

# THE PROFIT PRINCIPAL™

*Companion Guidebook & Business Assessment Workbook*

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## Welcome

This guidebook is designed to help you apply the concepts from **The Profit Principal™** workshop to your own business.

As you complete the exercises, make note of any questions, frustrations, opportunities, or blind spots you discover along the way.

If you schedule a strategy session with Thomas Minieri, bring this completed workbook with you. It will help guide the conversation and accelerate the diagnostic process.

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## PART I: The Strategy Paradox

### *Why Smart Entrepreneurs Stay Stuck*

Most entrepreneurs don't fail because they lack effort. They get stuck because they've followed incomplete advice, implemented the wrong strategies, or trusted people who were unqualified to diagnose the real problem.

Before moving forward, take a moment to evaluate the advice, assumptions, and decisions that may be influencing your business today.

## Business Strategy Evaluation

### Advice & Influence

- Have you ever hired a marketing agency that failed to produce the results you expected?
- Have you ever purchased a course, coaching program, or consulting service that promised more than it delivered?
- Have you ever implemented a strategy simply because someone told you it was the "best" way to grow?

- Have you ever spent money on marketing without fully understanding what was being done?
- Have you ever continued paying for something because you hoped results would eventually improve?
- Have you ever felt overwhelmed by conflicting business advice?
- Have you ever received completely different recommendations from different experts?
- Have you ever felt pressured into buying a marketing service because you were afraid of falling behind?
- Have you ever implemented a strategy that worked for someone else but failed for you?
- Have you ever invested in a tactic before understanding the bigger strategy behind it?

## **The Expert Evaluation**

- Have you ever hired someone because they sounded knowledgeable?
- Did you verify whether they had actually built a successful business themselves?
- Have you ever taken business advice from someone whose primary income came from selling advice?
- Have you ever worked with someone who claimed to be a business expert but only specialized in a narrow skill?
- Have you ever delegated important business decisions to someone who did not fully understand your company?
- Have you ever allowed a vendor to dictate your marketing strategy?
- Have you ever accepted recommendations without understanding why they were being recommended?
- Have you ever assumed expertise instead of verifying it?
- Have you ever confused confidence with competence?
- Have you ever followed advice simply because it sounded persuasive?

## The Agency & Vendor Audit

- Are you currently paying a marketing agency?
- If yes, do you know exactly what they are doing each month?
- Can you clearly explain why those activities should generate revenue?
- Do you know how success is being measured?
- Are you receiving meaningful business results or activity reports?
- If you stopped paying them tomorrow, what would actually change?
- Have you ever felt dependent on an agency while simultaneously questioning their effectiveness?
- Are you currently investing in marketing activities you don't fully understand?
- Are you spending money because you have evidence it works—or because you're hoping it works?

## The Blind Spot Evaluation

- Have you ever believed marketing was the problem when something else was actually broken?
- Have you ever believed sales were the problem when the real issue was positioning?
- Have you ever believed lead generation was the problem when the real issue was your offer?
- Have you ever believed you needed more customers when the real issue was profitability?
- Have you ever focused on growth while ignoring operational problems?
- Have you ever treated symptoms while ignoring root causes?
- Have you ever spent money solving the wrong problem?
- Have you ever felt stuck despite working extremely hard?
- Is it possible your business has blind spots you cannot currently see?
- Is it possible the problem you're trying to solve isn't actually the real problem?

## **Reflection**

What business decision, strategy, investment, or piece of advice has produced the greatest disappointment in your entrepreneurial journey?

What lesson did it teach you?

What part of your business feels most confusing right now?

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Many Lemonade Maker® Strategies members save \$1,000–\$2,500 per month after discovering they were investing in the wrong marketing activities.

Thomas helps entrepreneurs identify hidden blind spots, diagnose the real problem, and avoid costly mistakes before they happen.

Sometimes the problem is marketing. Sometimes it isn't.

## **Ask Thomas**

Entrepreneurs often misdiagnose the real problem. What appears to be a marketing, sales, or lead generation issue may actually be something else entirely.

Use the space below to identify an area of your business you would like Thomas to evaluate during your strategy session.

**What part of your business would you like a second opinion on?**

**Where do you suspect there may be a blind spot, incomplete strategy, or hidden opportunity?**

**If Thomas could evaluate one thing inside your business, what would it be?**

# **PART II: The Profit Principal™**

## *The Three Forces Behind Every Profitable Company*

Most entrepreneurs are trying to improve their business without a framework for understanding what actually creates profitability.

The Profit Principal™ is built on three interconnected forces that drive growth, leverage, and long-term success.

### **The Three Forces**

#### **Escape the Self-Employment Trap**

Build a business that becomes less dependent on your personal labor, time, and expertise.

#### **Build a Real Marketing System**

Create a repeatable system that consistently attracts opportunities and guides customers toward a decision.

#### **Give Customers a Reason to Choose You**

Develop a meaningful competitive edge that helps your business stand out in a crowded marketplace.

### **Important Warning**

One of the biggest mistakes entrepreneurs make is focusing too heavily on a single area of the business—usually marketing—while neglecting everything else.

Profitable companies aren't built by strengthening one force. They're built by strengthening all three. These forces are interconnected.

- Strengthening one helps the others. Ignoring one eventually weakens them all.
- Before moving forward, let's identify where most of your attention is currently going.

## The Profit Principal™ Assessment

Rank the following from **1–3**.

**1 = Receives the most attention in my business today**

**3 = Receives the least attention in my business today**

\_\_\_\_\_ Escape the Self-Employment Trap

\_\_\_\_\_ Build a Real Marketing System

\_\_\_\_\_ Give Customers a Reason to Choose You

## Reflection

Which area receives the most attention?

Which area receives the least attention?

Do you believe your current approach is balanced?

Yes

No

Unsure

If not, what area may need more attention moving forward?

## Did You Know?

Lemonade Maker® Strategies is built around helping entrepreneurs strengthen all three forces simultaneously.

Through one-on-one coaching with Thomas Minieri, Lemonade Maker LIVE workshops, and hands-on implementation sessions inside Lemonade Lab™, members receive guidance on business model design, marketing strategy, competitive positioning, systems, sales, leadership, and growth.

The goal isn't to improve one area of your business. The goal is to build a stronger company.

## Ask Thomas

Which of the three forces do you believe is currently limiting your growth the most?

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## PART III: Escape the Self-Employment Trap

### *Build a Business That Creates Value Beyond You*

Most entrepreneurs believe they own a business. Many actually own a job they created for themselves. The difference comes down to one question:

**Where does the value come from?**

### Value Assessment

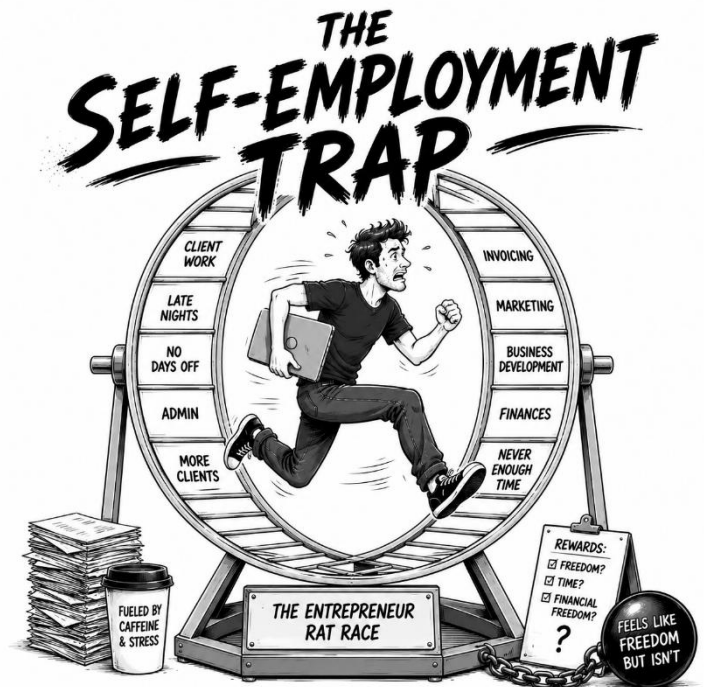
When customers buy from you, what are they actually buying?

Rate each item from **1–5**

**1 = Not Important**

**5 = Extremely Important**

- \_\_\_\_\_ My personal expertise
- \_\_\_\_\_ My credentials or certifications
- \_\_\_\_\_ My reputation
- \_\_\_\_\_ My relationships
- \_\_\_\_\_ My direct involvement
- \_\_\_\_\_ My company's brand
- \_\_\_\_\_ My company's systems
- \_\_\_\_\_ My team's ability to deliver
- \_\_\_\_\_ The customer experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ The product or service itself



## Reflection

If you disappeared for six months, which of the above would continue creating value without you?

## Self-Employed or Company Owner?

Answer honestly.

- Customers specifically want me.
- Customers specifically want my company.
- Most revenue depends on my direct involvement.
- Most revenue can be generated without me.
- I am the primary salesperson.
- I am the primary decision maker.
- I am involved in most major client interactions.
- My team can operate successfully without me.
- If I stopped working tomorrow, revenue would decline immediately.
- If I stopped working tomorrow, the business could continue operating.

## Reflection

Which statement best describes your business today?

- I own a job.
- I own a business.
- I'm somewhere in between.

## Earned Income vs. Leveraged Income

Most entrepreneurs operate primarily on earned income. The challenge isn't that earned income is bad. The challenge is that it depends on your time.

The goal is to create leverage.

## Income Sources

Estimate your current income mix.

\_\_\_\_\_ % Earned Income

(Directly tied to your time and labor)

\_\_\_\_\_ % Leveraged Income

(Systems, assets, teams, intellectual property, brand value, recurring revenue, or investments)

TOTAL = 100%

## Leverage Audit

Which of the following currently generate value without your direct involvement?

- Team Members
- Systems
- Intellectual Property
- Recurring Revenue
- Software
- Licensing
- Franchising
- Investments
- Real Estate
- Brand Recognition
- Referral Systems
- Automated Marketing
- None of the Above

## Reflection

What would need to change for your leveraged income percentage to increase over the next 12 months?

## Mad Hatter Syndrome™

Many entrepreneurs assume they are struggling because they aren't working hard enough. The reality is often the opposite. They are trapped inside the business, wearing every hat, solving every problem, and carrying every responsibility. The harder they work, the stronger the trap becomes.

## The Dependency Score

Rate each area of your business from **1–10**.

**1 = Can operate successfully without me**

**10 = Completely dependent on me**

Sales \_\_\_\_\_

Marketing \_\_\_\_\_

Operations \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Service \_\_\_\_\_

Product or Service Delivery \_\_\_\_\_

Finance \_\_\_\_\_

Hiring \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

Strategic Planning \_\_\_\_\_

Major Decision Making \_\_\_\_\_



## Your Total Dependency Score

Add your scores together:

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 100

### Results

#### 0–25

Strong leverage exists throughout the business.

#### 26–50

Moderate dependence on the owner remains in key areas.

#### 51–75

The business relies heavily on your involvement.

#### 76–100

You are likely trapped in the Self-Employment Trap. The business depends largely on your time, expertise, and daily decisions.

### Reflection

Which area received the highest score? Why is this area so dependent on you?

What would need to happen for that score to decrease by 50%?

### The Hard Question

If you disappeared for 90 days, what would happen to your business?

- It would continue operating successfully.
- Revenue would decline but the business would survive.
- Major areas would struggle.
- The business would largely stop functioning.

What does that answer reveal about the current structure of your business?

## Did You Know?

Many entrepreneurs assume they need more leads, more customers, or more marketing. Often the real problem is owner dependency.

Through one-on-one coaching, Lemonade Maker LIVE workshops, and implementation sessions inside Lemonade Lab™, Thomas helps entrepreneurs create systems, leverage, and leadership structures that make growth possible without increasing personal workload.

## Ask Thomas

If you could remove one hat from your business tomorrow, which would it be?

What part of your business currently depends too much on you?

What would freedom look like for you over the next 12 months?

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## PART IV: Build a Real Marketing System

Many entrepreneurs believe they have a marketing problem. In reality, they often have a systems problem. The issue isn't necessarily a lack of marketing activity. It's that the activity isn't connected, structured, or working together as a complete system.

### Marketing Asset Inventory

Which of the following marketing assets do you currently have?

- Website
- Social Media
- Email Marketing
- Google Business Profile
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Paid Advertising

- CRM
- Sales Process
- Lead Magnet
- Follow-Up System
- Referral System
- Online Reviews

## Reflection

Do these assets operate together as a coordinated system?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

If a stranger discovered your business today, could you clearly explain the path they would take to become a customer?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

## The Hope-Crash Loop™

Many entrepreneurs get trapped chasing one tactic after another.

- A new platform.
- A new agency.
- A new strategy.
- A new guru.
- A new promise.

And each new tactic creates temporary hope before the cycle begins again.



## Have You Ever?

- Hired a marketing agency
- Hired a social media manager
- Purchased a marketing course
- Started paid advertising
- Invested in SEO
- Switched marketing strategies multiple times
- Chased a trend because everyone else was doing it
- Abandoned a marketing strategy before fully testing it
- Felt overwhelmed by marketing
- Wondered why your marketing wasn't producing better results

## Reflection

How many marketing strategies have you tried in the past 24 months?

Which generated meaningful results?

## Structure Assessment

Most entrepreneurs don't have a marketing system. They have disconnected pieces. Evaluate the strength of each area below.

Rate each item from **1–10**.

**1 = Weak**

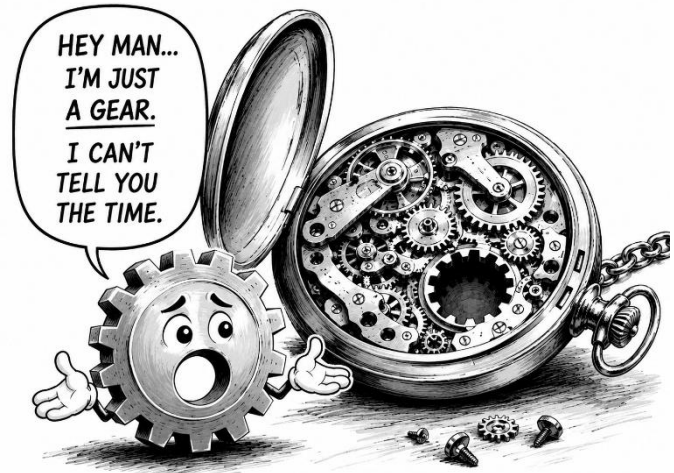
**10 = Strong**

Offer \_\_\_\_\_

Messaging \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Generation \_\_\_\_\_  
Follow-Up \_\_\_\_\_  
Sales Process \_\_\_\_\_  
Online Reviews & Social Proof \_\_\_\_\_  
Referral Generation \_\_\_\_\_



## Reflection

Which area received the lowest score?

If you could improve only one area over the next 90 days, which would it be?

## Marketing Machine Assessment

Can you clearly explain how a stranger becomes a customer?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Can you identify the exact steps a prospect takes before making a buying decision?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Do you have a documented process for moving prospects from awareness to purchase?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Would your team describe your marketing process the same way you would?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

## Reflection

What part of your marketing process feels least clear?

## Fragility Assessment

If one of these disappeared tomorrow, what impact would it have on your business?

Rate each from **1–10**

**1 = Little Impact**

**10 = Catastrophic Impact**

Referrals \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media \_\_\_\_\_

Google Search \_\_\_\_\_

Paid Advertising \_\_\_\_\_

Networking \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Relationships \_\_\_\_\_

Your Personal Reputation \_\_\_\_\_

Existing Customers \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflection

Which marketing source would hurt your business the most if it disappeared tomorrow?

Which marketing source do you depend on most?

Would you describe your marketing as:

- Unbreakable
- Somewhat Stable
- Fragile
- Not Sure

## Scale Readiness Assessment

Many entrepreneurs try to scale before the foundation is ready.

Rate the following from **1–10**.

Clear Offer \_\_\_\_\_

Clear Messaging \_\_\_\_\_

Consistent Lead Generation \_\_\_\_\_

Sales Process \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Process \_\_\_\_\_

Tracking & Measurement \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflection

If you suddenly received 10x more leads next month, what would happen?

- We could handle it.
- Some areas would struggle.
- It would create chaos.
- I'm not sure.

Why?

## Did You Know?

Many businesses appear successful on the surface but are operating with fragile marketing systems.

They depend heavily on referrals, personal relationships, a single lead source, or the owner's reputation.

Inside Lemonade Maker® Strategies, Thomas helps members transform fragile marketing into an **Unbreakable Marketing Machine™**—a structured marketing system designed to generate opportunities more consistently and predictably.

## Ask Thomas

Which part of your marketing system appears weakest?

Where do you believe prospects are falling out of your process?

If Thomas could improve one part of your marketing over the next 90 days, what would you want him to focus on?

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## PART V: Give Customers a Reason to Choose You

Marketing can communicate value. But before marketing can do its job, there is another question that must be answered first:

### Why should customers choose you?

The answer to that question is your competitive edge.

### The Sea of Sameness™

Many businesses slowly drift toward commoditization. Their services become similar. Their messaging becomes similar. Their promises become similar.

And when customers can't tell the difference, they often choose based on price.

### Sea of Sameness™ Assessment

Answer honestly.

- My competitors offer similar services.
- My competitors make similar promises.
- My competitors use similar marketing language.
- Customers frequently compare me to competitors.

- Prospects often ask what makes us different.
- Price is a major factor in buying decisions.
- I struggle to explain why customers should choose us.
- My competitors could make many of the same claims we make.
- My website sounds similar to other businesses in my industry.
- If my logo were removed, customers might struggle to tell the difference between my company and a competitor.

## Reflection

What makes your business genuinely different?

## The Credential Trap

Many entrepreneurs believe their credentials, experience, or reputation are their competitive advantage. Sometimes they are. Often they aren't. After all, competitors can earn similar credentials, gain similar experience, and make similar claims.

## Credential Assessment

- My primary value proposition is based on expertise.
- My primary value proposition is based on credentials.
- My primary value proposition is based on years of experience.
- My competitors could make similar claims.
- Customers may have difficulty evaluating my expertise.
- I rely heavily on reputation to generate business.
- Referrals are one of my primary growth strategies.

## Reflection

If your credentials, awards, certifications, and years of experience disappeared tomorrow, why would customers still choose you?

## Competition Mapping

Most businesses are competing against more than they realize.

### Direct Competitors

List up to five businesses that compete directly with you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### Alternative Competitors

Who else competes for the same customer, attention, time, money, or desired outcome?

Examples:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### The Competitor Nobody Talks About

Sometimes the biggest competitor isn't another company. It's indifference. It's procrastination. It's "maybe later." What happens if your customer simply does nothing?

## Origins of Innovation™

One of the foundational concepts of Lemonade Maker® is that innovation is often discovered through challenges.

The Origins of Innovation™ and the Four Types of Lemons are introduced in the Prologue of Lemonade Maker® the Book and serve as a foundational concept inside Lemonade Maker® Strategies.

### Which Lemons Are You Facing?

#### Self-Imposed Lemons

- Fear
- Lack of Knowledge
- Lack of Confidence
- Limiting Beliefs
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Status Quo Lemons

- Industry Assumptions
- Conventional Thinking
- Fear of Standing Out
- Pressure to Conform
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Lemons of Complacency

- Comfort
- Lack of Innovation
- Stagnation
- Resistance to Change
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Lemons of Chaos & Crisis**

- Economic Challenges
- Market Disruption
- Competition
- Unexpected Setbacks
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Reflection**

Which type of lemon is creating the greatest challenge in your business right now?

## **The Choice Question**

Customers choose. That is what they do every day.

- They choose between businesses.
- They choose between alternatives.
- They choose between opportunities.
- They choose between taking action and doing nothing.

The objective is not simply to be different.

The objective is to become the preferred choice.

## **Why Should Customers Choose You?**

Without mentioning:

- Credentials
- Certifications
- Awards
- Years of Experience
- Reputation

Why should customers choose your business?

## Reflection

Was that question easy or difficult to answer?

- Easy
- Somewhat Difficult
- Very Difficult

Why?

## Positioning Assessment

Who are you really competing against?

What value do you provide that customers genuinely care about?

What experience, outcome, transformation, or advantage do customers receive from working with you?

## Did You Know?

The original Lemonade Maker® book introduced 101 Lemonology® Strategies designed to help entrepreneurs solve problems, innovate, and stand out in crowded markets.

Today, Lemonade Maker® Strategies contains more than 200 business, marketing, leadership, innovation, sales, and systems strategies that members work through alongside Thomas Minieri.

The objective is simple:

Build a unique company that makes a lot of money, stands out from the crowd, and runs smoothly with or without you.

## Ask Thomas

Why should customers choose my business?

Am I becoming a commodity?

What blind spots do you see in my positioning?

Who am I really competing against?

If you were rebuilding my company from scratch, what would you make more remarkable?

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## PART VI: The Profit Principal™ Flywheel

Profitable companies are not built through isolated tactics. They are built by strengthening the right forces in the right way. As each force improves, momentum begins to build.

That momentum is what creates growth, leverage, and long-term profitability.

### The Three Force Scorecard

Rate yourself from **1–10** in each area.

**1 = Extremely Weak**

**10 = Extremely Strong**

#### Force #1

Escape the Self-Employment Trap

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Force #2

Build a Real Marketing System

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Force #3

Give Customers a Reason to Choose You

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Total Score

\_\_\_\_\_ / 30

## Reflection

Which force is currently your strongest?

Which force is currently your weakest?



## The Flywheel Effect

The three forces do not operate independently. A stronger competitive edge makes marketing easier. Better marketing creates more opportunities. More opportunities create the resources necessary to build systems, teams, and leverage.

And as leverage increases, business owners gain more freedom to strengthen the business even further. This is how momentum is created.

## Reflection

Which force would create the greatest positive impact if improved over the next 90 days?

- Escape the Self-Employment Trap
- Build a Real Marketing System
- Give Customers a Reason to Choose You

Why?

## The Michael Jordan Question

Michael Jordan once said:

*"If you practice shooting eight hours a day, but your technique is wrong, then all you become is very good at shooting the wrong way."*

The same thing happens in business. Many entrepreneurs work harder. They invest more time. They try more tactics. But if the underlying structure is flawed, they simply become better at building the wrong way.

## Reflection

What area of your business might be built incorrectly?

What assumptions should be challenged?

What might you be working hard on that isn't actually solving the real problem?

## Build Correctly Assessment

Which statement best describes your current situation?

- I need more customers.
- I need better marketing.
- I need better systems.
- I need a stronger competitive advantage.
- I'm no longer sure what the real problem is.

## **Reflection**

What problem have you been trying to solve?

What if the real problem is something else?

## **Your Next 90 Days**

If you could improve only one area of your business over the next 90 days, what would it be?

What specific outcome would you like to achieve?

What is the first step you need to take?

## **Did You Know?**

Most entrepreneurs enter Lemonade Maker® Strategies believing they have a marketing problem. Often the real issue is something entirely different.

Through one-on-one coaching, Lemonade Maker LIVE workshops, Lemonade Lab™, and more than 200 Lemonology® Strategies, Thomas helps entrepreneurs identify blind spots, uncover hidden constraints, and focus on the changes that create the greatest impact.

Sometimes the answer is marketing. Sometimes it isn't.

## **Ask Thomas**

If you could solve one business problem over the next 90 days, what would it be?

Which of the three forces needs the most attention?

What is your biggest frustration in business right now?

What would success look like 12 months from today?

If Thomas could help you accomplish one thing, what would it be?

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## Final Reflection

You are already building something. The question is whether you're building it correctly. What is the next step you need to take to begin building more intentionally?

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## PART VII: Your Next Move

If you've completed the exercises in this guidebook, you've probably realized something important:

- Building a profitable company is more complicated than simply working harder.
- It requires strengthening multiple forces at the same time.
- The question is no longer whether your business can improve.
- The question is where to focus first.

### Your Profit Principal™ Summary

Review your work throughout this guidebook.

#### Force #1

Escape the Self-Employment Trap

My biggest opportunity is:

## **Force #2**

Build a Real Marketing System

My biggest opportunity is:

## **Force #3**

Give Customers a Reason to Choose You

My biggest opportunity is:

## **My Top Priority**

If I could improve only one thing over the next 90 days, it would be:

Why is this my highest priority?

## **A Final Thought**

Most entrepreneurs already know they need to improve. The challenge is identifying the change that will create the greatest impact. Too often, business owners solve symptoms instead of root causes, chase tactics instead of strategy, and work harder instead of building smarter. Over time, those mistakes become expensive.

## **Did You Know?**

Every month, Lemonade Maker® Strategies members meet with Thomas Minieri through one-on-one coaching sessions, Lemonade Maker LIVE workshops, and implementation-focused sessions inside Lemonade Lab™.

Together, they work through real business challenges, uncover blind spots, pressure test ideas, strengthen marketing systems, improve competitive positioning, and build companies that make more money, stand out from the crowd, and run smoothly with or without them.

## Ready for a Second Opinion?

One of the most valuable things an entrepreneur can receive is an outside perspective.

Not another tactic.

Not another guru.

Not another marketing trend.

A real evaluation of what's actually happening inside your business.

If you've discovered blind spots, unanswered questions, frustrations, or opportunities while completing this guidebook, I'd like to invite you to schedule a free strategy session with me.

Together we'll evaluate:

- Your Business Model
- Your Marketing System
- Your Competitive Edge
- Your Biggest Constraints
- Your Greatest Opportunities

And if it looks like I can genuinely help you, I'll show you what the next 90 days could look like inside Lemonade Maker® Strategies.

## Before You Book

What is the primary reason you would like to speak with Thomas?

What would make the strategy session a success for you?

What is the biggest question you want answered?

## The Choice

At this point, you have a choice to make. You can continue building the way you've always built, or you can begin building more intentionally. Because whether you realize it or not, you're already building something—the only question is whether you're building it correctly.

## Schedule Your Free Strategy Session

Ready to strengthen your business model, build a real marketing system, and give customers a meaningful reason to choose you?

Book your complimentary strategy session with Thomas Minieri and let's identify what's working, what's not, and what will create the greatest impact moving forward.

**Your next breakthrough may not require more effort.  
It may simply require a better strategy.**

*Take the next step. Scan the QR code below to schedule your complimentary one-on-one strategy session with Thomas Minieri.*



## Notes for My Strategy Session