VentureBaked

THE X LAUNCH PLAYBOOK · PART I · FREE

How startups really launch on X, and what you can copy for free

What 11 launches and 10.2 million impressions taught us about buying reach, earning trust, and the 21 days before launch that decide which one you get.

Before you post anything

Most of the launch posts that blew up in your feed this season were not as organic as they looked. When we pulled them apart reply by reply, we found creator waves that landed within the same fifteen minutes, meme pages posting jokes that never named the product, and reply crews answering inside three minutes. We also found founders with no budget at all who beat those bought launches on the numbers that predict customers. The difference was not luck. It was a sequence of small, deliberate moves that starts three weeks before the post goes live. This guide is that sequence, kept short. **Save it somewhere you will find it the week before your own launch**, because by launch day most of the outcome is already decided. When you want the receipts (the real launches, the posts, the numbers and what each vendor charges), Part II at venturebaked.com/x-launch has every one of them.

The research behind this guide

We forensically reconstructed recent startup launches on X from public data: every reply, quote, repost and creator post we could reach, timed to the minute and compared with each author's normal performance.

11
launch cases analysed end to end (including one organic control post), 10 from the last six months

10.2M
impressions on the 11 launch posts alone (average 929k, median 530k per launch)

4,868 / 3,627
posts catalogued and accounts mapped: repliers, quoters, reposters, creators and pages

~9x
like-rate gap: earned launches had a median of 1.48% likes per view, bought ones 0.17%

79-88%
of quote-post reach came from paid-looking waves, in all three bought launches where we could measure the split

573x
the biggest jump over an author's normal reach. It came from an outrage hook, and it drew the fewest saves per view of any launch

Six things the data says

1. **Reach can be bought. Trust mostly can't.** Earned launches ran 1.22% to 5.96% likes per impression. Every launch with a bought distribution layer ran 0.009% to 0.43%, however big the view count.
2. **Bookmarks are the buying signal.** People save what they plan to try. Earned launches were saved by 0.84% to 1.8% of viewers; the bought ones by 0.14% to 0.2%.

3. **A warmed-up founder beats a bought wave, at zero cost.** Two launches from the same accelerator cohort drew almost the same views. The one whose founder had posted daily for ten days, with no paid layer, got 3x the like rate and 6x the bookmark rate of the one that bought a creator wave. Its best pre-launch post outreached the launch itself (62.6k vs 47.3k impressions).
4. **Paid layers are easy to spot.** In one wave, 28 of 35 creator quotes landed within 15 minutes of the launch, and one creator posted the brief's paste-ready caption in public. Only one of the five bought launches had sponsorship labels on any post, and only on a handful.
5. **Free ignition is real, but it is not reach.** Cohort peers replying in the first 90 minutes gave one launch about 20 first-hour replies. An accelerator's routine repost is worth roughly 1.4k to 3.8k impressions: one accelerator reposted 38 launches in 18 hours.
6. **Big reach is not always good reach.** The 573x breakout was carried by people mocking the post. Its like rate (0.168%) looked like a paid launch's. Check who is quoting you, and why, before you celebrate.

The launch campaign, step by step

T0 is the moment your launch post goes live. Pick it for your buyers' time zone and announce it to your supporters in advance.

THREE WEEKS OUT: BUILD THE AUDIENCE AND THE ASSET

T-21d to T-7d	**Run a teaser drumbeat.** Three to six short posts: a date, a behind-the-scenes clip, a one-feature demo. Repost each from the brand account.
T-14d to T-1d	**Warm up the founder account.** Post daily in your own voice about the build and the category. When a category headline breaks (a competitor's raise, a big launch), react within hours with a sharp take. That one post can outreach the launch.
T-14d to T-7d	**Put the proof inside the asset.** A native video of 50 to 90 seconds with a split screen, a before and after, or one hard metric at the end. Choose **one** verified headline number and use it identically everywhere.
T-7d	**Seed early access** to 20 to 100 relevant users, with credits, and ask them to disclose that they got free access.
T-7d	**Write a co-post kit** for investors, your accelerator, customers and partners: one angle each, which they rewrite in their own words. Line up one real customer quote for day one.

LAUNCH WEEK: LINE UP THE FIRST HOUR

T-7d to T-3d	**If you pay creators, book on-niche ones and brief talking points, not captions.** Require a clear #ad or paid-partnership label. Ask any agency for its roster before you pay.
T-5d to T-1d	**Rally your people.** Send friends, cohort peers and customers an invite with the exact time and link. They give you the first-hour replies the algorithm reads.
T-3d	**Set up attribution.** One landing page, a separate UTM for every channel and creator, and a numbered, time-boxed offer ("the first 100 get...").
T-24h	**Staff the replies.** Brief the team on the reply kit and cover T0 to T+12h in shifts. Secure your handles. In AI or crypto, say "no token" before impersonators do.
T-6h	**Publish the blog and docs first**, so search, aggregators and doubters find a real page.

LAUNCH DAY: T0 TO T+24H

T0	**Post the anchor:** native video, the proof, the number and the offer. Put the link in the post with a UTM, or in your first self-reply. Keep any thread to two or three posts; follow-up threads drew 1% to 2% of the anchor's views.

T0 to T+5m	**Brand account quotes; the team reposts.** Cohort and accelerator reposts follow. Treat them as ignition, not as results.
T+5m to T+1h	**Investor and partner co-posts go live.** They reach few people, but they are the posts your B2B buyers check.
T+15m to T+30m	**A team member posts a "try it yourself" proof:** a live demo, a sample output, a number to call. In one launch this got 19.4k views from a 123-follower account.
T0 to T+8h	**Run a founder reply sprint.** Answer big accounts and critics within minutes, then buyers, then congratulations. Real substance, never "so well said!"
T+1h to T+4h	**Expect "DM for collab" creator pitches.** They are sales offers, not fans. If you pay one, it needs disclosure.
T+6h	**Checkpoint.** Read like rate, bookmark rate, quote sentiment and signups by UTM. If likes sit under 0.2% and most quotes are paid, stop buying reach and put the effort into proof and replies.

THE DAY AFTER: T+20H TO T+48H

T+20h to T+24h	**Self-repost the anchor** in your audience's morning, and repost real user outputs from the brand account.
T+24h to T+48h	**Post the behind-the-scenes story and a real milestone** ("X signups in 24 hours"), then pitch media on that number.
T+48h	**Write it up:** cost per signup by channel, like rate against your baseline, which creators drove clicks. Drop any layer that brought views but no buyers.

How to read your launch at T+6h

Signal	What it usually means	What to do
Above 1% likes per view, no synchronised quote wave	Earned. People who saw it liked it.	Keep replying; self-repost at T+20h; pitch the milestone.
0.15% to 0.45% likes per view	Usually distribution-led reach with some real interest, or controversy.	Read the top five quotes. Endorsing means bought or supported reach; mocking means ragebait. Don't add more of either.
Under 0.05% at 1M+ views	Almost certainly boosted to broad, cold audiences.	Ignore the view count. Judge only by signups.
Bookmarks per view	The best early sign of intent: around 1% is strong, 0.1% to 0.2% is weak.	Track it against 7-day signups for every launch you run.

Part II: the receipts, and the full playbook

Part I tells you what to do. Part II shows you who did it, how it worked and what it cost, launch by launch, with links to the original posts:

- The 11 launches by name, with the numbers
- The most viral hooks we saw, and why they worked
- A benchmark table to grade your own launch
- Which layer to use: organic, cohort, creators, meme pages, clipping, paid boost
- Vendors and channels, with only published prices
- The hour-by-hour timeline, reply kit and creator brief
- Red flags buyers and journalists spot in hours
- 13 hypotheses to test on your next launch

Get Part II at venturebaked.com/x-launch