

Business Strategy / Business Ideas

Start with a specific customer problem and work backward to identify profitable business opportunities.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Problem Validation, Opportunity Discovery, Customer-Centric Ideation

Updated: May 2026

Why This Prompt Exists

Most entrepreneurs start with a solution, then look for a problem — the wrong way around.

You get:

- solutions looking for problems (no market demand)
- products nobody needs or wants
- wasted time and money on the wrong thing
- failure to validate the problem before building
- businesses that struggle to find customers

But problem-first is not a luxury.

It is the only reliable way to build something people want.

- Problem severity: how much does it hurt (1-10)?
- Audience size: how many people have this problem?
- Current solutions: how are they solving it now?
- Solution space: what could you build to solve it?
- Willingness to pay: will they pay for a solution?

Without problem-first thinking, you build something nobody wants.

This framework forces AI to start with the problem and work backward to solutions.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a problem-first business strategist who starts with customer pain.

Your task is to generate business ideas from a specific problem.

Generate:

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

- What is the problem?
- Who experiences it?
- How severe is it (1-10)?

2. PROBLEM VALIDATION

- How do you know this is a real problem?
- What evidence exists?

3. CURRENT SOLUTIONS

- How are people solving this now?
- What's wrong with current solutions?

4. SOLUTION IDEAS (5-7)

- Different approaches to solving the problem
- Different business models

5. TOP 3 OPPORTUNITIES

- Ranked by potential
- Why each could work

6. VALIDATION NEXT STEPS

- How to test if people will pay

INPUTS:

Specific Customer Problem (describe in detail):

[INSERT]

Target Customer (who has this problem):

[DESCRIBE]

How You Know This Problem Exists (evidence):

[E.G., "I've experienced it myself" / "50 people in a Facebook group complain about it"]

Your Relevant Skills (to solve this problem):

[LIST]

Your Resources:

[TIME, BUDGET, NETWORK]

RULES:

- Problem must be specific (not "small businesses struggle")
- Severity 8+ indicates urgent need (best opportunities)
- Evidence must be real (not "I think people have this problem")
- Current solutions analysis reveals gaps

- Solution ideas must be feasible with your skills
- Validation next steps must be low-cost (under \$500)

How To Use It

- Only start with problems you've experienced or observed directly.
- Problem severity 8+ (on 1-10) is best — people will pay to fix urgent pain.
- Talk to 10-20 people with the problem before designing a solution.
- Current solutions analysis reveals what's missing (opportunity).
- Validate willingness to pay before building anything.

Example Input

Specific Customer Problem: Freelancers waste 5+ hours per week manually tracking time, creating invoices, and chasing late payments

Target Customer: Freelance designers, writers, and developers with 1-5 years experience

How You Know This Problem Exists: Experienced it myself as a freelancer; 200+ comments in freelance Facebook groups complaining about admin work

Your Relevant Skills: Product management, basic coding, user research

Your Resources: 10 hours/week, \$2,000 budget

Why It Works

Most startups build solutions first.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- problem specificity (clarity)
- severity assessment (urgency)
- evidence requirements (validation)

- current solution analysis (gaps)
- willingness to pay testing (demand)

Great businesses don't start with solutions — they start with problems people desperately need solved.

Build Better AI Systems

Subscribe for advanced prompt engineering, AI business strategy tools, business idea frameworks, and practical strategies for entrepreneurs and founders.

Carefully engineered prompts for people doing real work.

Share this:

- [Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\) Facebook](#)
- [Share on X \(Opens in new window\) X](#)

See also [The Revenue Model Explorer](#)