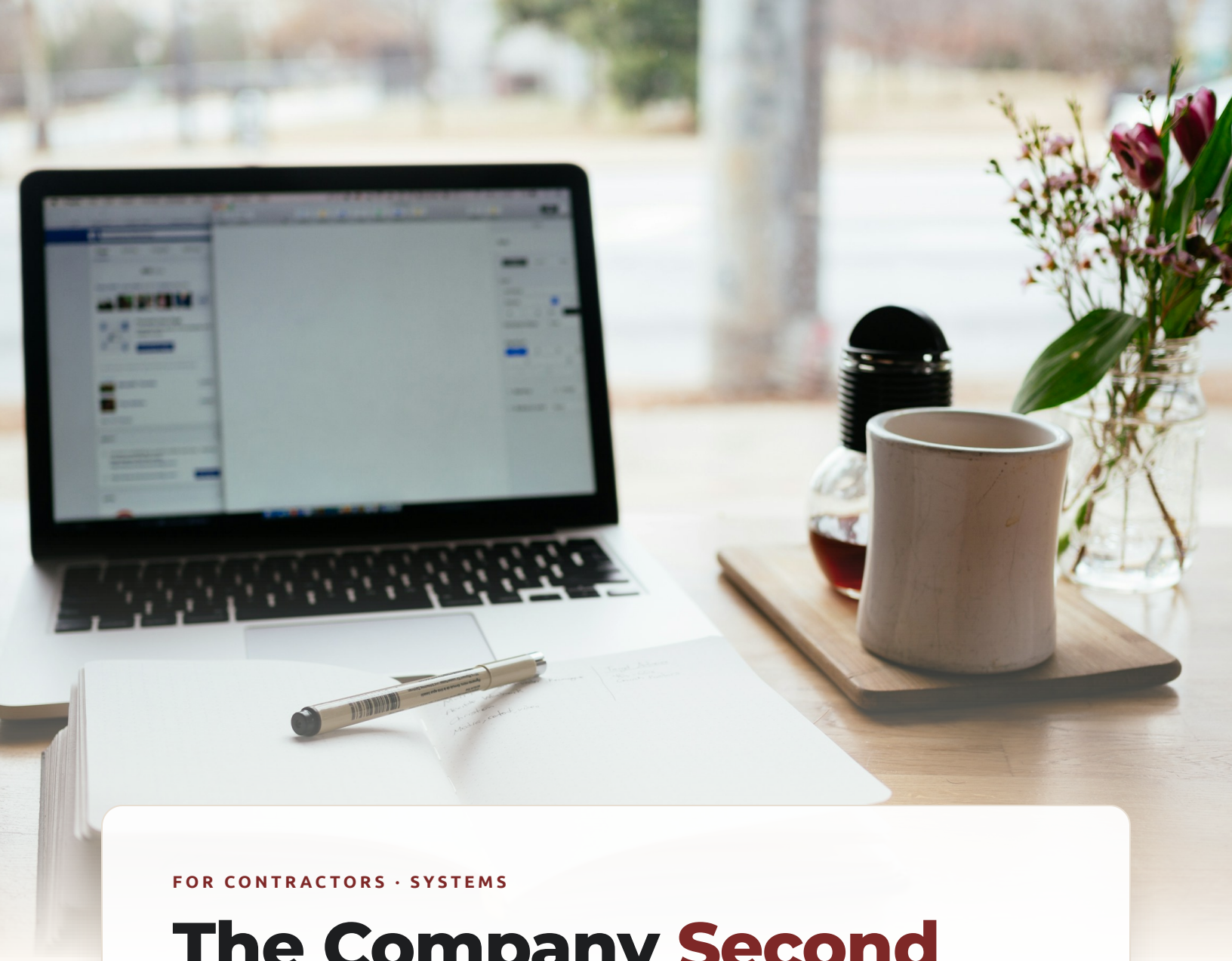


FOR CONTRACTORS · SYSTEMS

The Company Second Brain

Get the company out of your head: a free Obsidian knowledge base with your services, policies, prices, procedures and templates, marked approved or not, that your team, your website and your AI tools all work from.

15 chapters · Starter vault included · 116 interview questions · AI prompts

VISION FLOORING

Vision Flooring LLC · Everett, Washington
visionflooringllc.com

What's inside

Read chapters 1 to 5 first, with the starter vault open beside you. Then work through 6 to 15 at your own pace; the 30–day plan in Chapter 15 puts it in order. The **Company Brain starter vault** that came with this guide has every folder, template, dashboard view and prompt ready to use.

01 **Your company lives in your head**
What it costs you, and what a company brain changes

02 **What a company brain is (and isn't)**
Four rules, knowledge versus transactions, and why Obsidian

03 **Obsidian in 20 minutes**
Install, open the starter vault, the settings and Markdown you need

04 **The vault structure**
The folders, naming notes, and linking up and across

05 **Properties and the approval system**
Statuses, owner approval, markers and who may change what

06 **Writing your first notes**
Company facts, services, policies, FAQs, style and pricing

07 **Procedures (SOPs)**
From a recording to a tested checklist

08 **Templates and customer care**
Message templates, note templates and handouts

09 **The dashboard**
Bases views and the fifteen–minute weekly review

10 **The company map**
Roles, workflow and systems on one Canvas

11 **Feeding AI from your brain**
Rules, three ways to give AI your facts, and privacy

12 **Building on top of the brain**
Website, estimates, handouts, hiring and posts from one source

13 **Pulling knowledge out of your head**
The interview method and what you already have

14 **Team, backups and privacy**
Access, syncing, backups and what never goes in

15 **The 30-day setup plan**
Week by week, and how to tell it is working

T **Tools**
Note quality checklist and weekly review · Question bank (116 questions) · Interview session sheet · Starter vault map · Sources

About this guide

This guide was written by Alex Babko, owner of Vision Flooring LLC in Everett, Washington: 20+ years of running a contracting business since 2006, first remodeling and now flooring, with 3,800+ clients behind us. It is not theory. It is how we run our own company today, what we tried and dropped, and what we would do first if we started over, written so you can use it in yours.

For most of our twenty years, our company ran out of one head and a phone full of texts. In 2026 we wrote it down in a free Obsidian vault: services, policies, pricing guidelines, procedures, message templates, customer care guides and a review queue, every note marked approved by the owner or not. Our website, its chat assistant, our care handouts, our hiring post and the guides in our shop are built from that vault. This guide is the method and the structure, with a starter vault built the same way, minus our private details.

> ⚠ **General business information, not legal, tax or financial advice**
> Laws, platform rules and prices differ by state and change over time. Where this guide touches contracts, lending, taxes, employment or advertising rules, it explains how things usually work and the questions to ask; your attorney, accountant, licensing agency and each platform's current rules come first. Check the sources at the back for the latest versions.

How to use it

- Read it once start to finish, then work through it in order: each chapter builds on the one before. Every chapter starts with **"The short version"**.
- Boxes marked **AI prompt** are ready to copy into Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini or any other assistant. The same prompts are in the files that came with this guide, so you don't have to retype them.
- Words in [square brackets] are placeholders: replace them with your own facts. Never let a tool fill them in with guesses.

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CHAPTER

01

Your company lives in your head

In most contracting companies the owner is the database. Prices, procedures, which product to use, what to say when a customer is upset: it is all in one head, plus a phone full of texts. That works until you want to hire, take a week off, use AI, or simply stop answering the same question for the hundredth time.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Knowledge that lives only in your head can't be delegated, checked, improved or handed on.
- A company brain is one place where everything the company knows is written down, marked approved or not, and linked together.
- It pays three ways: fewer repeated questions and mistakes, faster training, and AI tools that write from your facts instead of guessing.
- Everything else (website, estimates, handouts, posts, hiring) gets built from it, so it is written once and used everywhere.

Where your company's knowledge lives today

Take an honest look. For most owners, the answer to "how do we do this?" is scattered across places that nobody else can search:

WHERE IT LIVES	THE PROBLEM
Your memory	Only you can reach it, and only when you are available. It changes without anyone noticing.
Text threads and emails	The perfect answer you wrote a customer last spring exists, somewhere, in thousands of messages.
Estimates and invoices	They show what you charged, not why, or what was left out.
A crew lead's habits	Good habits leave when the person leaves. Bad ones spread quietly.
Sticky notes, a binder, a few Word files	Outdated the week after they were written, and nobody knows which version is right.
Nowhere	Many decisions were never made at all. They get made again, differently, on every job.

What it costs you

None of these show up as a line on your profit and loss statement, which is exactly why they are so expensive:

- [ ] **Repeated answers.** The same questions from customers, crew and office help, every week, each one pulling you off an estimate or out of the evening.
- [ ] **Repeated mistakes.** A problem gets solved on one job and happens again on the next, because the fix was never written down.
- [ ] **Slow training.** A new helper learns by following you around. That takes weeks of your time and still leaves gaps.
- [ ] **No time off.** If the company can't run for a week without your phone, you don't own a business; you own a job.
- [ ] **AI that guesses.** Ask an AI tool to write a page or a reply without your facts and it fills the gaps with confident inventions: a warranty you don't offer, a price you never quoted.
- [ ] **A company that is hard to pass on.** A buyer, a partner or your family can't take over what only exists in your head.

What a company brain changes

BEFORE	AFTER
"Call me, I'll explain it."	"It's in the brain: open *Job Start SOP*."
Each crew does the job its own way	One written procedure with a checklist, improved after every problem
Customer answers depend on who picks up the phone	Approved answers and message templates, in your voice
A new helper shadows you for weeks	A new helper reads the procedures and checklists, then shadows to practise
AI writes nice-sounding text that is wrong	AI writes from approved notes and leaves placeholders for anything missing
The website, handouts and estimates all say slightly different things	They are all built from the same approved notes

How we got here

We ran our company out of one head for most of twenty years. In 2026 we wrote it down: an Obsidian vault with our services, policies, pricing guidelines, procedures, message templates, customer care guides and a review queue, every note marked as approved by the owner or not. Today our website, the chat assistant on it, our customer care handouts, our hiring post and the guides in our shop are all built from that vault. When something changes, we change the note first, and everything built on it follows.

This guide is the method, the structure and the starter vault we would hand you if you came to work with us, minus our private details.

Write it once, use it everywhere

The goal is not documentation for its own sake. Every note should answer a question that keeps coming back, or feed something you build: a page, a reply, a checklist, a handout. If a note does neither, it can wait.

What you will have at the end

PART	WHAT IT GIVES YOU	CHAPTER
A free Obsidian vault on your own computer	Private files you own, no subscription	3–4
An approval system	Everyone (and every AI tool) can tell approved facts from drafts	5
Your first 25–40 notes	Services, policies, FAQs, pricing guidelines, communication style	6
Written procedures with checklists	Jobs done the same way, whoever does them	7
Message templates and care guides	Consistent, friendly customer communication	8
A dashboard	What is approved, what is waiting, what is out of date	9
A company map	How the business fits together, and where it is stuck	10
AI rules and prompts	AI that writes from your facts	11–12
A habit	Fifteen minutes a week keeps it alive	9, 15

CHAPTER

02

What a company brain is (and isn't)

A company brain is a set of plain text notes in folders, linked together, each one marked with whether the owner has approved it. That is all. The power comes from four simple rules and from building everything else on top of it.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Four rules: plain files you own, one topic per note, every note has a status, and only the owner approves.
- The brain holds knowledge (how and why). Transactions (customers, invoices, payroll) stay in the software built for them.
- Obsidian is a good home for it: free, private, offline, and its notes are plain text that any AI tool can read.
- The method works in other tools too, but free and plain text is hard to beat.

The four rules

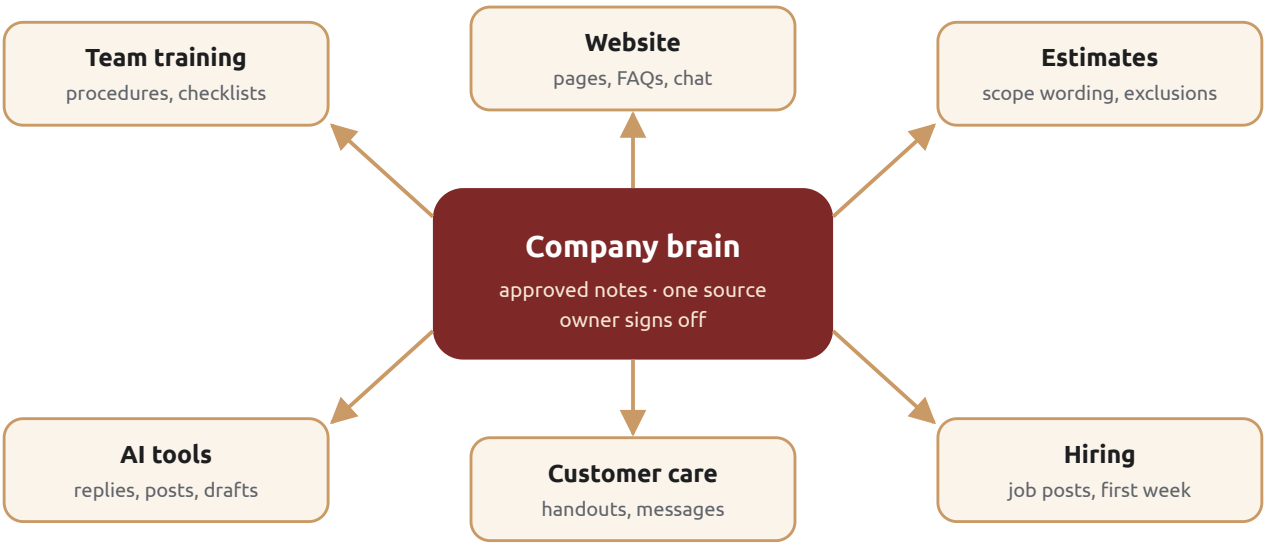
1. **Plain files you own.**
   Every note is a text file on your computer. No company can lock you out, raise the price or shut down and take your knowledge with it.

2. **One topic per note.**
   "Warranty Policy" is a note. "Hardwood Refinishing" is a note. A note that covers everything is a note nobody can find, link or approve.

3. **Every note has a status.**
   Needs review, proposed or confirmed, plus whether the owner approved it (Chapter 5). Nobody has to guess whether a note can be trusted.

4. **Only the owner approves.**
   Anyone can draft, including AI. Only the owner (or the person the owner names) marks a note confirmed and approved.

The brain in the middle



Everything you build reads from the brain. When a fact changes, the note changes first.

Knowledge, not transactions

The brain holds what the company *knows*: how, why, what we say, what we do. It is not the place for records of what happened. Those already have homes:

BELONGS IN THE BRAIN	BELONGS SOMEWHERE ELSE
What each service includes and excludes	Customer names, addresses and job history → your job or CRM software
How we price, the guidelines and what moves a price	Each customer's estimate and invoice → estimating and accounting software
Payment terms and what happens when a payment is late	Payments received, bank records → accounting software and the bank
How we hire, onboard and train	Employee files, pay, tax forms, medical notes → payroll or HR software, kept private
Which software we use for what, and who runs it	Passwords and keys → a password manager, never a note
Our contract wording and why each clause is there	Signed contracts → document storage with the job

Why Obsidian

You can build a company brain in a binder, in Google Docs or in Notion. We use Obsidian, and this guide does too, for five reasons:

	OBSIDIAN	SHARED DOCS (GOOGLE DOCS, WORD ONLINE)	ALL-IN-ONE WORKSPACES (NOTION AND OTHERS)
Cost	Free, including for business use; paid add-ons are optional	Usually part of a plan you already pay for	Free tiers with limits; teams usually pay
Where files live	On your computer, as plain text	In the provider's cloud	In the provider's cloud
Works offline	Yes	Partly	Partly
Linking notes	Built for it: type `[[` and pick a note	Manual links	Good
Status and dashboards	Properties and Bases, built in	Not really	Good (databases)
Reading by AI tools	Plain text: paste, upload or point an agent at the folder	Copy and paste or export	Export or connector
Many people editing at once	Weak: one editor at a time works best	Excellent	Excellent

Already use something else?

Keep it if your team lives in it. The four rules, the folder structure, the approval properties and the question bank in this guide work anywhere. What matters is one place, statuses and an owner who approves.

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

The Company Second Brain

You just read a few pages. The complete version has everything below, with every worksheet and the spreadsheet.

- ✓ Why a company brain beats folders, apps and memory, and what it lets you build on top
- ✓ Obsidian in 20 minutes: free, private files on your own computer, no subscription needed
- ✓ The vault structure we use: services, FAQs, policies, pricing, templates, communication style, procedures, customer care and a review queue
- ✓ The approval system: every note marked needs-review, proposed or confirmed, so people and AI only use what the owner approved
- ✓ Writing procedures (SOPs) from what you already do, with templates
- ✓ The dashboard and company map: see what is approved, what is waiting and how the business fits together
- ✓ Feeding AI from your brain: the rules and prompts that make AI answer from your facts instead of inventing them

Get the full guide →

visionflooringllc.com/company-second-brain · Instant download · Guide + Obsidian starter vault + AI prompts

Questions first? Text 425-218-4234; a real person answers.