of thumb. Try it yourself: stand next to any busy sign and count how long people look. A sign is read at walking speed. A WhatsApp status is read at thumb speed. Every extra line you add spends attention you do not have.

When you say everything, they hear nothing. Fourteen services on one board do not add up to fourteen messages. They add up to noise. One clear message is simply easier to remember than fourteen - so be the one who chooses which message gets remembered, instead of leaving the choice to a hurried reader.

Lead with the job they need done, not everything you can do. Ntombi's board does not lie about the other services. It just knows the cracked screen is the job that makes a stranger stop. The other services are sold across the table, after the conversation has started. Your one message is not your whole business. It is the door into it.

Give every surface one job. The sign carries the one message. The price board carries the prices. The status pushes today's special. When one surface tries to do every job, it does none of them well - and the reader scrolls, walks or drives past.



One clear message is chapter 9. Chapter 10 is what to put inside it: the difference between talking about yourself and talking about the customer, and why one of those two gets read.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down the one thing you most want to be known for. Not the full list - the one. That is your headline.

2. Look at your current sign, flyer or status and cross out every sales message that competes with the one. Keep what people need to act - your phone number, where to find you, and any safety or legally required details. What survives is the start of your new draft.

3. Test it: show someone your message for three seconds, hide it, and ask them what you sell. If they cannot say it back, cut more.

4. Give each surface its one job this week: the sign says the one thing, the price list carries prices, the status carries today.

Bra Kgosi and Ntombi are made-up characters. The three-second test is yours to run - stand next to any sign on a busy corner and count how long the people actually look.

CHAPTER 10

Talk About Them, Not About You

Part 2 - Say It So They Listen

Bra Sello printed two hundred flyers, and every one of them was about Bra Sello. "WE DO QUALITY HAIR," the flyer said. "WE are the best in the section. WE care about our customers. WE have years of experience. WE, WE, WE." He handed them out at the rank himself. People took them the way you take a flyer - politely, folded once, gone by the next corner. His daughter counted the flyers and then counted the "we"s. The "we"s won, fourteen to nothing. The nothing was the number of new bookings that week.

Across the road, **Mma Karabo** does the same hair from a smaller room with no flyer at all. Her WhatsApp status on Thursday says one line: "Chomie, your hair can be done by Saturday. Two chairs left." She is usually booked out by Friday. She is not a better stylist than Sello - ask around, people say they are evenly matched. The difference is not in their hands. It is in whose name is in the sentence. Sello's flyer talks about Sello. Karabo's status talks about you, and gives you a day and a reason to move. **"Your hair done by Saturday" beats "we do quality hair"** - one of them is about the person reading it, and that is the one that gets read.



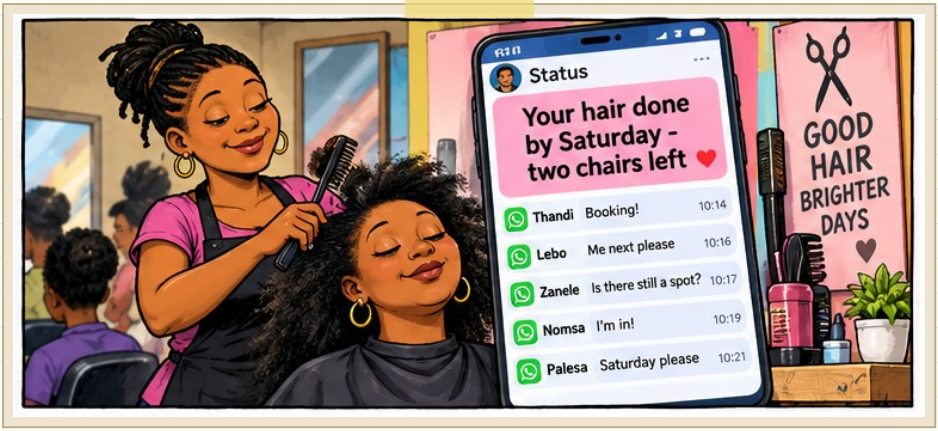
The cheapest edit in the book

The reader has one question: what do I get? Not who are you, not how long you have been trading, not how much you care. Watch how people read anything a business gives them - they are scanning for themselves in it. If they are not in the sentence, the sentence is wallpaper.

Count the "we"s. Then count the "you"s. This is the cheapest edit in copywriting: take your flyer, your status, your sign, and change the subject of the sentence from yourself to the customer. "We do quality hair" is about you. "Your hair done by Saturday" is about them. Same salon, same hands, different subject - and the subject is the whole game.

A date beats an adjective. "Quality" claims nothing anyone can check - every salon on the street claims it, including the one that burned Gogo's edges. "Done by Saturday" can be checked: Saturday comes, and the hair is done or it is not. Adjectives ask the reader to trust you. Specifics - a day, a time, a number, a result - give the reader something to hold. But only write the specific you can deliver: a Saturday you will actually make, two chairs that are actually left. A specific that fails its check costs more than any adjective ever saved.

Use their words for their problem, not yours. The customer does not say "I require a restorative treatment." She says "my hairline is finished, chomie." The words she uses at the rank are the words that will stop her thumb on your status. Listen to how your customers describe the problem, then say it back to them in their own mouth.



Now you have one message, and it is about them. Chapter 11 is where to put it so the street actually sees it: the sign, the price board, the status, the Facebook post - and which words survive each surface.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Take your main line - sign, status or flyer - and try rewriting it starting with "You" or "Your". It is an exercise, not a law: "Screen cracked? Fixed while you wait." starts with neither, and the customer is still the subject. But if every line you write starts with "we", this exercise will find it.

2. Find one adjective you claim ("quality", "best", "affordable") and replace it with a fact you can be checked on and can actually deliver: a day, a time, a number, a result.

3. Read your message aloud to one customer or friend and ask: "What do you get out of this?" If they cannot name their own benefit in one breath, rewrite.

4. Write down the exact words customers use when they describe their problem to you. Use those words in your next status, not yours.

Bra Sello and Mma Karabo are made-up characters. The "we" count is real - try it on your own flyer. Fourteen is not even a high score.

CHAPTER 11

Words That Work on the Street

Part 2 - Say It So They Listen

Bra Fistos wrote one beautiful message and put it everywhere, exactly the same, word for word. He sells braai meat at the corner, and he was proud of his paragraph: where he started, how he chooses his meat, what his grandfather taught him, why quality matters. It went on his street sign in small print. It went on his price board, above prices you had to lean over the fire to read. It went on his WhatsApp status as a wall of text. And it went on Facebook, where it actually belonged. People at the corner squinted at the sign and walked on. The ones who stopped asked "how much is the wors?" - the one question the price board forgot to answer.

Sis Nandi, two stalls down, sells the same wors with one message - "Fresh wors, made this morning" - dressed four different ways. Her street sign carries only those five words, big enough to read from across the road. Her price board is prices, full stop, in numbers you can read from the back of the queue. Her status every morning is a photo of the day's wors with today's special and the time she starts. Her Facebook post has the whole story - grandfather, quality, all of it - with her corner and her hours at the bottom. Same message. Four translations. **Each surface got the version it can carry.**



Each surface speaks its own language

Every surface has a reading speed and a job. The sign is read at walking speed: one message, five to ten words. The price board is read at decision distance: the numbers, big, no hunting. The status is read at thumb speed: today's reason to come, with a photo. Facebook holds the longer story - and must always end with where you are and when you are there. Match the words to the job, or the surface eats them.

Words must survive the surface. Big enough to read from where the reader stands. High contrast - fading chalk on a grey board is a secret, not a sign. And complete: a price a customer must ask for is a customer who can quietly walk to the stall that shows it. Some people would rather leave than ask. Let the board answer.

Translate, don't copy-paste. Your one message from chapter 9 stays the same everywhere - but each surface gets its own grammar. The sign gets five words. The status gets a photo and today. The post gets the story. Pasting your Facebook paragraph onto a street sign is not consistency. It is wearing a suit to swim.

Old words say you stopped caring. A special from three weeks ago, a status about stock that finished, a sun-bleached sign - the street reads these as "nobody is watching this shop." Fresh words are cheap proof of life. (Chapter 6 said trust is the currency; a current sign is small change that adds up.)



One message. Four translations.

Your message is clear, about them, and dressed for each surface. Chapter 12 sharpens the spear: your whole offer in one sentence - the line people repeat about you when you are not there to explain.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Stand where your customers stand and read your own sign from there. If you squint, they walk.

2. Check your price board: can every price be read from the back of your longest queue, without asking? If not, redo the board this week.

3. Give each surface its job today: sign = the one message, price board = prices, status = today's reason, Facebook = the story plus where and when.

4. Delete or replace one stale message tonight - the old special, the finished stock, the faded line. Fresh words are proof of life.

Bra Fistos and Sis Nandi are made-up characters. The squint test is real - go stand where your customers stand and try to read your own sign.

CHAPTER 12

Your Offer in One Sentence

Part 2 - Say It So They Listen

At a wedding in Orlando, an auntie asked Bra Mpho what his son does, and Bra Mpho began at the beginning. "Ah, Bongani, he is busy with many things. He started with fixing things, you know he was always good with his hands, but now he also does deliveries, and he is looking into catering, and on weekends..." The auntie nodded the way you nod when you are already thinking about the meat queue. Next to them, another auntie asked about Thembeka - and got one sentence back: "She washes and irons your blankets and curtains in one day. You drop them in the morning, you sleep under them that night." Two weeks later, that second auntie's neighbour needed curtains done before a stokvel weekend, and the sentence travelled with her: drop them in the morning, sleep under them that night. Bongani, busy with many things, got no call. **The sentence people can repeat is your real advert. You are not there when it runs.**



Building the sentence

One line, no "and also". The sentence works because it survives being repeated by someone who was half-listening. Every "and also" you add is a piece that falls off on the second telling. If you cannot say it in one line, they will not remember it - they will remember that you do many things, which is another way of remembering nothing (chapter 9).

Build it from three parts: who, what they get, and when. Look at the lines that already work: "Screen cracked? Fixed while you wait." - the job and the speed. "Your hair can be done by Saturday." - you, your result, the day. "Drop them in the morning, sleep under them that night." - what you hand over, what you get back, and how fast. Pick your parts from chapter 10's rules: about them, and checkable.

Test it on a second mouth. Say your sentence once to a friend. Tomorrow, ask them what you do. If their version is close, the sentence travels. If they shrug, shorten it. The test is not whether they liked it. It is whether it survived the night.

Put the sentence at the head of everything. It leads the sign, sits in your status bio, opens your Facebook page. The story, the prices, the photos - all of that is the body (chapter 11). But the head is one line, the same line everywhere, until the street can say it for you.



And that closes Part 2. You have one clear message (chapter 9), about them (chapter 10), dressed for each surface (chapter 11), sharpened into one repeatable sentence (this chapter). Part 3 takes that sentence to the people: how to get noticed - the rank, the church, the school gate, the group chat.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write your offer in one sentence: who it is for, what they get, and when. Cross out every "and also".

2. Say it once to a friend or customer. Tomorrow, ask them what you do. Their answer is your sentence's report card.

3. Check the sentence against chapter 10: is it about them, and can it be checked - a day, a time, a result?

4. Put the sentence at the head of one surface today: your status bio, your sign, or the top of your Facebook page.

Bra Mpho, Bongani and Thembeka are made-up characters. The wedding conversation is real - it happens at every wedding, and somebody's sentence always travels home with the guests.

CHAPTER 13

Be Where Your People Are

Part 3 - Get Them To Notice

Welcome to Part 3. You know your people (Part 1) and you have the words (Part 2). Now the words must go and stand where the people already are.

Bra Teboho bakes the best muffins on his street, and he bakes them at home, for his gate. Every morning he sets up a small table at his own gate, waits, and watches the street walk past to somewhere else. By eleven he is telling his sister the township has no money. His sister, **Lindiwe**, bakes the same muffins from the same recipe in the same kitchen. She does not wait at the gate. At seven she is at the school gate with one tray, from the spot the school agreed she could use, where the parents stand hungry after drop-off. At half past she is at the rank with the second tray, at the place the marshal pointed her to when she asked. On Sundays she is outside the church when the service lets out - with the church's blessing, not across its doorway. She sells out by nine most days. Same muffins. The only difference is the address: he sells where he is. She sells where they are.



Best muffins on the street. Wrong street corner.

Go to the crowd, don't wait for it

Foot traffic you do not have to create is the cheapest marketing there is. The school gate, the rank, the church steps, the clinic queue - the crowd is already gathered, already waiting, already a little hungry or a little bored. You do not have to pull people to you. You only have to be standing where they already are, with the thing they already want. One thing, though: none of these places is automatically free to trade in. Lindiwe asked at the school, the rank and the church before her first tray. Ask first - a trader who gets moved on sells nothing that day, and a gate kept clear keeps you welcome.

Match the place to the moment. The same crowd buys different things at different times. School gate at drop-off: quick breakfast. Rank at five in the evening: supper and airtime. Church after service: something to take home. Ask not only "where are my people?" but "what are they doing and needing in that exact moment?" Then be the answer standing there.

Show up in one place regularly, not once everywhere. Lindiwe did not try ten corners. She took two, at the same times, until the parents started looking for her tray before they saw it. A corner learns your name the way it learns a taxi route - by repetition. Become part of the scenery first; the selling follows (chapter 6: trust is the currency, and repetition is how you mint it).

The group chat is a corner that never closes. Your customers also gather on their phones - the street group, the parents' group, the church group. Be there as a member, not a billboard: answer questions, be useful, and let people discover what you sell. Remember chapter 8 - the group has no off switch, and it punishes spam the same way it punishes bad atchar.

> **From the SBD library:** the step-by-step phone setup - Google profile, WhatsApp Business, Facebook page - lives in the companion book, **Get Found, Get Customers**. This book is the thinking; that one is the buttons.



Now you are standing where they can see you. Chapter 14 is what they see: looking the part - the photos, posters and Google profile that make people trust you before they ever meet you.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down three places your customers already gather - a gate, a rank, a queue, a group chat. Pick the one where they gather hungry for what you sell.

2. Before you set up anywhere, ask whose space it is: get the site's permission, check the trading and food rules that apply to you, and keep gates and walkways clear. Then show up at the same time every day for two weeks and let the corner learn your name.

3. Match your tray to the moment: what is that crowd doing and needing at that exact hour? Sell that.

4. Join one group chat where your buyers gather - as a member. Respect the group's rules and get the admin's go-ahead before any promotion; answering questions usefully earns you the room, it does not license you to sell in it.

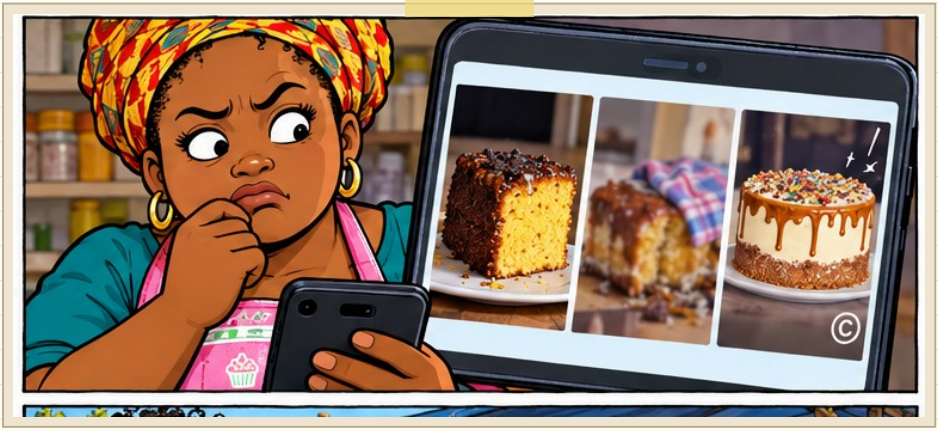
Bra Teboho and Lindiwe are made-up characters. The school gate at seven in the morning is real, and so is the queue at the rank - go and stand in one this week.

CHAPTER 14

Looking the Part

Part 3 - Get Them To Notice

Sis Zanele bakes celebration cakes so good people go quiet at the first bite. Her photos say otherwise. A customer planning her mother's 60th asked two bakers for pictures. Zanele sent three: one taken at night in a yellow kitchen, cake half out of frame; one blurry, with a dishcloth in the background; and one beautiful perfect cake - taken from the internet, which the customer had already seen on another page that same week. **Mdu**, whose cakes are honestly a level below hers, sent photos of his last four jobs: morning light, clean table, cake big in the frame, his own hands in one of them, and a Google profile with his hours, the areas he delivers to and his phone number. The customer booked Mdu. Not because his cakes are better - she never tasted either. She booked the baker she could already see and check. **People meet your business on a screen long before they meet you. The photo is the first impression, and the first impression closes the deal or closes the chat.**



Her cakes are better than her evidence.

Look like the truth, well-lit

Good photos are free. You do not need a camera or a studio. You need daylight - the same morning sun that is free to everyone - a tidy background, and the product big in the frame. Photograph your real work, every job, until you have a small gallery. Ten honest photos of your actual work beat one borrowed photo of somebody else's. And if the job was for an identifiable customer - their event, their home, their people in the shot - get their go-ahead before it joins your gallery. The work is yours to show; their privacy is theirs to give.

Never pass off somebody else's work as your own. The internet cake is a lie with legs: the customer has seen it before, or she will see it again, and now she is wondering what else is borrowed. Chapter 6 said trust is the currency - a passed-off photo spends money from an account you have not built. A supplier's catalogue picture used with permission and clearly labelled is a different thing; but the portfolio, the work you claim, must be yours. Show your real work, at its real standard, and let the work climb.

The poster follows the same rules as the words. One message (chapter 9), about them (chapter 10), readable from where they stand (chapter 11). A poster is your one sentence wearing clothes. If it tries to say everything, it is wearing the whole wardrobe at once.

Your Google profile answers before they ask. Before a stranger crosses the township to you, they check: are you real, where do you trade, are you open, what does the work look like. Hours, phone number, real photos, and the location your customers actually need - your trading spot or the areas you serve, not your private home address by default - each one is a question answered while you sleep. An empty or wrong profile answers too; it says "keep scrolling".

> **From the SBD library:** setting up the Google profile, WhatsApp Business and Facebook page step by step is in the companion book, **Get Found, Get Customers**. This book is the thinking; that one is the buttons.



Now they can see you, and what they see can be trusted. Chapter 15 turns your customers into your advertisers: getting talked about on purpose, without paying for it.

Sho't left, do this today

1. This morning, in daylight, retake the photo of your main product or your last job: clean background, product big in the frame. Replace your worst photo with it.

2. Look at your own profile the way a stranger does: your WhatsApp name, photo and status. Would you book you?

3. Remove any photo that passes somebody else's work off as yours, and any image you have no permission to use. Your portfolio is your own work; supplier or reference pictures only with permission and clearly labelled.

4. Search your own business name and see what a stranger finds: hours, service area, phone, photos. Fix the first wrong thing you meet.

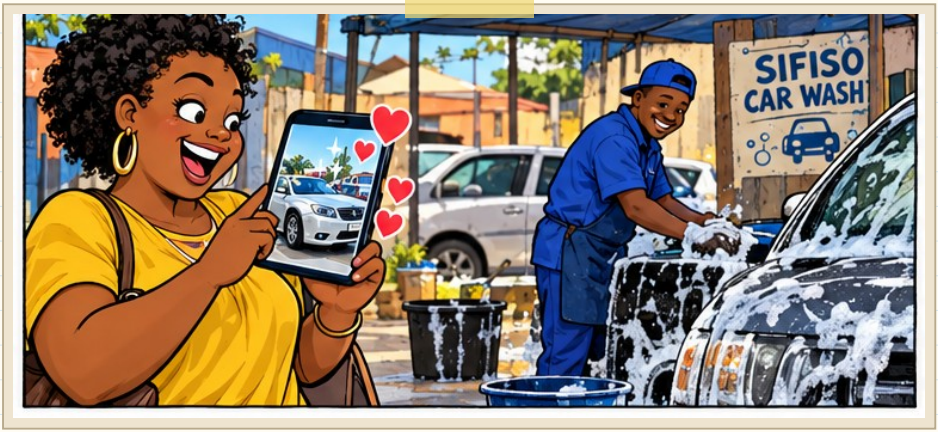
Sis Zanele and Mdu are made-up characters. The 60th birthday shortlist is real - somebody is comparing two businesses on a phone tonight, and the better evidence is winning.

CHAPTER 15

Getting Talked About

Part 3 - Get Them To Notice

Bra Sifiso washes cars at the corner, and his customers do his advertising for him, unpaid, happily. When your car is done, he sends you a photo of it gleaming in the sun - your car, looking better than the day you bought it, the dust of the week gone. Straight to you, privately; what you do with it is your choice. People get that photo and post it themselves: "Look what Sifiso did to my car." He never asks them to. He just hands them a picture worth showing, at the exact moment they are proudest of the car. Down the road, another car wash sends a broadcast to every group every Friday: "PLEASE SHARE MY PAGE, SUPPORT LOCAL." People mute him. One group removed him. **People scroll past a plea. They stop for a moment.**



Advertising you cannot buy

People talk about what gives them something to show. Chapter 8 said happy customers need a small reason to talk. This chapter is about making that reason on purpose: the photo of their clean car, their finished cake table, their fixed gate catching the light. The moment must be real - a trick gets found out, and chapter 8's network has no off switch. Send the photo to the customer privately and let them choose what to share. Keep plates, addresses and faces out of it unless the customer wants them in - and if the job involves someone's child, the parent's go-ahead comes before any photo.

Make the talking easy. A happy customer who wants to praise you should not have to work at it. Hand them the photo (chapter 14). Give them the sentence (chapter 12): when Sifiso's customers describe him, they all say the same line - "he sends you a photo of your own car, spotless." That is his one sentence, travelling on other people's phones.

Ask personally, at the moment of delight - not by broadcast. When a customer is standing there smiling, a quiet "if you know someone who needs this, send them my way" lands like a favour between people. The "PLEASE SHARE" broadcast lands like noise, and in group chats it lands you in the admin's bad books (chapter 13). One honest ask at the right moment beats fifty forwarded flyers.

Thank the talkers - with their permission, and within your costs. When someone posts about you, thank them, by name if they are happy with that, privately if they are not. A small thank-you extra next time keeps the story alive - just make sure any referral special you offer still covers what it costs you (an offer that loses money on every sale makes it up on nothing). Recognition keeps the story alive as much as any saving does - a thank-you by name, a face remembered, travels further than a quiet discount.



A broadcast is not a referral.

And that closes Part 3. You are standing where they are (chapter 13), you look like the truth (chapter 14), and your customers are talking (this chapter). Part 4 turns that attention into money: the ask, the objection, the follow-up, and the customer who comes back.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Decide your "photo moment": what can you hand a happy customer - a photo, a before-and-after, a small extra - that they would want to show someone?

2. Write down your one sentence (chapter 12) where your customers will naturally pick it up, so the talkers all say the same line.

3. Replace one "please share" broadcast with one personal ask: the next happy customer, at the moment they are smiling, hears "send them my way".

4. Thank your last three talkers - message them, by name, with their permission before you ever quote or repost them.

Bra Sifiso and the broadcasting car wash are made-up characters. The gleaming-car photo is a made-up moment, but a familiar one - you have seen that post on your own phone.

CHAPTER 16

Asking for the Sale Without Fear

Part 4 - Turn Interest Into A Sale

Welcome to Part 4. Attention is not money. Somebody noticed you (Part 3), they like what they see, they are standing right here - and now the deal must actually be asked for. This part is the ask, the objection, the follow-up and the customer who comes back.

Ayanda does beautiful nails, and beautiful conversations, and then she lets the customer leave. The customer picks a design, Ayanda shows her colours, they laugh, the price is fine, everything is fine - and then Ayanda goes quiet and says "so... yeah, I'm here whenever." The customer says the words every seller knows: "I'll think about it." And drifts off, thinking about it less with every step. Her friend **Seipati from Missy Nails**, same talent, same prices, ends the same conversation differently: "Shall I book you for Saturday, same time?" Some customers say yes, some name their own day, some say not today - and all three answers are allowed. Seipati is not pushier than Ayanda. She is just willing to invite the decision out loud. **Many deals are not lost on the price. They are lost in the silence where the ask should be.**



She was interested. Nobody asked.

The ask is part of the service

Asking is not forcing. The customer did not wander over by accident - something interested her, and interest is worth respecting. But interest is not a decision yet, and the decision is hers. When you ask, you are not pressuring her; you are inviting her to decide, out loud, either way. "Shall I book you?" is an invitation, not a push. The pushy sellers are the ones who will not take no for an answer - and that is a different thing entirely, covered below.

Ask with a small choice, not a cliff edge - and check readiness first. "Do you want it?" is a cliff: yes or no. So start with the easy question: "Would you like to book?" If yes, then "Saturday morning or afternoon?" is a small step forward. And keep the third door visible: "or another day - no stress." A real choice always includes a graceful way to say not today. Honest is the word: only offer days and stock you actually have (chapter 10 - a specific that fails its check costs more than it saves).

Silence reads as doubt. Watch it from the customer's side: the seller who never asks can look like a seller who does not expect anyone to say yes. A calm, plain ask says you believe in your own work. You did the nails. Say the sentence.

Take the no like a professional. Sometimes the answer is no, or not today, and that is allowed. Take it warmly - "no stress, you know where I am" - and mean it. A no taken well leaves the door open, and some customers do walk back through it later; the queue watching how you handle a no is the same queue from chapter 8. Guilt-tripping one customer costs you the ones still deciding.



Saturday or next week? Door held open.

You asked. Sometimes the answer is not yes or no, but a sentence: "It's too expensive." Chapter 17 is that sentence - and the other things customers say on the street, and how to answer them without dropping your price or your dignity.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down your ask - one plain sentence you will say at the end of every good conversation: "Shall I book you for Saturday?" Practice it out loud until it sounds like you.

2. Give the ask two honest options: two days, two colours, two sizes - options you can actually deliver.

3. The next three conversations, count how many end with you asking. The number, not the result, is today's lesson.

4. Decide your line for a no, before you need it: "No stress, you know where I am." Then take the next no with it, and watch how the customer leaves - door open or door closed.

Ayanda is a made-up character. Seipati from Missy Nails is real, and plays herself here in a made-up scene: the conversation and how it ends are invented for the lesson, not a report of anything she actually said or did. "I'll think about it" is a real sentence - listen for it this week, and watch which sellers hear it most.

CHAPTER 17

"It's Too Expensive"

Part 4 - Turn Interest Into A Sale

Last chapter you asked. Now the sentence comes back at you. "It's too expensive." Every seller on the street has heard it, usually before breakfast. What you do in the next ten seconds decides whether you keep your price, your customer, or - on a good day - both.

Bra Stix fixes phones from a container by the rank, and he used to flinch. Customer: "R250 for a screen? The guy at the rank does R150." And Stix, scared of losing the sale, would drop to R200 before the sentence was finished. Word travelled, the way word does (chapter 8 - the network has no off switch). Soon people were saying "it's too expensive" before they even heard the price, because everyone knew Stix's first price was just the opening bid. Across the road, **Mam' Rosie** sells tomatoes and hears the same sentence every day. She never drops. She says, "They're still fresh at supper time, my baby," and keeps packing. Some customers walk. Most pay. **The sentence is not the problem. The flinch is.**



The street learned the magic words.

One sentence, three meanings

"It's too expensive" is not one sentence - and you cannot read minds. It can mean "convince me" - I want it, talk me into it properly. It can mean "not this size today" - I want it, but not at this price this week. It can mean "not for me" - and that is allowed. And it can mean something else entirely. So when you are not sure, ask, warmly and respectfully: "Is it the price itself, or what is included?" Then listen. The customer's own answer tells you which door to open - and answering all of them with a discount is how a price dies.

When it means "convince me", answer with the thing, not the discount. Say what your price buys, and only what you can truly stand behind: the grade of the part, the labour included, the warranty you give in writing. Promise your own durability, speed and guarantee only where you can honour them. And leave the other guy out of it: cheap is not automatically bad, and you have not tested his screen. Just show, concretely, what your customer gets for yours - and let them choose, eyes open.

When it means "not today", shrink the job, not the price. Offer the honest smaller version: half the magwinya order. The nails without the colour. A smaller sale that still covers its costs beats a big sale given away (chapter 10 - the price must cover what it costs you, or you are donating). And none of this means never moving on price: a planned special, a loyal-customer rate, a transparent negotiation can all be right when your costs allow and you chose it calmly. The lesson is not "never adjust". It is "never flinch". Keep the third door from chapter 16 open too: "or another day - no stress."

When it means "not for me", let them go warmly. "No stress, you know where I am." Some people are not your customers at this price, and chasing them down it costs you the ones who are. The queue is watching how you handle the walk-away - the same queue from chapter 8. A price dropped in panic tells everyone your first price was a guess. A price held with a smile tells them you know what your work costs and what it is worth.



Held your price, lost the sale, and the customer walked? That is not always the end of it. Chapter 18 is the follow-up - the list of names, the quiet message, and the customer who comes back next month with money ready.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write your clarifying question on a card and keep it at your table: "Is it the price itself, or what is included?" Next time you hear the sentence, ask it, then listen before you answer.

2. Write your "convince me" answer: three things your price buys that you can truly stand behind (the part, the labour, the written warranty). Practice it out loud until it sounds like you.

3. Decide your smaller honest option in advance - the today version of your offer that still covers its costs.

4. Decide your letting-go line before you need it: "No stress, you know where I am." Then watch how the next walk-away walks away - and who in the queue was watching.

Bra Stix and Mam' Rosie are made-up characters, and the R250 screen and the rank guy's R150 are made-up prices - your street has its own numbers. The sentence is real. Listen for it this week, and ask before you answer it.

CHAPTER 18

The Follow-Up

Part 4 - Turn Interest Into A Sale

You held your price, and the customer walked - or bought, and left. Either way, that is not always the end of it. But there is a right way to come back, and a way that gets you muted. This chapter is the difference.

Bra Oupa fixes geysers and leaks, and he keeps an exercise book. Every job gets a line: the name, the problem, the date. And before he packs his tools, he asks: "May I check in with you in a few months, just to hear how it is behaving?" Most customers say yes - and Mam' Dikeledi said yes. Three months after fixing her geyser, he sends one WhatsApp: "Morning Mam' Dikeledi, how is that geyser behaving?" She answers in four minutes. The geyser is fine, but the kitchen tap has been dripping, and her sister needs a plumber on Saturday. One quiet message, two jobs. **Sis Poppy**, who sells clothes from her phone, works just as hard - but she sends "HAPPY MONDAY SPECIAL!!!" to all 400 of her contacts, every week. People muted her one by one. When they actually need a dress, her name no longer lands. Poppy's hustle is not the problem. The rhythm is. **Follow up about them, or don't follow up at all.**



One message, about her.

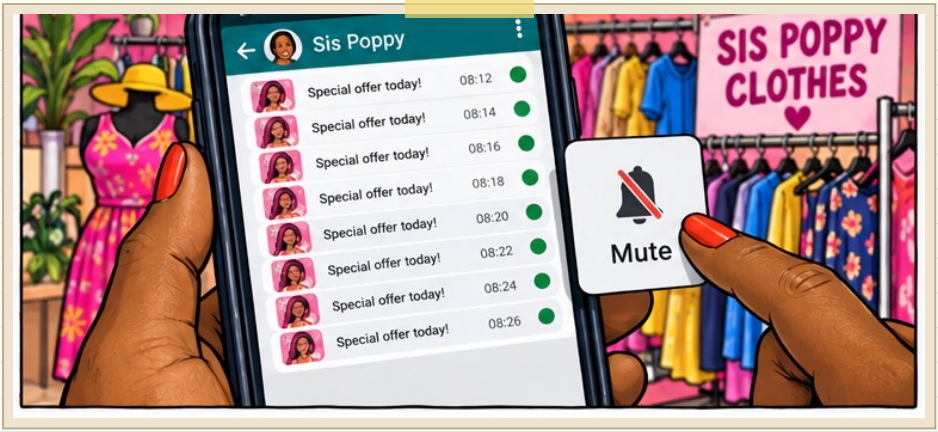
The list of names

No list, no follow-up - and no permission, no list. The customer you fixed something for in March is a stranger by August unless you wrote her down. Keep it simple: name, job, date, in an exercise book or a phone note, kept somewhere safe - only what you need, nothing more. And before she leaves, ask: "May I check in with you when it is due for a look?" Her number given for the job is a trust for the job; a check-in she agreed to is a new, small yes. If she says no, the answer is no. And a list is not a hoard - when someone has clearly moved on for good, let the line go.

Follow up about them, not about you - and stick to what was agreed. "How is the geyser behaving?" lands like care, because it is care, and because she said you could ask. "Do you have work for me?" lands like a bill. The good check-in is tied to their thing: the hair that has grown out, the geyser due a look, the school term coming back around. A real check-in is service; a sales flyer wearing a check-in's clothes is just a flyer, and she can tell the difference. If she ever says stop, it stops, immediately and warmly. One personal line beats forty flyers - the same principle as chapter 15: give them something worth answering, never a broadcast to endure.

The rhythm is the whole game. Follow up when there is a reason, not on a timer. The mute button is one tap away - check your own phone: you know exactly which numbers you muted, and why. One quiet message, then wait. If the answer is silence, silence is the answer for now. A second, third and fourth message do not warm a customer up; they teach her to ignore the sound of your name.

The list compounds quietly. Some customers come back with money ready, as chapter 17 allowed for. Some hand your number to a sister without you asking, like chapter 15. And some never answer - also fine, the door stays open ("no stress, you know where I am"). You are not collecting replies. You are keeping a door oiled.



Forty messages, all about Poppy.

A good follow-up can bring one customer back once. Chapter 19 takes that further: earning repeat business and turning customers into regulars who keep a small business alive between paydays.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Start the list today: one exercise book or phone note - name, job, date, and a tick for who agreed to a check-in. Every customer from today onwards gets a line, and a question: "May I check in with you?"

2. Write your check-in line and practice it until it sounds like you: "Morning ___, how is the ___ behaving?"

3. Pick three past customers who agreed to a check-in and whose job is honestly due for a look, and send each one a personal message. One each, not a broadcast.

4. Decide your silence rule before you need it: no answer means wait, not resend. Write it at the front of the book.

Bra Oupa and Sis Poppy are made-up characters. The muted numbers are real - they are in your own phone, and you know why you muted them.

CHAPTER 19

Keep Them Coming Back

Part 4 - Turn Interest Into A Sale

Last chapter you kept the door open. Now give people a reason to walk through it again. A follow-up reminds a customer you exist. What happened the last time tells her whether coming back is a good idea. Another message cannot wash a shirt that still smells like yesterday's braai.

Sis Busi runs a laundry from her yard, and her best advert is a Thursday afternoon. That is when Mam' Zodwa collects her work clothes. Busi counts the items with her, writes down the price and collection time, and returns everything clean, dry and folded. When a machine breaks, Busi phones before collection time, explains the delay and agrees a new time. Zodwa is not delighted about waiting. But she does not have to knock at a locked gate in her slippers, holding tomorrow's problem.

Across the road, **Bra Lucky** has a loyalty card: five washes, the sixth free. Very smart. Gold letters. Unfortunately, nobody knows when the first wash will be ready. His card promises a free wash in the future. His gate is keeping today's clothes hostage. **A reward for coming back cannot fix a reason to stay away.**



Sixth wash free. First wash missing.

Make the second visit feel safe

A regular is not somebody who owes you another sale. She has choices every time. Your job is to make choosing you feel sensible again: the same care, a clear price, the thing ready when promised. Remember chapter 6: trust is built in small things people can check. Last week's good job does not excuse this week's shrug.

Remember the useful thing, not the whole person's life. "No starch on the blue shirts, still the same?" tells Zodwa that Busi listened. Guessing or announcing her private business across the yard tells her something else. Ask before keeping a preference, keep only what helps the job, and let her change it. Familiar is warm. Nosy is not a service.

Make buying again easy. Put your hours where people can see them. Explain how to place the next order. If you offer bookings, ask: "Would you like the same slot next week, or will you message when you need it?" Both answers are welcome. Do not quietly add someone to a weekly order. A regular customer still gets to say no.

When you slip, fix the slip before selling again. A missing button is not the moment for "Have you seen our special?" Listen, check what happened, and agree a fair fix you can carry out. Say when it will be done, then do it. If a complaint shows a repeated problem, change how you work. An apology is useful. An apology printed on every collection slip is a system asking for help.

Loyalty is not always a discount

Start with care you can afford to repeat. A friendly greeting, a clear collection time and an order checked properly do not need a gold card. A loyalty offer can help, but count its cost first. State the terms plainly and honour them. If the free wash eats the money for soap and electricity, you have rewarded the customer by closing the laundry.

Watch who returns, without chasing who doesn't. In your simple job book, mark a repeat visit. Ask a willing regular: "What brings you back?" Her answer may be reliability, not the thing you were about to spend money on. If someone stops coming, do not invent a betrayal. Needs and budgets change. Chapter 18's permission and silence rules still apply.



The next booking started with this week's promise.

Getting the first sale takes work. Keeping the next one starts with doing this one properly. That closes Part 4: ask, answer, follow up, earn the return. Chapter 20 brings the whole book onto one page - your offer, clear enough to stick on the wall and use.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write down one promise a customer should be able to rely on every visit. Check whether you actually keep it.

2. Remove one obstacle to buying again: unclear hours, a confusing order process or a collection time nobody agreed.

3. Ask one willing regular what brings them back. Write the answer, not your guess.

4. Before offering a loyalty reward, work out what it costs and whether each sale still covers its costs. Fix any unfinished customer problem first.

Sis Busi, Bra Lucky and Mam' Zodwa are made-up characters. The laundry scenes and loyalty offer are invented for the lesson, not reports about real businesses.

CHAPTER 20

Your Offer on One Page

Closing - Running It Day To Day

You have walked the street, found the words and asked for the sale. Now put the pieces where you can see them. Not in fourteen phone notes, three voice messages and the back of a till slip. One page. Clear enough to use before you open tomorrow.

Sis Dudu makes lunch packs, but her first offer could feed an argument. "Affordable quality food for everyone, any time." Lovely words. No lunch. A customer wanted two packs before an early shift. Dudu meant orders for ten or more, booked the day before. They discovered this after seven WhatsApps and a hungry misunderstanding.

Her neighbour **Bra Themba** repairs school bags. His page says who he helps, what he fixes, what the job includes and how to ask for a price. It is not fancy. One corner has a tea stain shaped like Lesotho. But when someone asks what he does, he does not need a committee meeting with himself. **A clear offer saves both people a wasted conversation.**



The words were full. The lunch box wasn't.

Bring the book onto the page

Start with a person and a problem, not a slogan. Chapter 1 asked what the street needs. Chapter 4 asked why people buy. Dudu's person might be the organiser ordering lunches for a small work team. The problem is feeding that team on time without collecting everyone's separate order. "Everyone who eats" does not help her plan tomorrow's cooking.

Say what they get, and where the promise stops. Use chapter 12's one-sentence offer. Then name what is included, what costs extra, and how much notice you need. Dudu can promise her own preparation time. She cannot promise that nobody will ever be late for work. Keep chapter 17's lesson too: the price must cover the work. If jobs vary, explain what you need to know before quoting instead of inventing one price for every bag.

Choose where people will hear it and how they can buy. Chapter 13 took you where your people are. Pick one useful place to start, not every group on your phone. Write the next step plainly: send the quantity and collection date, bring the bag for a look, or ask for an available slot. A customer should not have to solve a puzzle to give you money.

Read it to somebody who might actually buy. Ask: "What would you get? What would it cost? What would you do next?" Listen without explaining over them. If they cannot tell, the page needs work. If they understand but do not need it, that is different. Clear words cannot create a need the street does not have.



Meeting cancelled. Offer clear.

This page is a working tool, not a promise carved into a wall. Date it. Change it when your costs, hours or capacity change, and update any customer-facing version too. The final chapter is about the small daily habits that help you keep what this page promises.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Fill in the next page for one offer, not every service you might do one day.

2. Check the price against your costs and the promise against what you can actually deliver.

3. Read it to one possible customer. Fix whatever they cannot understand without your help.

4. Put the page where you work. Use it to write one clear sign, status or spoken introduction when you are ready.

Sis Dudu and Bra Themba are made-up characters. Their businesses and scenes are invented for the lesson.

My offer, on one page

Business / offer: _____

Date: _____

1. Who is this for?

2. What problem am I solving for them?

3. My offer in one sentence:

I help _____ with _____

by offering _____

4. What is included? What is extra or not included?

5. Price / how I quote: **Covers my costs?**

6. When / where? How much notice do I need?

7. Where will the right people hear about it first?

8. How does a customer order or ask for a quote?

Check: They can explain what they get, the price or quote process, and the next step. I can keep this promise.

CHAPTER 21

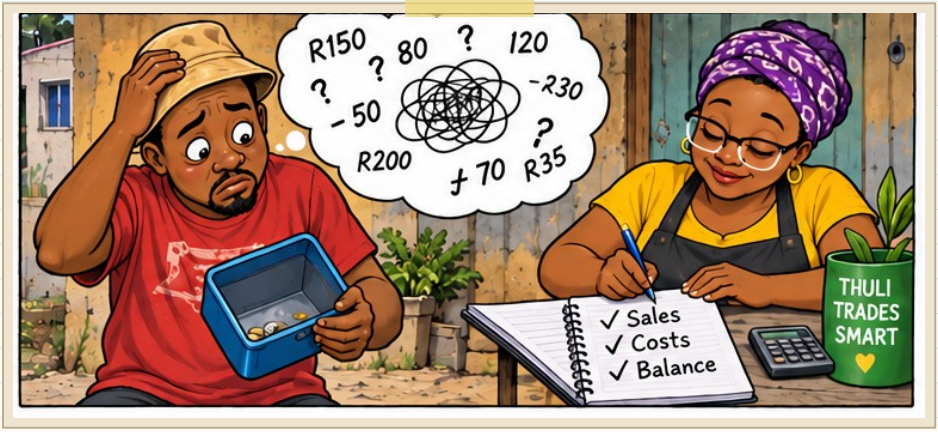
The Habits That Keep a Shop Alive

Closing - Running It Day To Day

The offer is on the wall. Now comes Tuesday. No launch balloons. No cousin taking photos. Just a customer at the gate, stock to count and yesterday's money that must still buy tomorrow's supplies. A business is not kept alive by its opening day. It is kept alive by the ordinary days after it.

Mam' Thuli sells vegetables from a table outside her yard. Before she opens, she checks what is fresh, counts what she has and puts the prices where people can see them. At closing time, she writes down what sold, what spoiled, what she spent and what money is there. Her notebook has no password. It does have a safe place, away from the tomatoes and her grandson's colouring pencils.

Her neighbour **Bra Sello** remembers everything. Ask him. He remembers yesterday's sales, last week's supplier bill and which customer still owes him. Unfortunately, his memory and his cash tin are giving different answers. He shakes the tin as if the missing figures might fall out. **A small written habit beats a big confident guess.**



The tin cannot remember either.

Before you open. Before you close.

Give the money a job before your household does. Keep business money separate from home money. Write down money coming in and going out, including anything you take for yourself. Sales are not the same as profit, and the money in your hand is not all spare. Some must pay for stock, transport and the other costs of doing the work. The SBD Finance book goes deeper into these money habits. Start with the notebook today.

Count what earns the money. Know what you have before ordering more. Check what is running low, damaged or going off. Put older usable stock where it gets used first, where that suits the product and its safety instructions. If you sell a service, count your available hours instead: an empty booking space and an overbooked afternoon both tell you something. Do not promise three jobs in one hour because all three customers sound nice.

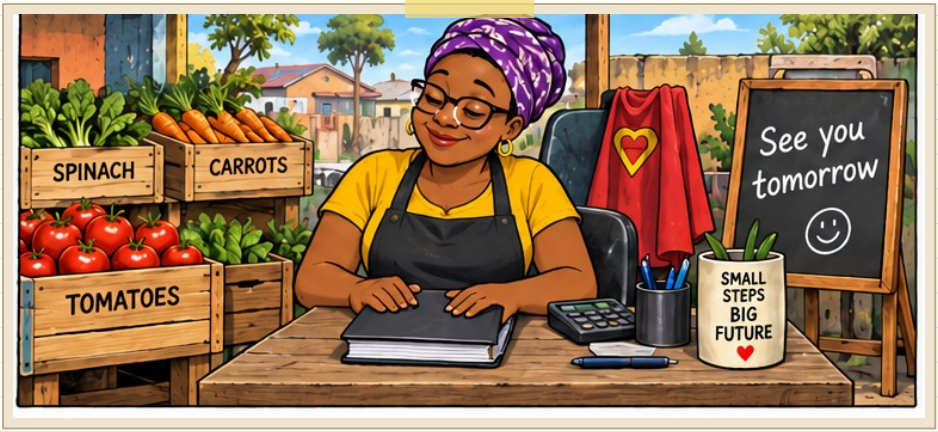
Keep a promise list, not a worry cloud. Write down orders, collection times and the next thing you must do. Check it before opening and before closing. If you cannot keep an agreed time, tell the customer early and agree what happens next. Chapter 19's regulars are built here, not in the loyalty-card printer.

Greet people even when the day is slow. A quiet morning is not the customer's fault. Say hello, listen and give the same clear answer you gave when the queue was long. Keep your space ready for the work and your prices clear. You do not need a fancy shop to make a person feel expected.

A short check each week

Look for the leak, not somebody to blame. What sold? What sat untouched? Which job took longer than you allowed for? Which promise did you nearly miss? Compare your notes with the cash, stock and orders. A difference is something to check, not proof that someone stole. Fix one repeated problem before adding another special.

Use the library when the next question is bigger than this page. The SBD Finance book helps with money. Get Found, Get Customers takes the visibility work further. For stock, records or registering, look for the relevant guide in the SBD library and check that it fits your business. A story in this book is not a licence, a tax ruling or a substitute for checking the rules that apply to your work.



No miracle. Just the closing routine.

You do not have to do everything in this book tomorrow. Choose the business the street needs. Make one clear offer. Do the job properly. Write down what happened. Learn, then do the next day a little better. The playbook is not finished when you reach this page. It starts earning its place when you use it.

Sho't left, do this today

1. Write a short opening check: stock or available time, clear prices, today's orders and promises.

2. Write a short closing check: money in and out, stock used or lost, unfinished work and tomorrow's promises.

3. Choose one time each week to compare the notes with what actually happened. Fix one repeated problem.

4. Pick one lesson from this book and use it tomorrow. Not ten. One you can keep doing.

Mam' Thuli and Bra Sello are made-up characters. Their businesses and scenes are invented for the lesson. The notebook is yours to start.