real. startup ideas

BRAND BOOK · EDITION 01 · OCTOBER 2026

Real problems people want solved.

REALSTARTUPIDEAS.COM

Contents.

A quiet library of real problems, and the rules that keep it quiet.

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01 — THE IDEA

Most startup ideas are guesses. Ours end in a full stop.

Every idea here starts as a public complaint: a thread, a review, a post where someone said, plainly, this is broken.

We read the thread. We rewrite it into a problem, a person who has it, and a first version worth building. We link the source and date the evidence. Then we stop talking.

The brand works the same way. Quiet grey type, lots of air, and a single orange full stop that says: this one is real. No hype, no rockets, no exclamation marks.

100	7	30 days
IDEAS IN REPORT 01	GROUPS	SEP 14 - OCT 14, 2026

Three things, sold plainly.

The page is free. The prompt is one credit. The build is a fixed price.

01 · FREE

The idea page

$0

The pain, the source thread, who feels it, what they use now, MVP scope and a market estimate. Free to read and free to build from.

`/ideas/earned-wage-access-fee-auditor`

02 · CREDITS

The agent starter prompt

$9.99

A full PRD written for a coding agent. One credit, yours to keep. Five for $29, ten for $49, or a $499 yearly pass.

`Unlock · 1 credit`

03 · DONE FOR YOU

Build it for me

$10,000

Two weeks, after a $1,000 scoping fee credited toward the build. Five working days is $15,000.

`Pay the scoping fee`

THE BRAND IDEA

The full stop is the brand.

It ends the guessing. A full stop means sourced, settled, real. Everything in this system grows from that one orange point.

SIGNAL · #F2541B
THE ONLY COLOUR THAT SPEAKS

02 — LOGO

The wordmark.

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REAL.

Instrument Serif Italic. The editorial voice: a quoted, human word, and the word we stand behind.

THE FULL STOP

Signal orange #F2541B. The only colour in the logo, and the one orange mark on any view.

STARTUP IDEAS

Geist Medium in ink-3 grey. Monocle's two-tone cadence: the claim in ink, the context in grey.

LOGO ANATOMY

Built on the x-height.



ITALIC EMPHASIS

“real” runs about 1.2× Geist's x-height on a shared baseline, so the word we stand behind leads.

THE STOP

About a quarter of the x-height, tucked into the italic l. Never detached, never recoloured.

OUTLINED

Instrument Serif Italic and Geist, converted to paths. Never retype or respace it.

TWO TONES

Ink #151515 and grey #8C8C89 on light; #ECECEA and #7B7B78 on dark.

VERSIONS

Light, dark, and the small r.



WORDMARK · LIGHT (PRIMARY)



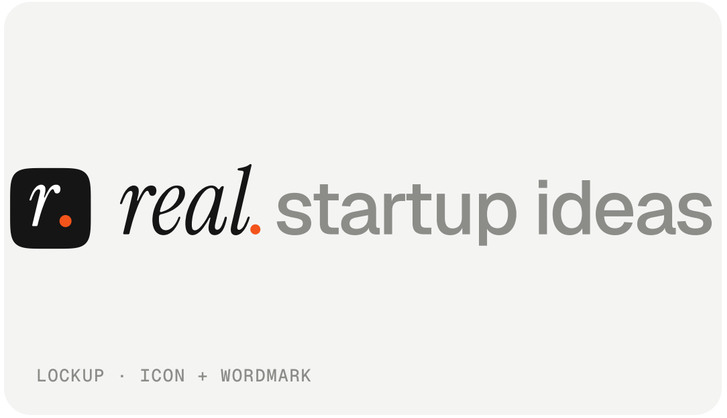
WORDMARK · DARK



ICON · LIGHT



ICON · DARK



LOCKUP · ICON + WORDMARK



LOCKUP · ON IMAGERY



MARK · R. (NO TILE)



MARK · DARK

CLEAR SPACE AND MINIMUM SIZE

Give it one r of air.



Keep clear space equal to the height of the italic *r* on every side. Nothing enters it: no text, no edges, no other marks.

MINIMUM SIZES

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WORDMARK 96 PX · 24 MM

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LOCKUP 120 PX · 30 MM

ICON 16 PX (FAVICON CUT)

ICON 32 PX+

MARK 24 PX

Below 96 px wide, switch to the icon. Use the 16 px favicon cut, which has a heavier r, below 32 px.

MISUSE

Don't touch the stop.

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× Recolour the full stop

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× Stretch or squash

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× Set it all in signal

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× Drop the stop

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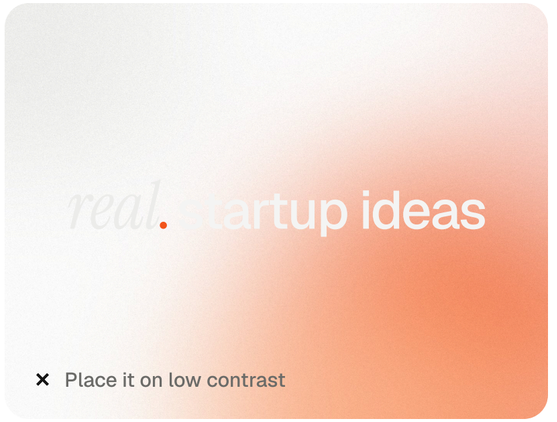
× Retype it in another face

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× Rotate it

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× Add shadows or effects



× Place it on low contrast

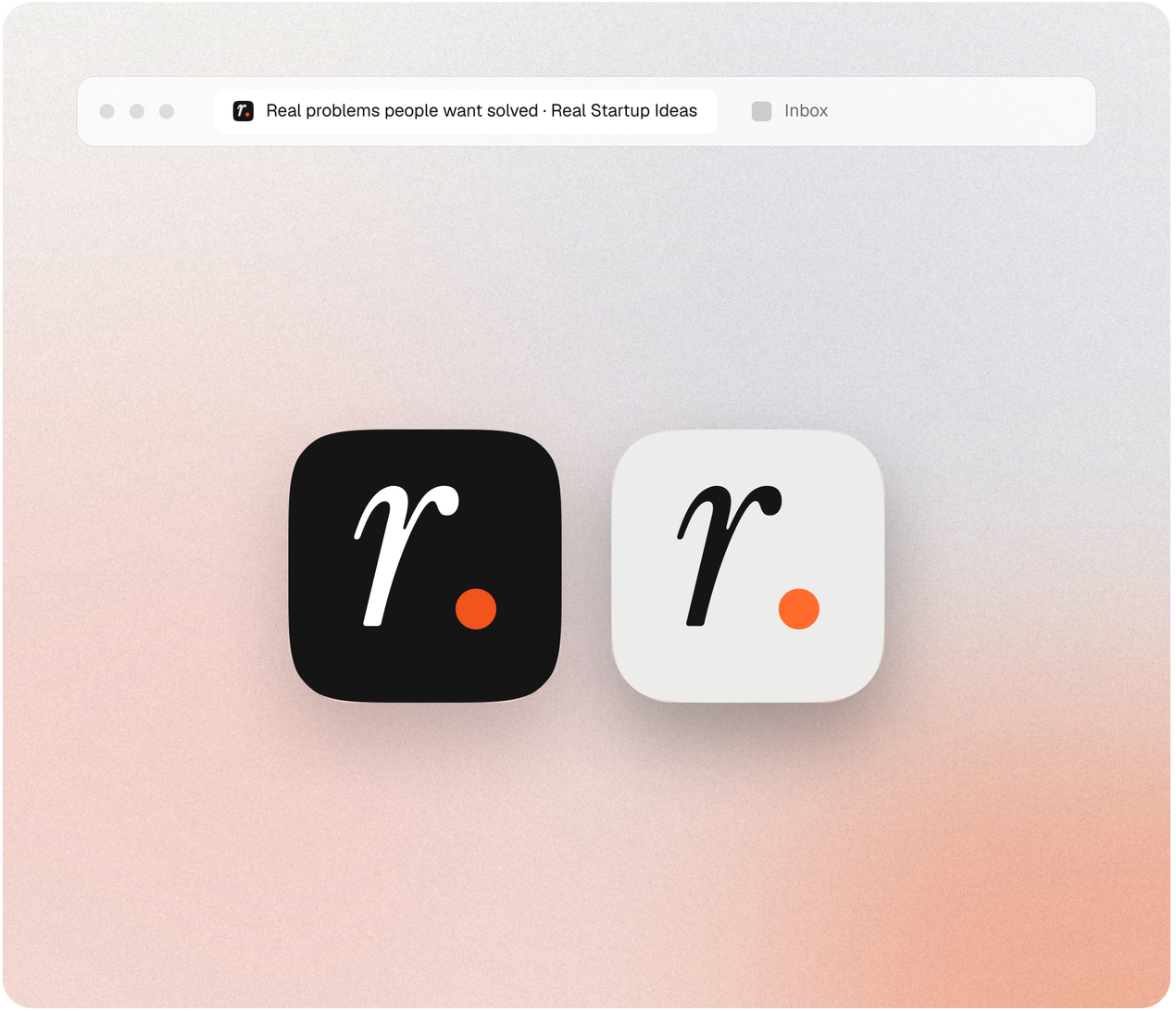
ICON

r. at every size.

The icon is the wordmark's first letter and its full stop in a quiet squircle. On light grounds it's the ink tile; on dark grounds, the pale tile. Below 32 px it switches to a heavier drawing so the r survives the pixel grid.



16 32 48 180 IOS 192 ANDROID



03 — COLOUR

Greys that whisper, one colour that doesn't.

Warm neutral greys carry 98% of every surface. Signal is the full stop: a point, never a field.

Paper
#FFFFFF
Page background

Tile
#F4F4F3
Cards, inputs

Ink 3
#8C8C89
Logo grey, large type

Ink 2
#6B6B68
Secondary text

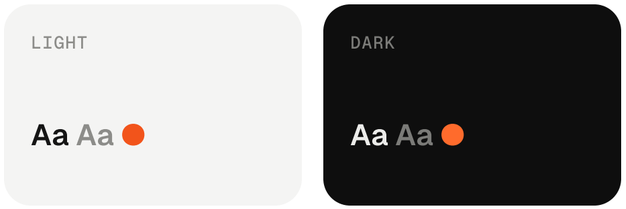
Ink
#151515
Type, solid buttons

Signal
#F2541B
The full stop. Once per view.

UI TOKENS

Light and dark, by role.

Name colours by job, not by hue. Dark mode follows the OS by default and can be forced with `[data-theme=dark]`.



TOKEN	LIGHT	DARK	ROLE
--bg	#FFFFFF	#0E0E0E	Page background
--surface	#F4F4F3	#1A1A19	Tiles, cards, inputs
--surface-2	#ECECEA	#222221	Hover, pressed, chips
--line	rgba(0,0,0,0.08)	rgba(255,255,255,0.09)	Hairline borders (0.5–1px)
--line-strong	rgba(0,0,0,0.18)	rgba(255,255,255,0.22)	Dividers, focused outlines
--ink	#151515	#ECECEA	Primary text, solid buttons
--ink-2	#6B6B68	#A3A39F	Secondary text, ledes, metadata (AA body)
--ink-3	#8C8C89	#7B7B78	Muted: logo grey, large display second line, disabled
--signal	#F2541B	#FF6B2C	The full stop: one mark per view, focus rings, live states
--signal-ink	#C2410C	#FF8A57	Signal as text (links on hover, inline emphasis)
--on-signal	#151515	#151515	Text on signal fills
--on-ink	#FFFFFF	#0E0E0E	Text on solid ink buttons
--ok	#1E7F45	#4CC27A	Success state (sparingly)
--danger	#C4271B	#FF6B5E	Errors, destructive
--focus	#F2541B	#FF6B2C	Focus ring (2px, 2px offset)

ACCESSIBILITY

Checked against WCAG 2.2.

Two honest findings. Ink 3 (#8C8C89, the logo grey) and Signal (#F2541B) pass only for large text and UI marks on white. So body copy uses Ink 2, and orange text uses Signal ink #C2410C. Text on orange is always ink, never white.

LIGHT

Aa	ink / bg	18.26:1	AAA
Aa	ink-2 / bg	5.35:1	AA
Aa	ink-3 / bg	3.37:1	Large / UI only
Aa	signal / bg	3.47:1	Large / UI only
Aa	signal-ink / bg	5.18:1	AA
Aa	ink / surface	16.59:1	AAA
Aa	ink-2 / surface	4.86:1	AA
Aa	on-ink / ink	18.26:1	AAA
Aa	on-signal / signal	5.27:1	AA
Aa	danger / bg	5.75:1	AA
Aa	ok / bg	5.03:1	AA

DARK

Aa	ink / bg	16.32:1	AAA
Aa	ink-2 / bg	7.63:1	AAA
Aa	ink-3 / bg	4.55:1	AA
Aa	signal / bg	6.79:1	AA
Aa	signal-ink / bg	8.30:1	AAA
Aa	ink / surface	14.72:1	AAA
Aa	ink-2 / surface	6.88:1	AA
Aa	on-ink / ink	16.32:1	AAA
Aa	on-signal / signal	6.43:1	AA
Aa	danger / bg	6.91:1	AA
Aa	ok / bg	8.55:1	AAA

IN CODE

Tokens ship as CSS, Tailwind and JSON.

tokens.css

```
:root {
  --bg: #FFFFFF;
  --surface: #F4F4F3;
  --surface-2: #ECECEA;
  --line: rgba(0,0,0,0.08);
  --line-strong: rgba(0,0,0,0.18);
  --ink: #151515;
  --ink-2: #6B6B68;
  --ink-3: #8C8C89;
  --signal: #F2541B;
  --signal-ink: #C2410C;
  --on-signal: #151515;
  --on-ink: #FFFFFF;
  --ok: #1E7F45;
  --danger: #C4271B;
  --focus: #F2541B;
  --font-sans: 'Geist', system-ui, -apple-system,
sans-serif;
  …
}
```

tailwind.preset.js

```
// tailwind.config.js
module.exports = {
  presets: [require('./tailwind.preset.js')],
}

<button class="bg-ink text-on-ink rounded-pill
  h-[52px] px-6 text-[17px] font-medium
  active:scale-[.97] transition ease-rsi">
  Unlock the prompt
</button>
```

tokens.json

```
{
  "color": {
    "light": {
      "signal": {
        "$value": "#F2541B",
        "$type": "color",
        "$description": "The full stop:
          one mark per view"
      }, …
    }
  },
  "type": { "h1": { "$value": {
    "fontSize": "48px",
    "letterSpacing": "-0.028em" } } }
}
```

04 — TYPE

Three voices, one sentence.

GEIST — THE CLAIM



Vercel · OFL · 400 / 500 / 600
Tracking -0.005 to -0.042 em

Headlines, UI, numbers. Tighter as it grows, like Monocle's system type.

INSTRUMENT SERIF ITALIC — THE QUOTE



Instrument · OFL · Italic 400
Never bold, never roman

The human voice: ledes, quoted complaints, one word of emphasis. The ‘real’ in the logo.

GEIST MONO — THE EVIDENCE

REPORT-01-096

Vercel · OFL · 400 / 500
Labels +0.06 em, caps

IDs, sources, dates, prices in tables, prompts and code. The receipts.

TYPE SCALE

Tighter as it grows.

Web hero is fluid: `clamp(40px, 5vw, 72px)`. Body reads at 17–20 px, 1.55 line-height. Display sizes above 96 px are for print and this book.

Two-tone headlines: the first clause in ink, the rest in Ink 3. Always end on a full stop.

display-xl	120/1.0 · 600 · -0.042em	**Real problems.**
display	72/1.02 · 600 · -0.035em	**People want solved.**
h1	48/1.06 · 600 · -0.028em	**Earned Wage Access Fee Auditor**
h2	32/1.15 · 600 · -0.022em	**How big this could get**
h3	22/1.25 · 600 · -0.012em	**What people use now**
lede	28/1.22 · 400 · 0em	*An app user compared 15 payslips with deposits.*
body	17/1.55 · 400 · -0.005em	The pain, the source and the scope notes are free to read and free to build from.
small	14/1.45 · 450 · 0em	Report 01 · last verified Oct 14, 2026
label	12/1.4 · 500 · 0.06em	R/POVERTYFINANCE · 1,207 UPVOTES
code	14/1.6 · 400 · 0em	`$ agent run prd.md --from report-01-096`

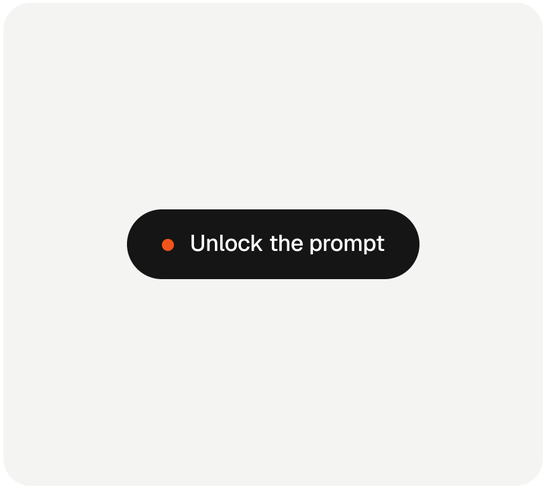
05 — GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

Everything is a full stop, or the space around one.



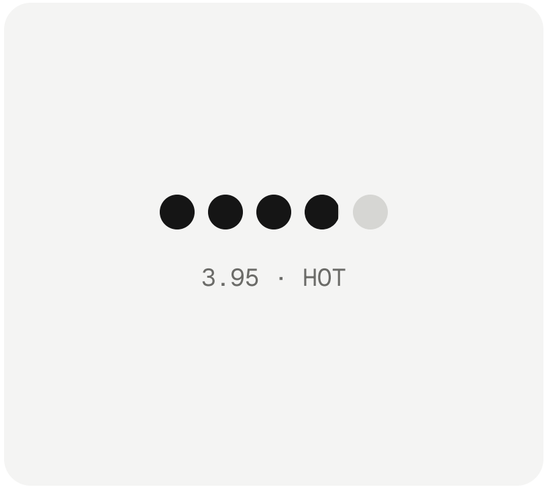
The terminal stop

Headlines end on a period. In hero moments that period is Signal: the claim is settled.



The signal

One orange point marks the one thing that matters: the unlock, the live state, the chosen idea.



The meter

Hotness reads as five dots, filled in ink. Numbers stay in Geist Mono beside it.



The cursor

In prompts and code, the block cursor is the stop in motion. It blinks, then settles.

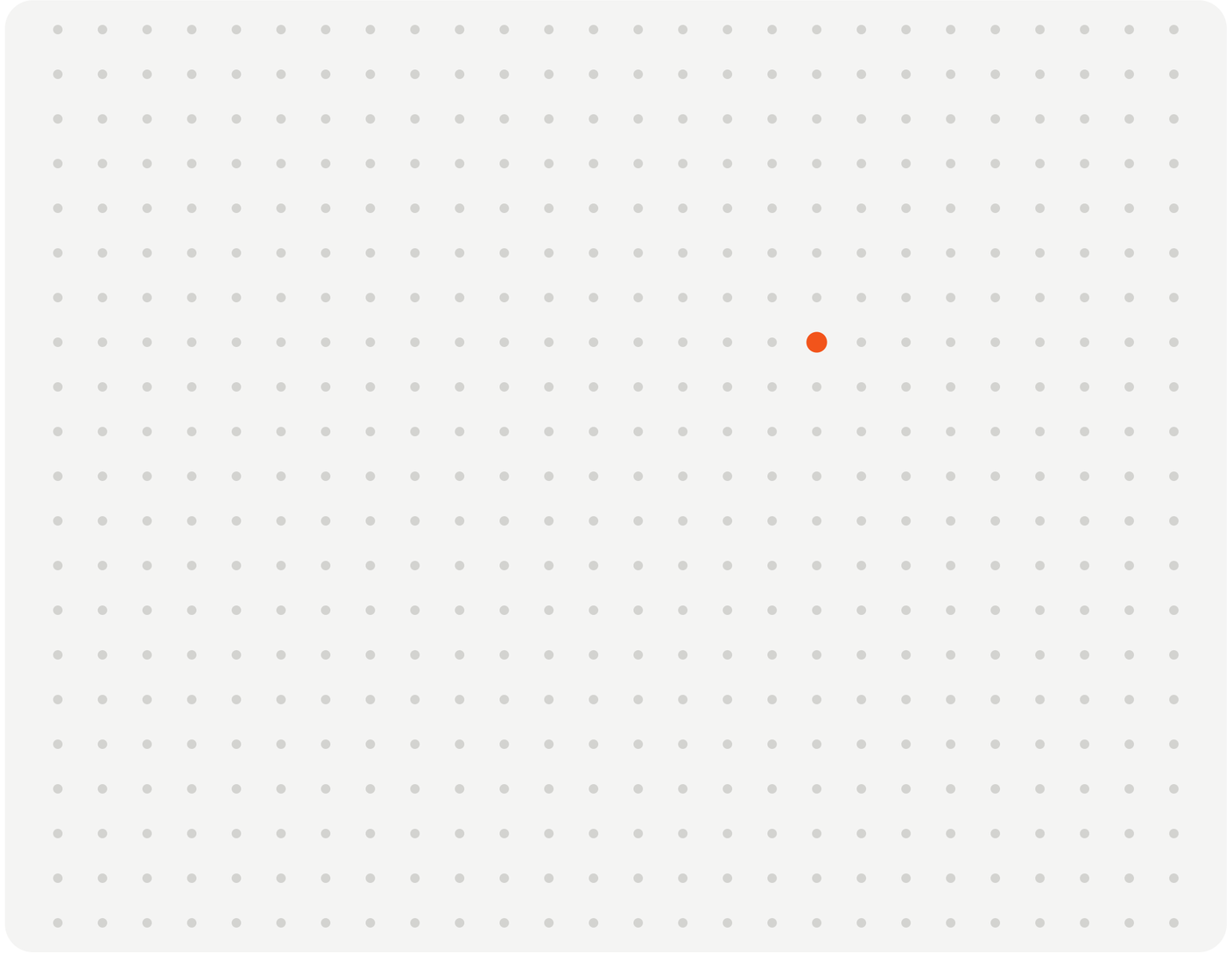
THE FIELD

A thousand complaints, one idea.

The field is our data graphic. Grey points are threads, posts and reviews. One point clears the bar and turns Signal. Use it on covers, report openers, OG images and loading states.

RULES

A strict grid, never scattered. Points are Ink 3 at 25% or line grey #D6D6D3. Exactly one Signal point, 2× size, off-centre on a third. No lines connecting points: we're not a network.



IMAGERY

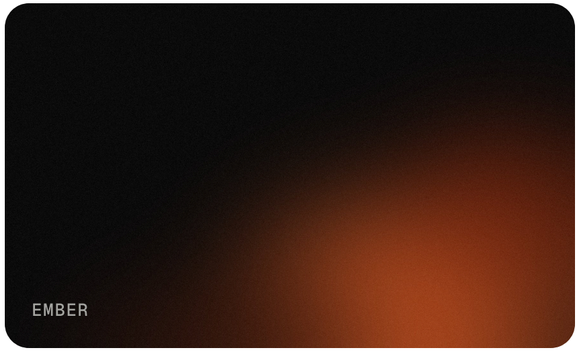
Blur is the noise.
Type is the focus.

Like Monocle, our images are soft fields of colour, rendered, never photographed. They stand for the noise of a thousand threads. Sharp type and one sharp point sit on top.

RECIPE

```
3–4 radial blobs · blur ≥ 10% of short edge
Hues: signal #F2541B, apricot #FFB38A,
rose #F7C9C0, mist #D9DCE3 on paper or ink
Grain 4–6 % · no hard edges · no people
Generator: kit/imagery/gradients.py
```











LAYOUT AND COMPONENTS

Air, hairlines, soft corners.

gutter	clamp(32px, 6vw, 128px)
max width	1680 px · reading 680 px
space	4 · 8 · 12 · 16 · 24 · 32 · 48 · 64 · 96 · 128
radius	6 inputs · 10 controls · 20 cards · pill
borders	0.5 px inset shadow, never 1 px solid grey
press	scale(.97), 160 ms

BUTTONS

Unlock the prompt

Read the thread

Build

Account

CHIPS AND META

Personal Finance

3.95 Hot

REPORT-01-096

COPY CHIP: PRIVATE MARKDOWN LINK FOR YOUR AGENT, EXPIRES IN 7 DAYS

realstartupideas.com/p/ewa-fee-auditor.md?k=7f3k2q

Copy

Copied

agent · prd.md

```
# Agent starter prompt: Earned Wage Access Fee Auditor
You are a senior product engineer. Build only the product described here.
## Scope
1. Import payslips (PDF, photo) and EWA transfer history.
2. Reconcile each pay period and show the true effective fee.
3. Flag gaps over $1. Draft a dispute letter with the gaps highlighted.
## Data model
PayPeriod { start, end, gross, net, employer }
Transfer  { date, amount, fee, provider }
## Screens
Import · Reconcile · Gaps · Dispute · Settings
```

PREVIEW · FIRST 45%

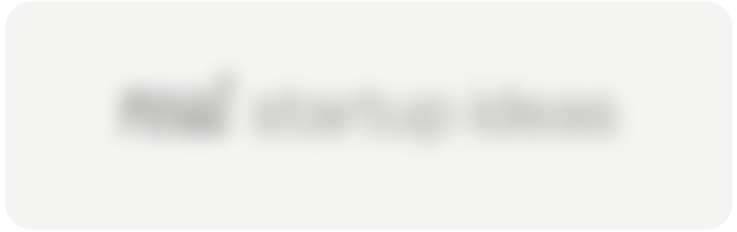
Unlock the rest · 1 credit

06 — MOTION

Develop, then settle.

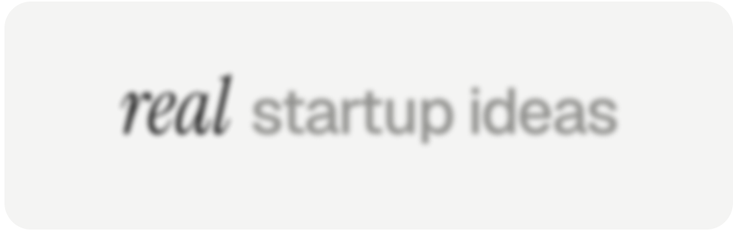
0 MS

Noise: blurred, low



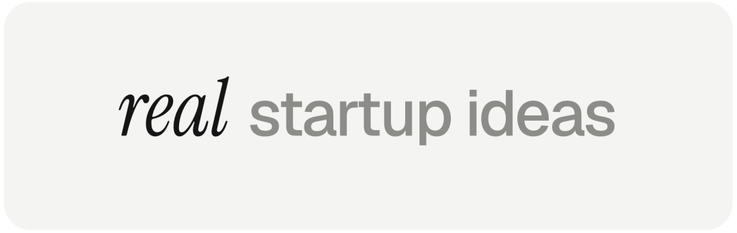
200 MS

Developing



400 MS

Nearly sharp



560 MS

Sharp, waiting



640 MS

The stop lands



720 MS

Settled

DEVELOP

From blur(24px), scale .985 to sharp. 600 ms, cubic-bezier(.2,.7,.2,1). For reveals and unlocks.

RISE

Fade + 8 px up, 240 ms, 40 ms stagger for cards. Never bounce.

THE STOP

The full stop always arrives last: scale 0 → 1.25 → 1 over 160 ms with cubic-bezier(.16,1,.3,1).

REDUCED MOTION

Respect prefers-reduced-motion: show the settled frame. Logo animation: kit/motion/logo-develop.mp4.

07 — VOICE

We sound like an editor, not a growth hacker.

01	**Specific over exciting.**	1,207 upvotes, 190 comments, Sep 14 – Oct 14. Numbers do the persuading.
02	**Evidence first.**	Quote the complaint, name the source, date it. If we can't link it, we don't say it.
03	**Plain over clever.**	Short words, short sentences. Say ‘prompt’, not ‘AI-powered blueprint’.
04	**Calm, then a full stop.**	No exclamation marks, no rockets, no ‘🔥’. Confidence is a period.
05	**Honest about limits.**	‘Not a forecast.’ ‘Ideas are suggestions.’ ‘The fee is not refundable.’ We say it first.

MICROCOPY

Say it once, then stop.

Sentence case everywhere. Prices as numbers. A period at the end of every complete sentence, including toasts.

WORDS WE USE

problem · thread · source · prompt · credit · build · scope · first version · verified

WORDS WE DON'T

goldmine · secret · hack · 10× · disrupt · revolutionary · AI-powered · unicorn

WHERE	WE WRITE	WE DON'T
UNLOCK BUTTON	Unlock the prompt · 1 credit	~~Get the AI goldmine now!~~
COPY CHIP	Copy → Copied.	~~Copied to clipboard successfully!!~~
CREDITS	4 credits left. They don't expire.	~~Running low! Top up before it's too late~~
UNLOCKED TOAST	Prompt unlocked. It's yours to keep.	~~Woohoo! 🎉 You're ready to build~~
EMPTY SEARCH	Nothing matches ‘pallet’. Try a broader word.	~~Oops! No results found :(~~
PAYMENT ERROR	That didn't go through. Nothing was charged.	~~Error 402: payment failed~~
BUILD CTA	Pay the $1,000 scoping fee	~~Start your journey to unicorn~~
MARKET NOTE	A bottom-up estimate. Not a forecast.	~~A $240M opportunity waiting for you~~
SPONSOR SLOT	This spot is open. Sponsor →	~~ADVERTISE HERE!!!~~

TAGLINES

Real problems people want solved.

PRIMARY. HOME HERO, OG DEFAULT, BIOS.

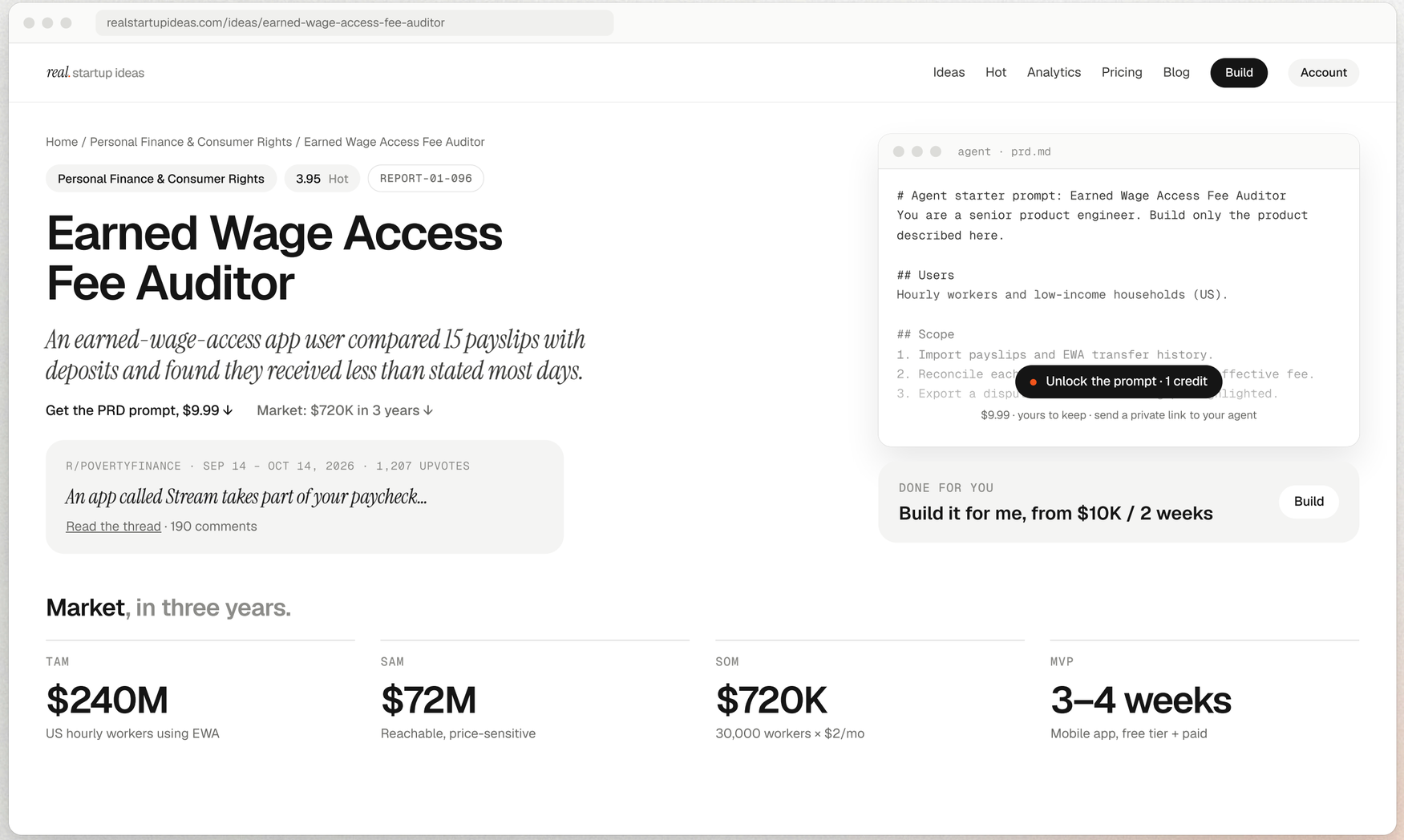
Mined from public complaints.	PROOF LINE UNDER THE PRIMARY.
The pain is free. The prompt is one credit.	PRICING AND ADS.
Ideas with receipts.	SOCIAL, SHORT FORM.
Build it yourself, or we do.	BUILD PAGE, FOOTER.
From thread to first version.	PITCH AND PRESS.

Sign-off for social posts: *For real.* Use rarely; it's a wink, not a slogan.

08 — IN USE

The idea page.

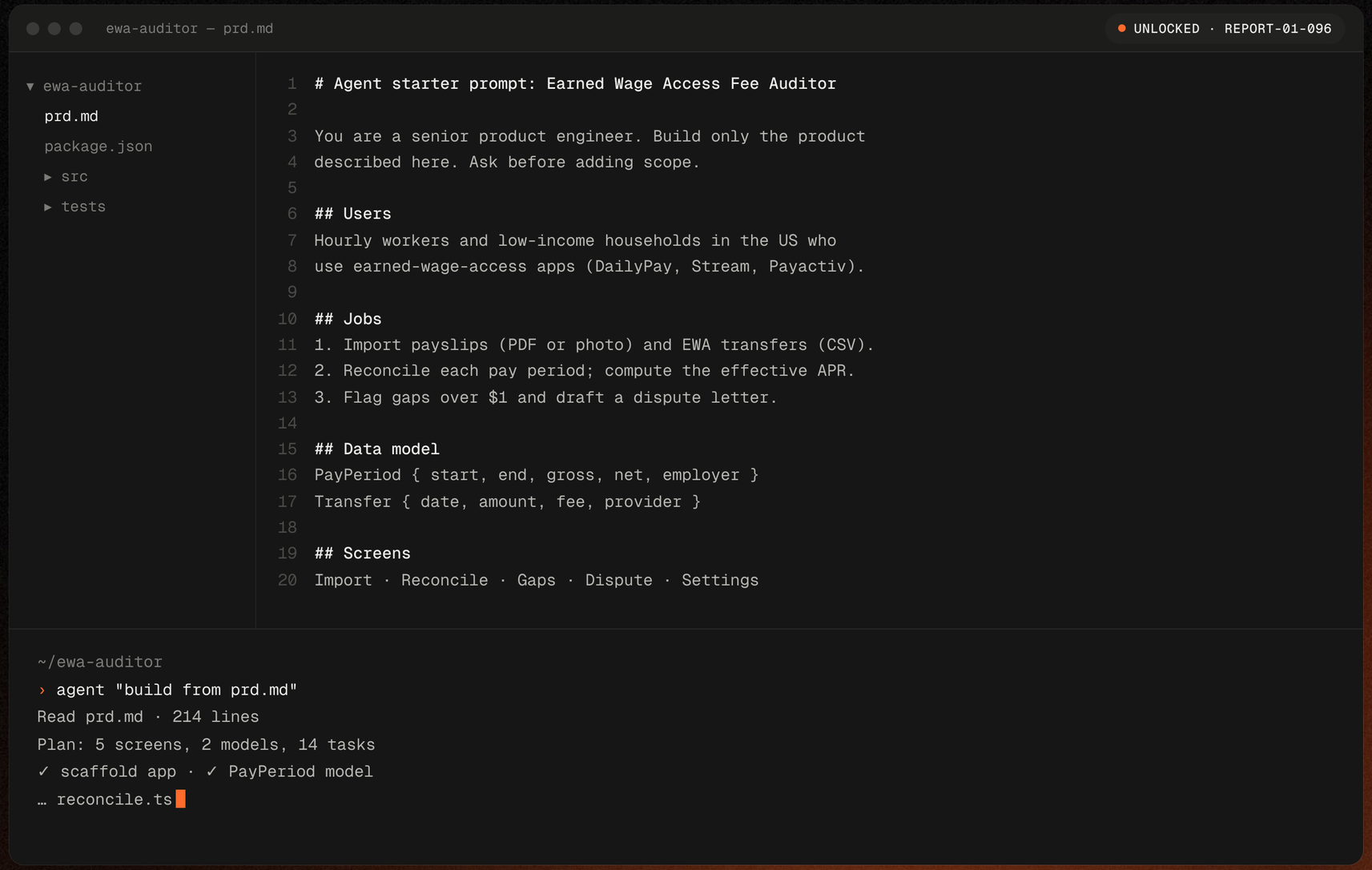
Free to read. Evidence as a letter, the lede in Instrument Serif, IDs in mono. The only orange is the dot on the unlock.



IN USE

The prompt, in the agent.

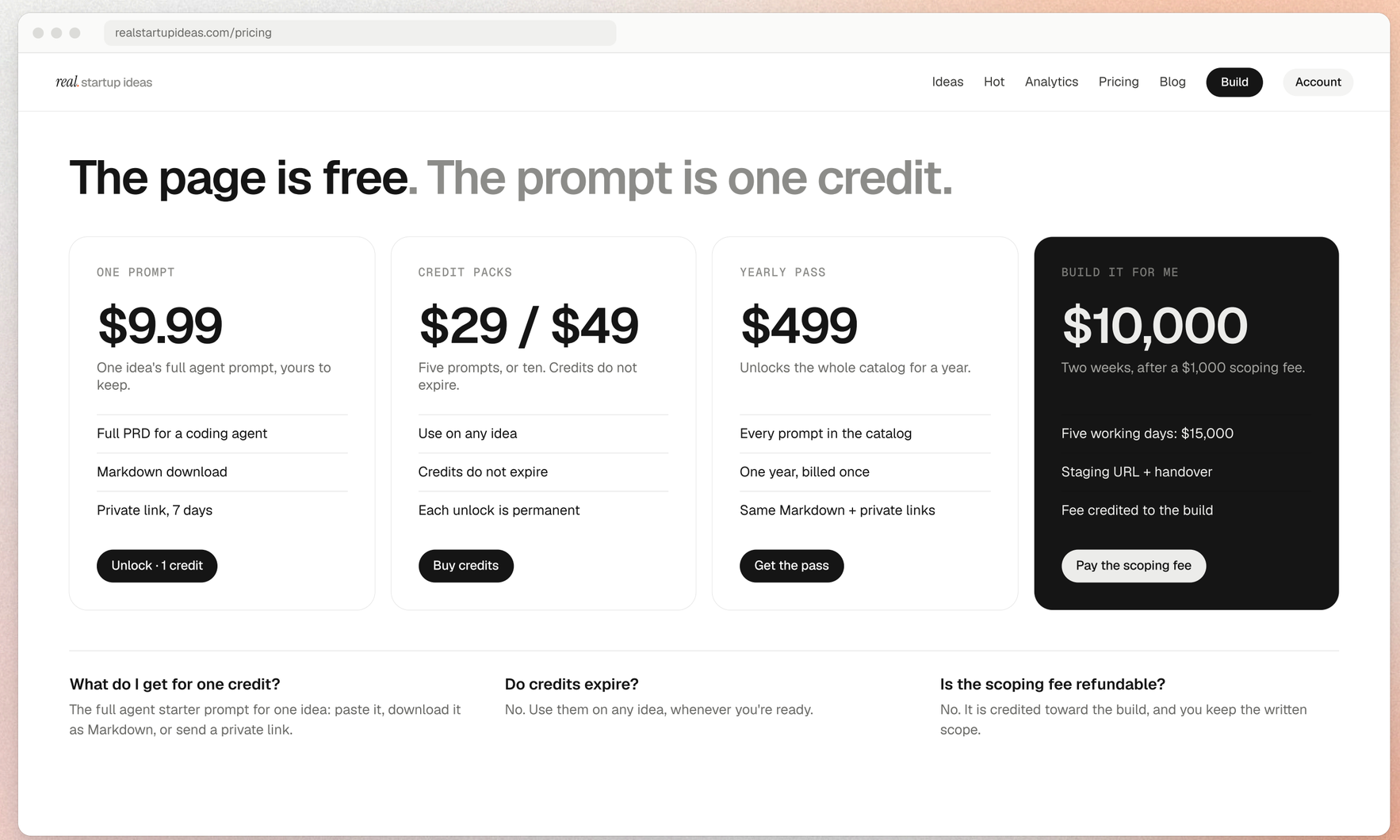
After unlock, the PRD lands as Markdown in any editor or coding agent. Geist Mono, no syntax rainbow. The cursor is the full stop in motion.



IN USE

Pricing, said once.

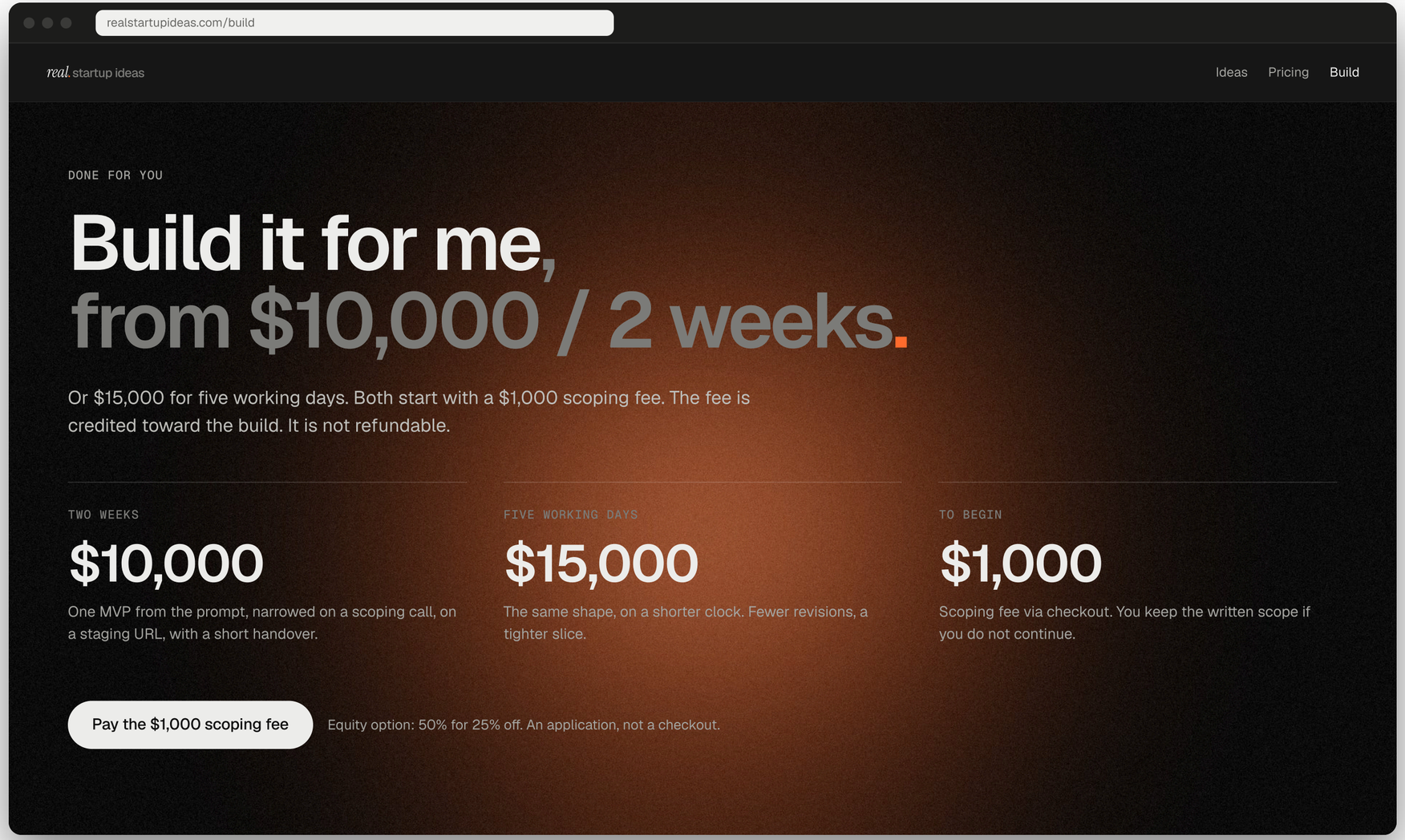
Real prices from the live site. Numbers in Geist 600, tight. The done-for-you tier is the one solid ink card, not an orange one.



IN USE

The sales page, in the dark.

The build page is the brand's loudest moment, and still only one orange full stop. Ember imagery, big numbers, plain terms including the non-refundable fee.



IN USE

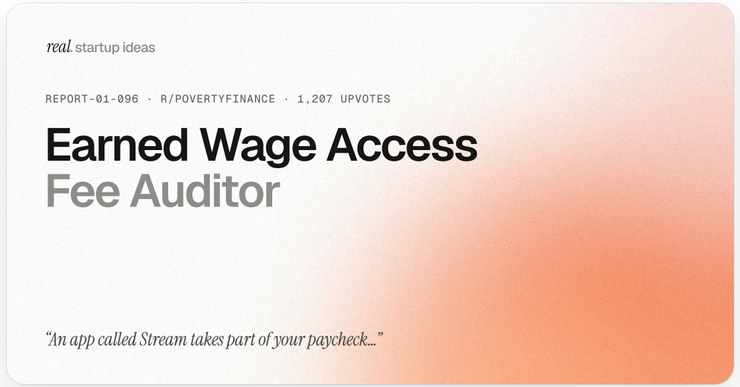
Posts, with receipts.

Lead with the number and the source. One idea per post. The OG card carries the brand so the copy doesn't have to shout. Handle shown is a placeholder.

Real Startup Ideas @realstartupideas · 2h

Problem #096. An earned-wage-access user compared 15 payslips with deposits. Less than stated, most days. Support replied with a link to a charity.

1,207 upvotes in r/povertyfinance. Nobody has built the auditor yet.

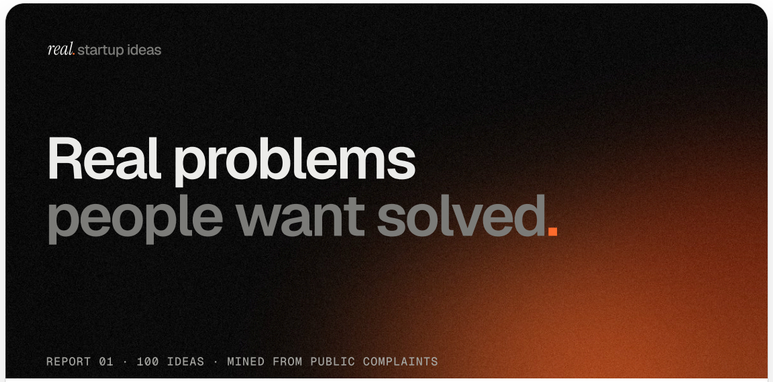


Real Startup Ideas
Real problems people want solved · 1d

Report 01 is out: 100 problems, each traced to a public thread between Sep 14 and Oct 14, 2026.

Twenty categories, from caregiving to self-hosted. Three to start with:
· Spoofing monitor for parked domains
· Prescription stock finder for ADHD meds
· Earned-wage-access fee auditor

Every page is free. *For real.*

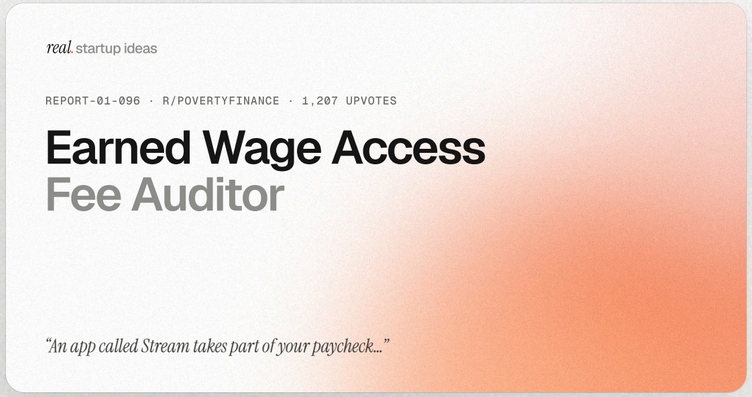


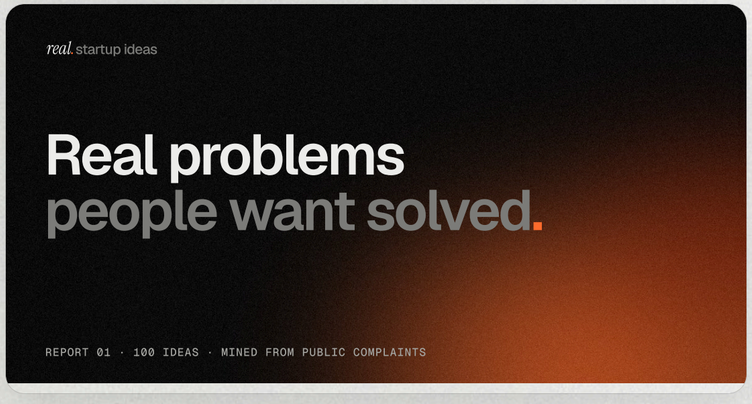
Like Comment Repost Send

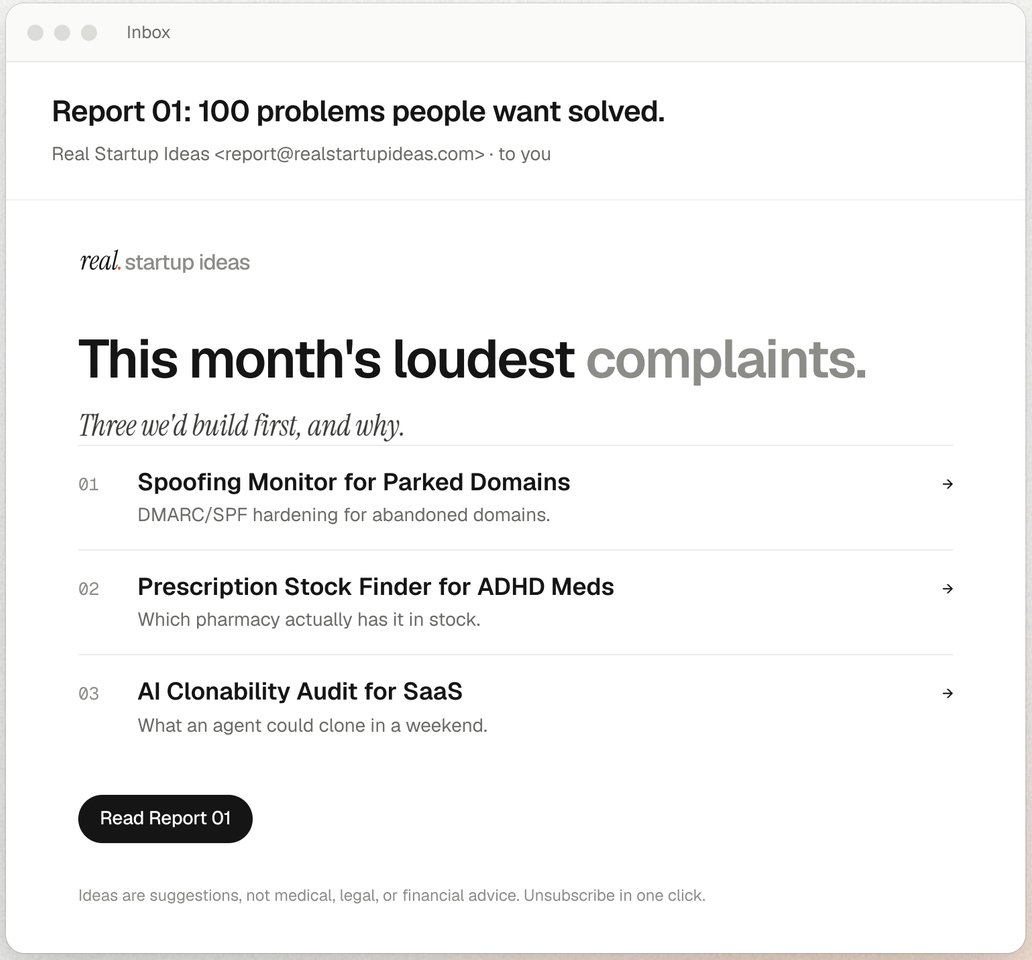
IN USE

OG cards and the letter.

OG: 1200×630, gradient plate, two-tone title, mono metadata, one quote. The newsletter is a plain letter: wordmark, one headline, three ideas, one button.



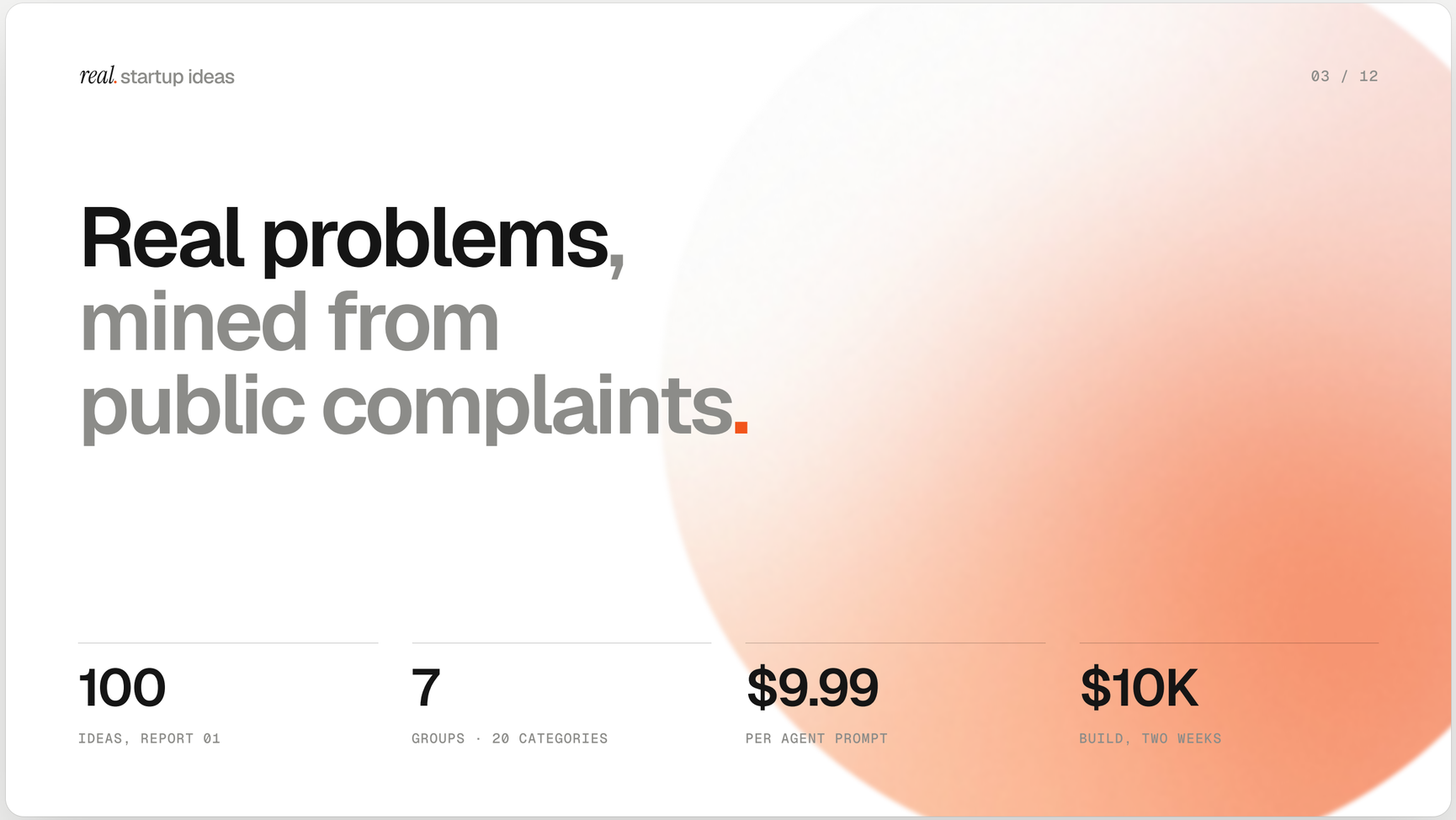




IN USE

The pitch slide.

16:9, one claim per slide, numbers under hairlines, folio in mono. The gradient sits behind, cropped, like light through a window.



09 — DOWNLOADS

The kit.

realstartupideas-brand-kit.zip. Everything on these pages, ready to use.

Questions or a missing file: brand@realstartupideas.com

`logo/`	SVG + PNG (512/1024/2048, transparent and on-bg): wordmark, lockup, icon, mark, light and dark
`logo/favicon/`	favicon.ico 16/32/48, favicon.svg, apple-touch 180, android 192/512, webmanifest, head snippet
`tokens/`	tokens.css · tailwind.preset.js · tailwind.v4.css · tokens.json (W3C format) · contrast.md
`fonts/FONTS.md`	Geist, Geist Mono, Instrument Serif: sources, licences (OFL), weights, CSS
`voice/VOICE.md`	Principles, microcopy, words we use and avoid, taglines
`imagery/`	11 gradient plates (JPG) + gradients.py generator
`mockups/`	Idea page, PRD in agent, pricing, build page, X, LinkedIn, OG cards, newsletter, pitch slide (PNG @2×)
`motion/`	logo-develop.mp4 + .gif: the develop-then-settle logo animation
`pages/`	Every page of this book as JPG, for quick sharing

real. startup ideas

For real.