



TEMPLATE

# Content Planning Template for Service Businesses

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LICENSE Free for personal and team use

This planning template gives you a repeatable structure for deciding what content to create, when to publish it, and how each piece connects to an actual business outcome. It is built for owner-operators and small teams who do not have a marketing department and do not want one.

## How to Use This Template

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Print this, copy it into a Google Doc, or duplicate the table into whatever tool you already use to track work. The format does not matter. What matters is that you fill it out once a month, on the same day of the month, before you write anything.

The pattern is simple. Once a month, sit down for an hour and fill in the planning sheet for the next four weeks. You decide the topics in advance, when you have time to think, so that on the day you sit down to write you are not also deciding what to write about. Decision fatigue is the reason most service-business content programs die in month three.

When the month is over, do not throw the sheet away. Move it to a folder called something like "past months" and start a fresh one. After 90 days you will have three filled sheets, and that is when the review questions at the end of this template start to pay off.

What not to do with this template: do not use it to plan six months of content in one sitting. The world changes, your business changes, and a six-month plan written in January is fiction by March. One month at a time, refreshed monthly, is the cadence that actually survives contact with running a business.

## The Monthly Planning Sheet

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Empty template – copy this for the next month:

WEEK	TOPIC	FORMAT	AUDIENCE	BUSINESS OUTCOME	DISTRIBUTION	STATUS
1						
2						
3						
4						

Filled example for a residential plumber:

WEEK	TOPIC	FORMAT	AUDIENCE	BUSINESS OUTCOME	DISTRIBUTION	STATUS
1	What to do in the first 10 minutes of a burst pipe	Short blog post with a numbered list	Homeowners in a panic searching at 11pm	Build trust so the panicked Google searcher calls us first	Site, Google Business Profile post, one neighbourhood Facebook group	Published
2	Why a \$40 hardware-store flapper costs more than a \$90 one over five years	Blog post with a simple cost table	Homeowners who pride themselves on doing it right once	Position us as the people who think long-term, not just cheap-fast	Site, monthly customer email, LinkedIn	Drafted
3	What we look at during a whole-home plumbing inspection	Service-page rewrite	Homeowners considering booking the inspection service	Drive bookings for the inspection service specifically	Site only; link from the inspection service page	Outlined
4	Customer story: the kitchen renovation we caught a venting problem on before drywall went up	Case study with two photos	Homeowners about to renovate, and the contractors who refer to us	Earn referrals from the GC who managed that project	Site, email to past customers, LinkedIn tagging the GC	Idea

Notice that every row connects to a real outcome. None of the rows say "build brand awareness" or "stay top of mind." Those are not outcomes you can verify in 90 days, so they are not allowed in the business outcome column.

## Content Type Selector

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Before you decide on a format, decide on the goal. Start here and follow the branch that matches what this specific piece needs to do.

- What is the goal of this piece?
  - Goal: get someone to book a call or request a quote
    - Best format: a service page that answers the three questions every prospect asks before booking, plus one short case study linked from it
    - Avoid: a blog post. Blog posts rarely convert cold readers; service pages do
  - Goal: build trust with someone who has been referred to you and is checking you out
    - Best format: an "about" page that names you, shows your face, and explains why you do this work, plus one or two recent case studies
    - Avoid: industry jargon. The referred prospect is comparing you to a stranger on Google, not to a competitor
  - Goal: rank in search for a service in a specific area
    - Best format: a dedicated service-area page that names the city or neighbourhood, describes the work you do there, and shows two or three jobs you have done locally
    - Avoid: stuffing one page with every city you serve. One page per area, written for a human, beats one page listing 40 zip codes
  - Goal: answer a question someone asks during the buying process
    - Best format: a short blog post or FAQ entry that answers the question directly in the first paragraph
    - Avoid: burying the answer under 600 words of preamble. The reader will leave
  - Goal: keep existing clients engaged so they refer you and rebook
    - Best format: a monthly email with one useful tip and one short story from a recent job

- Avoid: a newsletter that is mostly about you. The tip is for them; the story is the proof

If a piece does not fit any of these goals, ask whether it needs to exist. Content that exists because "we should be posting" is the content that wastes your Saturday afternoons.

## Pre-Publish QA Checklist

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- The piece names the actual problem in the words a client would use, not industry jargon
- A reader who lands on this page from Google can tell within five seconds what it is about
- There is one clear next step on the page (call, email, book, read this related piece) and it is visible without scrolling on a phone
- Every claim about results, timelines, or pricing is one I can stand behind in front of a client
- Any photo on the page is either a real photo from our work or a clearly-credited stock image; no generic handshake photos
- Names of any people, businesses, or properties mentioned have been cleared with them in writing
- The page reads cleanly on a phone screen; paragraphs are short, headings break up the page
- Spelling and grammar checked by a human, not just a spellchecker; the spellchecker misses tone
- The page title and the first heading match what someone would actually search for
- Internal links point to the right pages and open correctly; no broken links to old pages
- Contact information on the page matches what is on Google Business Profile, the website footer, and any directory listings
- If the page mentions a service, a price, or a service area, those match what the rest of the site says
- A friend or family member outside the trade has read the piece and understood it

- The publish date and author name are correct; no leftover "Admin" or "Lorem ipsum" anywhere on the page

## 90-Day Review Questions

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Sit down with the last three months of planning sheets and your contact-form or call-tracking data. Work through these in order. The goal is to make decisions about the next 90 days, not to produce a report.

1. Which piece brought in the most contact-form submissions or calls, and what did those leads have in common?
2. Which piece brought in leads that turned into actual paying clients, and which brought in tire-kickers?
3. Was there a piece you expected to perform well that did not, and do you know why?
4. Which topic ideas from the planning sheets did you skip, and were they skipped because they were bad ideas or because you ran out of time?
5. Did any single piece get referenced in a sales conversation, an email reply, or a customer meeting? If yes, can you make more like it?
6. Which distribution channel actually drove the readers who became leads: search, email, social, Google Business Profile, or word of mouth?
7. Are there questions clients asked you in the last 90 days that you do not yet have a written answer to on the site?
8. Looking at the next 90 days of work in your calendar, what kind of clients do you want more of, and does the planned content speak to them?
9. Is there a piece that is now out of date or no longer reflects how you work, and should it be updated, archived, or replaced?
10. If you had to drop one type of content for the next 90 days to free up time, which one would you miss the least?

The point of using this template is not to admire your own planning. It is to publish the next piece on Tuesday because last month you decided Tuesday was the day, and to look back in 90 days at a real record of what worked. Most service businesses I see drown in content ideas and publish nothing. A filled sheet beats a brilliant strategy you never executed.

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## Other downloads from this practice

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- [WordPress Site Launch Checklist \(/downloads/wordpress-pre-launch-checklist/\)](/downloads/wordpress-pre-launch-checklist/). The pre-launch checklist that catches what most launches miss.
- [Excel Training Prep Checklist \(/downloads/excel-training-prep-checklist/\)](/downloads/excel-training-prep-checklist/). A 30-minute planning guide for team Excel training sessions.
- [The Service Business Sales Stack \(/service-business-sales-stack/\)](/service-business-sales-stack/). The longer post on the systems that surround the planning template.

### WANT HELP APPLYING THIS?

#### If you'd like a second pair of eyes on what you turn up

Send me a note about what you're working on and I'll send back what I'd try first. Booking a call is optional. The form is the path; the call is only if a call would actually help.

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