Gatilab

FREE TEMPLATE

FINANCIAL PLANNING TEMPLATE

Small Business Budget Worksheet

A twelve-month budget you can fill in an afternoon, built around the three numbers that actually predict whether the business survives.

Most small business budgets are a list of expenses and a hopeful revenue line. This worksheet works backwards instead: what the owner needs to earn, what it costs to stand still, and what has to be true for the gap to close. Fill it in pencil and revisit it every quarter.

WHAT'S INSIDE

START HERE

How to use this worksheet

A budget is not a prediction. It is a statement of what has to be true, written early enough that you can still do something about it.

1. **Start with what you need to take home**, not with what you hope to bill. Every other number is derived from that one.
2. **Use last year's bank statements, not estimates.** People underestimate recurring costs by roughly a third, reliably, in both directions of optimism.
3. **Budget for the tax you will owe, monthly.** The most common cause of a cash crisis in a profitable small business is a tax bill nobody set aside for.
4. **Fill the twelve-month view in pencil.** It is a planning tool, not a commitment.
5. **Review every quarter.** A budget written in January and opened in December was a writing exercise.

> CURRENCY AND TAX
>
> This worksheet is currency-agnostic. Use whatever you bank in, and treat every figure as excluding sales tax, VAT, or GST, which is money you collect on behalf of the tax authority rather than revenue you earn.

WORK BACKWARDS

The three numbers that matter

Fill these three first. If they do not reconcile, no amount of detail further into the worksheet will fix it.

1. What you need to take home

ITEM	PER MONTH	PER YEAR	NOTES
Personal living costs			Rent, food, everything
Personal tax and contributions			Estimate high
Savings and pension			Not optional
Total owner requirement			

2. What it costs to stand still

TOTAL FIXED COSTS PER MONTH

From the fixed costs page

MONTHS OF RUNWAY CURRENTLY HELD

3. What you must bill

CALCULATION	AMOUNT
Owner requirement per month	
Plus fixed costs per month	
Plus business tax provision	
Minimum monthly revenue to break even	
Divided by average project or client value	
Clients or projects needed per month	

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

That last number is the budget. If it is larger than the number of clients you can realistically serve or sell to, the problem is pricing or costs, and no amount of working harder resolves it.

STANDING STILL

Fixed costs

Everything you pay whether or not you win a single client this month. Pull these from bank and card statements rather than memory.

CATEGORY	ITEM	MONTHLY	ANNUAL	RENEWS
Premises	Rent, utilities, insurance			
People	Salaries and contributions			
	Contractors on retainer			
Software	Hosting and infrastructure			
	Design and productivity tools			
	Accounting and payroll			
Professional	Accountant, legal, insurance			
Marketing	Retainers and ad spend floor			
Finance	Loan or lease repayments			
Other				
Total				

THE ANNUAL RENEWAL TRAP

Annual subscriptions do not feel like monthly costs, so they get left out and then arrive as a surprise. Divide every annual renewal by twelve and put it in the monthly column too. The renewal date column is what stops you paying for tools nobody has opened since March.

COST OF DELIVERY

Variable and per-project costs

Costs that scale with the work. Getting these wrong is how a business grows revenue and loses money at the same time.

COST	BASIS	AMOUNT	APPLIES TO
Subcontractor or freelance	Per project		
Stock assets and licences	Per project		
Payment processing	Percentage		
Client hosting passed through	Per client		
Travel and meetings	Per project		
Sales commission	Percentage		

True margin per project

CALCULATION	AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Average project price		100%
Less direct variable costs		
Less delivery hours at internal cost rate		
Gross margin per project		

KNOW YOUR INTERNAL COST RATE

Take total fixed costs, divide by the number of billable hours the team can realistically deliver in a month. That is what an hour costs you before profit. Quote below it and you are paying for the privilege of working.

MONEY IN

Revenue plan

Split revenue by how reliable it is. Recurring revenue and one-off project revenue are not interchangeable, even when they add to the same total.

REVENUE STREAM	TYPE	CLIENTS	AVERAGE VALUE	MONTHLY TOTAL
Retainers	Recurring			
Maintenance plans	Recurring			
Hosting	Recurring			
Projects	One-off			
Consulting or audits	One-off			
Products or licences	Mixed			
Total				

Coverage ratio

QUESTION	ANSWER
Recurring revenue per month	
Fixed costs per month	
Percentage of fixed costs covered by recurring revenue	

THE NUMBER TO MOVE

When recurring revenue covers 100 percent of fixed costs, project work becomes profit rather than survival, and you can start turning down bad clients. That single ratio changes how the business feels to run more than any revenue target.

THE YEAR

The twelve-month view

Fill the first quarter with what you know and the rest with what you intend. Seasonality matters more than most owners expect.

MONTH	REVENUE	FIXED	VARIABLE	TAX SET ASIDE	NET
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

MARK THE THIN MONTHS NOW

Circle any month where net goes negative. Those are the months to sell into earlier, not the months to panic in. Most seasonal cash problems are visible six months ahead and addressed six days ahead.

SAFETY

Cash reserve and runway

Where you are

CALCULATION	AMOUNT
Cash in the business account today	
Less money owed to you but not yet received	
Less tax already owed but not yet paid	
True available cash	
Divided by monthly fixed costs	
Months of runway	

Where you want to be

Under 1 month

Fragile. One late payment becomes a crisis. Build reserve before anything else.

3 to 6 months

Workable. You can survive a lost client and turn down bad work.

6 months or more

Comfortable. Now the question is whether idle cash should be invested in growth.

THE TAX ACCOUNT RULE

Move the tax provision into a separate account the same day revenue lands, not at the end of the quarter. Money in the main account gets spent, regardless of what the spreadsheet says it is for.

EVERY QUARTER

Quarterly budget review

- [ ] Actual revenue compared against plan, by stream, not just in total
- [ ] Any fixed cost that grew without a decision being made
- [ ] Subscriptions renewed this quarter that nobody has used
- [ ] Recurring revenue as a percentage of fixed costs, moving in the right direction
- [ ] Tax provision matches what the accountant expects, not what you hoped
- [ ] Runway in months, recalculated from the bank balance rather than the plan
- [ ] Average project margin, checked against the internal cost rate
- [ ] Prices reviewed against inflation and against your own cost increases

This quarter

MEASURE	PLANNED	ACTUAL	VARIANCE	ACTION
Revenue				
Fixed costs				
Net				
Runway (months)				

ONE DECISION PER REVIEW

End every review by naming one thing you will change before the next one: a price, a cost, or a revenue stream. A review that ends in agreement that things are fine is a meeting, not a review.

WHO MADE THIS

We build the systems behind the paperwork

Gatilab is an independent WordPress and search agency. We build sites, rank them, and stay long enough to prove the work moved something.

2014	850+	2,000+	10,000+
Founded	Clients served	Projects completed	Plugin installs

What we do

WordPress engineering

Custom themes, blocks, plugins, and migrations built to stay fast and maintainable after handoff.

SEO strategy

Technical fixes, topical coverage, and search visibility work measured against clicks, not scores.

Content marketing

Research-led articles and editorial systems your team can keep publishing without us.

Conversion design

Landing pages, service pages, and forms designed around the decision the reader is actually making.

Need this handled instead of templated?

Send the problem, not a brief. We will tell you whether it is worth building, what it depends on, and what we would deliberately skip. If the honest answer is that you do not need us, you will get that too.

Start a project

gatilab.com/connect

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