



# LAUNCH TOMORROW

Use a Landing Page To Launch  
Your Lean Startup In One Day

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LUKE SZYRMER

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# Launch Tomorrow v2.0

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# Foreword

A decade ago I attended Gary Bencivenga's "Bencivenga 100" copywriting seminar in Manhattan. At \$5000 a head, the audience was high cotton. Gary was retiring, and since he is-at heart-a teacher with a great love for humanity, he revealed all his secrets. Gary was unquestionably the top copywriter in the field.

That seminar is still legendary, but one motivation for Gary's retirement was the tremendous acceleration and commoditization of the copywriting craft. Gary outlined a meticulous approach for getting offer, message and tone exactly right which involved a great deal of research.

Gary saw that a new breed of copywriter was coming into vogue the SPEED copywriter. Why research when you can test? Why slave over paragraphs for days or weeks when you could buy cheap traffic and just do a bunch of A/B splits?

I'm not suggesting Gary's approach was or ever will be obsolete. I am, however, suggesting that one must now use Gary's tools 100x faster than most marketers would have 15 years ago.

On one hand, you must check to see if there's water before you dive into the swimming pool. The days of haphazardly sticking up a brand new product on a search engine and quickly selling it are over.

On the other hand, the days of fastidiously researching a market, a product and a niche for months and months are also over.

The correct approach combines both extremes. Here, Luke Szyrmer shows you how to go from zero to vetted and out the door with a reasonable, good-enough product strategy in literally one day. 80/20 high speed product launch research.

This book is full of juicy nuggets of sage advice that will speed you to reality. If your idea is a bad one... you need to find out NOW. Not three months from now. With this book you can literally test a new idea, a new concept, a new product... without actually building a single prototype first... once per day.

Are you stuck with your current business? Vet 14 new ideas in two weeks. One will stick for sure.

You'll find astute tips on when to A/B test and when not to; a slick trick using Wikipedia that I myself used to debug a problem long ago, then completely forgot about; how to harness clever online services like PickFu and a kamikaze, take no prisoners approach to researching a market.

Luke delivers great storytelling and interesting anecdotes, along with well researched claims.

Whether you are a big business or a tiny one, if you're introducing a new idea to a new market, your odds are the same as Venture Capital: out of ten ideas, one will be great, two will be OK, and seven will be duds. You cannot guess in advance which ones are good and bad.

But in ten days you can test ten ideas, eliminate seven, and be left with three that have a fighting chance.

That's pretty good odds, dontcha think?

Perry Marshall, Author of:

- Ultimate Guide to Google Ads
- Ultimate Guide to Facebook Advertising
- 80/20 Sales & Marketing

# Preface

High-growth companies live in maddening extremes, jumping from one extreme to the other—in an eye blink.

In 2015, Slack went from nothing to a [\\$1.12 billion valuation in under 2 years](#). And continued to grow quickly for years afterward.

Here's what Slack's founder, Stuart Butterfield, said about its growth at the time, "I have no F\*cking idea why this happened".



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'I have no fucking idea why it happened'  
refreshingly honest answer from [@stewart](#)  
about growth of Slack [#DLD15](#)



RETWEETS 120 FAVORITES 63



Or the founders of Airbnb.

They started out by designing gimmicky political cereal boxes to pay bills, buy food, and stave off homelessness. Over two months, they sold 800 boxes of cereal at \$40 each. They generated more than

\$30,000 to fund the company's incubation in 2009.

Five years after Airbnb's founding, it competes toe-to-toe with major hotel chains. The company was tentatively valued at **\$10 billion**, based on a **Series D** round of financing they closed in 2014.

Going beyond the top level growth numbers, think of what needs to change to go from the founder's kitchen table to unicorn: more than just marketing. Hiring, building product, and operational support for customers all undergo strain as each zero is added to every important number in the company's business model. Yet, despite this eye-popping growth in the tech startup press, the chances of hitting it big in a short time frame are slim.

Paul Graham, the former head of YCombinator (affectionately dubbed YC) and an early investor in startups like Airbnb, revealed YC's portfolio performance in a tweet:

As of now, 37 YC cos have valuations of or sold for at least \$40m.

RETWEETS 191 FAVORITES 119

12:56 AM - 27 May 2013

Out of 511 companies YC had chosen with a rigorous selection process, only 37 "made it" afterward. It's harder to get accepted into YC than Harvard. After benefiting from YC's mentoring, connections and financing, 7.2% of their startups cleared a valuation of \$40 million. And \$40 million is nowhere near unicorn status.

You rarely read about this tech underbelly in glossy startup magazines. It's called survivorship bias. The majority of startups disappear. They have no voice. By the time the exponential success

stories hit the news, they've been through it all. And they're only willing to open up their kimono once they feel established.

The best part is that the “successful” ones, like Slack’s Stuart Butterfield above, often can’t explain why their product clicked. Or they try, yet what they share is biased, over-simplified, or even flat out wrong. Ironically, moments of public founder honesty like the above contribute to the mystery of how “birthing a unicorn” works.

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One company that has historically been open about the principles driving its early success was Apple. As a business case study, Apple has become a bit cliche. Yet few companies can claim that a handful of principles enabled them to grow from startup to tech giant. In his biography of Steve Jobs, Apple’s flamboyant founding CEO, Walter Isaacson interviewed hundreds of participants in the early days of Apple to get the real story down.

In 1979, Jobs received a one-page memo from his earliest mentor: Mike Markkula. Apple was three years old at the time. As Apple’s angel investor and marketing strategist, Markkula proposed the three principles he thought should lie at the core of Apple’s approach:

- Empathy
- Focus
- Impute

The first two were rather intuitive. The mysterious third principle, while awkwardly named, referred to the idea that ‘people *do* judge a book by its cover’ according to Markkula. It doesn’t matter whether they should or shouldn’t do so. Jobs took the principles to heart, and built a huge company thanks to them.

As product developers, it’s smart to accept that humans rely on split-second associations as their default way to understand anything

new. Tap into that, and you'll find it much easier to influence your audience. Or better: be certain your audience will crave what you want to build, thanks to your deep understanding of those associations.

Consider how Apple packages its products. Even the box is designed to be unique, highly functional, and pleasant to look at. While most companies would consider packaging a line-item cost to be minimized, the impute principle drove Apple to initiate the user's experience from that first moment. The moment the user held the boxed product in their hands. Even the outside packaging of the early Macintoshes was in full color. This made them stand out on a retail shelf relative to the generic cardboard containers used by other computer vendors.

First impressions do matter, because they relate to an outside-in view of the product. The user's initial encounter with a product creates the atmosphere for all further interaction with it. And a significant portion of that first encounter relates to the user's preconceptions that may have little to do with the product itself.

The external packaging needs to:

1. Hook into what the customer already knows, understands, and potentially likes.
2. Communicate why the product is useful and relevant, (e.g. to address a need the prospect has).
3. Look attractive, or more precisely, not unattractive: it can't discourage the exact type of person the product is meant to help.

While we can't be 100% sure what causes high startup growth, testing for and iterating to improve a product's impute factor is smart. It's fully within founders' control to adjust and improve it. Stack the odds in your favor.

In this book, I want to be honest with you about being a founder at the earliest stages. I've had my own misadventures which I'll share

in a bit. I've also spoken to or worked with hundreds of technology entrepreneurs. Some are already quite successful, some struggling, and some just starting out.

People judge books by their cover. And movies. And business cards. We shouldn't, but we do. Just like we judge startups by their landing pages.

The smart founder taps into these preconceptions, in order to select a good idea and position it for success at launch. And you express that idea on your initial landing page. No customer cares how much effort went into the launch or creating the product beforehand. But their split second associations can make or break their first impression of your product.

If you take a structured approach to testing new business ideas, you will start to pick up on nuances like this. It becomes a pattern you can't unsee once you notice it.

Here's the good news: you can also figure out whether there is demand for a product, before you start building it. Or at a minimum, discard the duds before they flop.

By tapping into the principle of 'impute', with landing page pretesting, you are confirming whether the product idea or product ties into:

- Expectations
- Analogies
- Associations
- Beliefs or
- Preconceptions

your audience already has.

You can pretest an idea to surface these factors, ones which ultimately help derisk your product before you even start building it.

This book shows you how to build a product that your market longs for. To locate unmet demand. Identify and quantify a problem actually worth solving.

By launching into the thick of your market, all within a day, you discover what your prospects actually want. Design and refine your idea, before you even start building your product. Know you're building the right product with the conversion data to prove it.

Most importantly, you need to get out of your own head. And out of your own way. And take the customer's outside-in view deliberately. As frequently as you can.

And if you're preselling right from the beginning, you may even have money in the bank as additional validation of your product's prospects. And—in case you missed it—you have money in the bank, so start building a business!

## Take Action Now



In order to engage deeply with this book:

1. Shut off your access to social media, and all other distractions.
2. Get your beverage of choice. I'm always game for a bitter black espresso.
3. Make yourself comfortable (yes, that's important in terms of info retention).
4. If you're reading a physical copy, pull out a highlighter or pen. Underline what you like.
5. Take notes: in the margins, in a notebook, or in an app like [Evernote](#), [Notion](#), or a personal wiki.
6. If you keep getting distracted or overwhelmed by the itch to check your email, check out [Paced Email](#) or [Rize](#)

This section focuses on the essentials. The to-dos suggested are lightweight and easy to accomplish. Launch fast and get feedback!

## Key Points



At the end of each chapter, you'll find a summary of all the key points, stats, or quotes it contained. This makes it easier for you to scan the book.

In this chapter, you learned:

- High-growth companies are the exception, not the rule in tech.
- Often they don't understand all the reasons they hit exponential growth.
- As a founder, it's smart to assume people *do* judge a book by its cover.
- Use landing page testing to figure out whether your product idea or prototype has an eager audience waiting for it.

# Reviews

“Reading Luke’s book was like making the jump to light speed in Star Wars. I’m now working with a completely different time constant than I was a week ago...Thanks to your book, I’m now confident there’s real value in the concept, and am planning to take the next steps on a prototype.” – **Mark Hill, serial entrepreneur**

“There are selfless heroes in every startup community; the organizers and mentors who help for no reason other than that they know it’s the right thing to do. These people are the backbone of our progress as people, and my heart goes out to them. Today I want to talk about one community hero: Luke Szyrmer. Luke’s book has a ton of practical advice around Landing Pages and testing ideas I wish I had written myself”. –**Trevor Owens, founder of Javelin.com and author of *The Lean Enterprise***

“This is a must read if you have an idea for a startup and you want to create the right landing page to sell your idea before spending a lot of money building your product” – **Dharmesh Raithatha, Product Partner, Forward Partners**

“The Lean Startup meets direct response marketing. Eric Ries meets Gary Halbert. *Launch Tomorrow* by Luke Szyrmer provides a step-by-step approach to quickly launching an idea, a product, campaign, or business in a way that doesn’t cut corners on acquiring scientific, validated learning in the marketplace”. – **Alex Makarski, Marketing Consultant**

“Read this book today and launch your product today. I love the compactness and the actionable way the author wrote this book. The first time I paged through it I felt energized to put aside my own process lists and use this book verbatim, step by step, to systematically and confidently launch my product. This book will energize you and enable you to launch tomorrow. Read it today... or put off your launch for weeks and months and years”. – **Nitsan S. Gaibel, Publisher and Entrepreneur**

“In my corporate consulting days, I used to tell my clients that market research is a waste of time, because projects usually took 3 months and required a budget of \$50-150K. But this stuff really changes the equation!” – **Robert Grossman, Marketing Expert, Former Managing Partner, McKinsey & Co.**

# Ready. Fire. Aim!

Before we dig into the theory, it will help a lot if you pull out your phone or kitchen clock. Set a countdown timer for 60 minutes.

Here's the deal: you'll get a few times more out of this book if you do the practical exercises, applying them to what you're working on, anyway.

Here's what to do in 7 steps:

1. Set up a temporary email address with your project name, e.g. hedgefundsoftware@gmail.com. It doesn't matter what you choose. FYI, many of the tools used in this book rely on Google's free products, which work well if you want to conserve resources.
2. Set up a new Google Analytics property tied to that email address.
3. Now the heart of the matter. You're going to create a minimum viable product in the remaining time on your countdown:
  - Create a landing page that describes your product or product idea. You can use any technology stack or product that has the ability to create landing pages. You can use a dedicated or specialized landing page provider. Alternatively, email service providers (ESPs) provide free or bundled landing pages. Check out the [products](#) I recommend currently. Tools and tactics don't matter if you grasp the principles covered in this book.

- Consider who might be interested in buying your potential product or finding out more. Think of a specific person you know or you've met recently. Address the marketing copy to persuade that person (or company if it's B2B) to leave their contact details—including an email address—along with an explicit request for their permission for you to follow up (marketing consent).
  - On the landing page, include at least one picture.
  - Optionally, create a short animated (explainer) video with a service like [Powtoon](#).
  - Decide where you want the contact details to end up. Low tech is fine. You can just collect email addresses in an ESP for example.
4. Create a thank you page that is shown after the visitor submits their contact details.
  5. Implement Google Analytics. This may be easy to do in the tool you've chosen, if they just need an identifier. Alternatively, you need to add the scripts yourself. In this case:
    - Set up Google Tag Manager (GTM)
    - Add the Google Analytics Property you created
    - Add the GTM tag to your landing page.
    - Within Google Analytics, configure a Google Analytics goal that tracks when the visitor hits the thank you page.
  6. Hit publish and stop the timer.
  7. Email the link to your landing page to Launch Tomorrow: [customersuccess@lauchtomorrow.com](mailto:customersuccess@lauchtomorrow.com) along with how many minutes it took to create. Optionally, tell us whether you'd like feedback.

So, how was that?

If you finished in under 60 minutes, pat yourself on the back. Treat yourself. I like chocolate ice cream, if you need a suggestion.

Assuming you hit the deadline, you now have “muscle memory” of what *landing pages* are. You’ve had a brush with your target audience. You’ve forced yourself to think in terms of what your product is and why you think it’s attractive to them.

This is the startup’s equivalent of Amazon’s technique of writing the press release for a new product before they even start their first line of code. Or the tech startup’s equivalent of a salesperson printing up a new business card or brochure, when starting to sell a new product.

Don’t worry about the risks and implications of this little jaunt. Only you know its web address (URL). Nobody will come and visit the landing page before you unpublish it, unless you start promoting it.

Aha!

You see, that’s when the interesting questions bubble up. Where can you promote it effectively? What exactly do you say? How big is the existing market? Will this be a grassroots effort around a problem people aren’t even aware they have? What if my target audience doesn’t need it (really common in tech)? How much will it cost to market the product? How much can I charge? And so on.

If you buy paid ads, you can figure out your entire go-to-market strategy with this lowly landing page. Even if you don’t plan to sell the product online, you can reach exactly the people you want with targeted ads. This means you can test messaging and gather market intelligence. You can observe who likes what, and who responds to what messaging.

By doing so, you **transform your landing page from a lowly digital brochure into its mighty cousin: the landing page minimum viable product (MVP)**.

To be clear: you’re welcome to start promoting your landing page MVP. The rest of the book gives you the context to do so effectively.

By the way, if you didn't manage to make it in time....no ice cream for you. Sorry to rub it in.

## Next Steps

- Now that you have designed a landing page, buy a domain that seems relevant to the product. Try to make it a .com domain if you are going for a general audience. Or a country code specific one if you are only going to target your home country at first (which is smart, because it's easier). For a tech audience, you can get away with .co or .io endings. After you purchase it, point the domain at your landing page host, so that your landing page(s) live at that web address. Usually it's easiest to configure 'www' as a subdomain for that landing page. For various technical reasons not related to your hosting provider (look up DNS propagation), it will take 2 days for the URL to work. So you have some time to catch up in your reading—to the 1 day launch part of the book.
- As you continue reading, meet and speak with 5 people who are in your target market. These can and should be people you already know, including personal friends and family. Just ask them to put their "consumer" or "work" hat on. Dig into the problems you think they have around what your product does. After that discussion, show them the landing page you've just created.
- If you plan to test willingness and ability to pay for an early-stage product, set up a dedicated [Stripe](#) or [PayPal](#) account, and connect it to your landing page provider. You don't need a business PayPal account at this stage; personal works. If you are going to be testing a hardware or any other nondigital product idea, setup a [Square](#) or [Zettle](#) account. In all cases, use the project email you just set up. This will segregate out your payments from your personal finances or other businesses.