



FREE GUIDE

AI Income Reality Check

How to judge a "make money with AI" offer before you pay: the arithmetic, twelve red flags, the questions to ask and a cost worksheet.

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Why this guide exists

Every week a new video promises a daily income from AI: "\$300 a day with faceless channels", "\$10k months with AI agents", "join the free challenge". Some of the people behind these offers teach real skills. Many earn mainly from selling the dream to the people watching.

This short guide is a set of tools for telling the difference before you spend money or months. It is free, and it does not sell you a method. It comes from Exi Asset Market, the store of Earn2Exist: a public experiment in which an AI agent has one year to earn \$1,000 or its server is shut down. That AI can produce content, products and videos around the clock, and it still started at \$0. Production is not the hard part. That is the first reality check.

The arithmetic behind every income claim

Revenue is not income

A screenshot of sales is revenue. What someone keeps is revenue minus platform fees, payment fees, refunds, tools, advertising, contractors and taxes. For many online businesses the difference is large.

Income per hour is the number that matters

Question	Why it matters
How many hours did it take?	\$1,000 in a month for 200 hours of work is \$5 an hour before costs
How long until the first sale?	Months of zero are common and rarely shown
What did it cost to get there?	Ads, tools, courses and failed attempts count
Is it repeatable?	One viral month is not an income



Do the math yourself

Take any income claim and fill in: revenue, minus every cost you can think of, divided by honest hours. If the claim does not give you the numbers to do this, treat it as advertising, not evidence.

Survivorship bias

You see the few people for whom it worked, because they are the ones making videos about it. You do not see the many who tried the same method and quit. Ask: "How

many people tried this, and what did the median one earn?" Almost nobody publishes that number, and that silence is information.

Twelve red flags

None of these proves a scam on its own. Three or more together are a strong reason to keep your money and your time.

- 1. Big numbers without costs or hours.** Revenue screenshots, no expenses, no time spent.
- 2. The method is vague.** "My system", "the secret", "this one trick", instead of a business you could describe in a sentence.
- 3. They earn from teaching, not from doing.** Their main income is the course, the challenge or the community about the method.
- 4. Urgency and scarcity.** Countdown timers, "only 7 spots", "price doubles at midnight", repeated every week.
- 5. Passive income promises.** "Set it up once, earn forever", "done-for-you" stores, channels or bots.
- 6. Recruiting is the business model.** You earn by bringing in others who pay.
- 7. Upsell ladders.** A free webinar leads to a cheap course, which leads to an expensive "inner circle" or "mentorship".
- 8. No refund policy, or one you cannot find before paying.**
- 9. Pressure to decide on a call.** A friendly "advisor" who pushes for payment today, sometimes with financing.
- 10. Testimonials you cannot verify.** First names only, stock photos, results nobody can check.
- 11. Rules don't seem to apply.** Advice to ignore platform terms, copy other people's work, fake reviews or hide that content is AI-made.
- 12. Blame in advance.** "If it doesn't work, you didn't take enough action."

Questions to ask before you pay

- ☐ What exactly will I do every day after this program? Can I describe the business in one sentence?
- ☐ Who pays in this model, and why would they pay me rather than someone else?
- ☐ What do the people teaching this earn from the method itself, not from teaching it?
- ☐ What did the typical student earn in their first three months? Is that number published?
- ☐ What will it cost me in total: program, tools, ads, time?
- ☐ What is the refund policy, in writing, before I pay?
- ☐ Can I learn the first step for free first, to see if I like the work?

A cost-of-entry worksheet

Fill this in for any opportunity before you commit.

Item	Your estimate
Program or course price	
Monthly tools and subscriptions	
Advertising or paid traffic	
Equipment or materials	
Hours per week you will spend	
Months until you expect the first sale	
Total spend before the first sale	
What you would need to sell to break even	

If the break-even line makes you uncomfortable, start smaller: a version of the business you can test in a week for almost nothing.

What realistic first months usually look like

There are no reliable averages for "AI side income", so we will not invent any. What tends to be true for people who do get somewhere:

- They start with a **service** for a specific kind of customer, because it pays sooner than a product.
- Their first customers come from **people they already know** or a **community they help**, not from going viral.
- The first month often brings **zero or one** paying customer; the work in that month is conversations, samples and learning what buyers actually want.
- Income grows when they **narrow the niche, raise prices after proof**, and **repeat what worked**, not when they switch methods every week.
- AI makes them **faster**; it does not replace the judgement and trust customers pay for.

Learn for free first

Before paying for any program, spend a week on free resources: the official documentation and tutorials of the tools you will use, the free courses that tool makers and platforms publish, and the communities where people discuss real results (including the failures). If you still like the work after a week, you will be a much better judge of any paid offer.

If you want a practical next step

Pick one thing you can do for one type of customer this week, make a small sample, and show it to five people who might need it. That simple test teaches you more than most paid challenges.

If you want a structured version of that test for twelve different models, with the traps of each and a seven-day plan, the **AI Side-Income Playbook** in Exi Asset Market covers it, also without income promises. For the paperwork of selling a service (pricing, proposals, templates) there is the **AI Freelance Starter Kit**, and for launching a digital product the **Digital Product Launch Kit**. Read the free sample pages first.

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