

What to Measure When You Launch

A practical launch metrics guide for clinicians building products, services, programmes and ventures.

PRACTICAL FOUNDER GUIDE

THE PROMISE

Choose what to measure based on what you need to learn — then decide what each result will make you do next.

“Did the launch work?” is usually the wrong first question

A launch can generate attention and activity while leaving the important uncertainty untouched. Registrations are not attendance. Attendance is not payment. Payment is not use. Use is not benefit. Benefit is not sustainable delivery.

Don't measure everything. Measure what helps you make the next decision.

THE DECISION-LED FRAMEWORK

QUESTION

What are you still unsure about?

LAUNCH

What will you put into the world?

SIGNAL

What behaviour or outcome would help?

DECISION

What will you do differently?

THE USEFUL TEST

If no plausible result would change what you do, the metric is probably decorative. Write the decision rule before the numbers arrive.

Six questions your launch might need to answer

Do not ask one launch to answer all six. Pick the question that most needs resolving now.

PROBLEM

Is the problem real?

Repeated moments, workarounds, consequence and existing effort.

INTEREST

Do the right people care?

Qualified action, attendance, follow-through, referral and return.

UNDERSTANDING

Do they understand it?

Questions, objections, accurate explanation and next-step movement.

PAYMENT

Will they pay?

Completed payment, checkout friction, timing and real objections.

DELIVERY

Does it work?

Activation, completion, useful outcome, retention and support demand.

TRUST

Do they believe it?

Movement after relevant proof, referrals and concrete buying questions.

A free event can test attention and understanding. It cannot answer the same question as a completed payment or a successfully delivered outcome.

Is the problem real — and do the right people care?

LISTENING LAUNCH

Is the problem real?

Use interviews, a focused Q&A, problem clinic or listening session. Look for recent examples, repeated language, existing workarounds and meaningful consequence.

USEFUL SIGNALS

- Suitable people willingly discuss a recent example.
- The same difficult moment or workaround recurs.
- People already spend time, energy, money or reputation on it.

INTEREST LAUNCH

Do enough of the right people care?

Use a waitlist, early-access page, event or small challenge. Track qualified action and follow-through by audience and source.

DO NOT CONFUSE

- Reach with action.
- Registration with attendance.
- An “interested” comment with a completed next step.

Do they understand it — and will they pay?

TEACHING / DEMO LAUNCH

Do they understand the offer?

Track repeated questions, requests for examples, objections, drop-off and whether the right person can describe what happens next.

Care without understanding → simplify the promise, show the mechanism or use a recognisable example.

REAL OFFER

Will they pay in this context?

Track suitable offers made, completed payments, failed checkouts, time to payment and price/non-price objections. Ask buyers and suitable non-buyers separately.

No purchases does not prove “the price is wrong.” Recheck problem, audience, promise, trust, timing, offer clarity and friction.

Does it work — and can you deliver it?

A pilot needs more than a satisfaction score. Separate use, value and sustainable delivery.

1

DID PEOPLE USE IT?

Onboarding, activation, attendance, completion, drop-off.

2

DID IT HELP?

Outcome evidence appropriate to the promise, repeat use, retained behaviour.

3

CAN YOU DELIVER IT?

Founder time, support demand, cost, errors, complaints, access and risk.

BORROW A USEFUL QI HABIT

OUTCOME

Did the intended result begin to change?

PROCESS

Did the important steps happen as planned?

BALANCING

Did improvement create another problem?

Do they trust it — without creating hidden costs?

PROOF-LED LAUNCH

Do people believe this will work for someone like them?

Track behaviour after relevant proof, questions that reference evidence, referrals and whether hesitation becomes a concrete implementation question.

PROOF IS USEFUL WHEN IT IS

- Specific enough to understand.
- Relevant to the reader's situation.
- Credible and bounded to what actually happened.

BALANCING AND SAFETY CHECK

Could the launch increase clinical risk, missed follow-up, privacy exposure, inequitable access, complaints, team workload or founder burden? Decide what would trigger escalation, redesign, pause or stop.

Business launch data does not establish clinical efficacy, safety or generalisability. Use the proper governance, regulatory, research and professional routes.

A positive headline number never cancels a material safety, access or sustainability problem.

Three famous launch lessons

BUFFER

A landing page gauged interest; a basic product followed. Founder Joel Gascoigne reported a first paying customer within four days and shifted focus towards marketing and customer development.

The signal changed the next job.

AIRBNB

For its 2008 Democratic National Convention launch, Airbnb reported about 800 hosts signed up and 80 guest arrivals. Potential supply and completed use were different signals.

Name the behaviour and denominator.

KICKSTARTER

Kickstarter says successful projects often begin with friends and early supporters who share into wider networks. Warm, referred and cold audiences may behave differently.

Segment the source of support.

Famous launches illustrate a measurement idea. Their resources, trust, channels and conditions are not transferable performance targets.

Choose a small family of measures

REACH / EXPOSURE

Did the right people encounter it?

Visits · invitations · source

MEANINGFUL ACTION

Did they give something of value?

Time · contact · effort · money

PROCESS / USE

Did the mechanism happen?

Onboarding · activation · completion

OUTCOME / VALUE

Did the useful change begin?

Outcome · return · retained behaviour

BALANCING / SAFETY

Did another problem appear?

Workload · access · privacy · risk

QUALITATIVE LEARNING

Why did the result occur?

Questions · objections · dropout reasons

Start with one primary signal, one or two supporting process measures and any essential balancing or safety measure.

Launch Measurement Cheat Sheet

Pick the row that matches what you need to learn. Do not track every metric.

WHAT TO LEARN	USEFUL LAUNCH	WHAT TO MEASURE	WHAT IT HELPS DECIDE
Is the problem real?	Listening	Language · workarounds · consequence	Pursue · narrow · return
Do the right people care?	Interest	Qualified action · follow-through	Change audience, promise or friction
Do they understand it?	Teaching / demo	Questions · objections · next action	Simplify · demonstrate · reposition
Will they pay?	Real offer	Payment · checkout · objections	Review the offer · learn from buyers
Does it work?	Pilot / beta	Use · outcome · workload · safety	Keep · repair · redesign · pause
Do they trust it?	Proof-led	Movement after proof · referrals	Improve relevance or credibility

Choose 1 primary signal + 1–2 process measures + any essential balancing or safety measure.

Decide before the numbers arrive

Start with the uncertainty and the bounded launch. Short, operational answers are better than impressive language.

1

THE THING I STILL DO NOT KNOW IS

Write one uncertainty as a question.

2

THE LAUNCH I AM GOING TO RUN IS

Name the audience, offer, channel and time window.

3

THE DECISION I NEED TO MAKE IS

What choice must this launch help you make?

Choose your signals

Define what each signal counts. Include the denominator, source and timeframe where relevant.

4

MY PRIMARY SIGNAL IS

The behaviour or outcome that best answers the launch question.

5

MY SUPPORTING PROCESS SIGNALS ARE

One or two steps showing whether the intended mechanism happened.

6

MY BALANCING OR SAFETY SIGNAL IS

What burden, exclusion, risk or unintended effect must not be hidden?

Interpret before you explain away

Compare what happened with the rule you wrote before launch. Record evidence and interpretation separately.

CONTINUE

The intended audience and mechanism show credible support; balancing effects remain acceptable.

CHANGE

Exposure was adequate but action, understanding, use or outcome was weak.

INVESTIGATE

Tracking, sample, audience or delivery was too mixed to interpret confidently.

PAUSE / STOP

Risk, burden, economics or governance exceeds the acceptable boundary.

Not every first launch becomes a business. Every honest first launch should create a signal and a better next decision.

NEXT CYCLE

Launch. Learn. Refine. Relaunch.

Take the next decision into reality

Use the worksheet for your next launch. Choose one uncertainty, one bounded launch, one to three useful signals and a decision rule.

Want ongoing support taking one meaningful idea towards launch?

Explore the Clinician Founder Community for the pathway, practical resources and support designed around clinical life.

CLINICIANFOUNDER.COM/MEMBERSHIP

SOURCES AND ATTRIBUTION

IHI · Model for Improvement

IHI · Establishing Measures

IHI · QI Essentials Toolkit

The Lean Startup · Methodology

Buffer · Reflecting on 10 Years

Airbnb · 10 Years of Community

Kickstarter · About

Examples are illustrative, not benchmarks. QI measurement supports learning and improvement; it does not replace clinical research, governance, regulation or safety evaluation.