

The \$50 Solo AI Stack

Run a one-person business on one tool per job, for under \$50 a month. With a free alternative for every pick.

8 jobs, 8 tools

Week-1 setup plan

5 workflows

Checklist

Site

Email

Write

Design

Social

Calls

Automate

Admin

START HERE

Fewer tools. Clear jobs. A budget you can keep.

Running a business alone means you're the marketer, the designer, the scheduler and the admin team. Most solopreneurs end up with too many overlapping subscriptions. This guide does the opposite: one tool per job, picked so the whole stack stays under \$50 a month.

How we picked

- One tool for each of 8 core jobs, with no overlap.
- A free plan or low entry price, so you can start today.
- Prices come only from our own tool data, checked 17 Oct 2026.
- Anything we couldn't confirm is marked [check current pricing](#).

The 8 jobs

- Website & funnel
- Email marketing
- Content writing
- Design
- Social scheduling
- Meetings
- Automation
- Admin & client records

Inside this guide

The stack at a glance	3
Each pick explained, plus its free alternative	4–5
The \$0 version of the stack	6
Your week-1 setup order	7
5 time-saving workflows	8–9
The launch checklist	10
Keep going: StackBySolo & The Solo Stack newsletter	11

Affiliate disclosure. Some links from StackBySolo are affiliate links. If you buy through one, we may earn a commission. That never decides a pick: several tools here (Canva, ChatGPT, Fathom, Calendly) are recommended with no affiliate link at all. Prices and plans change often, so always confirm on the vendor's own pricing page before you buy. Full policy: stackbysolo.vercel.app/disclosure

THE RECOMMENDED STACK

The stack at a glance

One paid tool where it matters most, which is where you sell. Everything else starts on a free plan, so the rest of your \$50 is there for upgrades when you actually hit a limit.

Job	Pick	Plan & price	Free alternative
Website & funnel	Systeme.io	Startup · \$17/mo	Systeme.io Free plan
Email marketing	Kit	Free tier · \$0	beehiiv (free up to 2,500 subscribers)
Content writing	ChatGPT	Free · \$0	Claude (free plan available)
Design	Canva	Free plan · \$0	Gamma free tier (decks, docs, one-pagers)
Social scheduling	Metricool	Free tier · \$0	Buffer free tier
Meetings	Fathom	Free plan · \$0	Calendly free tier (booking side)
Automation	Make	Free tier · \$0	Zapier free tier
Admin & client records	HubSpot CRM	Free CRM · \$0	A spreadsheet + Julius AI free tier

\$17fixed monthly cost
(Systeme.io Startup)**\$33**upgrade headroom
left inside \$50**\$0**possible starting cost
(see page 6)

Spending the \$33 headroom. Upgrade the one tool you hit limits on first, not all of them. Prices we have confirmed: Gamma Plus \$9/mo (billed annually), Beacons Creator \$10/mo, Julius AI Plus \$20/mo. Paid plans for Kit, ChatGPT, Canva Pro, Metricool and Make: [check current pricing](#). Free-tier limits change too, so check what each free plan includes before you commit.

THE PICKS EXPLAINED

Sell, email, write, design

01 · WEBSITE & FUNNEL**Systeme.io**

Startup \$17/mo

Funnels, email marketing, courses and a store in one tool. It's the only paid line in the stack because your sales pages, opt-in forms and checkout live here. The free plan is enough to try it first.

Free alternative: Systeme.io's Free plan. If you only need a link-in-bio storefront, Beacons has a free plan too (9% seller fee).

02 · EMAIL MARKETING**Kit**

Free tier

Creator-focused email marketing with automations and digital product sales. Use it for your list, your welcome sequence and the weekly email to your audience. Paid plans: [check current pricing](#) at [kit.com/pricing](#).

Free alternative: beehiiv, free up to 2,500 subscribers, with built-in referrals. A good fit if you want to grow a newsletter with ad income later.

03 · CONTENT WRITING**ChatGPT**

Free

A general AI assistant for writing, research and brainstorming: outlines, first drafts, email copy, repurposing one idea into many posts. Start free. Paid plans: [check current pricing](#) on [openai.com](#).

Free alternative: Claude (free and paid plans). Try both on the same brief and keep the one whose drafts need the least editing.

04 · DESIGN**Canva**

Free plan

Templates and AI design tools for social graphics, slides and documents. Build a small set of reusable templates once and reuse them every week. Canva Pro: [check current pricing](#).

Free alternative: Gamma's free tier generates decks, docs and one-page sites from a prompt. Gamma Plus is \$9/mo billed annually.

THE PICKS EXPLAINED

Post, meet, automate, admin

**05 · SOCIAL
SCHEDULING****Metricool****Free tier**

Plan, schedule and analyse social posts across platforms from one calendar. Batch a week of content in one sitting, then let it publish on its own. Paid plans:

[check current pricing](#) .

Free alternative: Buffer's free tier is simple social media scheduling built for small businesses.

06 · MEETINGS**Fathom****Free plan**

An AI notetaker with unlimited free recordings and summaries. You stay present on client calls and get the notes and action items afterwards. Its Team plan (\$15/user/mo, 2-user minimum) is for teams, so you don't need it as a solo.

Free alternative / pairing: Calendly's free tier covers the booking side, so clients can pick a slot without email back-and-forth. TidyCal is a one-time-purchase option: [check current pricing](#) .

07 · AUTOMATION**Make****Free tier**

Visual no-code automation that connects your apps and AI models. It's the glue that moves data between the other seven tools, so you don't copy and paste. Paid plans: [check current pricing](#) at make.com/pricing.

Free alternative: Zapier's free tier. It's the best-known no-code automation tool, with thousands of app integrations.

**08 · ADMIN &
CLIENTS****HubSpot
CRM****Free CRM**

A free CRM with AI features: one place for every lead, client, deal and note. Paid marketing and sales hubs exist, but the free CRM covers a solo business.

Free alternative: a simple spreadsheet, plus Julius AI's free tier to analyse it by chatting, with no formulas or SQL. Julius AI Plus is \$20/mo.

NOT READY TO SPEND?

The \$0 version of the stack

Every job in this guide can start on a free plan. Use the \$0 stack to prove the business works, then move to the \$50 stack once you're making sales and hitting limits.

Job	\$0 option	When to upgrade
Website & funnel	Systeme.io Free plan	When the free plan's limits get in the way of selling. Startup is \$17/mo.
Email marketing	Kit free tier, or beehiiv free (up to 2,500 subs)	When you need features or subscriber numbers beyond the free tier. check current pricing
Content writing	ChatGPT or Claude free	When you regularly hit the free plan's limits. check current pricing
Design	Canva Free or Gamma free tier	When you need Pro features, or Gamma Plus at \$9/mo billed annually.
Social scheduling	Metricool or Buffer free tier	When you post to more channels than the free tier allows. check current pricing
Meetings	Fathom Free + Calendly free tier	Fathom's free plan includes unlimited recordings. Upgrade only if you add a team.
Automation	Make or Zapier free tier	When your automations run more often than the free tier covers. check current pricing
Admin & clients	HubSpot free CRM	Paid hubs only if you need advanced marketing or sales features.

Upgrade rule of thumb

Pay for a tool when it's the one limit stopping you from earning, not because a new feature looks nice. One upgrade at a time keeps you under \$50.

Watch the fees

Some free plans charge a fee on sales instead of a subscription. For example, Beacons' free and Creator plans carry a 9% seller fee. Compare fees as well as monthly prices.

SETUP ORDER

Your week-1 setup plan

Set things up in this order. Each day builds on the one before, so by day 7 you can capture leads, follow up, publish and track clients.

DAY 1

Sell

Systeme.io: your home base

Create your account, connect your domain if you have one, and build one simple opt-in page offering something useful (like a checklist or a template).

DAY 2

Email

Kit: your list and welcome email

Create a form, then write a short welcome email that delivers the freebie and says what readers will get from you next.

DAY 3

Write

ChatGPT: your voice and content bank

Save a reusable prompt that describes your audience, offer and tone. Use it to draft 10 post ideas and 2 email ideas.

DAY 4

Design

Canva: 3 reusable templates

Set up a quote/tip post, a carousel and a header image in your brand colours. From now on you only swap the words.

DAY 5

Post

Metricool: connect and batch

Connect your social accounts and schedule your first week of posts, using the ideas from day 3 and the templates from day 4.

DAY 6

Meet & admin

Calendly + Fathom + HubSpot

Create a booking link for discovery calls, connect Fathom to your calendar, and add your current clients and leads to HubSpot's free CRM.

DAY 7

Automate

Make: your first automation

Connect two tools (for example, new lead → CRM contact). Then review the week: what's working, what's missing, and whether anything needs a paid upgrade.

PUT THE STACK TO WORK

5 time-saving workflows

Tools save time once they're connected into repeatable routines. Here are five you can copy.

1 Lead → welcome sequence, on autopilot

Systeme.io opt-in → Kit form & tag → Welcome sequence → HubSpot contact

1. Point your Systeme.io opt-in page at a Kit form, or use Systeme.io's own email to start.
2. Build a short welcome sequence in Kit automations: deliver the freebie, tell your story, make one offer.
3. Use Make to create or update the matching HubSpot contact, so every lead is in one place.

2 One idea, a week of content

ChatGPT outline → Canva templates → Metricool queue → Kit email

1. Give ChatGPT one core idea (a lesson, a client win, a how-to) and ask for 5 short posts plus one email.
2. Drop the best lines into your Canva templates from day 4.
3. Batch-schedule everything in Metricool, and send the long version to your list from Kit.

3 Discovery call → follow-up in minutes

Calendly booking → Fathom notes → ChatGPT follow-up → HubSpot deal

1. Prospects book through your Calendly link, and Fathom records and summarises the call.
2. Paste the summary into ChatGPT and ask for a follow-up email that recaps their goals and your proposed next step.
3. Log the deal and the next action in HubSpot so nothing slips.

PUT THE STACK TO WORK

Workflows, continued

4 New customer onboarding without the admin

Systeme.io purchase → Make scenario → HubSpot + Kit tag → Booking link

1. When someone buys in Systeme.io, trigger a Make scenario (use a built-in connector if your apps have one, or a webhook).
2. Create the customer in HubSpot and add a "customer" tag in Kit, which starts an onboarding email sequence.
3. The first onboarding email includes your booking link for a kickoff call, recorded by Fathom.

5 The 30-minute Friday review

Metricool analytics → Export to sheet → Julius AI / ChatGPT → Next week's plan

1. Check Metricool to see which posts did best, and check Kit for new subscribers and email results.
2. Put your weekly numbers in a simple spreadsheet and ask Julius AI (free tier) what changed and why.
3. Ask ChatGPT to turn your best-performing post into next week's core idea, then go back to workflow 2.

Make each workflow stick

- Build one workflow at a time and run it for a week before adding the next.
- Write each one down as a 3-step checklist so you can repeat it, or hand it over later.
- Check the free-tier limits on Make or Zapier before you rely on an automation for anything urgent.
- Keep a human check on anything AI writes before it reaches a client.

[PRINT ME](#)

The \$50 Solo AI Stack checklist

Tick these off and your one-person business has a working system for leads, content, clients and follow-up.

Foundations

- ☐ Systeme.io account and one opt-in page live
- ☐ Domain connected (if you have one)
- ☐ Kit form connected to the opt-in page
- ☐ Welcome email or sequence written and switched on

Content engine

- ☐ Saved ChatGPT prompt with your audience, offer and tone
- ☐ Bank of 10+ post ideas
- ☐ 3 Canva templates in your brand colours
- ☐ Social accounts connected to Metricool
- ☐ First week of posts scheduled

Clients & calls

- ☐ Calendly booking link for discovery calls
- ☐ Fathom connected to your calendar
- ☐ Current leads and clients added to HubSpot
- ☐ Follow-up email template saved

Automation

- ☐ First Make scenario running (lead → CRM)
- ☐ Onboarding automation for new customers
- ☐ Each workflow written down as 3 steps

Budget & housekeeping

- ☐ Checked current prices on each vendor's pricing page
- ☐ Checked what each free plan includes
- ☐ Monthly total under \$50
- ☐ Calendar reminder to review subscriptions monthly
- ☐ Friday review added to your calendar

Keep learning

- ☐ Subscribed to The Solo Stack newsletter
- ☐ Bookmarked stackbysolo.vercel.app/tools

WHAT'S NEXT

Build your stack. Then keep it lean.

Tools, prices and free plans change all the time. StackBySolo tracks them so you don't have to. Here's where to go next.

THE WEBSITE

stackbysolo.vercel.app

Tool reviews written for solopreneurs, head-to-head comparisons (Kit vs beehiiv, Make vs Zapier, Systeme.io vs Kit), budget stacks and stacks for each type of business.

Explore the tools →

THE NEWSLETTER

The Solo Stack

Weekly: one tool deep-dive, three quick finds, one workflow or prompt, and one deal. Built for people running a business alone.

Subscribe free →

stackbysolo.vercel.app/newsletter