

Finding clients with AI: a guide for small businesses and freelancers

Define your ideal client, sharpen your offer, get found and write personal outreach. Copy-paste prompts and a 2-hour weekly routine.

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If you run a small business or freelance, the hardest part is often not the work itself but finding the right people who want it. AI will not find clients for you. But it can save you real time on **getting clear on who you sell to, making yourself easy to find and writing personal messages quickly**. In this guide we will define your ideal client, sharpen your offer, get you found on Google and in AI assistants, research prospects ethically, write personal outreach and tie it all together in a 2-hour weekly routine.

What you need

- ChatGPT or a similar chat assistant (the free plan is enough to start)
- A research tool that cites sources: Perplexity
- A short list of your last 5–10 clients (no names needed: what they wanted, why they picked you, how happy they were)
- A Google Business Profile (for businesses with a location or service area) or at least a one-page website
- A simple tracking sheet: Google Sheets, Excel or Notion



ChatGPT

An all-round chat assistant for writing, ideas, summaries and everyday questions.

[Open the tool: chatgpt.com](https://chatgpt.com)



Perplexity

An AI-powered search engine that answers with sources.

[Open the tool: www.perplexity.ai](https://www.perplexity.ai)

1. Define your ideal client

The moment you say "anyone could be my client", your message stops landing with anyone. Start by finding what your best clients have in common. Give the prompt below real observations about your existing clients and let AI turn them into a profile.

PROMPT 1

You are an experienced marketing strategist who advises small businesses.

My work: [describe what you do in 2 sentences]

City / region: [where you serve]

Notes on my 5 happiest clients: [for each: industry, size, why they came, what they bought, what the result was]

2 client types that made the work harder: [briefly]

Task: Build an "ideal client profile" from this.

1) Describe the profile in 5 bullet points (who, in what situation, with what problem, who makes the decision, how price-sensitive they are).

2) Write 5 example sentences in which this person describes the problem in their own words.

3) The moment they would contact me: which event pushes them to act? List 3 triggers.

4) List 3 warning signs of clients I should avoid.

Constraint: Do not invent anything beyond what I gave you; mark anything uncertain as an "assumption".

When you review the output, check whether the triggers are concrete. "Wants to grow" is weak; "just opened a second location" or "their contract with the old agency ended" is strong. A concrete trigger tells you who to contact and when.

2. Sharpen your offer and positioning

People buy outcomes, not services. Instead of "I do social media management", a line like "content plans that help local restaurants fill weekday bookings" is easier to understand and easier to recommend.

PROMPT 2

Use the ideal client profile from the previous message.

This is how I currently describe my work: [your current intro line]

What I think sets me apart: [2-3 points]

Task:

1) Write 5 positioning lines in the pattern "I help [who] get [what outcome] [in what time / with what method]".

2) Score each from 1 to 5 from the ideal client's point of view and explain why in one sentence.

3) For the strongest line, list 5 objections the client will raise in a first call and a short, honest answer to each.

Constraint: No exaggerated promises, guarantees or invented numbers. Write in plain language.

Tip

Send your chosen line to 2-3 real clients and ask: "Does this describe you?" Their reaction matters more than the AI's score.

3. Make yourself findable

Half of finding clients is making sure the people already looking can find you. There are three parts: your Google Business Profile, reviews and visibility in AI assistants.

Tidy up your Google Business Profile

- **Category:** pick the primary category closest to your work; keep extra categories to things you actually do.
- **Description:** open with your positioning line from step 2, then your service area and who you serve.
- **Services / products:** add each one separately with a short description.
- **Photos:** your real space, team and work samples. Your own photos rather than stock images.
- **Updates:** a few short posts a month (an offer, a new project, a frequently asked question).

Ask for reviews — the right way

In your business profile, the "Get more reviews" card gives you a review link and a QR code. Send that link on the day you deliver, with a short personal message. Google's rules say you should not offer discounts or gifts in exchange for reviews, and you should not only ask the clients you expect to be happy.

PROMPT 3

I run a [business type]. Write 3 different messages, to send on WhatsApp, asking a client whose job I just delivered to leave a review.

Client: [name], what we did: [briefly]

Rules: 60 words max, warm but respectful, offer nothing in return, no pressure, use the placeholder [LINK] for the review link. Make one very short, one a bit warmer and one suitable for email.

How do AI assistants "know" about you?

People now ask ChatGPT or Perplexity things like "recommend a good dietitian near me". These tools draw on information from the web, and nobody can guarantee a ranking. What you can do is make the information about you clear, consistent and easy to read:

- **Consistent name, address, phone:** your business name, address and phone number should match exactly on your website, Google profile and social accounts.
- **Clear website copy:** what you do, who for and where should be stated in plain sentences on the first screen.
- **An FAQ section:** add the 8–10 questions clients really ask, with short answers. It helps people and search engines alike.
- **Fresh reviews and content:** regular reviews and posts show the business is still active.

4. Research prospects ethically

Because Perplexity answers with sources, it is useful for researching a target sector and companies. The goal is not to collect personal data; it is to understand who to contact and why from **publicly available business information**.

PROMPT 4

I offer [your service] in [city/region]. My ideal client: [short summary of your profile from step 1].

Task: Research the types of businesses that fit this profile and recent developments in this area that could create a need for my service (new openings, industry regulations, seasonal needs).

Output: 1) 5 sub-segments and the likely need of each, 2) signals for each segment that can be found in public sources, 3) source links.

Constraint: Do not search for or list private details about individuals (personal phone numbers, home addresses, private accounts). Use only public information about businesses.

Always click through and check the sources. AI can present an old news item as current or mix up two businesses.

5. Write personal outreach

Mass copy-paste messages do not work and they hurt your reputation. A good first message is short, rests on a real observation about the other person and suggests a small next step.

PROMPT 5

You are a business development specialist who writes warmly and clearly.

About me: [your positioning line]

Recipient: [business name, industry, the contact's role]

A public observation about them: [e.g. they announced a new branch]

Channel: [LinkedIn message / email]

Task: Write 3 different first-message drafts.

Rules: 90 words max; the first sentence builds on the observation; name one concrete benefit; no sales pressure; end with a small yes/no question (e.g. "Would a short example be useful?"). No hype and no invented numbers.

Commercial messaging rules

In Turkey, promotional SMS, email and calls generally require prior consent, and these consents are managed through the Message Management System (İYS). Different rules can apply to messages sent to merchants and tradespeople, but recipients can always opt out. This is not legal advice; if you plan bulk sending, check current rules with an expert. Keep KVKK (Turkey's data protection law) in mind when handling personal data.

6. Set up a follow-up system

Most opportunities come from a polite follow-up, not the first message. Track each person in a simple sheet and follow up at set intervals. If there is no reply after the third message, let it go.

Stage	When	What you do
First message	Day 1	Short message based on an observation, with a small question
Follow-up 1	4–5 days later	Add new value: a short example, a useful resource or an idea
Follow-up 2	10–14 days later	Short, polite close: "If now is not a good time, no problem"
If they reply	Same day	Suggest a short call with two time options
After the call	Within 24 hours	Send a summary and a clear proposal

You can have AI draft the follow-ups too; just give it your previous message and the new value you want to add.

A 2-hour weekly client-finding routine

Finding clients is a habit, not a campaign. Put a fixed block in your calendar and split it like this:

Time	Task	Tool
20 min	Review last week's replies and your tracking sheet	Sheet
25 min	Research 5–10 new prospects and take notes	Perplexity
30 min	Prepare, edit and send personal first messages	ChatGPT + your own judgement
20 min	Send the follow-ups that are due	ChatGPT
15 min	Add an update to your Google profile, reply to new reviews	Google Business Profile
10 min	Note what worked and pick one change for next week	Sheet

Common mistakes

1. Starting outreach before defining the ideal client.
2. Sending AI-written messages without editing them; readers notice immediately.
3. Sending the same message to hundreds of people and ignoring commercial messaging rules.
4. Not checking the sources in research output.
5. Offering discounts for reviews or only asking clients you expect to be happy.
6. Running the routine for two weeks and stopping; results usually come from steady follow-up.

Next step

Once you have run this routine for a few weeks, it makes sense to automate the repetitive parts: automatic draft replies when a form is filled in, follow-up reminders, logging to a sheet. For that, head to the [AI automation guide for small businesses](#). If you want a roadmap tailored to your business, we can also set up a [1:1 call](#).

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