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BOTTLE ROCKETS & BALLISTIC MISSILES:

**DECODING THE
PRODUCT LAUNCH
SEQUENCE**



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So what does a product launch have to do with bottle rockets and ballistic missiles?

As I see it, absolutely everything.

But I'll show you what I mean in a minute. First, let's cover the basics.

“What Is A Product Launch?”

A product launch is a carefully controlled, strategically coordinated release of a product or service expressly designed to achieve maximum sales velocity (and profitability) in the marketplace.

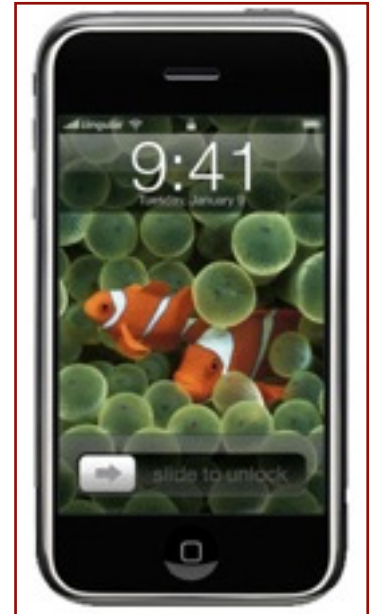
The goal of a product launch is to build high levels of excitement and anticipation, so that when your product becomes available, you have customers waiting to buy, as well as joint venture partners and affiliates lined up to sell it.

Let me give you an example you're probably familiar with: Ever heard of an iPhone?

On Friday evening June 29, 2007 the original Apple iPhone™ went on sale in the United States. People crowded outside AT&T store fronts and Apple's retail stores just to attempt to be the first to get their hands on one. Some even slept outside. Half of Apple's retail stores on the West Coast sold out of the popular smart phones on the first day they became available!

By the close of business on Sunday, Apple had sold close to 700,000 iPhones. The iPhone made well over \$300 million in profit during its weekend launch. Apple stock jumped over 40%.

Now that was a product launch. The best ones turn into great events.



Why were these buyers so motivated to take action? Because Apple successfully planned and executed a product launch event that created enormous buzz, induced multiple waves of anticipation and added critical elements of social influence and persuasion.

But Apple wasn't the first vendor to utilize this type of strategy.

Similar techniques have been employed by savvy internet marketers for years, and they have yielded amazing results. A successful product launch creates interest in your product even before it hits the market and has potential customers salivating to hit that "Buy" button.

Product launch techniques were proven and perfected in the online marketplace primarily by Jeff Walker, who formalized a "launch process" that took him more than eight years to develop. Subsequently, Walker has been involved in some way in nearly every major Internet marketing product launch, consulting on some of the largest launches ever to hit the web. (A student of his also consulted on Apple's product launches.)

The list of people and companies Walker has directly consulted for reads like a Who's Who of Internet marketers: Mike Filsaime (Butterfly Marketing), John Reese (Traffic Secrets), Frank Kern

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(Mass Control), Andy Jenkins (Video Boss), Rich Schefren (Strategic Profits), Don Crowther (SMARTS), Brad Fallon (StomperNet), Brock Felt and Buck Rizv (Pipeline Profits)...

I could go on but you get the idea.

But don't think this current iteration is only for the online crowd. The concept has been around for decades. Apple proved conclusively, product launches aren't only for Internet companies. Entrepreneurs from vastly diverse areas have used this system to successfully market products and services of all different kinds including:

- stock market training
- copywriting courses
- poker training
- consulting services
- how to write love letters
- how to use Photoshop
- how to correct your vision without laser surgery
- rolling out a stock launch
- quilting
- band accessories
- health and exercise membership site
- massage therapy
- how to play guitar
- scrap booking
- fly fishing

...and a whole lot more.

Of course, not every product launch can be a multi-million-dollar payday. But not every one has to be. It depends on your interest, your product and the size of your market:

- Paul Reddick used these strategies to sell a product he developed for baseball coaches - more than \$6,000 worth in a single day.
- Vishwanath, a software designer used these strategies to go from utter newbie to making \$70,000 in 47 days ... all while he was living in Mumbai, India.
- David Frey sold \$67,419 of a product that wasn't even his... in just four days.

Look, there are hundreds of multi-million-dollar opportunities... thousands of million-dollar opportunities... tens of thousands of high five and six figure opportunities.

The question is, "Which one are you?"

As of this writing, Walker's strategies are directly responsible for over \$200 million dollars in sales from product launch events. This methodology has been successfully used to market all kinds of products and services, physical and digital, both online and offline.

This type of product launch is a ballistic missile of marketing. One launch makes a huge impact.

"Apple proved conclusively, product launches aren't only for Internet companies.

"Of course, not every product launch can be a multi-million-dollar payday... But not every one has to be."

Product Release vs. Product Launch

Most traditional product releases rely on some sort of broadcast announcement and press releases in the hope that the target market will hear about it and somehow be enamored enough, not only to buy, but to spread the word.

That rarely happens anymore.

Unfortunately, we live in an age where people are ignoring most broadcast advertising and promotions – especially for new products they haven't heard of. Traditional advertising methods are far less effective (and significantly less profitable) than they used to be.

Broadcast channels still have their place, but less as a way to initiate sales, than as a means to create general awareness of your product.

This brings us back to bottle rockets...

Typical broadcast marketing is more like firing bottle rockets. It can work, but you've got to fire a lot of them in order to make a significant impact. (Hmmm, how many bottle rockets would it take to make the impact of one ballistic missile?)

That's one of the reasons the big boys spend so much money on television advertising.

“The difference between the traditional marketing "bottle rocket" and the product launch "ballistic missile" is this:

The bottle rocket approach is usually trying to get your potential customers to make a buying decision.

The ballistic missile approach focuses on getting prospects to WANT to buy...”

The significant difference between the traditional marketing "bottle rocket" and the product launch "ballistic missile" is this: In the first case, the broadcast approach is usually trying to get your potential customers to make a buying decision. The ballistic missile approach focuses on getting prospects to "want" to buy.

Read that last paragraph again. It's a big difference that yields dramatically different results.

Here's why the ballistic missile approach works: The most responsive customers in any marketplace subscribe to specific channels of information that they are interested in. Through these “opt-in” channels they have given vendors permission to communicate with them on topics they find relevant and engaging.

(It is this fact that makes a successful product launch event possible.)

That's why you don't want to attach your product to a "bottle rocket" (traditional product releases) when you should be strapping it to a "ballistic missile" (a product launch strategy). Not employing the proper launch strategies means not reaching as large an audience as you should be and not motivating them to purchase your product.

Think about it this way: The firework may get a few feet above your house and be noticed by some of your neighbors. A missile releases its payload miles above the earth and can have a massive reach with continental impact.

If you settle for "bottle rocket" marketing, you're missing out... BIG time.

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The right (well-planned and executed) launch program will create interest in your product even before it hits the market AND have potential customers waiting in anticipation to hit that "Buy" button and put your "cash register" to work.

Even beyond that, a proper product launch can help you achieve any or all of the following:

- Create broad awareness for your product.
- Optimize your product so that it delivers the "holy grail" that your customers may not even know they want yet.
- Build anticipation and urgency for your product by carefully orchestrating customer experiences for peak responsiveness.
- Increase excitement so that your audience becomes ravenous for your product.
- Establish credibility and trust so deep that your audience will only want to buy from you.
- Learn what your prospect's objections are long before you create a sales letter.
- Gather testimonials, even before you have a product.
- Develop new product ideas that your market is hungry for.
- Convert a "warm" into a cold list and turn them into responsive buyers.
- Attract Joint Venture partners and affiliates excited to promote your offer.

Not to mention the fact that a successful product launch event can be used to attain first mover advantage in highly competitive markets.



“You need a good product that is in demand. The last thing you want to be trying to do is “putting lipstick on a pig.”

But if those reasons are not enough for you, let me give you the bottom line:

Just a semi-successful product launch in your business (or re-launch of an existing product) can make you more money in a shorter amount of time than ANY other marketing strategy.

If you know just a little about what you're doing, a product launch campaign can bring in more immediate sales than anything...

...BUT not only does a product launch generate massive sales velocity from the start, the "real beauty" of the thing is the MOMENTUM it builds for your business long after the "launch" itself.

“What Does It Take To Create a Product Launch?”

If you thought all you had to do to launch your product successfully was pitch a few affiliates, write a little bit in the forums and email your list a couple of times...

...Umm, think again, Junior Rocketeer.

While it's not "rocket science," a successful (i.e. highly profitable) product launch doesn't happen casually or without significant effort. It takes forethought, focus, planning, and attention to detail.

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It should go without saying that you need a good product that is in demand (or at least one for which demand can easily be created). The last thing you want to be trying to do is “putting lipstick on a pig.”

Don't waste time and effort on a product/service that is not viable or valuable to your customers. You only end up ruining your name and reputation in record time.

There are two primary capabilities you need to possess:

1. The ability to identify, follow and execute the critical elements of a plan (you don't have to create the plan yourself you can have an experienced or trained product launch manager do it for you)
2. The willingness and knowledge to apply principles of social influence / persuasion

Let's break it down:

#1 Critical Elements of a Product Launch Event

The product launch engagement approach lends itself better to two-way conversations (email, blog, social media websites, etc.) as opposed to the traditional broadcasting of one-way conversations (print, radio, television). In this way, you engage the potential customer community in a way that accelerates the building of trust and credibility.

Importantly, this also enables you to acquire ahead of time what used to be strictly "post-release" information, allowing you to:

- Gather testimonials and social proof before the product launches.
- Identify and overcome actual customer objections in advance.
- Fix/address product defects before release (or delaying it until it is actually ready).
- Validate the target market.

Having a community means you're in a position to condition, educate and pre-sell during the pre-launch stage. Doing so encourages conversation and participation, providing critical feedback from your audience allowing them effectively share their experiences, opinions and points of view.

1. Preparation – The preparation stage is primarily about asking questions. You need to ask questions that qualify the opportunity, uncover the requirements and help you position your product. Here are a few of the key questions to be asked when considering a product launch:

- What market segment/niche does your product serve?
- Why do potential customers need your product/service?
- Do you currently have or can you get testimonials or case studies that can provide "social proof" for your product?
- Do you currently have a customer e-mail list?
- Do you currently have a prospect e-mail list?

2. Pre-Launch – This period consists of the weeks, or sometimes months, leading up to the launch event and is arguably the most critical stage of any launch. It can consist of multiple events depending on the requirements of the situation.

The “pre-launch” stage not only serves to educate potential buyers, but this is where you get valuable feedback and information to ensure that your product hits or exceeds its mark when released.

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The pre-launch stage is used to:

- Identify and validate market opportunities with minimal investment.
- Reduce risk for vendor a product is indeed ready for launch.
- Confirm that the marketing message and value proposition resonate with consumers.
- Identify customer objections before the full launch in order to position product properly with less sales resistance.
- Identify potential hotspots sooner to capitalize on what the customer wants and values the most.
- Create raving fans who provide social proof through testimonials.
- Raise awareness and create buzz for the product.
- Attract qualified resellers and joint venture partners to extend the reach of the market.
- Obliterate the competition who are operating on a slower, more traditional marketing cycle.

The pre-launch stage also initiates the second customer motivating factor: social proof. As early buyers of the product provide feedback, this gives a clear indicator to the target market community that the product has been validated by others. This validation reduces fears and paves the way for a huge increase in acceptance and subsequent sales.

3. Internal Launch – Before releasing the product to joint venture and affiliate partners, it's a very good idea to test the offer on your own internal (warm) list to validate it, as well as the system process or technology running behind it.

Specifically, you want to be certain that your process of fulfillment (both online and off-line) and merchant account can handle the flood of orders that you will generate from successful launch.

4. Full Launch – With all of the objectives and conditions of the pre-launch met, you'll be ready for the main launch and release of the product. This is sink or swim. Still, the product launch follows a sequence of events just as the pre-launch does.

Getting the missile "off the launch pad" takes a team and your primary role in the Full Launch stage will be as Project Manager/Launch Coordinator. The primary aspects of the product launch you'll be keeping track of include:

- Community Monitoring – Someone's got to keep their ear to the ground because if there's a problem, it will likely escalate once the market gets wind of it. Stay on top of this.
- Fulfillment – Make sure that your fulfillment process continues to operate smoothly during the surge of orders on launch day.
- Merchant Account Management – Make doubly sure that your merchant account remains in good standing throughout the process. If they aren't aware that you're expecting massive orders, they could shut you down or freeze your account while they "investigate the problem." That would be very bad.
- Customer Service – Keep your support operation running smoothly. Disgruntled customers spread bad news way faster than they spread good news.
- Server Administration – For most launches these days, sales will be coming through the Internet. Make sure your web servers have been optimized to handle the load. Don't leave this to chance. Do I need to tell you what can happen if they go down?
- JV/Affiliate Handling – Your Joint Venture Partners will be keeping as close a tab on what's going on as you will be. They've got money at stake and you want to keep them calm and happy. If you think a disgruntled

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customer can generate bad news fast, it's nothing compared to how quickly a dissatisfied JV can destroy your reputation.

5. Launch Close – This involves the plan for creating a sales spike at the end of the launch event – it usually involves invoking the scarcity factor by applying one or more of these conditions:

- Bonuses being eliminated.
- The price increasing.
- The product being pulled off the market.

6. Post-Launch – In the days, and sometimes weeks, following the launch event the post-launch sequence is designed to continue to drive demand and extend the sales cycle.

#2 Social Influence & Persuasion Tactics

WARNING: The following is volatile rocket fuel for your ballistic missile. Put on your flame retardant suit, gloves and protective goggles before proceeding.

Fact: Anyone who wants to improve the effectiveness of any marketing endeavor will use one or more principles of social influence or persuasion to achieve better sales results.

There are proven psychological “triggers” that experienced marketers employ which induce customers to take action. This is necessary to shake prospects out of their natural inert state because it's always easier for a person to not do something rather than to take action.

It's simply not enough to offer something people want (or even to get them to want what you have to offer); you still have to stimulate them to take action to acquire your product or service. Even though a person may desire something, the impetus to take action won't happen on its own.

These triggers must be employed to achieve optimal results for any product of launch, as they enable you to capture and direct your prospects (and potential joint venture partners) into taking desired action.

No doubt some questions will arise as to whether exerting any form of social influence is ethical. Without getting into the subject here, let me state that I believe no matter how well-intentioned the use of these tactics are, to get anyone to do anything against their will is unethical.

What you want to do is give your prospect the ability to choose. This, I believe, is what separates the ethical application of these techniques from the unethical.

Persuasion Tactic #1 – Scarcity (Fear of Loss)

One of the most effective and reliable human psychological triggers operates on the principle of scarcity – that opportunities seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited.

Marketers of all stripes frequently seek to convince customers of an item's scarcity, thus increasing its immediate value in the customer's eyes.

The scarcity trigger has a significant power of influence in directing human action and is used in every decent product launch and indeed, in almost every marketing campaign of any type worth its salt.

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The reason is simple: Scarcity affects human decision-making in extraordinary and primitive ways - the thought of missing out on a limited opportunity gives some people a reason to act now instead of delaying or procrastinating, which is a common problem when selling anything.

There are a myriad of variations of the scarcity technique including: the “Limited Number,” the “Right-Now” and the “Romeo and Juliet Effect” used by marketers everyday.

Persuasion Tactic #2 – Social Proof (The Herd Mentality)

You’ve heard me mention “social proof” a few times. Social proof is another key decision-making enabler that stems from the “herd mentality.”

The herd is any group that moves together. Cows, lemmings and human beings tend to follow the herd in actions and in opinions. When a social group indicates its approval of a product, having sampled it early on (usually in the pre-launch), this indicates that it’s “safe” for others to give the product a try.

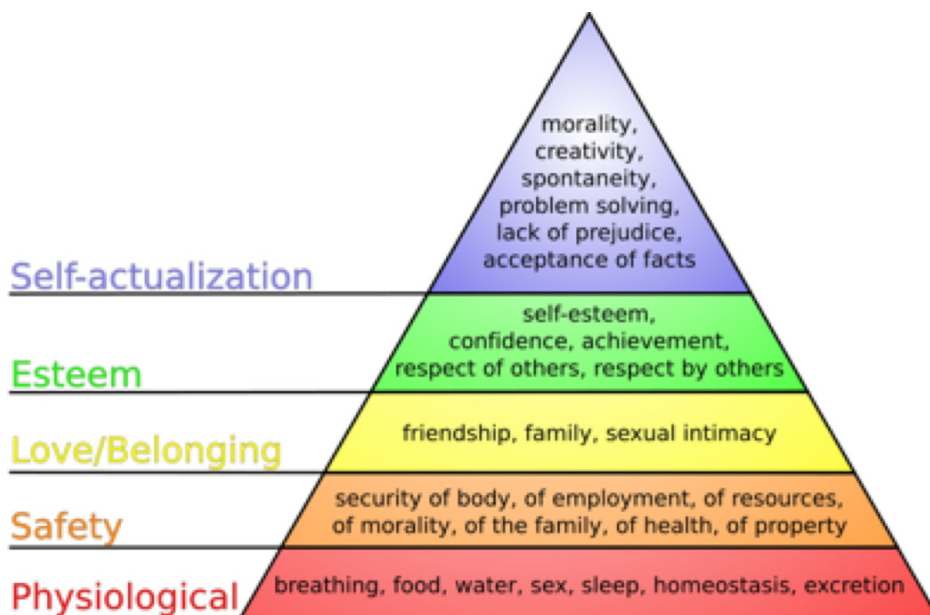
The biggest segment of the herd (think “mainstream” buyers) are often risk-averse, but when they see a clear indication that others have already validated a new product, it greatly reduces their fears, paving the way for a huge increase in adoption.

An experienced product launch manager will mine the information you have compiled on your customers (the herd) and make sure that the data is prominently featured for all to see. This is the point of social proof. Others will follow the direction of the herd.

Persuasion Tactic #3 – Human Need (Maslow’s Hierarchy)

It has been persuasively argued that every action a person takes is motivated by a desire to satisfy some fundamental, basic human need.

For a successful product launch, you want to find a way to strongly appeal to the needs and desire of your customers. No sales pitch or offer should ever be made without referring to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs chart:



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This is the basis of stressing the benefit of the product over the features. Every conversation with your customer should never be about what the product can do on its own, but rather how the product can help satisfy the customer's basic need in relation to what really drives or motivates him.

Now you know. This is product launch sequence decoded.

Godspeed.

Additional Points to Consider

- Before contemplating a launch, you should have your product finished (or at least be very, very close to having it done).
- You should also have your research completed and have confirmed that there is a viable market for your product or service: That is, a market that wants what you have to provide and is willing and able to pay for it.
- You want a product that's going to lend itself to a successful product launch – stuff that's popular to a passionate market that's growing, not shrinking.
- Ideally, you should be in touch with your audience and have an active connection with them online through website, blog, e-mail, twitter, etc. – hopefully all of the above. If you don't currently have an active list yet, creating one should be part of your pre-launch strategy.
- Your customers should know you, like you and preferably, already be fans of yours. Trying to do a product launch for a person or a product with a dubious reputation is an exercise in fatalism.

Summary

The Product Launch process...

- is a complete, next-generation marketing system for selling almost anything
- has been proven in hundreds markets
- uses a tested methodology to uncover people's fears, frustrations, dreams and aspirations;
- allows you to develop a conversation with the market that helps you pinpoint exactly how to position the sale [...which means you "pre-sell" people by answering their objections before the launch goes live];
- enables you to create a sales process that's perfectly tuned to your market;
- develops a huge momentum;
- builds topmost market positioning;
- may enhance your list building (depending on your product);
- aids in attracting Joint Venture partnerships;
- is a Low-Cost/Low-Risk strategy (but requires "sweat equity")

The Product Launch is expressly designed to build extreme excitement, anticipation and participation and is the ballistic missile version of a product release. And if you're going to be releasing a product or service, you want the marketing equivalent of a ballistic missile, not a wimpy bottle rocket.

The right (well-planned and executed) launch program will create interest in your product even before it hits the market AND have potential customers waiting in anticipation to hit that "Buy" button and make your "cash register" ring.

Even a semi-successful product launch in your business (or re-launch of an existing product) can make you more money in a shorter amount of time than ANY other marketing strategy.

You must have a plan in order to execute a successful product launch. If you aren't detail oriented, an experienced or trained product launch manager can provide you with a detailed plan and even implement and manage the launch for you if you don't want to do it yourself.

The high-octane rocket fuel that powers your product launch is the use of social influence/persuasion. When your launch plan properly balances scarcity, social proof, and human need, it can have the wide-reaching impact of a ballistic missile.

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WHAT TO DO NEXT

Product Launch Titan.com has developed a "**20 Minute Product Launch Assessment**" which we conduct over the telephone with you and your top staff members. Here's what we accomplish together in this fast-paced, no-nonsense session:

- **Product Assessment** – Is your product right for launch? Is it ready? Can it be improved to generate a better response or be more profitable? We'll help you assess your product for viability in the marketplace and optimize it for better adoption.
- **Market Analysis** – Who's your customer? Have you targeted the right demographic group for your offer? Are there other markets that you can address as well? We'll examine your target demographic to see if you are on the right track or if you might even be able to do better than you think.
- **Profit Potential** – What is your idea worth? Is it a million-dollar concept or only worth a few hundred thousand? Do you still want to pursue it if it's just a \$70,000-\$80,000 launch? We'll compare it to our own experience and discuss what we think you can expect.
- **Launch Analysis and Recommendation** – Is everything ready for a product launch? If not, what do you need? If so, what's the best way to proceed? We'll give you an honest, straightforward assessment about how to do things right and get your project on the pad for countdown.

The "**20 Minute Product Launch Assessment**" is personally conducted by the principle of our company, Xavier LeMond. Please be assured that this consultation will not be a thinly disguised sales presentation. It will consist of the best intelligence Mr. LeMond can supply you with in a 20 minute time span. There is no charge for this call, but please be advised that the call must be strictly limited to 20 minutes.

This consult will typically take place within one to two weeks of your call. To secure a time for this consultation, please email Jane Donovan (jane@productlaunch titan.com) or call her at (626) 698-0889 and she will advise you regarding available time slots. She will also provide you with a pre-consultation questionnaire that will prepare both you and us to get maximum value in the shortest amount time.

About Product Launch Titan.com & The Author

Product Launch Titan.com provides services for blueprinting, managing and advising product launches for vendors and marketers. We specialize in creating spectacular product launch events and can manage the process end to end, working on a revenue share basis. We do well only when our clients do well.

Prior to founding his own companies, Xavier LeMond managed the information technology infrastructure at Trust Company of the West (TCW), the foremost private money management firm on the west coast.

As Vice President of Information Technology, Mr. LeMond was responsible for managing a staff of 35 talented engineers and overseeing the Network, Telecommunications and User Support divisions. He retired from corporate life in 2002 to pursue his interests as an entrepreneur and marketer, and now manages several of his own businesses.

