

TOOLKIT

0-to-1 Launch Checklist

A product, marketing, and sales-integrated checklist for taking a product from raw idea to first revenue — covering positioning, GTM, sales readiness, launch, and the critical 30/60/90-day post-launch arc.

How to use this checklist

Work through each phase in order. Do not skip ahead. Phases 1–3 must be complete before building any marketing assets. Phases 5–6 must be complete before any sales conversation. The post-launch phases (8–10) are not optional — they are where the real product decisions get made.

Phase	Name	Focus	Items
1	Positioning & Messaging	What you are, who it's for, why now	7
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Total: 87 checklist items across 10 phases. The printable template is included at the end of this PDF — print it, pin it, use it in sprint planning, discovery sessions, and GTM reviews.

1

WHAT YOU ARE, WHO IT'S FOR, WHY NOW

Positioning & Messaging

Before anything goes out, your positioning must be airtight. Vague messaging produces vague customers.

Key insight: If your one-liner takes more than 5 seconds to understand, you don't have a positioning problem — you have a clarity problem. Rewrite it until a 10-year-old gets it.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Written a one-liner: [Product] helps [ICP] do [outcome] without [pain]	Forces extreme clarity — if you can't write this, the positioning isn't ready
■	Defined your category — creating one or entering one?	Category creation requires education budget; category entry requires differentiation
■	Identified your single strongest differentiator vs. alternatives	One differentiator remembered beats five forgotten
■	Validated messaging with 5 ICP members — do they immediately get it?	If they ask "what does it do?" the message failed
■	Chosen a primary emotional hook — what feeling does this sell?	People buy feelings, then justify with logic
■	Confirmed name availability — domain, social handles, trademark check	Discovering a conflict after launch is expensive
■	Defined the anti-positioning — what you are NOT and who you are NOT for	Prevents chasing the wrong customers from day one

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EXACTLY WHO YOU'RE SELLING TO FIRST

ICP & Segmentation

The ICP is not a persona — it is a precision tool. The more specific, the more effective your GTM motion becomes.

Key insight: Most failed launches sold to everyone and converted no one. Your first 10 customers should be so similar that a stranger could pick them out of a room.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Written the ICP in one sentence — job title, context, pain, budget signal	Prevents "our ICP is anyone who needs X"
■	Identified the early adopter within the ICP — who buys before it's perfect?	Early adopters tolerate bugs; mainstream users don't
■	Segmented B2B vs B2C motion — they are different playbooks	Mixing them produces a product that serves neither well
■	Mapped where the ICP discovers products like yours	Distribution comes before product in GTM
■	Identified the ICP's trusted voices — who influences their decisions?	Influencer here means trusted peer, not social media
■	Built a list of 50 named prospects — not personas, real people	Real names force real thinking about reachability
■	Defined the anti-ICP — who looks like your customer but will churn or never convert	Saves enormous sales time especially in B2B

3 HOW YOU REACH, ACQUIRE, AND CONVERT

Go-to-Market Strategy

GTM is not a launch event — it is a repeatable system for acquiring customers. Build the system, not just the campaign.

Key insight: Most 0-to-1 teams spread across 6 channels and master none. One channel owned completely beats six channels dabbled in.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Chosen a primary GTM motion: product-led, sales-led, or community-led	Each requires a fundamentally different team and product investment
■	Chosen 1 primary and 1 backup channel — validated by at least one acquisition each	Forces testing before committing budget
■	Defined the acquisition loop — how does one customer bring the next?	Paid acquisition at 0-to-1 is a treadmill; loops compound
■	Set the CAC target before spending — what can you afford per customer?	Without a CAC ceiling, you optimize for vanity not viability
■	Planned first 90 days of content or outreach — not just launch day	Launch day is 1% of the GTM journey
■	Defined the free/trial/freemium model if applicable — what converts to paid?	Free without a conversion path is charity, not growth

4 WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU SELL ANYTHING

Product Marketing Assets

Sales without assets is exhausting. Every conversation where you rebuild the pitch from scratch is a process failure waiting to be fixed.

Key insight: The goal of product marketing assets is to make the first sales conversation shorter, not longer — the customer should arrive pre-educated.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Landing page live with clear headline, ICP-specific value prop, and one CTA	If there are three CTAs there are effectively zero
■	Demo video or interactive walkthrough — under 2 minutes	Longer than 2 minutes loses B2B buyers before the key moment
■	3 customer pain point stories written — even fictional at launch	Stories convert better than feature lists
■	Pricing page with clear tiers and value anchoring	Hiding pricing in B2B creates friction before trust is built
■	One-pager or pitch deck for B2B sales conversations	Sales without a leave-behind loses the internal champion

■	FAQ document covering the top 10 objections you will face	Written objection responses mean faster, more consistent sales
■	Social proof placeholder — even a waitlist number builds trust	Zero social proof is the biggest conversion killer at launch
■	Built an email nurture sequence for leads who don't convert immediately	B2B buying cycles are long — most leads need 5–12 touches
■	Created a competitor comparison page or battlecard	Customers will compare you regardless — control the narrative

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BEFORE THE FIRST SALES CONVERSATION

Sales Readiness

In B2B especially, the sales conversation is the product experience before the product. A bad demo or discovery call kills deals that a great product would have won.

Key insight: Founders who skip sales readiness spend twice as long closing half as many deals — and blame the market instead of the process.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Written a discovery call script — questions first, pitch second	Talking before listening is the most common early sales mistake
■	Defined and practiced the demo flow — what to show, in what order, what NOT to show	A bad demo kills more B2B deals than bad pricing
■	Defined decision-maker vs. champion vs. blocker in the sales process	Each requires a different conversation and different materials
■	Built a simple CRM pipeline — even a spreadsheet — before the first lead	Leads without tracking are leads lost
■	Set the sales cycle length expectation — days, weeks, or months?	Mismatched expectations kill morale and forecasting
■	Prepared objection responses for: price, timing, trust, and competition	Unscripted objection handling loses to scripted every time
■	Defined what a qualified lead looks like — not everyone interested is a buyer	Chasing unqualified leads is the biggest time drain at 0-to-1
■	Set the conversion rate target from demo to close	Without a benchmark you cannot tell if the process is working
■	Defined the handoff process from marketing lead to sales conversation	Even if you're doing both, the handoff breaks at scale predictably

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48 HOURS BEFORE GOING LIVE

Pre-Launch

Pre-launch is not preparation — it is the last gate before an action you cannot fully undo. Everything missed here gets discovered by customers instead.

Key insight: The most expensive bugs are the ones discovered on launch day. The second most expensive are the analytics gaps discovered on day 3.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Tested the full purchase or sign-up flow as a real user — not QA	QA finds technical bugs; founder testing finds UX failures
■	Confirmed onboarding delivers value in under 5 minutes	The moment of first value is the strongest predictor of retention
■	Built and warmed a launch audience — email list, community, waitlist	Launching cold to zero audience is a tree falling in a forest
■	Scheduled launch content across chosen channels	Scrambling on launch day produces inconsistent messaging
■	Briefed any partners, affiliates, or community influencers	Coordinated amplification beats individual effort every time
■	Set up UTM parameters across all launch channels	Without UTMs you cannot attribute what drove which conversion
■	Set up analytics, tracking, and conversion events — before launch not after	Retroactive analytics miss the most valuable early data
■	Confirmed legal and compliance baseline — data laws, payment compliance	Ignored at 0-to-1, always painful later in B2B enterprise
■	Prepared the support channel — someone watching live on launch day	First-day support failures become first-week churn

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GOING LIVE

Launch Execution

Launch day is not the finish line — it is the starting gun. The goal is not maximum visibility on day one but maximum learning.

Key insight: A small launch to the right 20 people generates more signal than a large launch to 2,000 wrong ones.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Launched to warm audience first — not cold	Warm audiences convert at 5–10x the rate of cold ones
■	Sent personal outreach to first 20 prospects — not a mass email	Personal always outperforms broadcast at 0-to-1
■	Posted on channels where ICP actually is — not where you are	Founder comfort and ICP presence are rarely the same channel

■	Monitored sign-up/purchase funnel live for the first 24 hours	24 hours captures multiple time zones and usage patterns
■	Followed up with every sign-up within 24 hours — personally	First-touch personal response sets the relationship tone
■	Captured same-day qualitative feedback — what almost stopped them?	The hesitation before conversion is the most valuable data
■	Resisted feature requests on launch day — shipped is shipped	Launch-day feature requests are noise; patterns over time are signal

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REVENUE, RETENTION, AND REAL LEARNING

Post-Launch: Days 1–30

Day 30 is where the honest signal separates from the launch noise. Everything before is enthusiasm; everything after is truth.

Key insight: Most products that fail by month 3 had all the warning signs by day 30 — they were just not looked for specifically enough.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Tracked weekly: sign-ups, activation rate, conversion to paid, churn	Four metrics that together tell the full product health story
■	Measured activation rate — not just sign-ups	Sign-ups are vanity; activation is the real retention predictor
■	Sent NPS or one-question satisfaction pulse to first users by day 14	Early signal, low effort, disproportionate insight
■	Called every churned user — not emailed, called	Churn reasons in text are polite; churn reasons on a call are honest
■	Doubled down on the acquisition channel that worked — ignored the rest	Optimization before scale, always
■	Collected 3 real customer quotes for social proof	Real quotes convert better than any copywriter
■	Made the Go / Pivot / Stop decision by day 30 — with data not feelings — and communicated it	Decision without communication changes nothing
■	Documented the GTM playbook — what worked, what failed, why	Undocumented learning is lost learning

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PIPELINE, PROOF, AND B2B MOMENTUM

Post-Launch: Days 31–60

In B2B, this is where deals actually get made or permanently lost. Day 30 set the signal — days 31 to 60 turn it into revenue.

Key insight: The deals that go quiet between day 30 and day 60 will almost never close. Call them now — not to push, but to understand why.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Reviewed every open deal — qualified out the ones going nowhere	Unqualified pipeline is false confidence
■	Identified the pattern in deals that progressed — what do they share?	The pattern is your real ICP, not the one you wrote in phase 2
■	Followed up with every trial or pilot customer — personal call	Trial-to-paid conversion is the single most important metric here
■	Turned at least one customer into a reference — even informal	One genuine reference unlocks 10 conversations
■	Built the first case study or success snapshot — even one metric	Proof before scale; even a rough number beats an empty page
■	Refined the sales deck based on what actually resonated in calls	The deck that closes is never the deck written pre-launch
■	Tested pricing — offered a discount to one deal to measure sensitivity	Price sensitivity data is more valuable than the discount given
■	Identified top 3 objections still blocking conversions — addressed in messaging	Recurring objections are product or positioning problems, not sales problems
■	Mapped the buying committee for each open deal — who else must say yes?	Unidentified blockers kill late-stage deals
■	Ran a structured competitive intelligence pass from customer conversations	Customers reveal competitor weaknesses you cannot find online
■	Identified integration or partnership opportunities with tools ICP already uses	Integrations are distribution shortcuts in B2B
■	Set a day 60 pipeline target: number of qualified deals, not leads	Qualified pipeline is the only number that predicts revenue

10 SCALE WHAT WORKS OR PIVOT WITH EVIDENCE

Post-Launch: Days 61–90

Day 90 is the most honest moment in any 0-to-1 journey. By now the signal is clear. The only question is whether you are willing to act on it.

Key insight: The decision to pivot is not a failure — it is the product of 90 days of learning. The failure is pivoting without evidence, or not pivoting when the evidence demands it.

	Checklist item	Why it matters
■	Calculated real CAC and LTV — not projected ones	Projected CAC and LTV are fiction; real ones are strategy

■	Identified the acquisition channel with the best CAC — cut the rest temporarily	Temporary focus beats permanent dilution
■	Closed at least one deal using the documented playbook without founder involvement	Replicability is the only proof the sales process scales
■	Measured net revenue retention — are early customers expanding or contracting?	Expansion is the strongest PMF signal; contraction is the clearest warning
■	Gathered structured feedback from 100% of paying customers	Sampling paying customers is a luxury you cannot afford at 0-to-1
■	Checked PMF signal: would customers be very disappointed if the product disappeared?	The disappointment test is still the most honest PMF measure available
■	Formalized the sales playbook — scripts, objections, discovery questions documented	An undocumented process is a founder-dependent process
■	Updated the product roadmap based on what paying customers are actually asking for	Pre-launch roadmaps and post-launch reality are always different
■	Made the expansion decision: deeper in current ICP or open adjacent segment?	Premature segment expansion kills focus; too-late expansion loses the window
■	Set Q2 targets based on Q1 actuals — not spreadsheet projections	Projection-based targets demoralize teams; actuals-based targets build them
■	Defined commission or incentive structure if hiring the first salesperson	Wrong incentive structure breaks a sales team before it starts
■	Decided what role the next hire unlocks — and why that role before others	Hiring out of order is the most expensive 0-to-1 mistake
■	Prepared investor update or stakeholder report — even if not fundraising	The discipline of reporting forces the clarity fundraising requires anyway

B2B Signal Dashboard — Days 30 / 60 / 90

Track these five signals at each milestone. A product scoring green across all five by day 90 has demonstrated enough evidence to scale. Anything amber or red demands a specific action.

Signal	Day 30 target	Day 60 target	Day 90 target
Deal velocity	First 3 qualified deals in pipeline	At least 1 closed deal	Predictable avg. close time
Activation rate	Baseline established	Improving week-on-week	Above 60%
Churn rate	First churn reasons documented	Pattern identified	Addressed in product or ICP
Net revenue retention	First customers stable	Any expansion signal visible	NRR above 100%

PMF signal	Collecting disappointment test data	40%+ would be very disappointed	Confirmed or pivot decided
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Positioning & Messaging

PHASE 1

- Written a one-liner: [Product] helps [ICP] do [outcome] without [pain]
- Defined your category — creating one or entering one?
- Identified your single strongest differentiator vs. alternatives
- Validated messaging with 5 ICP members — do they immediately get it?
- Chosen a primary emotional hook — what feeling does this sell?
- Confirmed name availability — domain, social handles, trademark check
- Defined the anti-positioning — what you are NOT and who you are NOT for

ICP & Segmentation

PHASE 2

- Written the ICP in one sentence — job title, context, pain, budget signal
- Identified the early adopter — who buys before it's perfect?
- Segmented B2B vs B2C motion — different playbooks, don't mix them
- Mapped where the ICP discovers products like yours
- Identified the ICP's trusted voices — who influences their decisions?
- Built a list of 50 named prospects — not personas, real people
- Defined the anti-ICP — who looks like a customer but will churn

Go-to-Market Strategy

PHASE 3

- Chosen primary GTM motion: product-led, sales-led, or community-led
- Chosen 1 primary and 1 backup channel — validated by at least one acquisition each
- Defined the acquisition loop — how does one customer bring the next?
- Set the CAC target before spending — what can you afford per customer?
- Planned first 90 days of content or outreach — not just launch day
- Defined the free/trial/freemium model — what converts to paid?

Product Marketing Assets

PHASE 4

Landing page live with clear headline, ICP-specific value prop, one CTA

Demo video or interactive walkthrough — under 2 minutes

3 customer pain point stories written — even fictional at launch

Pricing page with clear tiers and value anchoring

One-pager or pitch deck for B2B sales conversations

FAQ document covering the top 10 objections you will face

Social proof placeholder — even a waitlist number builds trust

Built an email nurture sequence for leads who don't convert immediately

Created a competitor comparison page or battlecard

Sales Readiness

PHASE 5

Written a discovery call script — questions first, pitch second

Defined and practiced the demo flow — what to show, in what order

Defined decision-maker vs. champion vs. blocker in the sales process

Built a simple CRM pipeline — even a spreadsheet — before first lead

Set the sales cycle length expectation — days, weeks, or months?

Prepared objection responses for: price, timing, trust, and competition

Defined what a qualified lead looks like — not everyone interested

Set the conversion rate target from demo to close

Defined the handoff process from marketing lead to sales conversation

Pre-Launch

PHASE 6

Tested the full purchase or sign-up flow as a real user — not QA

Confirmed onboarding delivers value in under 5 minutes

Built and warmed a launch audience — email list, community, waitlist

Scheduled launch content across chosen channels

Briefed any partners, affiliates, or community influencers

Set up UTM parameters across all launch channels

Set up analytics, tracking, and conversion events — before launch

Confirmed legal and compliance baseline — data laws, payment compliance

Prepared support channel — someone watching live on launch day

Launch Execution

PHASE 7

- Launched to warm audience first — not cold
- Sent personal outreach to first 20 prospects — not a mass email
- Posted on channels where ICP actually is — not where you are
- Monitored sign-up/purchase funnel live for the first 24 hours
- Followed up with every sign-up within 24 hours — personally
- Captured same-day qualitative feedback — what almost stopped them?
- Resisted feature requests on launch day — shipped is shipped

Post-Launch: Days 1–30

PHASE 8

- Tracked weekly: sign-ups, activation rate, conversion to paid, churn
- Measured activation rate — not just sign-ups
- Sent NPS or one-question satisfaction pulse to first users by day 14
- Called every churned user — not emailed, called
- Doubled down on the acquisition channel that worked — ignored rest
- Collected 3 real customer quotes for social proof
- Made the Go / Pivot / Stop decision by day 30 with data — communicated it
- Documented the GTM playbook — what worked, what failed, why

Post-Launch: Days 31–60

PHASE 9

- Reviewed every open deal — qualified out the ones going nowhere
- Identified the pattern in deals that progressed — what do they share?
- Followed up with every trial or pilot customer — personal call
- Turned at least one customer into a reference — even informal
- Built the first case study or success snapshot — even one metric
- Refined the sales deck based on what resonated in calls
- Tested pricing — offered a discount to measure price sensitivity
- Identified top 3 objections still blocking conversions
- Mapped the buying committee for each open deal
- Ran a competitive intelligence pass from customer conversations
- Identified integration or partnership opportunities
- Set a day 60 pipeline target: qualified deals, not leads

Post-Launch: Days 61–90

PHASE 10

- Calculated real CAC and LTV — not projected ones
- Identified the acquisition channel with the best CAC — cut the rest
- Closed at least one deal using the documented playbook without founder
- Measured net revenue retention — expanding or contracting?
- Gathered structured feedback from 100% of paying customers
- Checked PMF signal: very disappointed test
- Formalized the sales playbook — scripts, objections, discovery documented
- Updated the product roadmap based on what paying customers ask for
- Made the expansion decision: deeper ICP or adjacent segment?
- Set Q2 targets based on Q1 actuals — not projections
- Defined commission/incentive structure if hiring first salesperson
- Decided what role the next hire unlocks — and why that role first
- Prepared investor update or stakeholder report