

## “Optimal” 2-Page Launch Checklist

There is no such thing as a 100% “optimal” launch, but this would be close. You can apply this whether you’re wide / in Kindle Unlimited and regardless of the price point you’re releasing at.

### PRE-LAUNCH

- Book promo sites (if releasing at 99c or running a free or 99c deal on earlier books)
- Submit to BookBub (either the new release or an earlier book in the series; if you’re not running any discounts, then don’t do this)
- Test 2 covers (if this is Book 1 in an entirely new series, a standalone novel, or a box set)
- Test 5 blurbs (if this is Book 1 in an entirely new series, a standalone novel, or a box set)
- Test Facebook Ads (1 – 4 weeks before)
- Test BookBub Ads (1 – 4 weeks before; not always possible if deal isn’t live yet)
- Start Amazon Ads (if for an entirely new book) or refine existing Amazon Ads (if you’re releasing a new book in a long-running series that’s already being advertised) (2 – 4 weeks before)
- Set up a daily tracking sheet for the first 30 days of your launch

Note: don’t run ads on all three platforms just for the sake of it; only test on the platform(s) you’ll be using.

### LAUNCH STRATEGY

Answer the following questions to form a launch strategy:

- **GOAL:** profit, rank (e.g., visibility that pays off with profit down the line), establishing the series (losing money on Book 1 to build a fanbase for later books)
- **BUDGET:** the amount of money you plan on spending during the launch. I prefer to have this be flexible; starting with a certain base amount, with room to grow if the numbers look good. You always want to be able to pour more fuel on the fire if things are going well; not every launch is a big winner, so you want to be able to seize opportunities when they arise.
- **PRE-ORDER:** whether or not you’re going to do a pre-order or not. This is recommended in 99% of circumstances. It used to be that pre-orders killed your launch with the Amazon Algorithms, but that hasn’t been the case for a couple years. They’re incredibly helpful for getting your administrative ducks in a row, and if you have a long-running series, getting Book 8 up for pre-order as soon as Book 7 is out, for example, allows you to “chain” them together—put the pre-order link in the back matter of the latest book and people can instantly pre-order the upcoming book, thus helping you bank considerably more sales of it.
- **PRICING:** whether you’re going to release the new book at full price (\$2.99+) or \$0.99. Also any discounts you might be planning to run on earlier titles.
- **LAUNCH WINDOW:** how long the main launch push is going to last. Usually this will be 5 – 7 days, but it can be longer. If you’re pushing for longer, it takes a higher budget

to sustain momentum and more experience with the ads (because you'll need to refresh the creatives more often to fend off ad fatigue)

- **TRAFFIC SOURCES:** what sources you're going to use to push traffic to your book. The most common sources are Facebook, Amazon, and BookBub, promo sites, your author newsletter, social media, and newsletter swaps. Don't feel compelled to use every option at your disposal; it's far better to be able to use a couple effectively than have a mess of half a dozen or a dozen ineffective / mediocre options.
- **NEXT RELEASE / PROMO:** knowing when your next release or promo is helps you determine how much of a splash you need to make with the current launch. Generally speaking, the less frequently you release, the more you need to get out of any one single launch. That means if you release less frequently you often need to push the launches harder.

## POST LAUNCH

- **ADS:** scale these back after the launch window rather than cutting them completely (e.g., if you're spending \$250/day, you might scale back to \$100 or \$50—do so over a few days, try not to make massive cuts all at once). Scaling back and keeping the ads running (especially Amazon Ads, which tend to age well if you refine them over time) helps you keep selling books. Scale back based on the data; if you were planning to scale back from \$250 to \$100, but things look good at \$200, ride that wave (if you have the available cash). The more books you sell and the more visibility you maintain as you extend the tail, the more money you generally make—and also, the more your fanbase grows for the next launch / promo you run. This has a tremendous compounding effect when applied over months and years.
- **LAUNCH STACK:** set up a big promo or a second launch around Day 7 – 21 to extend momentum from the initial launch and build on top of it. This isn't often possible, but there might be a chance one or two times a year to double-up with big promos / launches in the same month, even if you don't release super fast. Doing this can massively accelerate your revenue and career growth.
- **CLIFF EXTENDER:** set up a promo on an earlier book in the series AND / OR increase the ad spend for the new book somewhere around Day 27 – Day 33 to prolong the momentum and signal to the Amazon Algorithms that the book is still selling strong.
  - Options
    - Free run or 99c deal on Book 1
    - Kindle Countdown Deal on Books 1, 2, and 3 in the series
    - BookBub deal on an earlier book in the series or new book
    - Increase ad spend on new book