

THE IGNITING STUDIO

The Claude Code Setup Guide for Marketers

A practical guide to setting up Claude Code and making it actually useful for your marketing work.

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1. What is Claude Code?

Claude Code is a command-line AI assistant that runs inside your code editor. Think of it as having a marketing teammate who sits inside your project files, remembers everything you tell it, and gets better the more you work together.

If you have used ChatGPT or other AI tools, you know the pain: you paste your brand voice every single time. You re-explain your audience. You correct the same mistakes over and over. Claude Code fixes that.

Here is how it differs from ChatGPT:

- **Persistent context.** Claude Code reads a file called CLAUDE.md every time it starts, so your brand voice, rules, and client details are already loaded before you type anything.
 - **Skills.** You can save repeatable workflows (like "write a LinkedIn post" or "generate hashtags") as skill files that give you consistent output with a single command.
 - **File access.** Claude Code reads and writes files in your project, so it can look at your past content, read your style guide, and check your analytics notes instead of working in a blank chat window.
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2. What you need before starting

I know this looks complicated, but trust me, once you get the hang of it, you will never look back. You need four things:

- A computer (Mac, Windows, or Linux all work)
- VS Code, a free code editor (code.visualstudio.com)
- A Claude Pro or Max subscription (claude.ai)
- About 15 minutes

GOOD TO KNOW

You do not need to know how to code. VS Code is just the container Claude Code runs in. You will mostly be typing plain English.

3. Step-by-step setup

Install VS Code

Go to code.visualstudio.com, download the version for your operating system, and install it. Open it once to make sure it runs. That is it.

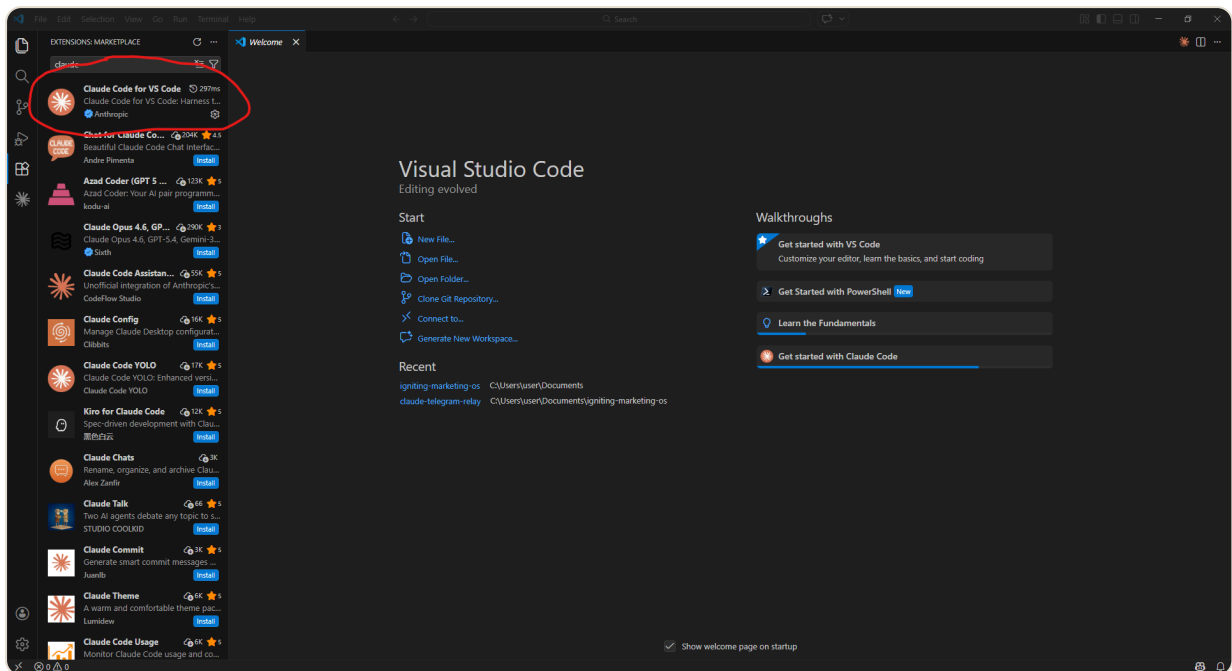
Install Claude Code

There are two ways to install it. Pick whichever feels easier.

Option A: VS Code extension (easiest)

Open VS Code and click the Extensions icon in the left sidebar (it looks like four squares). Search for "Claude Code" and install the one by Anthropic. It is the most popular result. Sign in with your Claude account and you are ready to go.

SCREENSHOT



Option B: Terminal install

Open VS Code. At the top menu, click **Terminal > New Terminal**. A panel will open at the bottom of your screen. Check the latest install instructions at docs.anthropic.com since the install command may change over time. Once installed, type `cclaude` in the terminal and press Enter. If it starts up, you are good to go.

Create your first project folder

Go to your Documents folder (or wherever you keep your work) and create a new folder the way you normally would. Right-click, New Folder, give it your business name. Something like:

```
My-Business-Name/
```

Then open it in VS Code: **File > Open Folder**, and select the folder you just created.

This folder is where Claude Code will look for everything: your instructions, your content, your past work. It all lives here.

4. The CLAUDE.md file

THIS IS THE IMPORTANT PART

Everything before this was just setup. This is the part that actually makes Claude Code useful.

What is CLAUDE.md?

It is a plain text file you put in your project folder. Claude Code reads it automatically at the start of every session. Whatever you write in this file becomes Claude's baseline knowledge about you, your business, and your rules.

Why it matters

Without CLAUDE.md, every conversation starts from zero. With it, Claude already knows:

- Who you are and what your business does
- How your brand sounds
- What mistakes to avoid
- Which platforms you use
- What you are working on right now

You write it once and Claude reads it every time you start a session. When you notice Claude making a mistake, you add a rule, and it never makes that mistake again.

How to create it

In VS Code, right-click in your project folder and select **New File**. Name it exactly `CLAUDE.md` (all caps, with the .md extension).

Paste the template below and fill in your details.

Starter CLAUDE.md template for marketers

CLAUDE.md

Who I am

- Name: [Your name]
- Business: [Your business name]
- Role: [What you do, e.g., "Founder and head of marketing" or "Freelance social media manager"]
- Website: [Your URL]

My business

- What we do: [One or two sentences. Example: "We help small e-commerce brands grow their Instagram and TikTok organically. No paid ads, just content that works."]
- Who we serve: [Your target audience. Example: "Women-owned product businesses doing \$10K-\$100K/month who do not have time to post consistently."]
- What makes us different: [Your honest differentiator.]

Voice and tone

- We sound like a smart friend giving advice, not a corporate brand lecturing.
- Warm and direct. Say it in fewer words when you can.
- Confident but not arrogant. We share what works, we admit what we do not know.
- Conversational. Write like you talk.
- [Add your own: any phrases you love, any words that feel like "you"]

Writing rules

Always do:

- Use short sentences. Break up long ones.
- Start with the most interesting thing, not the backstory.
- Include a clear call to action on every post.
- Use "you" and "your" when talking to the audience.

Never do:

- Never use the word "utilize" or "leverage." Say "use."
- Never write "game-changing" or "revolutionary." Just describe what it does.
- Never use emojis in LinkedIn posts.
- Never write hashtags in CamelCase. Always lowercase. #socialmedia not #SocialMedia.
- [Add your own rules here as you notice patterns you want to correct]

```
## Platforms
- Instagram: [posting frequency, content types]
- LinkedIn: [e.g., "2x/week, thought leadership posts"]
- TikTok: [e.g., "4x/week, short talking-head videos"]
- [Add or remove platforms as needed]

## Content pillars
1. [e.g., "Behind the scenes of running the business"]
2. [e.g., "Tips and how-tos for our audience"]
3. [e.g., "Client results and case studies"]
4. [e.g., "Personal stories and opinions on the industry"]

## Current priorities
- [What you are working on this month.]
- [E.g., "Growing LinkedIn from 500 to 1,000 followers."]
- [E.g., "Testing short-form video on Instagram."]

## Clients (if you manage accounts for others)
- [Client name]: [brief description, platforms, voice notes]
```

Making it yours

The template is a starting point. The more specific you are, the better Claude performs. Instead of "warm and friendly," write "sounds like a barista who also has an MBA." Instead of "professional," write "we never use exclamation marks and we always back claims with numbers."

KEY INSIGHT

The best CLAUDE.md files are messy and specific. They grow over time. Every time Claude does something you do not like, add a rule. That is the whole system.

5. Your first tasks to try

Once your CLAUDE.md is set up, open Claude Code in your terminal and try these:

- 1 "Write a LinkedIn post about [topic] in my brand voice." See if it picks up your tone. If it does not, refine your voice section.

- 2 "Create a week of content ideas for my [platform]." Check if it respects your content pillars and posting frequency.
- 3 "Review this caption and make it sound more like me." Paste a caption you wrote and one Claude wrote. Ask it to spot the differences.
- 4 "Research hashtags for [your niche]." Let it find what people actually use instead of guessing.
- 5 "Build me a simple landing page for [your offer]." Claude Code can create HTML files right in your project folder. You will have a working page in minutes.

These five tasks will tell you immediately whether your CLAUDE.md needs more detail. If the output feels generic, your instructions are too generic. Add more specifics and try again.

6. Skills: making Claude Code repeatable

What are skills?

A skill is a saved set of instructions for a specific task. Instead of typing "write me a caption, make it sound like me, keep it under 150 words, add 5 hashtags, use my brand voice" every time, you save that as a skill. Then you just say "use the caption writer skill" and it runs the whole thing.

How to create one

In your project folder, create this path:

```
.claude/skills/caption-writer/SKILL.md
```

The `.claude/skills/` folder is where all skills live. Each skill gets its own subfolder with a `SKILL.md` file inside.

Example: a simple caption writer skill

```
# Caption writer
```

```
Write a social media caption for the given topic or video.
```

```
## Rules
```

- Read the client's voice from CLAUDE.md before writing.
- Keep captions under 150 words.
- Do not summarize the video. Write an original thought that stands on its own.
- End with a clear call to action.
- Add 3-5 lowercase hashtags at the end.
- No emoji. No bullet-point lists. No "here's why" format.
- First line must hook the reader. Make them want to read line two.

That is it. Ten lines. Now every time you need a caption, Claude follows these rules automatically.

WANT MORE SKILLS?

The **Marketing Skills Starter Pack** (our other free download) includes ready-made skills for content creation, SEO, proposals, email sequences, and more. Each one is a SKILL.md file you drop into your project and start using immediately.

There is also a great open-source collection by Corey Haines at github.com/coreyhaines31/marketingskills. It covers CRO, copywriting, SEO, analytics, paid ads, pricing strategy, and more. You can browse the repo, pick the skills you need, and drop them into your `.claude/skills/` folder.

7. Tips from 6 months of daily use

These are the things I wish someone had told me on day one.

Keep your CLAUDE.md updated. Every time you correct Claude, add that correction as a rule.

"Never use the word 'delve'" is more useful than hoping it remembers from last time. Your CLAUDE.md should grow over time. That is a sign the system is working.

Organize by client or project. If you manage multiple brands, give each one its own folder with its own CLAUDE.md. Claude reads the instructions for whichever folder you have open. You set it up once and it just works.

Skills beat prompts. If you type the same instructions more than once, make it a skill. Prompts get forgotten but skills stay in your project forever, and the five minutes you spend writing a SKILL.md file will save you hours.

Always review before publishing. AI text has patterns that humans can spot: groups of three, synonym cycling, words like "delve" and "landscape" and "tapestry." Read your output out loud. If it sounds like a press release, rewrite the parts that feel stiff. The AI gets you 80% there. The last 20% is your voice.

Claude Code reads files by meaning, not keywords. You do not need to write your CLAUDE.md in any special format. Just write naturally. Claude understands context and meaning, not just exact word matches.

8. What is next

You now have a working Claude Code setup that remembers your brand and gets better the more you use it.

Go deeper with the full system

The full AI Marketing OS includes 90+ marketing skills, a content engine, a client dashboard, and the workflows that power a real agency. All built on Claude Code.

[Join the waitlist](#)

Follow @the.igniting.studio for weekly Claude Code tips, real examples, and honest takes on what works (and what does not) with AI marketing.

You do not need to learn everything at once. Just set up your CLAUDE.md today and try one task. When something feels off, add a rule. It compounds from there.

Built by [The Igniting Studio](#). A real agency running on Claude Code, sharing what we learn along the way.