

STEP 5 — Build the smallest product

Put simply

Your first product can be small.

Small does not mean **sloppy is fine**.

It means **the smallest form in which the change still happens**.

An everyday version

Nobody teaching a friend to cook hands them a whole recipe book.

They write out one dish and say: try making this.

The friend makes the one dish and says it was good. Only then does "shall I show you the others" arrive.

Do it in the other order and the recipe book goes on a shelf and stays there.

The order people commonly get wrong

Here is what someone about to build a product tends to do first.

1. Think of a service name
2. Make a logo
3. Buy a domain
4. Build a website
5. Make social accounts
6. Commission an avatar
7. Print business cards
8. File the paperwork to trade

That is roughly a month and some tens of thousands of yen gone.

And nothing has been handed to anybody yet.

All eight of those can be done later.

There is one thing to do first.

Hand something small to one person.

The reason is simple: at this stage your product is still **a hypothesis**.

Putting a logo on a hypothesis does not stop it being a hypothesis.

Forms the smallest product can take

There are plenty.

- A PDF, a few pages is fine
- A one-page checklist
- A thirty to forty-five minute online consultation
- A template, in a fill-in-the-blanks state
- A review of something they made, with comments back
- Doing part of the work for them
- One sheet of paper included with a physical product
- Ten minutes of audio

You may think: can I really sell only that?

The test is not volume.

Does a change happen to the person who receives this?

Does it reach the After you wrote in STEP 3? If it does, it is a product.

Small is not sloppy

Keep these clearly apart.

Small means the scope is narrow.

Sloppy means what is inside that narrow scope is careless.

- A 12-page PDF covering three days of an itinerary — that is small
- Ten days covered, with the addresses and opening hours wrong — that is sloppy

Making something small means narrowing the scope and raising the accuracy inside it.

You narrowed it, so go deeper.

The smallest form, by field

Choosing clothes

The deluxe version: rebuild the entire wardrobe.

The smallest version: one 45-minute online consultation, plus a shopping list of nine items built during the call, plus one sheet of the combinations those nine make.

That reaches the After of "the deciding time disappears."

A seasoning, physical

The deluxe version: a gift box, presentation packaging, a dedicated dish.

The smallest version: the bottle, a small packet of the cracker that goes with it, and one card. Front: how to eat it first. Back: how long it keeps and two things it goes with next.

That reaches the After of "used on the day it arrived, and confirmed it was not expensive."

A travel guide

The deluxe version: every city, a hundred pages, photographs.

The smallest version: three days only. A 12-page PDF, plus one shareable map with the pins colour-coded by kind of stop, plus one page of "three things to do before you go."

That reaches the After of "the destinations and the order are settled."

Advice on a social account

The deluxe version: a three-month programme with weekly calls.

The smallest version: look at the account and name three things to fix, in priority order. Ten minutes of audio, or one page of text.

That reaches the After of "one thing to do today, decided."

What all four have in common is that **they stopped trying to hand over everything and kept only the part the After needs.**

"Would it not be better to do this for free?"

A question that comes up a lot.

Giving something away is not a bad thing in itself. The free part of this site was a demonstration of exactly that.

But do the whole of your smallest product for free and there is one thing you cannot find out.

Whether they would pay for it.

Between "that was good" and "I will pay a thousand for it" there is a considerable gap. People tend to be kind about things they were given.

So put a price on it for your first person.

How to decide that price is the next step.

Work 5 — Settle the smallest product

Write three things.

1. **The form** — a PDF, a consultation, a template, something included in a parcel, doing it for them, reviewing their work
2. **What is in it** — how many of what. Page count, item count, minutes
3. **Why this reaches the After** — one line

If you cannot write number three, it is either still too small or pointed in the wrong direction.

Then settle one more thing.

How many hours will this take you to make?

If it is more than ten, look for a way to make it one step smaller. For a first product, **being finishable** matters more than anything else.

The sentence that finishes this step

My smallest product is (), in the form of ().

Six of the nine fields are done.

05 — Smallest product

Your first product can be small. But **small** and **sloppy** are different things.

- Small = the scope is narrow
- Sloppy = what is inside that narrow scope is careless

You narrowed it, so go deeper.

What not to do first

A service name. A logo. A domain. A website. A social account. Business cards.

All of that can be done later. The only thing to do first is: **hand something small to one person.**

Candidate forms

A PDF. A one-page checklist. A 30 to 45 minute online consultation. A template. A review of something they made. Doing part of it for them. One sheet of paper included with a physical product. Ten minutes of audio.

The test

It is not volume.

Does the After you wrote in 03 happen to the person who receives this?

Write here

Write these four.

1. The form
2. What is in it — be specific: page count, number of items, number of minutes
3. Why this reaches the After, in one line
4. How long it will take you to make

If number four is more than ten hours, look for a way to make it one step smaller. For a first product, **being finishable** matters more than anything else.

1. Form

2. What is in it — page count, item count, minutes

3. Why this reaches the After (one line)

4. How long it takes you to make

Field 6 of the design sheet**6. The smallest product**

My smallest product is (), in the form of ().

10 — Three worked examples

Models to compare your own answers against.

All three are **invented examples**, written to show the shape of an answer. They are not real sales records and they are not customer feedback.

All three differ in price and in form.

Example A — travel

Field	Filled in
1. Who it is for	27, office job. Going to Seoul for the first time in October with a friend, three nights
2. Where they are now	Over eighty places saved, and the more that grows the less the order gets decided. "I keep saving things and now I have less idea than before"
3. Where they want to be	Three days of destinations and a route settled before departure. On the day, they just open the map
4. Negatives removed	Narrowing eighty saves / building the route / checking closing days / standing still deciding where next
5. Positives added	An unasked-for page: "the first evening, photographs come out well here" / a map colour-coded by kind of stop
6. Smallest product	A 12-page PDF + a shared map of 30 pins in four colours + one page of "three things to do before you go". Three days only
7. First price	¥2,000
8. Where it goes out first	Individually, to people who answered a question sticker on their Instagram story
9. After the purchase	5 min = save the map to their own account (3 min) / 1 day = "did the map save alright?" / three days before departure = a packing list. One question after they get back

Example B — clothes