PROJECT UNDERDOGS FOUNDER LIBRARY · LAUNCHING · L-07

PLANNING YOUR LAUNCH

A launch timeline from six weeks out to opening day, so you open with customers waiting.

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AT A GLANCE

- A good launch starts **6 weeks or more before opening**, building a list of people ready to buy.
- Consider a **soft launch** first, with friends and early customers, to fix problems before the public opening.
- Plan for **what happens after** launch day, too. The first month matters more than the first day.

Why it matters

Opening day sets the tone. A launch with customers lined up brings early sales, reviews and word of mouth. A quiet opening can mean weeks of slow sales while you pay full costs.

Launch timeline

When	What to do
6+ weeks before	Finish setup and permits. Set your launch date. Start collecting emails and phone numbers.
4 to 5 weeks before	Announce the date on social media and to your network. Contact local media and partners.
3 weeks before	Line up launch offers. Finalize your website, booking and payments. Train any staff.
2 weeks before	Soft launch: open to friends, family and early sign-ups. Fix what goes wrong.
1 week before	Remind your list. Confirm inventory, staff and supplies. Test everything.
Launch day	Open. Welcome everyone. Take photos. Ask for reviews.
First month	Follow up with every customer. Track sales daily. Adjust quickly.

Launch ideas

- **Founding customer offers**: a special price or extra for the first 50 customers
- **Opening event**: tastings, demos, music, a ribbon cutting with your chamber of commerce
- **Partner promotions**: neighboring businesses share your launch
- **Local media**: send a short story to local news, blogs and community newsletters

- **Giveaways**: a free product or service for people who share your launch

> EXAMPLE
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> **Lina** collected 900 sign-ups from her weekend market stall before her bakery opened. She ran a 3-day soft launch for those sign-ups, which showed her the espresso line was too slow. She added a second grinder before opening. On launch day, the first 50 customers got a free pastry. She sold out by 1 pm and earned 60 reviews in the first week.

> TIP
>
> Use the **Launch Plan Template** (**L-12 Launch Plan Template**) and **Pre-Launch Checklist** (**L-14 Pre-Launch Checklist**) to stay on track.

Common mistakes

- **Announcing too late.**
- **Skipping the soft launch.**
- **Opening before systems are tested**, like payments, booking and inventory.
- **No plan for the weeks after launch.**

Your checklist

- ☐ Set your launch date
- ☐ Start building your sign-up list now
- ☐ Plan a soft launch
- ☐ Choose one launch offer and one launch event
- ☐ Contact local media and partners
- ☐ Plan your first-month follow-up

Where to go next

- **L-12 Launch Plan Template**
- **L-14 Pre-Launch Checklist**
- **L-08 Opening a Physical Location (Main Street)**

IMPORTANT
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