

HUSTLE MAG

Hustle in Silence.

EDITION 006

VOLUME I

PREMIUM EDITION

FLOOR

*Know your price
floor*

VALUE

*Price the value,
not the hours*



OFFER

Packages that sell

GROWTH

*Raise prices
without losing
clients*

THE COVER STORY

PRICING WITH CONFIDENCE

Charge What Your Work Is Worth, and Explain Why

HUSTLE MAG — THE COMPLETE BUSINESS COLLECTION · EDITION 006

From the Editors

Few decisions affect a small business as much as its prices, and few are made with less thought. Many founders choose a number by glancing at competitors, lowering it slightly to feel safe and then avoiding the subject for years. The result is a business that works hard, stays busy and struggles to pay its owner properly.

This issue is about pricing deliberately. It begins with the floor below which you should never go, then moves to the value your work creates and the models and packages that express it. We look at discounts, which quietly cost more than most people realise, and at raising prices without damaging relationships.

Confidence in pricing does not come from boldness alone. It comes from understanding: knowing your costs, knowing the value you deliver and being able to explain the connection between the two in plain words. Customers rarely resent a fair price clearly explained. They resent surprises, vagueness and the sense of being manipulated.

Read this issue with your current prices in front of you. By the end, you should know whether they are right, and what to do if they are not.

The Editors, Hustle Mag

EDITION 006 · PRICING WITH CONFIDENCE

Contents

	From the Editors	2
	In This Issue	4
	PRICING WITH CONFIDENCE	
01	Know Your Price Floor	5
	COVER STORY	
02	Price the Value, Not the Hours	10
	STRATEGY	
03	Choosing a Pricing Model	15
	MODELS	
04	Packages That Sell	21
	OFFER	
05	The Hidden Cost of Discounts	27
	PROFIT	
06	Raising Prices Without Losing Clients	32
	GROWTH	
07	The Price Conversation	38
	SALES	
08	Honest Pricing Builds Lasting Businesses	43
	PRINCIPLES	
	Your Action Plan	48
	THIRTY DAYS, FOUR STEPS	

IN THIS EDITION · EDITION 006

Pricing With Confidence

Charge What Your Work Is Worth, and Explain Why

Price is the single number that connects everything else in a business: costs, value, positioning and growth. Set it well and the business has room to deliver excellent work, invest and pay its owner. Set it poorly and even strong demand cannot fix the economics.

This issue builds a complete approach to pricing. We start with your price floor and the value your work creates, then compare pricing models and design packages. We examine discounts and price increases, prepare you for price conversations and finish with the principles of honest pricing.

Each article ends with a step you can apply to your own prices this week.

The theme: Pricing strategy, value communication, packages and price changes.

COVER STORY · 4 MIN READ

01

Know Your Price Floor

Before you can price with confidence, you need to know the number you must never go below.

FIGURE 01 · PRICE FLOOR

Calculating your price floor

STEP 1 Software, insurance, equipment, accounting, marketing, fees: €900

Monthly costs

STEP 2 What you need to live and save: €2,600

Your pay

STEP 3 Realistic, not total working hours: 80 a month

Billable hours

RESULT $(€900 + €2,600) \div 80 = \text{€43.75 an hour}$, before a buffer

Floor rate

Example figures. Your floor is a boundary, not your price.

Every business has a price floor: the lowest price at which it can sell without losing money or underpaying its owner. Many small businesses have never calculated theirs. They set prices by instinct or comparison, then discover months later that busy periods somehow fail to produce profit.

Knowing your floor does not mean charging it. It means you can recognise a bad deal immediately, negotiate without anxiety and build every other pricing decision on solid ground.

Count every cost

Start with direct costs: the materials, products, software, subcontractors or delivery expenses tied to each sale. Then add overheads: the costs of running the business regardless

of sales, such as software subscriptions, insurance, equipment, accounting, marketing, workspace and payment fees.

Founders often forget smaller recurring costs, but together they add up. Review a few months of bank statements to capture everything, then calculate a monthly total.

Pay yourself properly

The most commonly omitted cost is the founder's own pay. If your prices only cover expenses, the business is not truly profitable; it is simply using your time for free. Decide what you need to earn each month to live, save and contribute to a pension or emergency fund where relevant, and include it as a cost.

A business that cannot pay its owner a fair income at its current prices has a pricing problem, not a motivation problem.

Account for non-billable time

If you sell time, remember that not every working hour can be charged. Marketing, sales conversations, administration, learning and finance all take time. Many independent professionals find that only half to two-thirds of their working hours are billable.

Divide your total monthly costs, including your pay, by your realistic billable hours, not your total working hours. The result is often surprisingly high, and it explains why so

many freelancers feel busy but underpaid.

“Marketing, sales conversations, administration, learning and finance all take time.”

Calculate the floor

For product businesses, your floor per sale is the direct cost of each unit plus its share of overheads and your pay. For service businesses, it is the minimum hourly or project rate that covers all costs at realistic billable hours.

Add a margin for unexpected costs, quieter months and taxes. A floor without any buffer leaves no room for the inevitable surprises of running a business.

Use the floor as a boundary

Once you know your floor, treat it as a firm boundary. If a customer asks for a price below it, the answer should usually be no, or an offer with reduced scope that still respects the floor. Selling below your floor means paying to work.

This boundary also makes negotiation calmer. You no longer need to guess whether a discount is acceptable. You know exactly where the line is.

Review it regularly

Costs change. Software subscriptions rise, suppliers adjust prices and your personal needs evolve. Recalculate your floor at least twice a year and whenever a significant cost changes. Many businesses lose profitability slowly because prices stay fixed while costs creep upwards.

An example in practice

A freelance designer charged €35 an hour because it felt competitive. When she calculated her real costs, including software, equipment, insurance, a modest salary and the fact that only twenty of her forty weekly hours were billable, her floor came to €48 an hour. She had been losing money on every project without realising it. She raised her rates for new clients to €65 and introduced fixed-price packages based on that figure.

THE TAKEAWAY

Your price floor is the foundation of confident pricing. **Add up your monthly costs and your own pay, divide by realistic billable hours or sales, add a buffer, and write down the price below which you will not go.**

02

Price the Value, Not the Hours

Customers do not buy your time. They buy the result your time produces.

Cost tells you the minimum you can charge. Value tells you how much a customer might reasonably pay. The space between the two is where good pricing lives. Businesses that price only from cost leave that space empty, often charging far less than their work is worth to the people who buy it.

Value-based pricing means setting prices with reference to the outcome a customer receives, rather than the effort or time required to produce it.

Understand what the result is worth

Ask what your work changes for the customer. Does it increase their revenue, save time, reduce costs, avoid a risk or improve their quality of life? Try to describe that change in concrete terms. A website that brings a clinic ten extra bookings a month is worth more than a website that simply looks attractive, even if both took the same time to build.

You do not need precise figures. Reasonable estimates, confirmed in conversation with customers, are enough to anchor your prices to something more meaningful than hours.

Value differs by customer

The same work can be worth very different amounts to different customers. A bookkeeping service may save a small café a few hours a month, while saving a growing restaurant group from expensive errors and missed tax

deadlines. This is why specialisation and clear positioning matter: they help you find customers for whom your work creates the greatest value.

It also explains why identical prices for every customer are not always fair or sensible. Packages and tiers allow customers to choose the level of value they need.

Ask about outcomes before quoting

In service businesses, value-based pricing starts with questions. Before proposing a price, ask what the customer wants to achieve, what the problem is costing them now and how they will measure success. These questions often reveal value the customer has not fully considered.

When you later present your price, connect it to those outcomes: "You mentioned that missed appointments cost about €2,000 a month. This system is designed to reduce that significantly."

“Before proposing a price, ask what the customer wants to achieve, what the problem is costing them now and how they will measure success.”

Compare with the customer's alternatives

Customers judge value relative to their alternatives: doing the work themselves, hiring someone else, using a cheaper tool or doing nothing. Understand what each alternative really costs them in money, time and risk. Your price should be clearly justified compared with the realistic alternative, not with the cheapest option on the market.

Separate your price from your hours

When you price by outcome, your income is no longer limited by the hours you work. As you become more skilled and efficient, you deliver the same value in less time, and your effective hourly income rises. Under hourly pricing, efficiency is punished: the faster you work, the less you earn.

This does not mean hiding effort or charging arbitrary amounts. It means recognising that experience and skill are part of what customers pay for.

Stay grounded and fair

Value-based pricing is not an excuse to charge whatever you can. Prices should remain fair, explainable and comfortably above your floor. Customers who feel overcharged leave and warn others. The aim is a price that represents a clear good deal for the customer while rewarding the business properly.

An example in practice

A consultant who helped small online shops improve their checkout process charged €80 an hour, usually earning about €800 per project. After learning that typical clients gained several thousand euros of additional monthly revenue from her changes, she introduced a fixed €2,400 checkout review with a clear scope. Clients compared the price with the expected return rather than her hours, and most accepted without negotiation.

THE TAKEAWAY

Customers pay for outcomes, not effort. For your main offer, write down the result it creates for a typical customer, estimate its value in money or time, and check whether your price is anchored to that value or only to your hours.

03

Choosing a Pricing Model

How you charge shapes how customers perceive value and how stable your income becomes.

FIGURE 03 · PRICING MODELS

Five ways to charge

MODEL	BEST FOR	WATCH OUT FOR
Hourly	Uncertain scope	Caps income; rewards slowness
Fixed project	Defined deliverables	Scope creep
Retainer	Ongoing work	Unclear monthly limits
Subscription	Continuing value	Cancellations
Per unit / usage	Variable volume	Unpredictable bills

Prices are not only numbers. They are also structures: hourly rates, fixed projects, retainers, subscriptions or per-unit prices. The structure you choose affects how customers compare your offer, how predictable your income is and how much risk each side carries. Choosing the right model is as important as choosing the right number.

Hourly pricing

Charging by the hour is simple and familiar. It suits work with uncertain scope, where neither side can predict how long the job will take. It also protects the provider from projects that grow unexpectedly.

However, hourly pricing caps your income at the hours you can work, rewards slowness rather than efficiency and encourages customers to scrutinise time rather than

results. It works best as a fallback for loosely defined work rather than the foundation of a business.

Fixed project pricing

A fixed price for a defined project gives customers certainty about the total cost. It rewards efficiency, because a faster delivery increases your margin. It also makes buying easier: customers know exactly what they will pay.

The risk is scope creep. Fixed pricing requires a clear written scope, a defined number of revisions and an agreed way to handle additional requests.

Retainers

A retainer is a recurring payment for ongoing work or availability, such as monthly marketing support, bookkeeping or advisory services. Retainers provide predictable income and deepen client relationships.

To work well, a retainer needs clear boundaries: what is included each month, how unused time is treated and how extra work is charged. Without boundaries, retainers can quietly expand into unlimited work for a fixed fee.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions charge customers regularly for continued access to a product, service or community. They create recurring revenue and allow long-term planning. They suit

offers that deliver ongoing value, such as software, regular deliveries or memberships.

The challenge is retention. Customers cancel when value fades, so subscription businesses must keep delivering visible benefits.

“Subscriptions charge customers regularly for continued access to a product, service or community.”

Per-unit and usage pricing

Some businesses charge per product, per item processed or per unit of usage. This model feels fair to customers because they pay for what they use, and it scales naturally as customers grow.

It can make income less predictable, and customers may hesitate if they cannot estimate their costs. Clear examples and price calculators help.

Choosing the right model

Consider four questions. How predictable is the work? How much certainty do customers need? How important is recurring income to you? How does your value grow over time? Many businesses combine models, for example a fixed-price setup project followed by a monthly retainer.

The best model is the one that aligns your income with the value customers receive, while keeping risk fair for both sides.

Moving between models

Changing models is possible but should be done carefully. Moving from hourly to fixed pricing usually begins with new clients and clearly defined packages. Moving to subscriptions may start with an optional monthly plan alongside one-off purchases. Test with a small group before changing everything.

Common mistakes

Two mistakes are especially common. The first is mixing models without clear rules, for example a fixed project price that quietly turns hourly when the client asks for changes. Customers feel misled, even when the extra charge is fair. State in writing when and how additional work is charged.

The second is choosing a model for the provider's comfort alone. A subscription may suit your cash flow, but if customers only need help twice a year, it will feel like poor value and they will cancel. The model must make sense from the customer's side as well.

An example in practice

A web developer charged hourly for maintenance and constantly sent small invoices that clients questioned. He introduced a monthly care plan at a fixed fee covering updates, backups, security checks and up to two hours of changes. Clients appreciated the predictability, invoices stopped being debated and his monthly income became stable enough to plan around.

THE TAKEAWAY

Your pricing model shapes risk, perception and income stability. **Write down how you currently charge, identify the main problem it causes, and design one alternative model, such as a fixed package or retainer, to offer your next client.**

04

Packages That Sell

Clear options help customers choose, and help you sell without negotiating every detail.

FIGURE 04 · PACKAGES

Three packages, three customer types

Essential	Recommended	Complete
For individuals who need the core result. Short session, ten edited images.	For small businesses. Half day, thirty images, two locations. Most choose this.	For companies. Full day, team portraits, location set, usage rights.

Every package must sit above your price floor.

Offering a single price forces customers into a yes-or-no decision. Offering unlimited custom options overwhelms them. A small number of well-designed packages sits between the two: enough choice for customers to find the right fit, structured enough for you to deliver efficiently.

Good packages are not decoration. They are a way of expressing value, guiding choice and making buying easier.

Why packages work

Packages simplify decisions. Instead of evaluating every detail, customers compare a few clear options and choose the one that matches their needs and budget. Packages also communicate the range of value you offer, which can lead some customers to choose a more comprehensive option than they originally intended.

For the business, packages reduce custom quoting, standardise delivery and make income more predictable.

Three is often enough

Many businesses find that three packages work well: an essential option, a recommended option and a comprehensive option. Each should be designed for a specific type of customer rather than simply adding more features.

For example, a photographer might offer a short headshot session for individuals, a half-day package for small businesses and a full-day package for companies needing team portraits and location images.

Make each package distinct

Customers should be able to understand the difference between packages within seconds. Describe each by who it is for and the result it delivers, then list the main inclusions. Avoid long lists of minor features that make packages look similar.

A useful test: if a customer cannot explain why someone would choose the middle package over the first, the packages are not distinct enough.

Price the steps sensibly

The price gaps between packages should reflect real differences in value and effort. If the comprehensive package is only slightly more expensive than the recommended one, many customers will choose it, perhaps

more than you can deliver profitably. If the gap is too large, few will consider it.

Every package must sit comfortably above your price floor. The essential package should still be profitable, not a loss leader you hope customers will upgrade from.

“The essential package should still be profitable, not a loss leader you hope customers will upgrade from.”

Highlight a recommendation

Most customers appreciate guidance. Marking one package as recommended, usually the option that suits most customers best, makes the choice easier. Explain briefly why it is recommended.

The recommendation must be genuine. Steering customers towards an option that does not suit them damages trust and increases refunds and complaints.

Avoid decoy packages

Some pricing advice suggests creating options that exist only to make another option look attractive. Customers increasingly recognise this tactic, and it can feel manipulative. Every package should be one you would be happy for a customer to choose.

Review package performance

Track which packages customers choose, how profitable each is and which generate the most satisfied customers. If nearly everyone chooses the cheapest option, the higher packages may not offer enough additional value. If no one chooses the essential package, it may be poorly designed or unnecessary.

Adjust packages based on evidence, not assumptions.

Common mistakes

Founders often build packages around what they can do rather than what customers need, producing options full of features few people value. Start instead from customer types and outcomes, then decide what each package must include to deliver that outcome.

Another mistake is creating too many packages. Five or six options, each slightly different, make comparison tiring and slow decisions down. If you need more flexibility, offer a small set of optional add-ons alongside a few core packages.

An example in practice

A cleaning company offered only hourly cleaning and spent hours quoting every enquiry. It introduced three packages: a regular weekly clean, a deep clean for move-ins and move-outs, and a monthly maintenance plan for

offices. Each listed what was included and who it suited. Quoting time fell sharply, and the office plan became the most profitable part of the business.

THE TAKEAWAY

Clear packages make choosing and selling easier.

Design two or three packages for different customer types, describe each by who it is for and the result it delivers, check every price against your floor, and mark one genuine recommendation.

05

The Hidden Cost of Discounts

A small discount can remove a large share of your profit. Know the arithmetic before you offer one.

Discounts feel generous and harmless. A customer hesitates, you offer ten percent off, the sale closes and everyone seems happy. Yet discounts are one of the most expensive habits a small business can develop. They reduce profit far more than the headline percentage suggests, train customers to wait for lower prices and can quietly undermine the value of your work.

This does not mean discounts are always wrong. It means they should be used deliberately, with a clear purpose and an understanding of their true cost.

The arithmetic of discounting

Discounts are taken from your profit, not your revenue. Imagine a product sold for €100 that costs €60 to make and deliver, leaving €40 profit. A ten percent discount reduces the price to €90, but your costs remain €60, so your profit falls to €30. A ten percent discount has removed a quarter of your profit.

To earn the same total profit at the discounted price, you would need to sell about a third more units. Many businesses offer discounts without ever checking whether the extra volume appears.

Discounts change customer expectations

Customers learn quickly. If you frequently offer discounts, many will wait for the next one before buying. Some will ask for a discount every time, because it has worked before.

Regular discounting can turn your full price into a number nobody actually pays.

Discounts can also send an unintended message. If a premium service is regularly reduced, customers may wonder whether it was overpriced in the first place.

Better alternatives to discounting

When a customer hesitates about price, a discount is rarely the only option:

- **Adjust the scope:** offer a smaller package at a lower price rather than the same package for less.
- **Add value instead:** include something inexpensive for you but valuable to the customer, such as a short training session.
- **Change payment terms:** spread payments over several months while keeping the total price.
- **Offer a guarantee:** reduce the perceived risk instead of the price.

Each alternative protects your price while addressing the customer's real concern.

“If a premium service is regularly reduced, customers may wonder whether it was overpriced in the first place.”

When discounts make sense

Discounts can be useful when they serve a clear purpose. Examples include rewarding customers who pay a year in advance, offering a founding price to early customers who take a risk on a new product, clearing old stock or thanking long-term clients. In these cases, the discount buys something valuable: cash flow, commitment, early feedback or loyalty.

Define the purpose, limit the duration and communicate the reason clearly. A discount with a reason feels fair. A discount without a reason invites negotiation.

Set rules in advance

Decide your discount policy before you face a hesitant customer. What discounts are allowed, for whom, how large and under what conditions? Write it down. Clear rules prevent emotional decisions in the middle of sales conversations and ensure customers are treated consistently.

Measure the results

If you run a promotion, measure its effect: how many additional sales it produced, what profit it generated and whether customers returned at full price afterwards. Many promotions look successful because they increase sales, while actually reducing total profit.

An example in practice

A small online tea shop ran a twenty percent discount almost every month. Sales spiked during promotions and fell sharply between them. When the owner calculated the effect, she found that the promotions produced more orders but less profit than ordinary months. She stopped regular discounts, introduced a loyalty programme offering a free sample with every third order and kept one annual sale. Orders became steadier and profits improved within a quarter.

THE TAKEAWAY

Every discount is paid from your profit. **Calculate how much profit a ten percent discount removes from your main offer, write a short discount policy with clear purposes and limits, and prepare one alternative to discounting for hesitant customers.**

06

Raising Prices Without Losing Clients

Price increases are a normal part of a healthy business. Handled well, most clients accept them.

FIGURE 06 · RAISING PRICES

The price increase sequence

FIRST New clients	Apply the new price to all new proposals now.
THEN Watch demand	Three months of steady acceptance confirms the market.
NOTICE Existing clients	One to three months' written notice with date and reason.
EVERY YEAR Review	A small annual review beats rare large increases.

Many small business owners keep prices unchanged for years, even as costs rise and their skills improve. They fear losing clients, appearing greedy or starting uncomfortable conversations. Yet unchanged prices quietly erode profit every year, and the eventual increase often has to be larger and more painful.

Raising prices is a normal part of running a sustainable business. Done thoughtfully, with notice and clear communication, most clients accept increases without difficulty.

Signs your prices are too low

Several signals suggest it may be time to raise prices. Your calendar is consistently full. Enquiries exceed your capacity. Clients rarely question your quotes. Your costs

have risen since you last set prices. Your skills, results and reputation have improved. Perhaps most tellingly, you feel resentful about how much work you do for the income you receive.

If several of these apply, your prices are probably below the value you provide.

Start with new clients

The simplest place to begin is with new clients. Raise your prices on your website and in new proposals immediately. New clients have no previous price to compare with, so they judge the new price on its own merits.

This approach also lets you test the market. If new clients continue to accept your prices, you have evidence that existing clients may accept an increase too.

Give existing clients notice

For existing clients, give clear notice, typically one to three months depending on your relationship and the type of service. Notice allows clients to budget and shows respect. Avoid surprises on invoices.

Communicate in writing, personally where possible. A short, direct message works better than a long apology.

“If new clients continue to accept your prices, you have evidence that existing clients may accept an increase too.”

Explain briefly and confidently

A good price increase message states the new price, the date it takes effect and a short reason, such as rising costs, improved services or the need to maintain quality. It thanks the client for their business and offers a conversation if they have questions.

Avoid excessive apologies or lengthy justifications. They make the increase sound unreasonable. A calm, professional tone signals that the change is a normal business decision.

Consider reasonable transitions

For long-standing clients, you might phase in an increase or honour current prices until the end of an existing agreement. These gestures show loyalty without preventing necessary changes. Be careful, however, not to keep favourite clients on old prices indefinitely, as this can lead to resentment and unprofitable work.

Accept that some clients will leave

A price increase may cause a few clients to leave, usually those most focused on price. This can feel uncomfortable, but it often improves the business. Higher prices with slightly fewer clients can produce the same or greater income with less work, leaving more time for better service and new opportunities.

Track the results. In many cases, fewer clients leave than feared.

Make increases regular

Small, regular increases are easier for clients to accept than rare, large ones. Many businesses review prices annually and adjust them in line with costs and value. When clients know prices are reviewed every year, increases feel normal rather than personal.

An example in practice

A bookkeeper had not changed her prices in four years. She raised prices by fifteen percent for new clients and, after three months of steady demand, notified existing clients that the same increase would apply after a two-month notice period. Her message gave the new price, the start date and a brief explanation of increased software costs and expanded reporting. Two clients out of thirty left; the rest stayed, and her monthly income rose noticeably.

THE TAKEAWAY

Regular price increases protect the health of your business. **Raise prices for new clients this month, draft a short, confident notice for existing clients with a clear date and reason, and set an annual date to review your prices.**

07

The Price Conversation

State your price clearly, then let the customer respond. Confidence is mostly preparation.

For many founders, the most uncomfortable moment in a sale is saying the price aloud. They rush, apologise, offer discounts before the customer has responded or bury the number among explanations. Customers notice the hesitation, and hesitation suggests the price may be negotiable or not quite justified.

Confident price conversations are not about personality. They come from preparation: knowing your floor, understanding the customer's needs and having clear answers to common objections.

Understand needs before discussing price

Price should come after you understand what the customer needs and what success looks like for them. Ask about the problem, its impact and the result they want. When the price arrives, it can then be connected to those outcomes, rather than appearing as an isolated number.

Customers who understand how an offer solves their problem are far more receptive to its price.

State the price clearly

When the moment comes, state the price simply and directly: "The complete package is €2,400." Then stop speaking. Resist the urge to fill the silence with justifications or discounts. Allow the customer time to think and respond.

Silence can feel uncomfortable, but it shows confidence.

Many customers simply need a moment to consider the decision.

Present options rather than a single figure

Where appropriate, present two or three options. Options change the question from "Should I buy?" to "Which option suits me best?" They also give customers a way to reduce the price by reducing the scope, rather than asking for a discount.

Listen to objections carefully

Price objections are not always about price. "It's more than I expected" may mean the value is unclear. "I need to think about it" may hide uncertainty about results or timing. "Another provider is cheaper" may reflect a different scope.

Ask a gentle question to understand the concern: "What were you comparing it with?" or "What would you need to feel confident about this?" The answer tells you how to respond.

"It's more than I expected" may mean the value is unclear."

Respond with value or scope, not discounts

When the value is unclear, explain it again in terms of the customer's goals, using examples or case studies. When the budget genuinely does not fit, offer a smaller package or a phased approach. Lowering the price for the same work should be a rare exception, not your first response.

If the customer truly cannot afford your services, it is acceptable to part politely. Not every enquiry is a good fit.

Prepare answers in advance

Write down the objections you hear most often and prepare clear, honest responses. Practise saying your prices and responses aloud, perhaps with a friend or colleague.

Rehearsal reduces anxiety and helps you sound natural rather than defensive.

Put prices in writing

After a conversation, send a written summary: what is included, the price, payment terms and next steps. Written proposals reduce misunderstandings and give customers something concrete to review and share with others involved in the decision.

A simple script

A clear structure helps when nerves arrive. One example:

summarise the customer's goal ("You want to cut missed appointments and free up reception time"), describe the recommended option and its result, state the price once ("The recommended package is €1,800"), then pause. If the customer hesitates, ask what they are weighing up, and respond to that concern specifically.

An example in practice

A personal trainer used to mention his prices quickly and immediately offered discounts when clients hesitated. He changed his approach: a free consultation focused on goals, then three clearly priced options presented calmly, followed by a pause. When clients raised concerns, he asked what they were comparing with and explained what each option included. Fewer clients asked for discounts, and more chose his middle package.

THE TAKEAWAY

Confidence in price conversations comes from preparation. **Write down your three most common price objections with honest responses, practise stating your prices aloud followed by a pause, and prepare two options for every proposal.**

08

Honest Pricing Builds Lasting Businesses

Clear, fair and transparent prices earn trust that clever tactics cannot buy.

There is no shortage of pricing tricks: hidden fees revealed at checkout, countdown timers that reset, fake "original" prices crossed out, subscriptions that are easy to start and difficult to cancel. Some of these tactics increase short-term sales. Many damage trust, attract complaints and, in many countries, breach consumer protection rules.

For a small business that depends on reputation, recommendations and repeat customers, honest pricing is not only the ethical choice. It is the more profitable one over time.

Show the full price

Customers should know the total price before they commit. Hidden fees, surprise delivery charges and mandatory extras revealed late in the buying process create frustration and abandoned purchases. Show taxes, delivery costs and any additional fees clearly and early, following the rules that apply where you sell.

If prices vary, explain the factors and give realistic examples or ranges. Transparency reduces anxiety and filters out customers who would never accept your prices anyway.

Be truthful about reductions

If you offer a reduced price, the original price should be genuine: a price at which you actually sold the product for

a reasonable period. Inventing inflated "original" prices to make discounts look larger is misleading and is restricted by law in many places.

Similarly, urgency should be real. If an offer ends on Friday, it should end on Friday.

Make subscriptions fair

Subscriptions should be easy to understand, easy to manage and easy to cancel. Explain clearly what customers will pay, how often and how to stop. Remind customers before annual renewals. Businesses that make cancellation difficult may keep revenue for a few extra months, but they lose goodwill and often attract negative reviews.

“Subscriptions should be easy to understand, easy to manage and easy to cancel.”

Treat customers consistently

Customers talk to each other. If similar customers receive very different prices without a clear reason, those who paid more will feel cheated when they find out. Base price differences on transparent factors such as scope, package, volume or contract length, and be prepared to explain them.

Price for sustainability, not exploitation

Fair pricing works in both directions. It means not overcharging customers who lack information or alternatives, and it also means not undercharging to the point where your business cannot deliver good work or pay its owner. A sustainable price allows you to serve customers well for years.

Honest pricing as a selling point

Transparency can become part of your brand. Clear prices, no hidden fees and straightforward cancellation are increasingly rare and valued. Customers who trust your pricing are more likely to buy without lengthy comparison, return and recommend you to others.

Check your own pricing

Review your website, proposals, checkout and invoices from the customer's point of view. Is the full price visible before payment? Are all fees explained? Are discounts genuine? Is cancellation simple? Small improvements here can reduce complaints and increase conversions.

Know the rules where you sell

Consumer protection rules about price display, reference prices, subscriptions and cancellation differ between countries and change over time. Many require total prices

including taxes for consumers, genuine reference prices for discounts and simple ways to cancel. Check the official guidance where you and your customers are based, and seek professional advice if you are unsure. Following the rules is part of honest pricing.

An example in practice

An online course creator used a countdown timer that restarted for every visitor and listed an inflated "regular" price that had never been charged. A few customers noticed and complained publicly. She removed the timer, showed one honest price, introduced a clear refund policy and explained exactly what buyers received. Conversion dipped briefly, then recovered, and refund requests fell because customers knew exactly what they were buying.

THE TAKEAWAY

Trust is the most valuable thing a price can communicate. **Review your pricing from a customer's perspective, remove any hidden fees or misleading claims, make cancellation and refund terms clear, and state your full price before payment.**

BEFORE YOU CLOSE THIS ISSUE

Your Action Plan

Turn what you have read into the next thirty days.

Your next 30 days

Week 1: Find your floor. Calculate your true costs, including your own pay and non-billable time. Write down the lowest price you can accept.

Week 2: Describe the value. For your main offer, write the outcomes customers receive in money, time or risk avoided.

Week 3: Package and present. Create two or three clear options and rewrite your pricing page or proposal around outcomes.

Week 4: Raise and practise. Apply your new prices to new customers, plan notice for existing ones and rehearse your price conversation aloud.

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