

The AI Starter Stack

10 ways creatives can build a business with AI

The tools, the real costs and the first steps. Prices checked Oct 2026.



CXT ACADEMY · FIELD GUIDE · 2026 EDITION · DRAFT

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10 ways creatives can build a business with AI

READ BEFORE YOU START

This guide is education, not financial, legal or tax advice. Nothing in it is a promise of income. Every price is either **cited** (with a numbered source at the back) or labelled an **estimate** or **guidance**. Prices were checked in October 2026 and tools change their prices often, so check the live page before you buy.

ABOUT THE PICTURES

The cover and chapter photographs are AI-generated images made for this guide. They show no real people or brands. The interface cards are illustrations.

CREDITS

Several methods are summarised from Higgsfield AI's public YouTube videos and blog, credited where used. This guide is not affiliated with or sponsored by Higgsfield or any tool named.

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Contents

Start here	Read this first	4
	Pick your play · what we left out	5
	The starter stack: top 8 tools	6
01	Launch and motion ads	7
02	AI for e-commerce: photos, listings, ads, shop setup	11
03	Short-form content studio	14
04	Ad creative studio: still ads + real-creator UGC	17
05	Clipping, with the owner’s permission	20
06	Be the middleman, or form a mini studio	23
07	AI-built websites, apps and your own products	28
08	AI assistants and automations	32
09	Global voiceover and dubbing	35
10	Sell small AI courses and what you build	38
Bonus	Bonus: 10 more quick ideas	41
	Work with CXT	42
	Sources	43

Read this *first*

This guide is for creatives anywhere in the world (designers, editors, motion designers, writers, photographers and developers) who want to turn AI skills into paid work. It isn't about getting rich. It's about choosing one realistic play and doing the first steps well.

HOW EACH CHAPTER WORKS

- **What it is and who pays**
- **The tools and what they cost**, each tagged
- **How to start**, step by step
- **Your first client**
- **Pricing guidance and watch out for**

THE LABELS

- CITED \$1** from a source, numbered at the back
- ESTIMATE** our arithmetic, not a measured cost
- GUIDANCE** how to think about price, not a quote
- METHOD: HIGGSFIELD \$25** a creator's method we summarise
- IF YOU OWN IT** use it if you already pay for it

PICK ONE PLAY, FOR 30 DAYS

The most common mistake is trying five ideas at once. Choose one chapter, make three samples, talk to ten real potential clients and sell one small fixed-price job. Then decide whether to keep going. The matrix on the next page helps you choose.

Honest note. AI makes the making cheaper. It doesn't make clients appear. Most of the work in every chapter is finding people with a real problem and doing reliable work for them. If a video promises "\$10k a month in 30 days", treat it as a sales pitch.

WHAT 30 DAYS LOOKS LIKE

Day 7

Three samples made and posted

Day 14

Ten real conversations with potential clients

Day 21

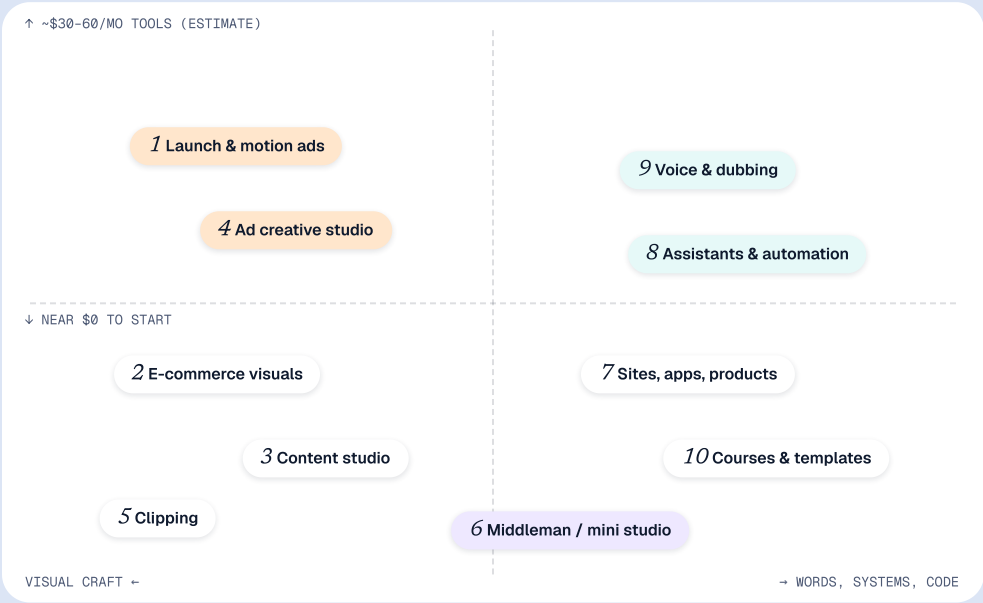
One clear offer sent, with a price

Day 30

One paid job, or a clear reason to switch play

Pick your *play*

Place yourself by what you are already good at (left to right) and how much you want to spend on tools each month (bottom to top). Start near where you are.



QUICK PICKS

- You animate already → 1, then 4
- You shoot or retouch → 2
- You edit video → 3 or 5
- You write or build → 7 or 8
- You speak two languages → 9
- You know lots of people → 6
- You can teach what you do → 10

WHAT WE LEFT OUT, AND WHY

AI influencer personas. Much of the money is in adult content, and passing a synthetic person off as real carries deception and legal risk.

Mass-produced AI books on KDP. Amazon requires AI disclosure and limits submissions, and returns per book are falling as volume rises.

AI “customer” testimonials. Invented reviews are banned in the US and UK and break ad codes elsewhere. CITED S2-S41

The starter *stack*: top 8 tools

You don't need all of these. Most plays use three or four. Prices checked October 2026; check the live page before paying.

1. ChatGPT or Claude

\$8-\$20/mo

Scripts, briefs, storyboards, research, outreach drafts. Use one, not both.

CITED \$1-\$2

Claude Pro £18/mo UK

2. CapCut

Pro \$19.99/mo

Fast vertical editing, captions and templates for short-form.

CITED \$9

3. Canva or Framer

£13/mo · \$10-\$45/mo

Canva for social and print assets; Framer for sites and landing pages.

CITED \$8-\$5

4. Blender

Free

Open-source 3D. Block out scenes and camera moves, then render or hand to AI video.

CITED \$24

5. Higgsfield (Seedance)

Credits

Image and video models in one place, incl. a Blender plugin. Seedance 2.5: 35 credits per 5s at 720p.

CITED \$17-\$19

6. ElevenLabs

\$6-\$22/mo

Voiceover, dubbing and consented voice clones in 70+ languages.

CITED \$3-\$4

7. Cursor or Lovable

Free-\$8 · \$25/mo

Build sites, tools and small apps with AI. Cursor for code; Lovable to start without code.

CITED \$12-\$10

8. n8n

Self-host free · €20+/mo

Automations: connect forms, sheets, WhatsApp and AI into one workflow.

CITED \$11

Higgsfield's plan prices were reported differently by different sources on 30 Oct 2026 (from about \$9 to \$19 a month for the entry plan), so we only cite its credit costs. Check the checkout page. CITED \$18

01

Skill: motion basics

Tools: ~\$0–\$60/mo est.

Who pays: launches

Launch and *motion* ads

Turn product launches into short, on-brand motion clips for software companies, crowdfunding campaigns and online sellers. This is the lane CXT Studios works in.



LAUNCH STILL · REAL CXT FRAME TO COME

Placeholder: swap for a frame from a real CXT launch film

WHAT IT IS

Short clips (usually 10–30 seconds) cut in 16:9, 9:16 and 1:1 for each release: feature reveals, interface walkthroughs, logo stings and “now live” teasers. AI speeds up the scripting, storyboarding and rough motion; your taste does the rest.

WHO PAYS

- **Software and AI startups** shipping features every few weeks.
- **Crowdfunding campaigns** (Kickstarter and similar) that need a clearer story while the campaign is live.
- **Online sellers** launching a product on Amazon, Shopify or Etsy.

PRICE CONTEXT

£250–
£900

a day: what UK freelance motion designers charge, by seniority. Upwork London: \$36–\$50/hr.

CITED S35

Third-party benchmarks, not what you will earn.

TOOLS AND COST

ChatGPT / Claude	Scripts, storyboards, code for motion	\$20/mo · £18/mo UK	CITED S1·S2
Higgsfield	Storyboard frames, then animate (Seedance)	Credits: 35 per 5s clip at 720p	CITED S17
Remotion	Code-driven motion templates	Free for individuals	CITED S2
Blender	3D blockouts and camera moves	Free	CITED S24
ElevenLabs	Voiceover	\$6–\$22/mo	CITED S3
After Effects	Hero polish	IF YOU OWN IT	
Monthly tools to start		~\$0–\$60/mo	ESTIMATE

PRICING GUIDANCE GUIDANCE

Sell a fixed **launch pack** (for example one hero clip plus two cut-downs), not hours. Estimate the days it will take, check against the day-rate range above for your market and level, then round to a package price. Put revision rounds and delivery formats in writing.

Start *this week*

- 1 **Build one reusable template.** Type styles, easing, transitions and a sound bed you can re-skin for any brand.
- 2 **Storyboard, then animate.** Write a one-paragraph brief, generate about eight key frames as stills, fix them until they read as a story, and only then animate each frame. Use clean, classic motion for digital products and bolder 3D “hyper-motion” for physical ones.
METHOD: HIGGSFIELD S25
- 3 **Make 2–3 spec clips** from public changelogs or your own product. Label them “spec, not commissioned”.
- 4 **Post a breakdown:** one release, three formats, and what you changed between storyboard and final.

CXT ran this stack as an internal test: six launch clips from one brief (29 Oct 2026). A test, not client work.

YOUR FIRST CLIENT

- Founders who just posted a release or a changelog.
- Crowdfunding campaigns that are live but under-explained.
- A Contra service listing with your launch pack and spec clips.
- Send 10–15 personal notes with a relevant spec clip, not 200 automated emails. Never let an AI tool send outreach for you.

METHOD: HIGGSFIELD S31 · S25

WATCH OUT FOR

- **The “AI look”.** Wobbly logos and melting text kill trust. Keep logos, type and UI as real vector or screen recordings.
- **Credits burnt on retries.** Lock the storyboard first.
- **Output licence.** Commercial rights depend on your plan; Higgsfield’s free plan isn’t for commercial use. CITED \$17
- **Brands in spec work.** Make clear you aren’t affiliated.

Method credit: Higgsfield AI, “Claude Fable 5 + Higgsfield MCP: My Favorite Business Idea for 2026!” (YouTube, 12 Jun 2026). Summarised, not quoted. Their earnings figures are not repeated here.

YOUR 30-DAY SCORECARD

Day 7

Three samples made and posted

Day 14

Ten real conversations with potential clients

Day 21

One clear offer sent, with a price

Day 30

One paid job, or a clear reason to switch play

Box · Step by step

Blender + Seedance

Blender + AI *render*

Block out a shot in free 3D software, then let an AI video model “render” it. You control the camera and layout; the model adds materials, light and detail. Verified: Higgsfield publishes this workflow and released an official Blender plugin that sends viewport scenes to **Seedance 2.5**. CITED \$19 · \$21

- 1 **Greybox in Blender.** Cubes and simple shapes for the product and set, a camera with a real focal length, one clear camera move. Keep shots short: reference clips are trimmed to 15s. CITED \$20
- 2 **Make a look frame.** A still of the final style: your real product photo, a render, or an AI image.
- 3 **Export a clean clip.** Viewport or clay render, no gizmos, labels or watermarks (they come back in the result). CITED \$23
- 4 **Generate.** In Seedance, use the still as the start frame and the Blender clip as the motion reference; prompt it to follow the clip for camera and layout only. CITED \$20 · \$22
- 5 **Test small, then finish.** Run 720p tests; go to 1080p only for keepers. Fix one segment at a time, then edit and add sound.

TOOLS AND COST

Blender	Free; your renders are yours CITED \$24
Higgsfield plugin	Uses your credits, no extra subscription CITED \$19
Seedance 2.5, 5s clip	35 credits 720p · 80 credits 1080p CITED \$17
Third-party example: 6s, 1080p	\$9-\$11 per take CITED \$23

CHEAPER ROUTE

Render simple product shots in Blender itself (free) and spend AI credits only on the hero shot. Test at 720p and at 5 seconds; on Higgsfield’s table 1080p costs over twice as much. CITED \$17

WATCH OUT FOR

Consistency: models add objects and change product details, so check every frame against the real product. **Credits burnt on retries:** finished generations aren’t refunded, even if you dislike them. CITED \$17

Licence of the output: Blender output is yours, but AI output follows your plan’s terms; check before client delivery. CITED \$24 · \$19