
THE 30-DAY QUICK START GUIDE TO A
MINIMALIST
BUSINESS
EVERETT BOGUE

WHY QUICK START?

Many people have written in suggesting that I write a step-by-step guide to starting a minimalist business, so I've done just that.

The problem with a guide like this is it leaves out the creative improvisation that is necessary to start a business. Every business will be different. And it's absolutely essential that you look at the entire picture while you make each of these moves.

In simpler terms: do these out of order if it's better for you to do them out of order. They don't have to be done in 30 days - they can be done in 60 days, they can be done over the course of a year. Don't do something if it doesn't seem like it'll work for your business.

Most of all, be creative! This is your minimalist business, not mine. Every business is different, some of these steps might not even be relevant to you. Try them out. If they don't work, stop doing them.

Most of these steps are best completed in under an hour. The trick is to balance these ideas with a day job that supports you, or while you're enjoying your time on the beach somewhere nice.

Don't spend all day updating your Twitter and tweaking your blog templates. Enjoy your life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR EVERETT BOGUE

Everett Bogue is the author of *The Art of Being Minimalist*, *Minimalist Business*, and blogger at Far Beyond The Stars. He lives in the world, with somewhere around 50 things.

Currently, he lives in San Francisco CA, but depending on when you read this, he could be living and working from anywhere.



Please note: this is a supplement to *Minimalist Business* by Everett Bogue

If you received this independently of the original guide, you can find more information by visiting:

http://www.farbeyondthestars.com/

DAY 1

The epiphany moment. This is the day when you come up with your minimalist business concept. Either its been sitting in your head for a long time, or you wait to start until you come up with the idea.

Don't start the next days without having some idea of what your concept will be.

Good concepts for a minimalist business focus on a niche market, they are distributed via digital media, and they create some sort of change in the lives of yourself and others.

Don't feel like you need to set this idea into stone. Just pick one and go with it. If it doesn't seem to be working, don't be afraid to re-assess the situation and tweak the idea if necessary (but only if absolutely necessary).

DAY 2

Find your minimalist business a home. Register a domain name with a hosting service that fits your minimalist business concept. Be creative, or use your own name. The most important aspect in a domain name is that people are able to spell it.

If you don't want to commit to a domain name — or the expertise to do this exceeds your abilities — because they can cost a small amount of money, consider registering a blog with Wordpress.com instead. This is much easier for those of us who are less tech savvy. It's also completely free.

DAY 3

Install blogging software on your domain name. Go to Wordpress.org and download the blogging software. Follow the instructions to install it on your domain name via FTP. If you have trouble contact Wordpress or do a Google search for information on this subject, as blogging software install is beyond the scope of this e-book —for the simple reason that there are thousands of free resources on how to install a blog available on the Internet that are better than any I could ever write.

Don't buy expensive templates like the Thesis Theme unless absolutely necessary. Buying pro themes for Wordpress will only add to your business overhead, which is what we're trying to avoid.

DAY 4

Register a Twitter account. Use your real name (people on the Internet do not pay attention to pseudonyms and people with weird icons for faces — we've been taught that these are usually used by spammers) and upload a picture of yourself.

DAY 5

Write one sentence that describes your minimalist business. Put this on your blog and your Twitter profile.

Actually, put it on your bathroom mirror.

It should accurately describe the one thing that your business helps people do better. For instance: my sentence is "being minimalist in order to live and work from anywhere." Keep the sentence simple, direct, and understandable at a glance. Ideally, they should be able to repeat this sentence to someone they meet on the street without having to go to your website to look up what you're actually about.

DAY 6

Identify the leading players in your niche. Chances are these are bloggers, authors, and creators that you should already be aware of if you've been studying the subject of your minimalist business thoroughly.

If not, a simple Google search for the subject of your business should bring up some people who are already doing it (people already doing something is a good thing). Follow these people on Twitter and start to observe what they're doing. Retweet some of their work periodically to make these players aware that you exist.

Generosity in sharing other people's work is key.

DAY 7

Write and publish some free helpful information on your blog. Make it insanely useful and helpful to anyone whom might read it. Chances are that no one will read it right now, but that's okay — the Internet is a big place. The point is to get started creating free information regularly on your blog.

DAY 8

Establish a publishing schedule on your blog that's manageable for you while you grow your business. A good rule of thumb is that you have to publish less if your information is more valuable. When I first started creating valuable information from people on the web, I published three times a week. Over time, I've been able to scale that down to less and still maintain momentum.

I recommend publishing two-three times a week, no more no less. The rest of these steps will assume that you're regularly publishing valuable information on your blog. I won't remind you again.

DAY 9

Install Retweet and Facebook share buttons on your blog posts. There are of course thousands of other buttons you can install, but I want you to focus on these two. When there are less options, people are more inclined to click on something. The technical details of how to do this are beyond the scope of this e-book, but a simple Google search for "Retweet Wordpress plugin install" will give you more than enough information to get this completed.

DAY 10

Begin to work on your product. As we covered in *Minimalist Business*, there are a huge number of mediums and forms on which to create your product. The art of creating a product is different for everyone. I created an e-book on living a minimalist life, but you might need to do something completely different. There is plenty of room on the Internet for audio, video, multimedia products, as well as e-books. I'm more comfortable as a writer, you might be more comfortable recording yourself talking, or talking with another person. There are so many options here, I give you free creative reign.

The most important part is to remember that your product needs to help a niche market do something better.

The rest of this guide assumes that you will dedicate at least an hour every day to working on your product. This is the most important part of your work, so make it good. The world doesn't need more bad products.

DAY 11

Take a day off. You're working way too hard! Have a beer. It's important to give yourself time to relax, learn, and not take yourself so seriously. The object of creating your minimalist business is so you can have time to do the things that you enjoy doing and not have to work your life away at a day job. The time to start doing that is now. You'll find that when you return to work you'll be reinvigorated and ready to tackle every problem that comes your way.

DAY 12

Read a book on marketing or some other useful topic. There's a list of suggested reading in *Minimalist Business*. Go look at that list if you're stumped. You can't usually go wrong with anything written by Seth Godin, he will teach you many things and make you think about what's important.

DAY 13

Send a thank you email to one of the leaders in your niche. Write it to be short, succinct, and direct. Don't ask for publicity or anything like that —this will turn them off. In fact, it might be best to tell them that you're not writing them for publicity because niche leaders are inundated by requests from smaller business owners who need help getting their word out. Simply and legitimately thank them for the work that they're doing and tell them how much it's helped you in the work that you're creating.

Feel free to do this regularly with people who you honestly admire. It's a great way to make people aware of your existence without making people feel like you want something from them. Plus, it makes people smile.

Again, do not ask for anything in return for this.

DAY 14

Spend a day keeping track of how much time you spend doing stupid things you shouldn't be doing. Such as: checking Twitter every 15 seconds, refreshing your email every 35 seconds, refreshing your blog to see if any comments came in during the last 60 seconds, and watching Lost (or another TV show that makes you feel like you actually did something today, even if you didn't).

It's almost crunch time for your product, so you can't be wasting all of your time on the unimportant. It's better to do nothing than to do unimportant things.

DAY 15

Create an outline for your product based on the work you've already been doing. List everything you think needs to be in the product. Check off everything you've done already. This will give you a somewhat accurate idea of how much work you have left to do as well as how much work you've already done.

DAY 16

Get rid of every feature on your blog that isn't important. Blogs have a way of accumulating features and other things that you think are necessities, but which no one really needs. Go ahead and delete as many of these as possible. Make your blog simple, functional, and focused around the important work that you're doing.

DAY 17

If you haven't already, get a good picture taken of your face. I can usually do this with my own cellphone by standing in a sunlit room, holding it at arms length and taking a couple of pictures until I feel happy. If you can't manage this, get someone to hold the camera for you.

I cannot stress enough the importance of having a real picture of your face, one where you can actually see what you look like. People do not buy things from people who do not have faces.

The most important aspects of taking a good picture are that you look normal, you're well lit, and that you can see your eyes. Don't wear silly hats, don't make a face, don't take a picture of your hand in front of your face.

Everyone is self-conscious about photos, but they're necessary for a minimalist business to succeed.

Hire a real photographer if this is impossibly challenging for you, but chances are you can make do with a point and shoot or a cellphone camera.

Put this picture on your blog, your Twitter, and your sales page.

DAY 18

Kill every feature of your product that you aren't 100% enthusiastic about. It's not worth creating a product that you're not passionate about. This will free you to focus on the features that you do care about, and make them as helpful as possible to customers.

DAY 19

Start checking your email once a day. Seriously, this is one of the most important factors in finishing a product. When you're getting this close to finishing, your mind will seek out the constant distraction of email and Twitter (and sometimes drinking heavily) in order to sabotage your efforts at making work that matters.

If you're being distracted by something other than the above mentioned situations, eliminate any other distractions you may have in order to focus on the important.

Impose these distraction restrictions from now until launch day, or there's a very real possibility that you won't finish.

DAY 20

Write a post on your blog about the product that you're working on. Teach the fundamentals of what you're trying to get across in this post. The idea is to communicate a simple and yet useful set of information to anyone who might be reading.

Make it clear that you're developing a product that will go deeper into helping people with this topic. Communicate that your intention is to be as helpful as possible on the blog, but that you want to offer people who are incredibly interested in the topic the option of digging in deeper with your premium product.

DAY 21

Install Google Analytics on your blog and sales page so that you can start to be aware of how many people are visiting and from where they're coming from. Don't become obsessed with the stats because this can become counterproductive, but it can be very helpful to know where traffic is coming from. Check stats once a week at most.

DAY 22

Interview one of the top players in your niche. Send an email to someone, ideally someone who you've sent a thank you letter to and who responded, asking to do an interview. Ask them about their success. Ask questions of them that will help your audience specifically. Be kind, helpful, and do your best to make the content as relevant as possible to your audience. Publish this interview on your blog.

If this person has an affiliate marketing program for a product they sell, be sure to offer the product on your blog so that you can start making a small amount of money.

Don't interview people with small followings, or people who you aren't honestly interested in. Instead, focus on big players who have influence.

I've found this to be one of the most important tactics that helped me grow my minimalist business.

DAY 23

Identify your biggest fans. Hopefully by this time you should have some people reading your blog and following you on Twitter. If you don't, well, take some time to work on that once you're done with the product launch. Take a moment to identify the people who are the most enthusiastic about the work you're doing. Follow these people on Twitter. Ask them what they think about your product. Send them a preview copy of what you've completed so far.

Do everything in your power to make these people your friends. If treated right, these fans will be your biggest advocates. It's said that you only need to find your first 100 fans to get started, and 1000 advocates to be successful. Keep the number of people you reach out to small, but make sure they're passionate about what you're doing.

How do you make people your friends? Help them achieve their own goals.

DAY 24

Send your almost finished product to your biggest fans and any bloggers who you are friends with. Do not ask them to promote it! Every blogger, and even fans, gets emails from bad marketers asking them to promote things.

No one likes to be asked to sell something.

Instead, just simply thank them for their support and say that you'd like to give them the gift of your product. Ask them that if they have time and if anything stands out to them as feedback worthy, that they can send you an email.

You'll be surprised how much people will be willing to help you if you've built a solid relationship with them by helping them further their own goals. Don't expect anything though, just be happy if anyone helps you.

DAY 25

Begin writing sales copy. Sales pages are hard, because it's so easy to fall into the habit of making them skeezy. I'd suggest you revise and revise the page until you don't feel bad about showing it to people.

Focus on how your product will authentically help people because this is the reason that you created the business in the first place. If your product doesn't help people, well, you need to revise your product until it does.

Here are a few things that you should include on your sales page.

1. 60 day+ money back guarantee. This closes sales, but more importantly, it keeps people from being annoyed at you if your product isn't right for them.
2. Short testimonials from 3-5 of your biggest fans. Lead with someone who's famous if possible.
3. A bullet list of ways that your product will help your customer.
4. A short bio and picture of you, the author.

DAY 26

Finish your product today. Give yourself only two hours to bang-out the final details.

Chances are that there will be an endless list of features and requests that need to go into the product at this point. Just throw that list away and finish. You're getting too close to the deadline to thrash about trying to figure out how to include every idea you wished that you could complete.

Arrange the content in a way that makes some sort of sense, and package the document. Good, it's done. Go have a beer.

DAY 27

Design packaging. Yes, you're creating a digital product, but that doesn't mean that it can't look cool. People like to, at the very least, look at something that resembles packaging before they purchase something.

I'm a big fan of searching for free e-book templates on the Internet and using those. What kind of templates you use will depend on what kind of product you're selling. Consider asking a designer or Photoshop guru friend to help you out if you're stumped on how to do this. A good visual presentation is so important.

DAY 28

Take a look at your product name. Make sure it's both specific to what your product does to help people, and isn't so generic as to not mean anything. Add a little hype to the name, but not too much.

Imagine if my first e-book was called How to Be Minimalist instead of The Art of Being Minimalist. One is certainly a lot more attractive than the other.

Don't overdo the hype, just add a little. Creating a cool name for your product can go a long way towards helping people understand why they need it.

Develop ideas by looking at the top-10 lists of similar products. The professionals know how to make a good product name, and a good product name typically can take it to the top 10 lists.

DAY 29

Release your product into the wild. Publish the sales page on your blog, or on a separate URL with a post pointing from your blog.

Don't sit around watching sales roll in. Watching and waiting for sales can make you crazy, and it might take a few days for them to really take off. Just keep an ear open just in case anyone has problems making purchases or receiving the product.

If your blog isn't getting enough traffic at the moment to support a large amount of sales, consider giving away the product for free for 24 hours for some extra publicity. I did this with my first product with excellent success. Ask people to retweet your product page or share with friends in exchange for being able to read it for free.

DAY 30

Take a break, have a party, buy a bottle of wine, do something that makes you feel good. You've done a lot of work, and you deserve to take a rest.

You've created a minimalist business for a reason: so you can live your life. Don't get wrapped up in checking stats or overanalyzing the reactions to your work. None of that stuff is important.

What is important is that you created work that matters.

For more insanely useful information about starting a minimalist business, visit:

http://www.farbeyondthestars.com/