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<div class="cover__brand">Capers Ventures · Lead Magnet</div>
<p class="cover__sub" style="margin-top:1.4rem; color:#8B8270; font-size:9.5pt;
letter-spacing:0.22em; text-transform:uppercase;">Free for Eastern NC
Operators</p>
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# The 3-Day *Ad Launch Checklist*

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<p class="cover__sub">First ad live in three days. A working launch sequence for
the operator with a real offer and a $300–500 test budget who's tired of being
told to "just dive in."</p>
<div class="cover__meta">
  <span>Built by Capers Ventures</span>
  <span>Eastern North Carolina</span>
</div>
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# Three days. One launch. No guesswork.

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Most ad guides are 37-item lists that read like a textbook and ship like nothing. This one is a launch sequence. Three days, in order, with a real start and a real end. You finish Day 3 with a live ad, a tracking pixel that fires, and the first 48 hours of data already coming in.

The contrarian frame: **most first ads fail on sequencing, not on creative.** The operator who puts the audience and offer ahead of the visuals — who installs the pixel before they boost a post — succeeds more often than the one with the prettier creative. Sequence is the lever. This checklist forces the sequence.

## *Who this is for*

- You've never run a paid ad and want a clean first attempt.
- You have an offer that already works somewhere. Word-of-mouth, referrals, manual outreach — something is converting. Ads scale what already works; they accelerate what doesn't.
- You can commit a real test budget: \$300 to \$500 minimum. Less than that and the platforms can't optimize and you can't read the data honestly.

## *Who it's not for*

- You're hoping ads will fix a soft offer. They will not. They will surface the softness faster, at scale.
- You need someone to run them for you. The retainer is the path. This checklist is for the operator willing to do the launch themselves.

Ads do not make a bad offer good. They make a working offer faster. The checklist assumes you've got the offer.

# Day 1 — Audience and Offer

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The first day is the day most operators skip. The boring day. The day with no creative work and no exciting platform tabs to click around in. This day is where the launch is won or lost.

## *Morning block — 60 minutes*

**Task 1.1 — Write your ICP in three sentences.** Open a blank doc. Describe the single best customer you've ever served. Not the type of customer. The actual one. Who they are, what they were trying to do, what made them a great fit. Three sentences. Specific.

**Task 1.2 — Identify the three places this person lives online.** Are they on Facebook? Instagram? LinkedIn? In a specific local community group? In Google searches for a specific phrase? Pick the top three. Your ad platform will be the one where they spend the most time, not the one you're most comfortable with.

**Task 1.3 — Write your offer in one sentence.** The single promise. The thing you're asking them to say yes to. If it takes more than one sentence, the offer isn't ready. Shrink it.

## *Afternoon block — 90 minutes*

**Task 1.4 — Set the budget.** Decide right now: total test budget, daily cap, and the date you'll evaluate. \$300–500 over 5–7 days is the standard test for a local Eastern NC service business. Write the numbers down. Do not change them mid-test.

**Task 1.5 — Pick the conversion event.** One. Not three. What single action defines "this ad worked"? A form submit. A call. A booked appointment. A purchase. The event that maps cleanly to revenue. Note it.

**Task 1.6 — Write the single-promise headline.** Six to nine words. The headline a stranger could read in two seconds and understand what you're offering and who it's for. Three versions, no more. Pick the one that names a specific outcome.

**End of Day 1 deliverables.** A one-page brief that lists: the ICP, the platform pick, the offer sentence, the budget, the conversion event, and the headline. If you don't have this page, do not move to Day 2.

# Day 2 — Creative, Copy, Tracking

Day 2 is the build day. The temptation is to spend the whole day on creative. The discipline is to spend half of it on tracking — because without tracking, every dollar from Day 3 onward is spent blind.

## *Morning block — 90 minutes (creative + copy)*

**Task 2.1 — Three ad variations.** Build three. Not one. Not ten. Three.

- **Variation A — the direct version.** State the offer. State who it's for. State the call to action. No metaphor, no story.
- **Variation B — the story version.** Open with a 1-sentence customer scenario. Bridge to the offer. End with the same call to action.
- **Variation C — the contrarian version.** Open with a statement most of your competitors would disagree with. Use the offer as the resolution.

Same image or video across all three for the first round. You are testing the copy, not the visual.

**Task 2.2 — One landing page hypothesis.** The ad clicks somewhere. That somewhere is not your homepage. Build one purpose-built page: the headline from Day 1 at the top, three paragraphs explaining the offer, one form with three fields max, no nav, no extra links. The page's only job is the conversion event.

**Task 2.3 — Match the language.** The headline on the ad and the headline on the landing page should match word-for-word. If they don't, your bounce rate is going to tell you so by Friday.

## *Afternoon block — 120 minutes (tracking)*

This is the block most first-time advertisers shortcut. Don't.

**Task 2.4 — Install the platform pixel.** Facebook Pixel, Google Tag, LinkedIn Insight Tag — whichever platform you picked on Day 1. The pixel goes on every page of your site, including the landing page. Most modern site builders have a one-click install.

**Task 2.5 — Configure the conversion event.** This is the moment of truth for the pixel install. Send a test event from the form on your landing page. Open the platform's Events Manager. Confirm the event registered. If it didn't register, troubleshoot now — not on Day 3.

**Task 2.6 — UTM-tag your destination URL.** A simple URL parameter set: ?

`utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=launch_2026_05` (or your platform equivalent). This lets you trace conversions back to the ad in your own analytics, not just the

platform's.

**Task 2.7 — A note on attribution sanity.** Your platform will report conversions. Your CRM may report a different number. Your Google Analytics may report a third. This is normal. Pick one source of truth — usually the conversion event in the platform itself — and use it consistently. Re-litigating attribution every week eats the time you need for actual optimization. *(For operators using CV's stack: our `/api/score` Pages Function fires a custom event on submission that mirrors the platform conversion. We use the platform's number as the canonical one and the function's log as the audit trail. Pick the same pattern for whatever stack you run.)*

**End of Day 2 deliverables.** Three ad variations drafted. One landing page live. Pixel installed and a test event confirmed in the platform's Events Manager. URL parameters set.

# Day 3 — Launch and Monitor

Day 3 is short. Push live, set the guardrails, watch the first 24 hours.

## *Morning block — 45 minutes*

**Task 3.1 — Final review.** Read each ad out loud. Click each link. Submit the form on the landing page yourself and watch the conversion fire. If anything breaks, fix it before launching.

**Task 3.2 — Set the daily budget cap.** Daily cap = total test budget ÷ test days. For a \$400 test over 7 days, that's roughly \$57/day. Set it. Lock it. Do not raise it during the test.

**Task 3.3 — Push live.** Submit for review. On Facebook and Google, expect a 30-minute to 24-hour review window. Submit early in the day so the ad can begin spending the same day if approved.

## *The 48-hour watch*

The first 48 hours are not a performance test. They are a delivery test. You are checking that the platform is showing the ad, that clicks are arriving, and that the conversion event is firing when it should.

### **What to watch in the first 48 hours.**

- **Delivery.** Is the ad spending its daily budget? If it's spending less than 50% of the daily cap, the audience may be too narrow or the bid too low.
- **Click-through.** The platform will show a CTR. Compare it across the three variations. The leader will usually emerge by the end of Day 2.
- **Conversion event firing.** Every conversion should register in the platform and in your CRM. If conversions show in one but not the other, the discrepancy is a setup problem to fix immediately.

### **What to ignore in the first 48 hours.**

- Cost per conversion. Sample size is too small. The number will be unstable.
- Audience demographic breakdowns. Same reason. Wait for at least 50 clicks before reading them.
- The temptation to "fix" the ad. Do not edit a live ad in the first 48 hours unless it is materially broken. Every edit resets the platform's learning phase.

### *Kill criteria — when to pull a variant*

A variation gets killed when, after \$50 spend or 100 clicks (whichever comes first), it has:

- Zero conversions and a CTR less than half of the best-performing variation, OR
- A cost-per-conversion that is more than 3x your acceptable customer-acquisition cost, OR
- A broken creative or copy issue that material edits won't recover from.

Keep the winner running. Kill the laggards. Reallocate budget. Do not "give the laggard another chance." The math has spoken.

### *Scale criteria — when to push budget up*

A variation earns more budget when, after 7 days or \$200 spend (whichever comes first), it has:

- A cost-per-conversion at or below your target, AND
- A conversion volume stable across at least 3 days (no single-day spike skewing the average), AND
- A landing-page conversion rate above 2% (below 2% and the ceiling is the page, not the ad).

Raise the daily cap by 20% at a time. Not more. Faster increases re-trigger the learning phase and the cost-per-conversion will spike before it settles.

# What to expect in week 2

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The first week tells you whether the launch works. The second week tells you what to optimize. By the end of week 2, you should be able to answer:

- Which audience converted best — by age, geography, interest, or intent signal?
- Which of the three creative variations carried the win?
- Where in the funnel are people dropping — at the ad, at the landing page, at the form?
- What is the realistic cost-per-conversion at this scale?

If you can answer these four, you have a working ad. If you can't, the data is incomplete or the setup has a leak. Either way, the next step is the same: diagnose, fix one thing, retest.

## *The honest interpretation rules*

**Don't extrapolate from too little data.** Three conversions over \$100 spend is not "\$33 CPA." It's "we don't know yet." Wait for 30+ conversions before treating the cost-per-conversion as real.

**Don't compare to industry benchmarks blindly.** Industry CPL benchmarks are an average across a wide range of businesses. Your number is the only one that matters. Your benchmark is your past number, improving.

**Don't kill a winner because the first week was lucky.** A great Week 1 followed by a normal Week 2 is the most common pattern. Don't conclude the ad is broken in Week 2; conclude that Week 1 had favorable randomness.



# The five expensive first-week mistakes

These are the errors that cost first-time advertisers \$200–\$1,000 to learn the hard way. Each one is in the checklist above. The list exists so you can scan it once more before pushing live.

1. **Skipping the pixel install.** Without a working conversion event, the platform cannot optimize. You will spend the full budget delivering to people who never convert.
2. **Mismatched ad-to-landing-page promise.** The ad says “free quote.” The landing page says “schedule a consultation.” Bounce rate spikes. Conversion crashes.
3. **Too many form fields.** Three is the working maximum for a first-touch ad. Five or more and the form is the bottleneck, not the offer.
4. **Editing the ad in the first 48 hours.** Every edit resets the learning phase. You’ll think the ad is broken when actually the platform is just being forced back to start.
5. **No budget cap.** “Let it run and see” is how operators discover their budget on the receipt. Set the cap. Set the test window. Hold the line.

*The checklist gets you live. The Audit gets you efficient.*

Once you have a week of real numbers — CPL, conversion rate, landing-page bounce — the \$27 Audit names which gap is actually limiting performance. Maybe it’s the offer. Maybe it’s the page. Maybe it’s the audience. We tell you which one to fix first and what fixing it should change.

<https://cv-pages-f5f.pages.dev/audit/>

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