let's get ready to launch!

launch•ftw
guidebook

Amy Hoy

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Welcome

Let's get you ready to launch, for the win!

We're going to start at the end

Welcome to launch•ftw!

We're gonna get you from $0 to your first product dollar. Stick with it, and it's gonna happen sooner than you think!

First things first: Download your launch•ftw roadmap using the handy button to the right.

Now... let's take a look at it.

It's a pretty big, and very dense, document.

You could spend a ton of time going through it, top to bottom. (And we will cover each section in the email course to come!)

But right now, this very second, I want you to start at the end.z

Because I've created an executive plan for designing, building, marketing, and launching a small product, to lift that mental load from your shoulders, so you can focus on the work itself.

The penultimate page is...

Your execution calendar

This execution calendar is both your plan and your destination. I highly recommend you print it out and hang it somewhere you can see it — and victoriously scratch things off as you complete them!

Download your launch•ftw roadmap

Each block here represent's one week's worth of work.

Stick with this 12-part plan, and by the end you will have:

- a product
- content marketing to attract interested buyers
- content to provide proof, build trust, and increase the desire to buy
- a list of people attracted by said content, with a strong likelihood of buying
- an email sequence you can use to launch the product (and reuse when new people sign up!)

To prepare for success, keep your destination in mind.

When you don't have a clear picture of your destination, it's easy to get distracted, go off-course, and end up somewhere you don't want to be... probably somewhere you've been before, through sheer force of habit.

That's why we're looking at the execution calendar first: you need to have a picture of what it is you're going to do, and what the end result will be, so you can use that to guide yourself through the steps.

The questions, techniques, skills, and information you'll need to execute on the deliverables in this calendar are, of course, located upstream in the launch•ftw roadmap.

1
Put up a Coming Soon page w/ a description of the pain + outline of the product, w/ email signup.

Create one discrete chunk of the product.

Share your C.S. page.

2
Write a welcome email that asks a question.

Outline, prep, and create two content pieces.

Publish one, with an email signup form that references your future product.

3
Publish the second content piece, with email CTA.

Create one discrete chunk of the product.

4
Outline, prep, and create two content pieces.

Publish one, with email CTA.

Write a Lesson #1 email that delivers a quick win.

5
Publish the second content piece, with email CTA.

Create one discrete chunk of the product.

6
Create one discrete chunk of the product.

Write a Lesson #2 email that delivers a quick win, related to the product chunk.

7
Outline, prep, and create two content pieces.

Publish one, with email CTA.

Write a Lesson #3 email that delivers a quick win.

8
Publish the second content piece, with email CTA.

Create one discrete chunk of the product.

9
Write a Lesson #4 email that delivers a quick win... and raises the idea of more.

Write a Sales email that offers the product at $49 or $79.

Write a Reminder email.

10
Create one discrete chunk of the product.

Queue up a launch campaign in your email list software, with the emails you've written.

11
Complete the product.

Transform the Coming Soon page into a sales page.

Turn a small chunk of the product into a free goodie, a reason to sign up for the list.

12
Update your CTAs and sequence for the goodie.

Enable the launch sequence.

✨ LAUNCH!!! ✨

PS: This approach is called Backwards Planning, a skill that forms the backbone of my book, Just F*cking Ship.

Got questions? Because I've got answers...

How much time will it require each week?

I tried to chunk it so each week is approximately 8 hours (one full "work day") of work, but of course, that will vary based on your speed, experience, choices, specific skills and strengths, and so on.

Will it take 12 weeks? Can I go faster?

Some results just take time — e.g., for people to find your content and sign up for your list — but yes, absolutely, you can go faster on the execution side of things.

What if it takes me more than 12 weeks? Will it still work?

Yes! It will absolutely still work for you.

The exact timing doesn't matter. If you have to spread each "week" across two weeks, or three weeks, that's absolutely fine! Similarly, if you need to take time off between "weeks," that's fine too! The only thing your execution speed changes is the time until you'll see results.

There's no award for going fast and no demerit for going "slow."

How can I help myself keep going?

Even though the launch•ftw plan is short & fast, it can still feel like a slog when you're working alone, and doubts have time to creep in and whisper nasty little nothings in your ear.

Here are my best tips to keep your spirits up and your feet moving:

1. **resist the urge to judge your work** — good or bad, valuable or not, worthy or unworthy, these ideas aren't helpful and they aren't even accurate! Remember that the first version is never perfect, no matter who you are, what matters now is making forward progress.

2. **track your progress** — and refer back to the calendar to keep your destination in mind, as well as how far you've come.

3. **make a decision and keep moving** — just like there's no perfect version 1, there's no perfect decision; you will learn so much by completing this project, shipping, and launching it, that you will benefit twice over, and your next project will be that much stronger... but to get that benefit, you've got to get to that finish line in the first place.

That last tip might be the most important, especially when you're already skilled at making things...

Many parts of the roadmap I must leave up to you, since you can use it for any type of audience and any type of small product, and I'm not here to dictate e.g. which landing page host or email list software you use.

These decisions are procrastination traps.

Each one seems so important in the vacuum of pre-product. But trust me, they don't really matter!

Just pick one and keep it moving!

Need help getting things done? My book, Just F*cking Ship, is a systematic approach to breaking down large projects and overcoming the appealing inertia of procrastination.

If you've ever read generic productivity advice and been left screaming, 'Ok, but HOW do I break it into tiny tasks?!' JFS is the book for you.

Lesson 1

3 rules for success in your launch•ftw challenge

Step 1: Learn from my mistakes...

In this series you're going to learn and practice and most importantly **set yourself on the path to building your very own own product business**.

Whether your goal is to earn an extra $10k on the side of consulting or a full time job (e.g. to pay down debt faster, or upgrade your lifestyle) – or to eventually replace your entire hourly income with product sales – this challenge is here to help you build a foundation for long-term success and execute a product launch you can be proud of.

And I know you can do it, because I myself started from $0.

The very first challenge like this was one I created for myself.

It took me 11 years to go from deciding to launch my first product to our first million-dollar year. Eleven! That's over a decade! 😅😬💀

That's not sooo bad, you might be thinking.

And, you know what? It's not. But it could've been sooo much better.

And so much faster.

Because, you see, I decided I would start a product business... in 2004.

I launched my first actual product at the very end of 2008. Our business hit our first million-dollar year in 2015.

So I knew what I wanted to do, roughly speaking, way back in 2004... and then I spent 100% of the next four years just noodling around.

I called it "experimenting," but it was mostly making stuff I thought was cool and dreaming big dreams. Maybe that sounds familiar to you?

Here was my favorite trick: I did loads of "**plan-crastination**."

You know, that thing where you write up ever-more deliciously detailed fantasies of what I would make and sell instead of, ya know, actually making or selling anything it.

Every new little detail distanced me further and further from action.

The cost of these choices... ouch. It hurts my wallet to think about.

But one day I got totally fed up with my choices...

One day I decided it was time to stop letting my daydreaming mouth write checks my procrastinating butt couldn't cash.

I resolved: "This time, I'll do what works."

I decided, effectively, to do the opposite of what I had always done before.

Did I still want to "have everything figured out" before I started working? My word, yes. I'm a planner to the core. But that wasn't going to cut it. So I decided to force myself to make friends with uncertainty and not knowing.

Did I still have an urge, every day, to make the product bigger and better?
You bet your sweet buttocks I did. But I knew what prize lay down that path: big fat nothing. So instead of letting myself fall prey, yet again, to the devil of scope creep, I wrote those extra ideas down for the far, far future, and mentally locked them away.

Was I still concerned that the product wasn't totally ready for prime time? Of course! "Well," I reminded myself, "what's the actual worst case scenario?" I'd make fewer sales, or issue a few refunds... but that was better than the guaranteed failure that comes with never ever launching.

Thus equipped, I got to work.

A few months later, my husband and I launched our first app — to paying customers on launch day!

A month or two after that, to accelerate our cashflow, we launched our first technical beta ebook about JavaScript performance.

Success didn't happen overnight...

Here's the path I took:

- one year to go from $0 in product sales to about $40,000

- another year to grow that $40k to a six-figure, full-time living for my husband and myself

- another 5 years before we hit our first million-dollar year

It probably would've gone faster, if not for my chronic illness and lack of focus, on top of a normal share of mistakes! But we did it.

Obviously work continued throughout — each year the proportionate gains for effort grew in our favor — but my entire product empire was built on the foundation of my first two hustle-heavy years.

Sometimes I look back on that time in my life and imagine, "If only I'd cut out all the years of thrashing, dreaming, and procrastinating, and making things that couldn't sell...where would I be today?"

Another five years further into my financial future.

As a wise woman once said, "I want to go to there."

And I want you to come with me.

You can accelerate _your_ success...

It's too late for me to change what I did those first few years...

But it's not too late for you. And I'm here to help you avoid the mistakes I made, and go straight to what works.

You signed up to get my launch•ftw roadmap and challenge to help you make the right choices and do the right things to build your own income stream from selling products. And with it, this week by week challenge to help you put the Roadmap into action!

I'm here to help you go from $0 – or wherever you are – to your first $10k and beyond.

QUICKLY.

And the very first lesson?
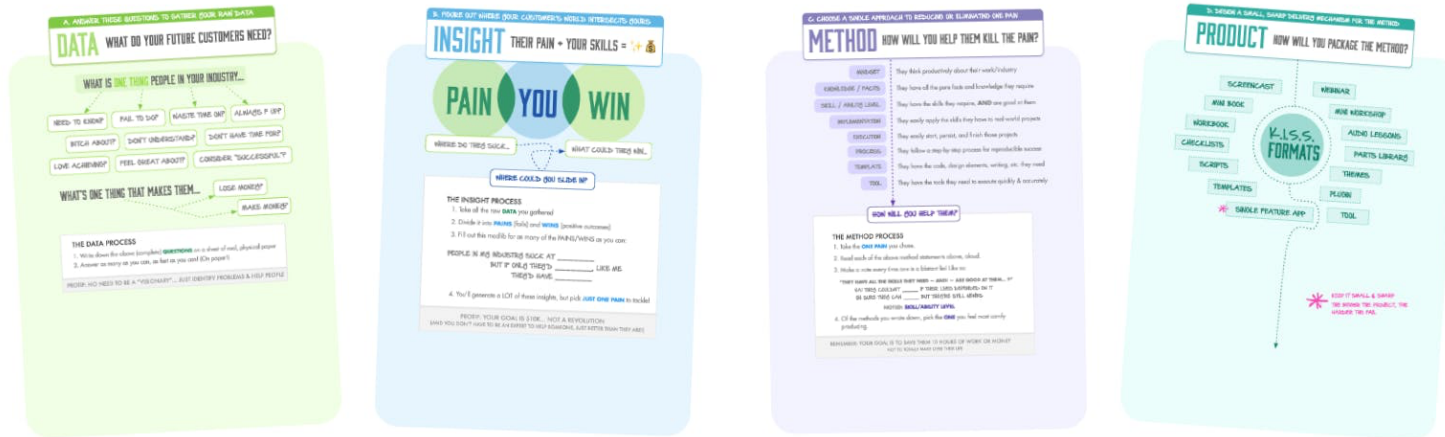
Learn from my mistakes

- Don't repeatedly make "cool stuff" for fun then try to monetize it later

- Don't plan-crastinate, making your dreams ever bigger and harder to build

- Don't wait for things to be perfect (they never will be) or for you to feel absolutely certain (you never will)

If this list of don'ts feels like exactly where you are right now, take heart — it's not a permanent state of being! It's not "just who you are"! You do not have to accept it.

You deserve better and you can make it better for yourself.

I know, because that's what I did.

That's why I designed the launch•ftw roadmap to help you observe the THREE most important rules:

Rule #1: DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy, and make that

Rule #2: DO design a realistic plan quickly — for a tiny first product, with marketing baked in — so you can hit the ground running and start seeing traffic and sales as soon as possible

Rule #3: DO execute and ship things that are good enough, not perfect, and keep doing it until you build your way up into success

It's gonna be real work, but we're gonna have fun doing it!

In the next lesson, I'm going to tell you the rest of my own story in all its embarrassing detail — and how I learned to turn it around into successful product launch after successful product launch.

And then over rest of this course, I'll walk you through executing on every single one of the powerful, no-nonsense, no-delay steps that you can use to jumpstart your very own business.

In the meantime, if you haven't already, download your launch•ftw roadmap.

Read it through, top to bottom. Print it out and take notes. Soak it in!

Three Big Rules

1 **DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy** — and make that

2 **DO design a realistic plan quickly** — for a tiny first product, with marketing baked in — so you can hit the ground running and start seeing traffic and sales as soon as possible

3 **DO execute and ship things** — things that are good enough, not perfect, and keep doing it until you build your way up into success

Lesson 2

"I can do it better than they can" and other lies I told myself

Step 2: Focus on the right thing...

Gather 'round... cuz I've promised some deeply embarrassing dirt and here I am to dish it:

In 2004, I decided I was going to build a better version of Basecamp.

YEP. You heard me. Just little ol' me thinking I could overtake one of the most successful non-enterprise SaaS businesses of all time.

If I hadn't learned the art of radical acceptance by now, I'd be M-O-R-T-I-F-I-E-D by the arrogance of my younger self. But hey, I'm human, and that's how we learn, right?

So, Basecamp.

If you weren't paying attention in 2003-2004, this might not make intuitive sense to you. But back then, Basecamp rocked the web world. It was one of the very first subscription web apps an average person could use. It felt like a new era.

That's because it was a new era. The term Software As A Service (SaaS) hadn't even been coined yet! 37signals was blazing a trail.

And Basecamp made its creators so. much. money.

But also, it kinda sucked? The app itself was objectively poor in a lot of ways; it worked like a web page, not what you or I would call "software." It wasn't the first web app, and it wasn't even close to the best web app.

Quick aside before I get into my story: it might appear that this example is about getting into the business of building software, but don't be fooled.

My mistakes apply to, well, almost everyone who sees other peoples' successful products and thinks they're going to set out to do the same.

Basecamp OG was very limiting in terms of what you could do with it. The interface was pretty much a closed group email replacement with a little to-do list app bolted on.

It could have been so much better. Even then.

And with my grounding in actual, formal, research-based human-computer interaction I knew that I, Amy Hoy, could be the person to make it so much better!

Some of that money and success I saw 37signals gaining could be mine.

I started planning. And doodling. And fantasizing. I spent literal years, off and on, making that plan ever more deliciously complicated.

Surprise: my mistakes were not limited to procrastination!

It's just as well that I stuck to the theoretical, because in all my scheming, I really never considered the important fact that there must be a reason that people signed up for Basecamp and not one of the crop of other project management options.

I was green. And I never really thought about the business side at all.

Or the customers.

Not until four years later, in 2008.

That's the year I decided to (in much-later-37signals parlance) "get real." To pull up my big girl pants and treat my dreams and goals with the respect they deserved.

I vowed to build a product business and quit selling my time, no matter what.

So I made a change.

And, despite my 4 years of laborious overthinking, I didn't do it with a Basecamp competitor.

Why? Simple. Because Basecamp users were happy.

Even if there were many things "objectively wrong" with the design, it met a need its users had — it killed a pain that bothered them. They liked it.

And for those who didn't like the way Basecamp works, well, you'd find them in radically different project management tools like Trello, or Jira.

Nobody was ever looking for "Basecamp, But A Little Bit Better."

And even more than I wanted to gratify my ego, I wanted to make a product that freed me from consulting forever.

Financial freedom > **bragging rights.**

Piles of cash > **acclaim.**

Consistent sales > **a meaty intellectual challenge.**

I reasoned that the easiest way to create success is – forgive me for stating the obvious – to only do the things that take me closer to my goals, and avoid the ones that don't.

Rather than making something INNOVATIVE! and REVOLUTIONARY! and hope against hope I could find people to buy it, I set out to answer the question that changed everything:

What could I make that people would definitely pay for?

And not just any people either — the people who were most likely to buy, and from me, specifically.

So, rather than trying to tackle a huge, amorphous, diverse and (let's be honest) technically unsavvy audience like Basecamp had, I decided to start closer to home.

Remember...

Rule #1: DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy, and make that!

I started to pay attention to what everyone around me was talking about.

Which people? Developers. Designers. Like my husband and me. People who consulted solo, or ran software development or design agencies, like we did. High-end professionals, like we were.

I gave new attention to the community forums and chats and conversations I was party to.

I took notes.

I studied.

I found misery and set out to fix it.

I learned that, among other things, my fellow developer/designer consultants were often:

- moaning about having to track their time

- fudging their hours at week's end because they forgot to track in the moment

- spending way too much time generating invoices, & dreading it

- so busy working, they'd forget to bill, and perhaps worst of all...

- forgetting to follow up on unpaid invoices!

- bitterly joking about how they were losing money because of "administrative crap"

They were aware of the problem.

They were mad about it losing time and money.

They were constantly hopping from tool to tool without finding relief.

So I knew that they felt this pain, talked about and shared this pain, and were willing to try things — and pay for things — to kill that pain.

I knew where they hung out, how they talked, so I knew I could reach them.

And I knew I had the skills to help them.

That's why I designed and launched my time tracking app called <u>Noko</u> (née Freckle) for consultants and agencies.
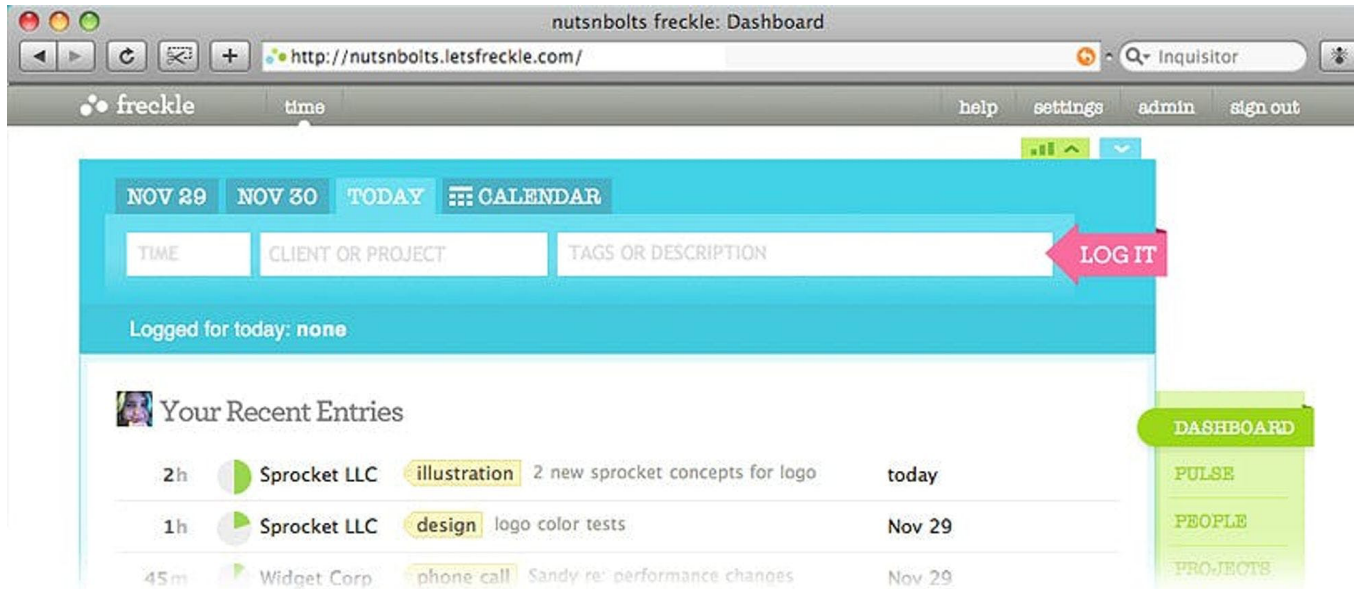
That's how we launched to over 1,000 interested subscribers from just a simple teaser page.

And how we billed nearly $1,500 in recurring revenue our very first month.

All thanks to a major attitude adjustment, a powerful willingness to let go of old fantasies and do only what works.

In the next few steps of your launch•ftw challenge, you're gonna learn a quick and lightweight version of the research method I invented — Sales Safari research — to begin finding problems people want solved, and how to reach those people to sell your product.

Lesson 3

My "radical" approach to starting up

Step 3: Learn my ultimate power move...

Today, you're going to learn my ultimate power move for identifying valuable problems to tackle with your first product.

It might seem simple at first, but it flies in the face of so much popular startup advice and practically guarantees success. Simple, but powerful.

Let's start by looking back at the three inviolable rules for succeeding in your launch•ftw Challenge:

Rule #1: DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy, and make that

Rule #2: DO design a realistic plan quickly — for a tiny first product, with marketing baked in — so you can hit the ground running and start seeing traffic and sales as soon as possible

Rule #3: DO execute and ship things that are good enough, not perfect, and keep doing it until you build your way up into success

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In my last email, you learned about how I succeeded by following these rules; how I came up with the idea for Noko, my time tracking app, a product which has generated millions of dollars in revenue since we launched.

You can sum up my strategy in a sentence:

"I found real misery and set out to fix it."

And I did it by focusing on people who were likely to buy — from me in particular — with the least amount of persuasion: people in the professional group I already belonged to.

I also told the story of why I didn't succeed sooner, and how I fixated for years on "Building a Better X" even though the sad and undeniable fact was, nobody wanted to pay for a better X.

Even if, maybe, they needed it, or could use it, or might have liked it, if given the opportunity.

I'm repeating myself because this, RIGHT HERE, is the most important thing you will ever do for your business:

Make something people already need, want, and are ready to buy.

Emphasis on 'already' cuz it's a million times easier to capture a need than create one.

And the only way to do that is by starting with the customer.

When you start with the customer, everything becomes easier

Instead of infinite pivots, you'll have the confidence of knowing you've got a product that is marketable, that is sale-able, inherently.

Baked in, from day 1. The rest is details and experiments.

Sound obvious? It's not! It just sounds that way because I've spent so many years trying to express this idea in a way that makes sense.

Because it's actually a radical approach to starting up.

Nearly all "traditional" startup advice tells you to do the complete opposite:

1. start with a 'great idea'

2. then 'validate' the great idea by spending time and money to test it

4. then try to figure out who will buy it, aka 'finding' product-market 'fit,' as if a viable market is a pair of pants hidden in the last pastel pink egg at an economic Easter Egg Hunt

I believe I speak for us both when I say, "no thanks!"

When you do it my way and start with the customer — find them, study them, learn from them — you build yourself a bunch of powerful advantages:

1. You learn where they gather online, and how to reach them

2. 2. You understand what pains they have — that they are consciously aware of... — and the things they value, with actions not words...

3. 3. You build on what they already read, try, share, and pay for in an attempt to solve those pains...

Before you make anything. You let yourself be guided by the customer's reality from the outset.

You can build your first product with confidence, knowing there's already a pool of potential customers out there waiting for you! You just have to offer them something they both need and want.

And you'll be able to do that because you'll know what it is, exactly, that they value.

My data-driven, customer-first approach is the cheapest, fastest, most direct way to succeed. And that's what you're working for, right? More success. Sooner rather than later. So you can break free.

Will everything be gumdrops and rainbows when you do it my way? Nope, because entrepreneurship is a learning process!

Some marketing techniques will work better on your audiences than others. Some pricing strategies will make you more sales than others. Some traffic sources you try out will perform better than others.

Not everything you try will be right the first time, but when people already need and want a product like yours, each experiment will bring you closer to the sales path that really works.

I hope by now that you're sufficiently convinced:

You're going to start with the customer, instead of an idea.

Now what?

Do you sit and brainstorm? Do you dream up a "persona" of your ideal customer? Or create an "avatar" with demographic details, like how many children and household income, details that will, supposedly, somehow, tell you what to make?

Nope, because personas and avatars aren't real! They don't exist. They're fantasies! We're not playing Dungeons & Dragons here, we're trying to create a product that sells. And fantasies don't carry cash.

Here's what you're going to do instead: build up a corpus of data based on how people in your audience actually behave.

You want to gather insights about what people in your audience

1. actually do
2. actually talk about
3. actually complain about
4. actually read, share, try, recommend and, of course
5. actually buy

Sales Safari is our step by step research technique for collecting these insights, which lives at the heart of our flagship course, 30x500 Academy.

But I want to get you started TODAY.

The key focus here is to gather the things that people really, actually, genuinely, in-real-life do, not things that they might do, or we wish they'd do, or believe they should do.

Remember: my audience actually switched time tracking apps regularly in pursuit of something better; they didn't actually want a Better Basecamp.

In business, reality beats fantasy. Every. damn. time.

Once you understand your audience's real-world behavior, you can then combine this raw material with your creative skills to make something that they perceive as valuable, and urgent.

"But Amy, I don't have an audience. Nobody knows who I am!"

Naturally, the instinct is to believe that you need fame and notoriety to have an audience.

This is not true. Repeat: NOT. TRUE.

In fact, having a large following can be a detriment!

Have you ever paid any attention to "famous" people and noticed how many can't seem to spin their enormous followings into an actual business, beyond merch?

This is a trap many very "successful" creators have found themselves in: millions of followers and nobody buys. Just because people follow you doesn't mean they want to buy things you can make & want to sell.

Fans want **you**, not stuff.

For our purposes, audience means something else. And you don't need to be well-known to find yours.

Your audience is the people you're best suited to serve.

The people you're best suited to serve are people who you already know some things about... because they're people like you!

For me, that was high-end design & dev consultants. For you, that's likely a different group.

Now, I'll level with you: Tons of people get to this step and just... stop.

What does your audience

1. actually do
2. actually talk about
3. actually complain about
4. actually read, share, try, recommend and, of course
5. actually buy

The answers are Sales Safari gold.

There's a common sense that this is a multiple choice quiz, and if you pick the "wrong" option you'll end up wasting time on the "wrong" audience.

But the truth is that the only guaranteed way to choose "wrong" is to not choose at all.

If you choose an audience that you discover (through Sales Safari) don't align with you, or don't buy things, you're not at a dead end. You don't need to start over. You've learned something valuable! You can use your new knowledge to adjust your focus and keep moving forward on a different track.

Meanwhile, if you don't make a choice, you choose to fail by default.

So here's two criteria to help you make your initial choice.

- **Prioritize professional audiences**. Consumer audiences are 100x harder to sell to and 1000x more price sensitive. Professional audiences tend to spend money to solve their problems much more reliably, giving you the best chance at bootstrapped success.

- **Prioritize audiences where you have built-in advantages** like insider knowledge or pre-existing professional relationships. That can include past work experiences, client experience, etc.

Don't worry, you won't have to cold call or even cold email.

If you still have multiple options after using these criteria to narrow your options, pick the one where you have the most advantages, or the one you like the best.

Everything else being equal... flip a coin! If your options are truly equal, or even close to each other, you can't pick wrong except for not picking. This is an exploration, not a marriage.

You'll need to pick an audience — to research — for the next step in the challenge, so don't wait on this.

My business partner Alex whipped up an interactive workbook to help you organize and work through your audience options:

Go to the Interactive Audience workbook

Does this challenge feel... almost too simple? That's because, in reality, it is simple.

So resist the temptation to get fancy!

One more time just so you know I'm serious:

The only way to guarantee failure at this step is to not choose at all.

Lesson 4

Pain & value, a crash course

Step 4: How to find value...

In the coming weeks, you'll begin designing your first tiny product.

You're also going to begin creating your marketing content — content you already know your audience will find interesting, useful, and shareable, because it's based on research!

But first, before you can combine or create anything, you've gotta get some raw material about your audience.

Time to do some work!

What do your future customers need?

Open up your launch•ftw roadmap to the third page, which should look like this page with a whole bunch of questions about your audience...

It might not look like much today, but the answers to these launch•ftw questions are deep & wide enough to build a business that'll last a lifetime.

Now, there are technically two ways you can answer these questions:

1. You can begin to sketch out preliminary answers from your personal experience observing people in your day-to-day work.

Just remember, you're not answering these questions about yourself! You're answering them about what you've seen in other people. So plumb your memories for examples of your coworkers, industry peers, etc.

But this is merely a place to start, and not a replacement for...

2. Active and intentional observation.

If you aren't used to observing your surroundings like a sociology experiment, you'll miss tons of valuable insights that happen every day, right under your nose.

Instead, you'll need to learn how to actively and intentionally study the interactions you've been just passively soaking up until now. This skill is called Sales Safari. (More on that later.)

Time for a crash course on pain & value!

We designed the questions in this section of the cheat sheet to help you "shake loose" a bunch of valuable audience insights quickly, and with the least amount of fuss.

Thing is, the concepts of "pain" and "problems" and "needs" and "value" are... pretty blurry. They can feel both huge and deep, and impossible to put your hands on.

What is painful, and what is valuable, also can vary a lot between audiences. Even within any given audience, multiple opposing answers can be right or true!

Humans are messy and multifaceted. Heady stuff. It's easy to get lost or overwhelmed and forget the point you were getting to.

So let's break it down real quick...

There are three main kinds of pain that people feel:

1. **waste** — of time, money, energy, & other resources

2. **lack** — of knowledge, skill, awareness, time, money, connections, resources

3. **feeling** — of exhaustion, fear, anger, irritation, stress, isolation, inability, uncertainty

Obviously, this list isn't exhaustive, but the vast majority of pain that you're able to do anything about is experienced something like one of these ways.

There are also three main types of value that people perceive:

1. **saving** — spending less money

2. **earning** — earning more money

3. **psychological** — pride, acclaim, confidence, respect, satisfaction, relief, etc

Again, not exhaustive, but plenty good enough for your purpose!

I could easily write an entire book just on how these 3 pains and 3 values interact with your audience's culture in deeply defining ways:

- **Some audiences value feelings** (like confidence, satisfaction, and pride) over achievements; some audiences place the highest value on cold, hard results

- **Some audiences are all about saving**, and are very price sensitive; others are all about the best return on investment, and don't care about cost at all

- **Some audiences deeply value the sense that they are doing things perfectly**; others find things done perfectly (like sleek, gorgeous design) to be suspicious, in a way

- **Some audiences vary internally** based on age, level of achievement; some audiences vary internally based on where the members came from before e.g. designers who learned to program vs people who grew up on calculus textbooks

Which attributes of pain and value does your audience trend toward?

Now, I don't expect that you to actually know and understand your audience at this level just from your memories.

These are the kinds of high-value insights that you can learn when you dive deep into your audience with Sales Safari, rather than answering your questions from memories of your personal experience. Your recollections will never be as good as cold, hard, fresh data.

But for today, you don't need a big fat textbook worth of insights to get started. You need just enough knowledge to take just enough action to make just enough sales to begin to see results.

And then you can improve!

So to kick things off, your goal is to answer the questions as best as you can, shaking loose your best answers. The more specific, the better!

My business partner Alex built this interactive workbook to help you fill in the blanks for this challenge, and save them for later:

[Go to the Interactive Pain & Value workbook]

And remember, the launch•ftw way is to **ship a small, sharp product quickly** so you can start making sales and freeing yourself as soon as possible. You can start with what you already know.

So make an appointment with yourself and your future! Grab a coffee and sit down to answer your launch•ftw data questions.

Think about what complaints, praise, purchases, reviews, and questions you hear about, read about, see every day.

Think about what successes people aim for and brag about, and the failures they lament and try to avoid.

If you get stuck on one of the questions, move on to a different one and come back to the other later! Get anything that comes to mind written down, and let these answers percolate in the back of your mind.

This probably won't feel easy or natural at first — and that's fine!

You're learning a new skill, it will always feel weird. And it does get easier with practice.

Pain
3 major types

1. **waste** — of time, money, energy, & other resources

2. **lack** — of knowledge, skill, awareness, time, money, connections, resources

3. **feeling** — of exhaustion, fear, anger, irritation, stress, isolation, inability, uncertainty

Value
3 major types

1. **saving** — spending less money

2. **earning** — earning more money

3. **psychological** — pride, acclaim, confidence, respect, satisfaction, relief, etc

Lesson 5

Designing with Tiny Product madlibs

Step 5: Start designing...

This is the 5th lesson, and you might be asking yourself, "When can I start doing the real work?" When do you get to spec, design, build, and launch your product?

Here's the thing: if you've been following the launch•ftw roadmap, you've already been doing "real" work.

- You've put real thought into who you're well suited to make a product for, saving you from the awful experience of later scrambling for the non-existent state of "product market fit"

- You've dug deep to identify what your audience struggles with, and why, and consider how they perceive value, saving you from making something they think is "cool" but won't ever pay for.

So realtalk – this is "real work"! And it's the work that your so-called competition is far less likely to do, giving you a very real advantage.

And in doing that work, you've successfully passed Rule #1:

> **Rule #1:** DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy, and make that

Now, you enter the realm of Rule #2...

> **Rule #2:** DO design a realistic plan quickly — for a tiny first product, with marketing baked in — so you can hit the ground running and start seeing traffic and sales as soon as possible

That means it's time to begin designing your product! Woooo-freakin-hoooooooooooo!

And, because you're following the launch•ftw roadmap — because you want to create success as quickly as possible — you're gonna start by choosing the **opportunity** for your product.

Which brings us to the question:

What is a product, exactly?

There are three (3) different layers to any product of any size, whether it's digital or physical:

1. The **Opportunity**: what it's about / concerned with

2. The **Method**: how it works / what it does

3. The **Format**: how you deliver it / what it 'is'

We'll come back to Method and Format layers in a moment.

For now, let's look a bit closer at the **Opportunity** layer, using the example of a book.

What is a book, exactly?

Is it just two covers, filled with paper, ink, and glue? No, of course it isn't.

When someone says, "I'm working on my book," they don't mean they're pulping trees for paper or sewing together signatures. They mean they're doing difficult intellectual or artistic labor.

A book is more than its physical (or digital) packaging.

A book is a set of ideas or facts, characters or research, a logical or narrative or persuasive structure, and lastly, the words and sentences themselves...

It's so tempting to start your product design journey with **what it is** — that's the thing that society understands, that's the thing we're used to hearing about when someone says, "I'm working on a thing..."

But here's the real tea:

People don't buy A Book™ just to buy A Book™, for covers and paper and individual words, they buy it for pleasure, for a thrill, for satisfaction... to be entertained, amused, scared, informed, educated, improved, empowered... even to impress others.

People buy a thing to get something else.

Your true product is always the end result for your customer.

The **Format** — the metaphorical box that your product comes in — does matter. But it doesn't matter the most. In fact, it matters the least out of the trifecta. That's why we put it last in the process!

Your job is to make your customers say, "I had this problem, need, or unfulfilled wish. And look, now I don't!"

You don't have to revolutionize an industry or disrupt any damn thing.

You just have to help people get the results they want.

(In other words, not A Slightly Better Basecamp... but a real result for a real problem that real people really have.)

And so your first product design task is to take your research, and find the place where your customer's pain overlaps with your ability to deliver results.

You do this with the "Insight" section of the launch•ftw roadmap shown below. Open it up now if you don't already have it handy!

B. FIGURE OUT WHERE YOUR CUSTOMER'S WORLD INTERSECTS YOURS

INSIGHT THEIR PAIN + YOUR SKILLS = ✨💰

PAIN YOU WIN

WHERE DO THEY SUCK...

WHAT COULD THEY WIN...

WHERE COULD YOU SLIDE IN?
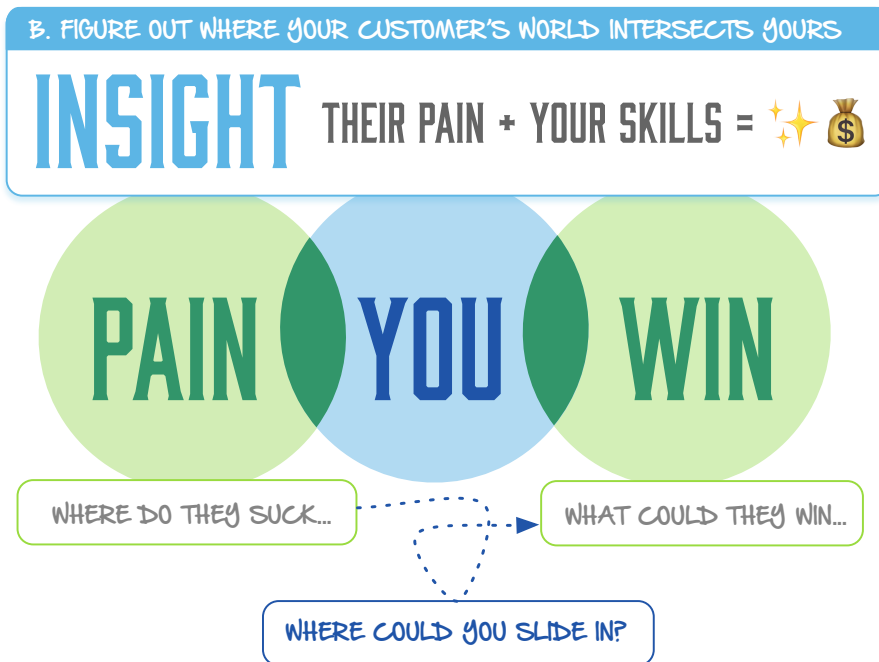
To find the Opportunity layer, we have a new challenge for you!

Go back your answers to the workbook questions from the last lesson (you'll have received an email copy if you filled it out; if you didn't, you can do the workbook now).

As you no doubt recall, they are broken into two categories:

1. Pains (failures, struggles, etc)

2. Wins (positive outcomes)

In today's challenge, your task is to plugg these answers into our "Mad Libs"-style sentence in as many ways as you can imagine:

```
"People in my industry suck at/suffer with [PAIN] but if
only they had [TINY PRODUCT], they could/would have
[WIN]."
```

You're welcome to take creative liberties with that sentence, if your pains and wins aren't a perfect fit for the sentence structure. This isn't poetry class, it's business. 😉

Et voila!

Each variation of this sentence describes an Opportunity for your Tiny Product.

At this stage, your "Tiny Product" descriptions shouldn't be too specific about whether it's software or a tool or a book or a course or...you get my drift.

Try describing what needs to change, instead of the way you'll change it.

If your instinct is to start describing the implementation details yet...slow your roll. Trust me.

Don't worry about fleshing out the details for your Tiny Product just yet.

Don't start fantasizing or elaborating and, above all else, do not **plan** anything. You're still in research mode, exploring your audience's needs through this new lens.

You'll get your chance to be creative very soon!

Now, just as for previous lessons, Alex has built an interactive workbook based on this part of the launch•ftw roadmap.

Click the button below and fill your workbook with your own versions of our delightfully repetitive sentence:

[Go to the Tiny Product Madlibs workbook](#)

If this step feels a bit messy and imperfect....that's actually a very good sign. Embrace it, and and have some fun!

Don't forget that the goal for your launch•ftw challenge is to make a tiny product. You're not solving big, epic problems here... you're not going to build a whole new project management app, like — cough — some people think when they think about starting out.

Keep it focused and narrow! Sharp and pointed! That's the key to 1. actually finishing and shipping in a reasonable timeframe, and 2. a highly targeted & persuasive pitch that makes people go "Ooh, need that!"
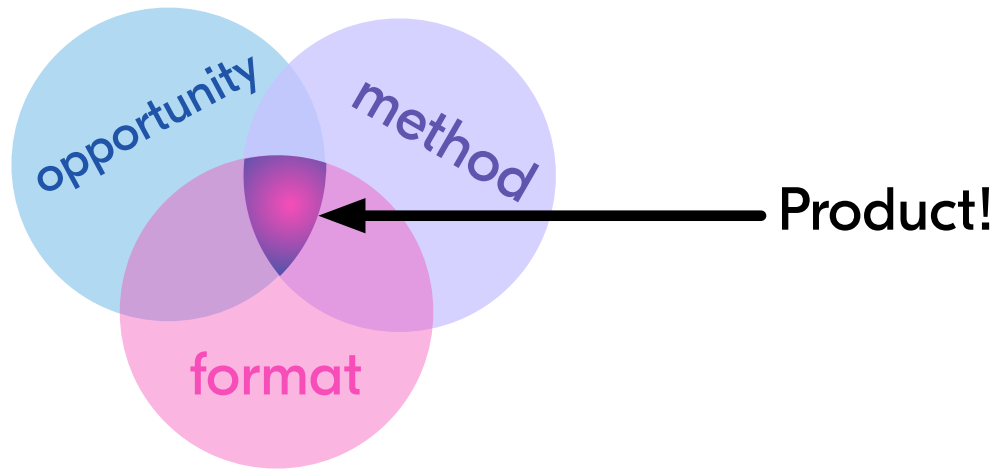
A Product Is...

1 **Opportunity:** what it's about / concerned with

2 **Method:** how it works / what it does

3 **Format:** how you deliver it / what it 'is'

Lesson 6

Time to make a decision

Step 6: Rank your choices...

At long last, you're about to pick that one Tiny Product Opportunity you're going to make and launch!

Remember, Tiny Product Opportunities looks like something like this:

```
"People in my industry suck at/suffer with [PAIN] but if
only they had [TINY PRODUCT], they could/would have
[WIN]."
```

And remember, these opportunities are distinct from "ideas" in that they don't specifically describe the format or method of delivery... we'll talk about that in the next email, I promise. 😁

For now, it's decision time.

How will you choose...

Most exciting? Most fun to make? The one with the hottest new technology?

Nope, sorry.

That way lies a marginally better Basecamp. Satisfying to make, yes. Relevant and successful? No. Fun and flashy factors are perfect for side projects and learning, but you're here to make money; you're not just looking to launch your first paying product, but to launch your future.

So you're going to make a smart, educated choice.

You'll do this in today's exercise by ranking your Opportunities from the previous section on two primary scales:

😫 How IMPACTFUL the problem is, meaning how painful or expensive it is

⚠️ How much they NEED the problem solved, and how acutely they feel that pain

This ranking process is a crucial step — don't skip it!

Because there's nothing quite like making a product people **need** but don't **want**, **want** but don't **need**, or that they simply **don't care enough about** to pull out their wallet and buy.

Here are some examples of the need-and-impact spectrum based around a pain point of being disorganized:

❌ **High-need / low-impact**: Your professional audience sucks at tidying their desks, and this is a source of constant but low-level annoyance and friction, distraction and discomfort during work hours... but it doesn't affect their skill level or earning potential.

❌ **Low-need / high-impact**: Your professional audience sucks at organizing their résumés, but they rarely job hop and when they do, they find it easy to get hired via networking and reputation, so while a fantastic résumé is absolutely high-impact, it's virtually never needed.

✅ **High-need / high-impact**: Your professional audience sucks at organizing something they use daily, which is vital to their productivity and dragging down their potential career success (clients, leads, invoices, portfolios, bug reports, tests, education, projects, research, code). Organizing it would save them from losses, & also create new financial opportunity.

Notice the pattern?

A golden Opportunity is high need and high impact

And you can tell it's golden because...

A. it contains some element of urgency, or expense, or big desire, that your audience is aware they have

B. and where smallish changes that are within their control can lead to them feeling big improvements

If your audience says — or you can imagine them saying — "I'm just desperate/ I'm so pumped..." about the pain/win space? That's an Opportunity, baby.

Your next assignment is to go through the potential Opportunities you came up with before, and rank each one as being high or low need; then go back and rank each one as being high or low impact.

(If it's helpful for you to have a bit more granularity, you can also tweak the rankings to include a third level, e.g. low – medium – high.)

Key words for golden Opportunities:

o Vital

o Urgent

o Eager

o Compelling

o Desire

o Obsessed

o Dream

o Meaningful

o Transformative

o Emergency

o Life/career/sanity-saving

Which Opportunities rise to the top?

If you've got more than one option, that's both medium or high need and impact, that's great!

Pick the one that'll be fastest to create and ship.

Everything else being equal... just pick one.

Much like when you picked your audience, the only way to guarantee failure is by stalling out and not making a choice at all.

Stay focused

Also important: If you're thinking about specific formats at this stage, e.g. a book or a course or software or template or...

...you're getting ahead of yourself. Stay focused on your audience, their pain, and the outcome. We'll get to that other stuff in the next lesson.

For now, focus on identifying a single, specific, high impact and high need Opportunity so you can make a product that's a big fat no-brainer insta-buy for your audience.

Once again, Alex has developed an interactive workbook to help you organize and rank your top 3 opportunities using the framework above.

[Go to the Tiny Product Ranking Workbook](#)

When you complete this workbook, we'll write you back with constructive feedback. Yes, really — Alex and I are reading your responses!

In the next lesson, you'll learn how you can turn one clearly identified pain/win point into a whole **slew** of viable product ideas.

But if you skip ranking Opportunities, you won't get very far in the next steps.

Lesson 7

Fix Methods & product Formats

Step 7: Choose your Method & Format...

Ah, finally. We're finally at the part of the process where we get to design our actual products!

Let's take a look at the (possibly literal) million dollar question:

"What kind of product will I make?"

You've picked your Opportunity —that's the pain or desire you're gonna tackle.

Now it's time to choose your Method and Format.

But first, a reminder:

Your first tiny product is a beginning, not an ending.

Gall's Law says that a large, complex system that works inevitably evolved from a small, simple system that worked, and the same is true of product businesses.

These are the bricks in Stacking the Bricks.

Instead of thinking of any given product as **being** The Business, think of your business as a container for many products, and many versions of those products over time.

Each small win adds up to bigger wins, in a compounding fashion.

So here, in launch•ftw, we are aiming for tiny and focused on the win.

Got it? Let's move on to your next set of decisions.

Today, you're going to figure out the Method and the Format of your tiny launch•ftw product. Grab your roadmap PDF and let's get to work!

C. CHOOSE A SINGLE APPROACH TO REDUCING OR ELIMINATING ONE PAIN

METHOD HOW WILL YOU HELP THEM KILL THE PAIN?

MINDSET	They think productively about their work/industry
KNOWLEDGE / FACTS	They have all the pure facts and knowledge they require
SKILL / ABILITY LEVEL	They have the skills they require, **AND** are good at them
IMPLEMENTATION	They easily apply the skills they have to real-world projects
EXECUTION	They easily start, persist, and finish those projects
PROCESS	They follow a step-by-step process for reproducible success
TEMPLATE	They have the code, design elements, writing, etc. they need
TOOL	They have the tools they need to execute quickly & accurately

HOW WILL YOU HELP THEM?

The Method: How will you help them reduce or eliminate the pain, mechanically speaking?

The Method asks, "**How** will you help them kill that pain or deliver that desire?"

So, how will you help them?

Will you...

- **teach** them the rules?
- **guide** them how to think about the problem?
- **demonstrate** how to do the thing?
- **support** them with reusable templates, resources, libraries?
- **connect** them to resources and people?
- **do** it for them with a service or a tool?
- et cetera

This list isn't exhaustive, and there isn't a single right or wrong answer here!

Which Method should you choose?

Your best choice might be different from my best choice. So let's analyze!

A. **Do any options make use your built-in advantages?** You don't have time to learn a new set of skills if you don't have to. Familiarity FTW.

B. **Which options going to be fastest for you to ship?** Which options require you to build the least before it was valuable enough for someone could buy it? The fewer moving parts, the better!
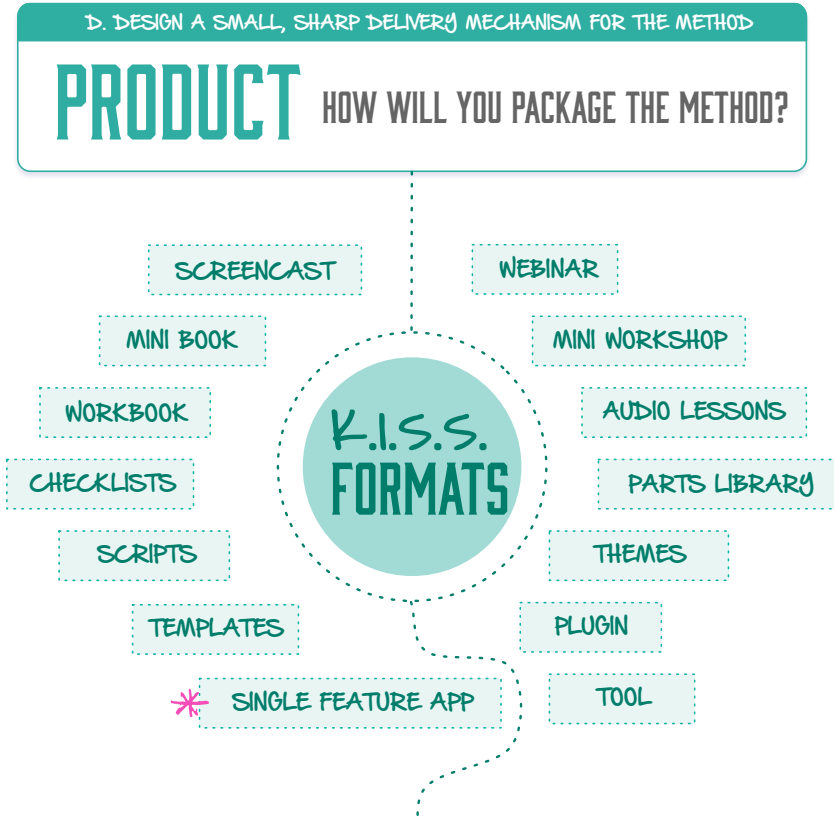
C. **Does your audience have any preferences?** Are there types of products they constantly recommend? Or that they complain about? (Pro-tip: Don't confuse your preferences for your audience's preferences.)

The best choice of Format and Method, whatever it is, should give you the shortest distance to your first paying customers at launch•ftw price points: $49, $79, even $99.

To help you decide, we have an interactive workbook for you!

[**Choose your Method with our workbook**]

Once you've completed this workbook, let's consider the Format...

D. DESIGN A SMALL, SHARP DELIVERY MECHANISM FOR THE METHOD

PRODUCT HOW WILL YOU PACKAGE THE METHOD?

K.I.S.S. FORMATS

- SCREENCAST
- WEBINAR
- MINI BOOK
- MINI WORKSHOP
- WORKBOOK
- AUDIO LESSONS
- CHECKLISTS
- PARTS LIBRARY
- SCRIPTS
- THEMES
- TEMPLATES
- PLUGIN
- SINGLE FEATURE APP
- TOOL

Which Format should you choose?

The Format Asks: "How will you package that Method?"

For a lot of folks, the Format is what they think of when they dream up a product to make. "I'm writing a book!" "I'm building a SaaS!"

But most folks get stuck on the "obvious" options – books, courses, and software – and overlook the wide range of ways you can package up a product for delivery. Including the options you can ship fast.

And fast is the name of the game for your launch•ftw challenge!

The format doesn't even have to be what you'd traditionally think of as "a product" and still deliver the benefits of income independent from time.

Here are some of the possibly surprising, but very profitable digital product types I've seen in the wild:

white papers	reports	collections (data, recipes, designs, examples)
paid newsletters	paid email courses	workbooks
code libraries/frameworks	webinars/talk recordings	design templates
other types of templates (Notion, code, etc.)	libraries of reusable elements	email or conversation scripts (e.g. emails to help raise your rates)
flowchart or process docs	plug-ins/extensions	community events
ebooks	audio books	courses
one-time use apps	micro apps	SaaS

It's true: many of our students have created ebooks, workshops, and web apps. But the key lesson is that these common choices are not your only choices, and might not even be your best choice.

If you pick a powerful opportunity and deliver a believable fix at the right time to the right person, **you can easily charge $19 to $99 for a surprisingly small, sharp product that would never make it as a "mass market" product on a shelf**.

As long as you kill pain or create wins and deliver value, your product can be anything.

So, how do you choose?

You know I love me a Venn Diagram!

Just as you did for pains and opportunities, your job is to look for cross-over in the circles of your audience + you:
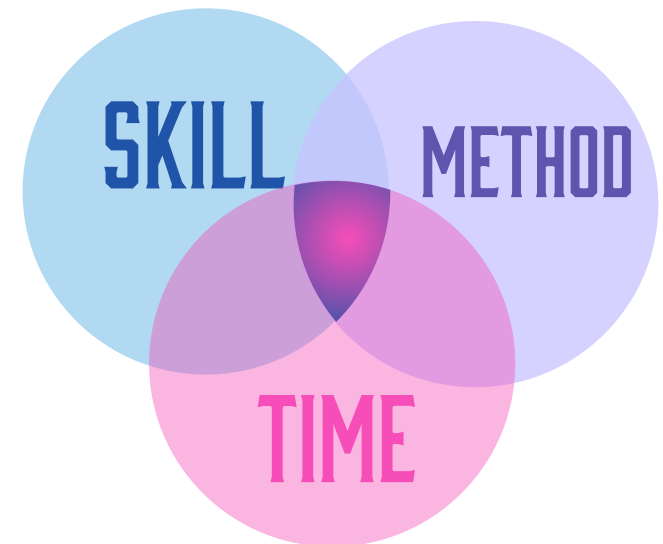
1. what your audience is predisposed to need, want, use and buy

2. what you are equipped for & excited to make

3. what's fastest and easiest for you to launch

Success means going with the grain, not against it.

It means shipping quickly, so you can build on it.

Stack those site visitors, subscribers, and sales.

Choose your Format with our workbook

Remember, there are three inviolable rules for succeeding:

Rule #1: DO learn what people need, want, and will actually buy, and make that

Rule #2: DO design a realistic plan quickly — for a tiny first product, with marketing baked in — so you can hit the ground running and start seeing traffic and sales as soon as possible

Rule #3: DO execute and ship things that are good enough, not perfect, and keep doing it until you build your way up into success

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Keep that in mind as you pick which Method you'll use to help your customer, and what Format to deliver that help!

Lesson 8

Time to launch!

Step 8: Time to launch!

Phew! You've come a long way!

Through these lessons and challenges, you've already made given yourself a whole slew of powerful ingredients for product success:

- a focus on an audience that buys things

- a genuine pain or win to tackle

- a method to turn that pain or win into an opportunity...

- a format and method — the design — for your product

- a narrow scope that you can actually start and finish quickly

These ingredients and the decisions behind them are the foundations of a tiny product that people will want to buy!

But, this isn't quite everything you need for sales on launch day.

Because products, alas, do not sell themselves.

Think of it like this: just like you need both a hammer and a nail to hang a picture — even though the nail is the thing that actually does the job of holding the picture up! — to make sales you need both a product and a product launch.

Alas!

But stay with me — yes, I can hear you sighing all the way over here — because I do have some good news:

A well-designed launch is very much like its own mini product layered on top of the actual product. That means you'll build that launch using the very skills you've been developing in launch•ftw. Reuse and recycle! Huzzah!

Plus...

To give you the best shot at your first paying launch...

I prepped a launch plan for you.

Finally, we come to the final part of your launch•ftw 12-week plan: The launch plan.

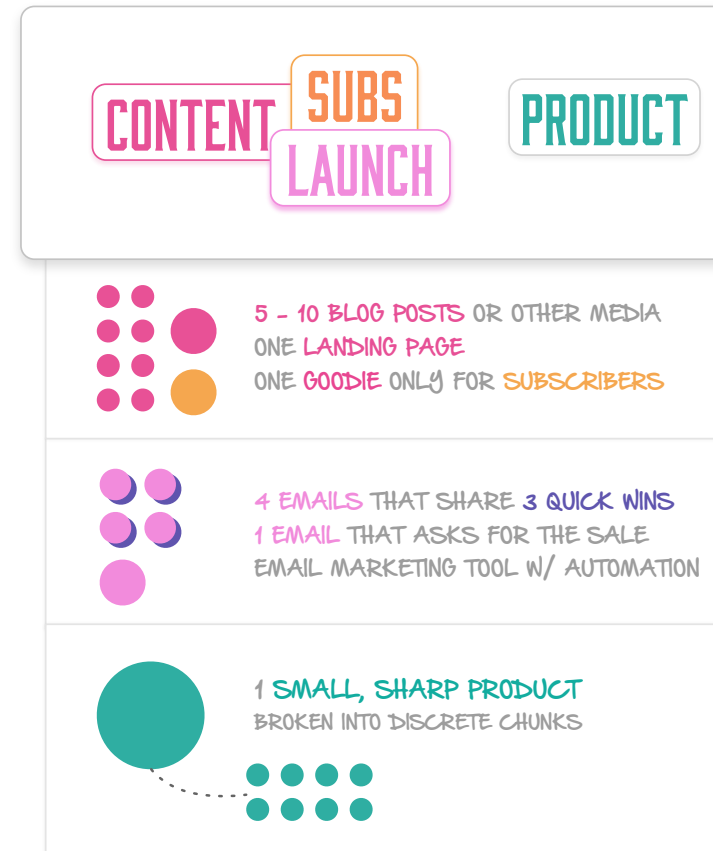**Why not just tweet "I did a thing," post it on Product Hunt, and call it a day?**

Well, because the point of a launch is to make sales... and that's not how people buy things.

Let me tell you a true story:

One day, a cute little boutique opened in my neighborhood. Everything about it was enticing! Cute and quirky home stuff, handmade pottery, fluffy sweaters... aka, totally my jam. I walked past it day after day, on my way to coffee or work, every time thinking, "I ought to go in there." Yet each day I passed it by, and never went in.

Then, on another day, a day like any other... they put out a little chalkboard sign offering a wine tasting... and that day, I walked right in. And I bought a sweater.

Here's the thing: Life is busy and full of demands.

CONTENT SUBS LAUNCH PRODUCT

5 – 10 BLOG POSTS OR OTHER MEDIA
ONE LANDING PAGE
ONE GOODIE ONLY FOR SUBSCRIBERS

4 EMAILS THAT SHARE 3 QUICK WINS
1 EMAIL THAT ASKS FOR THE SALE
EMAIL MARKETING TOOL W/ AUTOMATION

1 SMALL, SHARP PRODUCT
BROKEN INTO DISCRETE CHUNKS

Even when someone is in your audience, and they are aware of their pains/ desires, and they are interested in your specific product, and they do click the link to your landing page, there's really no reason for them to, metaphorically, stop what they're doing and walk inside your storefront with their wallet open.

"I ought to think about this," they'll say to themselves, as they promptly lose your tab.

That's why a single post, link, or email just won't drive sales.

Remember how our 12-week Action Calendar has you start on day 1 with a coming-soon page? That's so you can start sharing your plans, building awareness and anticipation, and alongside the rest of your launch prep.
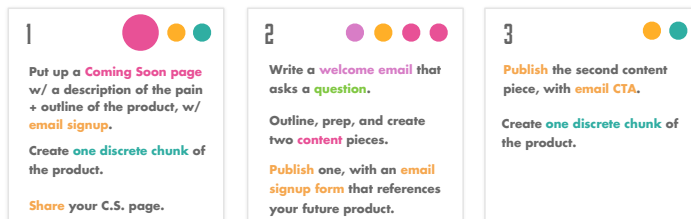
From there, you can spend the rest of your marketing time giving people a reason to 1. go to that page and 2. put their email address in the box.

Most of all, you can build that list WHILE building your product.

And, at the same time, you'll also be dropping content that serves as both trust-builders and proof of what's going into your product.

Doing your product development and product launch development simultaneously is an absolute power move.

When you're done and ready to pull the Launch Lever, you'll have people already convinced and ready to buy.

But wait, there's more — because seriously, there is.

Most people's initial launches are just about "hey here's this new thing!"

And that sucks for 2 reasons.

First, "new thing" launches aren't as good at making sales as you think they are, especially outside of a tiny segment of early adopters.

But second, "hey here's this new thing" launches make it seem like the only time you can launch is when you have something new. Which isn't even close to true, or a good way to run a business!

Instead, your launch•ftw launch focuses on the buyer instead of the product. Your content answers their burning questions about their problems, not about your product. Your emails show them you understand their pain, and helps earn their trust by providing tiny wins.

What do we mean by tiny wins? Consider this (incomplete) set of options:

answers to common questions

rules of thumb they can follow

checklists to remember the steps for a process

samples, snippets, tools to try

recommended next actions to take

a list of common mistakes to avoid

a reframed way of thinking, or a new philosophy

a roundup of examples of success or failure

Whether it's written, recorded, or visually designed, etc, each of these options gives the person a thing to **DO** or **TRY** for themselves.

If each one of these content ideas sounds remarkably like a tiny product, that's because it is! Just like the product you are launching, each piece of content is focused on a pain and helping them feel a win. Just tiny!

Your launch introduces the product in context of their problems, and proves that they can trust you because you already helped them with a smaller related problem even before they bought.

Best of all, by following this approach, and doing it in this order, you're building so many things:

A. you're building **interest** and excitement

B. you're building **trust** and respect with your future customers

C. you're building **momentum** to launch to instant sales

D. you're building a **reusable** and evergreen launch

Just like your product, which you can make once and sell over and over again... you can use your **launch** over and over again too!

That's what it means to stack the bricks.

That's the power of product.

So to prepare for your launch, you need **4 pieces of content** that are related to the pain that your product is built around, at least 3 of them delivering a "quick win" like one of the options above.

Our advice is to start with an outline of topics before you dive into fully creating any of them, so start there!

Go back to your answers from the Pain & Value workbook to look for related & adjacent pains you can talk about. Just remember that each piece of content needs to deliver a TINY win.

Of course your first launch won't be perfect... the first version of anything never is. But as long as you hit the fundamentals we've talked about in this series, it will be effective. Through the power of action, you'll learn things you couldn't even imagine before you tried.

You'll be even better prepared for the next launch.

And years from now, you'll look back and be so proud of yourself for making this the year you Launched For The Win!

Call to action

Tomorrow starts today

Putting it all together ✨

If you've been following the steps of this challenge closely, you're well on your way to a launch day you can be proud of.

You're not there yet – but you're closer than when you started reading this series.

You have...

1. identified a great **audience**, with built in advantages (workbook 1)

2. gathered a collection of their troublesome **pains** and desired **wins** (workbook 2)

3. described several **opportunities** using our "Mad Libs" formula (workbook 3)

4. ranked those opportunities by **need** x **impact** (workbook 4)

5. chosen a **method** for helping them that'll let you ship fast... (workbook 5)

6. ...and a **format** that fits within your constraints (workbook 6)

7. and finally, you've brainstormed your **launch** content (workbook 7)

Wow! Give yourself a pat on the back. You've done a better job prepping for a successful product launch than 99% of the people out there...possibly including your past self. 🤓

You've got all of the raw materials, and if you follow the launch•ftw execution calendar, most of what's left is assembly (and of course, making the thing you decided to make!)

But also...

If you've been reading this email series sporadically... I see you.

If you've been not reading this email series, saving each one in a tidy little folder for some future binge reading date (ahem)... I see you too.

If you've been noodling around with the launch•ftw steps in your head — with that satisfying lil hit of dopamine that comes from thinking — but you still haven't set aside dedicated time to really follow the steps in a way that makes it possible for you to take action...

I've **been** you.

Remember: I used to be an inveterate procrastinator.

Until one day I decided to call my own bluff, do everything the opposite to how I'd always done it, buckle down and actually ship stuff.

From mid-2008 to mid-2009, I shipped my first live workshops, a SaaS, and a technical book. I stacked my first bricks.

Those first 12 months shaped the rest of my career.

I'm sitting here in my comfy recliner my house atop 13 acres of pristine desert, near a city where I moved just because I wanted to, writing you on my own schedule, my own time.

I can live anywhere.

I can work on what the things I want to work on, including things that don't make money because my bases are covered.

I can never be fired, or excluded by office politicking.

No client or boss or coworker can run roughshod over my work.

I get to make things that help people. Every day.

I'm free to do my best and live my best life.

And yes, there was plenty of work between then and now — there were ups and there were downs (some pretty huge downs, even!) — but it was work on my own terms. And I was the one who reaped the rewards from it.

It all began when I challenged myself to break down that first goal, and put in the work to launch my first product.

Now is the perfect time to begin yours.

"What do you have to lose?"

Sure, it's a call to arms! But it's not a rhetorical question.

When you embark on a challenge like this, you do stand to lose something: Time and effort.

But if you're like I used to be, you're already wasting lots of time and effort on things that are guaranteed to get you nowhere.

Time passes the same no matter what you do with it.

You can spend that time building something you own, creating assets, and learning how to succeed.

Or you can spend it rewatching your favorite show on Netflix, or playing video games, or doodling your latest random idea on a whiteboard.

Either way, that time will slip through your fingers and soon be nothing but a memory… and it'll happen sooner than you think.

All the more reason to judiciously use your time today to invest in yourself and your future as soon as you can.

Get to launching, my friend!

Amy Hoy

Bonus!

The myth of launch day...

The myth of Launch Day

You probably think about Your Launch a bit like a graduation day:

A day of transition, where a student — I mean, product — has fulfilled their requirements — ahem, MVP — and is ready to to enter into the "real world" — ah! the marketplace! — and apply their learning (you know, make bank).

But successfully launching a product is... not at all like this.

You see, unlike a student who now has a credential for life and is done with an entire period of that life andmoving onto the next stage, your product is still the same the very next day, and literally nothing about your business is finished.

In a successful launch story, the thing that transforms isn't the product, it's the <u>customer</u>.

(Noticing a pattern with the launch•ftw framework yet? ;)

A great launch draws the customer in, persuades them to take their own wants & needs seriously, makes them feel understood & supported, builds anticipation, and finally prepares them to make a buying decision and follow through!

Follow through to using the product, getting the most out of it, experiencing those wins.

And because a great launch is actually a **customer** journey, not a product milestone, you have a chance to launch & relaunch every time you can draw a potential customer into your product's orbit... or even to reactivate or motivate a customer who's already bought but hasn't yet used your product to its full potential.

That means no particular day is special.

Every day brings another opportunity.

You can create **infinite** launches.

And, even better... your launch is not the high stakes, go big or go home, win or lose event you think it is.

A successful launch isn't one, perfect day... a successful launch is always happening.

Launching is a pattern, rather than an event.

So get out there. Create your imperfect launch. Push it out the door. Stack a brick. Gather feedback.

Make sales, learn more, do better, launch again.

Keep learning, keep growing

Do you get stuck on your side projects?

My book, Just F*cking Ship, is a systematic approach to breaking down large projects and overcoming the appealing inertia of procrastination.

If you've ever read generic productivity advice and been left screaming, 'Ok, but HOW do I break a large project into tiny tasks?!' JFS is the book for you.

Want to dive deep on your audience?

Learn how to read their minds with our Sales Safari 101 videos.

Sales Safari isn't the easiest skill in the world... it's a new way of looking at messages and communities you see every day. But with a little elbow grease — and a little support — you can start turning group posts, tweets, comments and reviews into **infinite ideas** for your business.

[More tools & resources in our online store]