

Creative intelligence for
startups and scaleups



Nailing your startup launch campaign

The inside track

SIM7
Creative Agency

Step by step to a successful marketing campaign

Looking for a way to put your startup brand out there and get noticed? Wondering how to carve out your niche and start growing that all important audience?

From content marketing to user-generated material, press ads to socials, your options are endless. But the good news is that a well-thought through launch campaign doesn't have to be overly complicated and it definitely doesn't need to break the budget.

The right marketing campaign done well should get your brand name known and catch the attention of potential customers. And what's more, it can make you memorable long after that video goes viral or your brilliantly bold billboard gets papered over.

Of course, we're not suggesting internet memes and large-scale print ads will fit every startups needs – or even be possible; let's face it, what works for one brand will almost certainly not work for another. The trick here is in understanding your audience, working out where they are and taking the 'one big idea' to them, on their turf as it were.



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Planning the perfect campaign

When you're planning your startup campaign it's vital you nail down a few pieces of information first. Think about the resources you have available to you – do you have anyone with specialist skills or will you need to buy in expertise? What sort of budget do you have for this initial launch and when would be the best time to do it - is your product or service seasonal for example? Now is also the time to start thinking about your goals - what would success look like for this campaign?

From Twitter to The Sunday Times, the array of options for getting your message in front of your audience is quite frankly mind boggling. So we advise you think logically and concentrate, to begin with at least, on things you can control. Focus on growing social media followings on the platforms you're seeing the most engagement on, build email lists that will serve you down the line, and listen to the specialists in your team when they suggest what will work best for your campaign.

As with many things in business, creating a marketing campaign that hits the spot is a lot about the planning that goes in at the front end.

Generating ideas

Get a trusted group together to workshop and discuss ideas, or at least to give yourself a bit of brain space away from the distractions of the day-to-day grind. Either way, why not grab a piece of paper and work through these questions step by step. You might just find some brilliant launch campaign ideas popping out the other end?



1. What do you want to achieve?

Brand awareness? Social media and email list growth? If you're about to invest your valuable time and effort into something, you need to at least know why you're doing it. And remember the more specific the goal the better.

2. How will you know if your campaign has worked?

The thing about a goal is that you need to know when, or indeed whether, you've reached it. Start by asking yourself, what does success look like? And then try to define some KPIs or targets that make sense for each different element of your campaign.

Sometimes the measurements you'll want to use here are obvious and easy to collect: X number of sales in the first month or an increase week on week in blog opens / click-throughs, likes and follows. But other times, they're not so easy to establish.

3. Who is your campaign for?

We hesitate to use the phrase 'target audience' because it's often overused. But the point still stands. Understanding who it is you're creating the campaign for is 100% key to all the other bits coming together. It's that simple!

Unfortunately working out exactly who your audience is, isn't that simple! And even if you've already done persona work for your new brand you'll be a step ahead of the game.

If not, dive deep into your target's mind. Where do they hang out online? What types of content do they consume and how do they use social media? What do they like doing? What is likely to get their attention? Do they like humour or are they drawn to simplicity? And importantly what are their 'pain points'? What problems do they have that your product or service could help them solve?

Consider too, what stage of the buyer journey your customers are at. Are they aware of your product or service at all? Are you likely to be one of a group of companies they're considering? Or are they already at the purchase stage? *Phew!*

Believe us, this work - when done properly - will benefit you long after this initial campaign is done and dusted.

4. What will the campaign look like?

Now let's talk about the creative stuff!

The people in your team who are best placed to work on your concepts will depend on the goals you set out above. If your campaign will be social media heavy, bring your SM team in on creative workshops, while if it's a local advertising route you're taking, perhaps your sales guys and gals are the ones to chat to. If you don't yet have specialists in these roles, consider an outside creative agency to take the load off.

Don't expect this to be a quick process. You might go through plenty of iterations before you hit on design and copy concepts that everyone is happy with. And remember you'll likely want a bit of variety too – think billboard and mailer designs that work in harmony, or a variety of graphics, videos and text that will work across all your social channels.



5. How will you get your marketing campaign in front of your audience?

Based on what you learned about your audience above, it's time to think about where you'll place your campaign so they can't help but notice it. Of course, your budget will play a part here too.

Best start, in our opinion, is the channels on which you're already doing well. So if LinkedIn works like a charm but Twitter only attracts tumbleweed, concentrate on the former. Or if you're only just getting started on social, keep on testing and trying different things.

Don't be afraid to use paid ads as part of the mix, done well they can put your carefully created campaign in front of a new audience to give it the boost you're looking for.

Plus, don't neglect your own corner of the internet. Take every opportunity to market your campaign on your own site: use temporary banners, create relevant blog posts and include mention in email newsletters you send out.

6. When will your marketing campaign get its time to shine?

Think back to the goals you set above, then grab a calendar, wall chart or even just a spreadsheet with dates on. Start plotting out your start, end and what comes in between.

Think about the number of blogs, newsletters and social media posts your time and budget will allow, and work backwards, spreading them out for best impact. Next layer in any offline activities such as shop front window-dressing, press articles, banners or even guerrilla marketing tactics if that's something you're interested in doing.

Do some research to find out if there are any national days that are relevant to your campaign and note them down on your calendar too. There might be a way you can use these to get in front of a new audience.

Getting this down in one place will be invaluable when it comes to running the campaign and keeping you organised.



7. How will you make sure your launch campaign leads to sales?

Of course, your launch campaign could be the best thing since tearless onions, but if your audience is left unsure about what's expected of them then the whole thing will likely fall flat.

So don't leave your 'call to action' as an afterthought. It's good practice to include one on any piece of marketing or content you write. Treat it as a prompt to get your potential customer to take direct action. Think, "Buy now", "Post a picture on social media with the hashtag X" or even "Send us your details and we'll get back to you with a quote within 24 hours".

You could provide a form to capture the data you need, offer a bonus download in exchange for your customer's email or a waiting list spot for your new launch. All great ways to gain valuable warm leads that you can put to good use later. Vital when you're starting a brand from scratch.

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Need more inspiration for your launch campaign? Head over to SIM7 creative agency at sim7creative.co.uk

Or get in touch with our startups branding specialist Henry John at Henry@sim7creative.co.uk