LAUNCHING AN APP OR ONLINE PRODUCT (TECH)

Beta testing, app stores, getting your first users and learning fast from what they do.

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AT A GLANCE

- Launch in stages: **private beta, then a public launch**, so you fix problems with a small group first.
- Your first users rarely come from app stores alone. They come from **communities, outreach and partnerships**.
- Measure what users **do**, not just how many sign up: activation, retention and payment.

Why it matters

Many tech launches get a burst of sign-ups and then silence, because people try the product once and leave. A careful launch helps you learn why people stay, fix what drives them away, and build momentum that lasts.

Launch stages

Stage	Who	Goal
Private beta	10 to 50 hand-picked users	Find bugs, learn what's confusing, prove people come back
Waitlist	People who sign up early	Build demand and a launch audience
Public launch	Everyone	Grow users, test marketing channels
Ongoing	All users	Improve, retain, and convert to paying customers

Step by step

1. **Recruit beta users** who match your target customer. See **I-02 Who Is Your Customer?**.
2. **Watch them use it.** Do short video calls and ask them to share their screen.
3. **Track key actions** with analytics: sign-up, first key action, return visits, payment.
4. **Fix the biggest problems** before public launch.

5. **Prepare your launch**: website, app store pages with clear screenshots, help pages, and a way to contact you.
6. **Launch where your users are**: online communities, partner newsletters, industry groups, social media, and launch websites.
7. **Follow up personally** with early users and ask what would make them recommend you.

What to measure

Measure	Question it answers
Activation	Do new users complete the main action?
Retention	Do they come back after a week? A month?
Conversion	Do free users become paying customers?
Churn	How many paying customers cancel each month?
Referral	Do users invite others?

EXAMPLE

Sofia ran a 6-week private beta with 12 clinics. Only half sent their first reminder because the setup was confusing. She simplified setup to three steps and offered a 15-minute onboarding call. Activation rose to 90%. At public launch, she partnered with a regional clinic association whose newsletter brought in her next 60 clinics.

WATCH OUT

If your app collects personal, health or payment data, check the privacy and security rules that apply, and post a clear privacy policy. Talk to a lawyer if you handle sensitive data.

Common mistakes

- **Launching publicly with no beta.**
- **Counting downloads instead of active users.**
- **Relying only on app stores** to bring in users.
- **Not talking to users who leave.**

Your checklist

- ☐ Recruit 10 to 50 beta users
- ☐ Set up analytics for key actions
- ☐ Watch at least 5 users try the product
- ☐ Fix the biggest problems before launch
- ☐ Choose 3 places to announce your launch
- ☐ Plan personal follow-up with early users

Where to go next

- **I-07 Building Your First Version (Tech)**
- **G-03 Growth Numbers Investors Watch**
- **P-11 Software and Apps**

IMPORTANT

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