Start Your Online Shop in 30 Days

A step-by-step guide for first-time sellers



Start Your Online Shop in 30 Days

A step-by-step plan for your first product, first sale and first ten customers

YOUR NAME

Copyright © 2026 Your Name. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author, except for short quotations in reviews.

This book offers general information, not professional, medical or financial advice.

First edition 2026

Contents

PART ONE: PLAN

1 Find a Product People Already Want 7

2 Do the Numbers Before You Spend

PART TWO: BUILD

3 Set Up Your Shop in a Weekend

4 Photos and Product Pages That Sell

5 Payments, Shipping and the Boring Bits

PART THREE: LAUNCH

6 Your First Ten Customers

7 The 30-Day Launch Plan

This sample includes chapter 1 of 7.

PART ONE

Plan

CHAPTER

1

Find a Product People Already Want

MOST FIRST ONLINE shops fail before they open, and almost always for the same reason. The owner spends months on the logo, the colours, the perfect name and the perfect website, and only then asks whether anyone wants to buy what they are selling.

This book does it the other way round. Before you build anything, you will find a product that people are already searching for, already buying and already complaining about. That last part matters more than you might think. Complaints are the most useful market research there is, and they are free.

By the end of this chapter you will have a shortlist of three product ideas and a simple way to choose between them. It should take you about three days.

Start with demand, not passion

You will often hear that you should sell what you love. It is half true. Loving your product helps you keep going on slow weeks, and customers can tell when an owner cares. But love does not tell you whether there are buyers, and a shop with no buyers is a hobby with a monthly bill.

The better order is this: find out what people already want, then pick the idea on that list that you would enjoy talking about for the next two years. You get the demand and the enthusiasm, in that order.

Three places to find real demand

You do not need expensive tools for this. You need an afternoon, a notebook and a little patience.

1. Marketplace best-seller lists. Large online marketplaces publish lists of their best-selling products in every category, updated often. Look for categories where lots of similar products sell well. That is proof of demand, not a sign the space is too crowded.
2. Reviews of popular products, especially the three-star ones. Five-star reviews tell you what people like. One-star reviews are often about delivery. Three-star reviews tell you what buyers wanted and did not quite get, and every one of those is a product idea.
3. Questions people ask in forums and groups. When the same question appears again and again, such as "where can I find a lunch box that actually keeps soup hot?", someone is waiting to be sold an answer.

> **KEEP A DEMAND DIARY**
> For three days, write down every product complaint you hear or read: from friends, in reviews, in your own kitchen. Do not judge them yet. By day three you will have more ideas than you can use.

What makes a good first product

Not every idea is a good first idea. Your first product has one job: to teach you how to sell online without risking money you

cannot afford to lose. That means some products are much better starting points than others.

A good first product usually has most of these five features:

- It is small and light, so shipping is cheap and simple.
- It does not break easily, so returns stay low.
- It sells for enough to leave a profit after costs, usually somewhere between about £15 and £60.
- It solves a clear problem, so you can explain it in one sentence.
- It is not seasonal, so you can keep learning all year.

Notice what is not on the list: being original. Your first product does not need to be a new invention. It needs to be a better or better-explained version of something people already buy.

A worked example

Priya teaches yoga three evenings a week and wanted a small online shop to earn extra income. Her first idea was handmade yoga mats, until she checked the costs: heavy, expensive to post and slow to make.

So she went back to her demand diary. Three of her students had complained that their mats slid around in the boot of the car and that the straps they had bought kept snapping. In the reviews of the best-selling mat straps, the same complaint came up again and again in the three-star reviews: the buckles broke within a month.

Her first product became a simple strap with a metal buckle, sourced from a small supplier and sold with a short video showing three ways to carry a mat. It weighed almost nothing, cost little to post and solved a problem people were already writing about. It was not glamorous. It sold.

Score your shortlist

Pick your three best ideas from the diary and give each one a score from one to five on these questions. Be honest. It is your money.

1. Can I see clear proof that people already buy this?
2. Can I explain the problem it solves in one sentence?
3. Is it small, light and hard to break?
4. Can I sell it for at least three times what it costs me?
5. Would I still enjoy talking about it a year from now?

Add up the scores. The highest total wins, unless your gut strongly disagrees, in which case look again at question five. Enthusiasm is not the first thing that matters, but it is not nothing.

> **YOUR TASK FOR DAYS 1 TO 3**
> Keep your demand diary, read twenty three-star reviews in one category, and score three product ideas. Write the winner on a sticky note and put it where you will see it every morning.

In the next chapter you will take that winning idea and check the numbers: what it will really cost you, what you can charge, and how many you need to sell each month before the shop pays for itself. It is the least exciting chapter in this book, and the one that will save you the most money.