LAUNCH LLAMA

FOUNDER OS // NEWSLETTER GROWTH

// AI PROMPTS FOR FOUNDERS — VOL. 03

GROW.
SCALE.
PROFIT.

The complete playbook for profitably scaling your newsletter with paid ads — from your first subscriber to your first $100k month. Research, copy, creative, and launch — all in one place.

<$2	3–6mo	$100k+
TARGET CPL	PAYBACK PERIOD	MONTHLY SCALE

BUILD.
LAUNCH.
CONVERT.

THE NORTH STAR

What you're actually optimising for

Every decision in your newsletter growth machine — creative, targeting, budget — should be made with one goal: minimise your payback period. Here's the full chain.

OPEN RATE

40%+

Quality signal

CLICK-THROUGH RATE

3–5%+

Engagement signal

AD CTR

0.5–1%+

Creative quality

COST PER LEAD

<$2

Paid growth target

B2C CPM

$10–40

Ad revenue target

B2B CPM

$50–100+

Higher value market

B2C SUB REVENUE

$0.10–0.20

Per sub per month

B2B SUB REVENUE

$0.20–0.40+

Per sub per month

// THE LOOP THAT FUNDS ITSELF

Drive quality readers at under $2 CPL → monetise at $10–100 CPM → use ad revenue to fund more ads → repeat. A 3–6 month payback period means the

business is self-sustaining. This is how 1440 spends $1M/month profitably.

// 01 — GROWTH CHANNELS

Three channels drive 80% of growth

Most media brands build their audience from one of three places. Knowing which one fits your stage determines everything else.

01 **SEO**

Slow to build, incredible long-term value. Requires consistent publishing, domain authority, and technical SEO. Best for brands with a content angle — B2C niches, health, finance, career. Used by Red Ventures, Dotdash Meredith, Condé Nast to reach tens of millions. Takes 12+ months to compound. Not useful for fast growth.

02 **Organic Social**

X/Twitter and Instagram drive significant newsletter audiences for brand builders. The Rundown AI, The Hustle, and Curiosity Chronicle all grew heavily through organic posting. Requires a consistent creator who understands the platform. High ceiling, but unpredictable — and you don't own the distribution. Good to layer in, not rely on.

03 **Paid Ads on Meta — the biggest lever**

Meta is responsible for 80%+ of paid subscriber growth for the fastest-scaling newsletters — 1440, Morning Brew, The Hustle, Superhuman. It's the most scalable paid channel available because Meta's AI can find your exact audience at scale, if you give it the right creative. This entire playbook is focused here.

// 02 — HOW META WORKS NOW

Stop trying to outsmart Meta

Meta ads fundamentally changed in 2021. Founders still using the old playbook are burning money. Here's what actually works.

✕ Old Approach: Manual Targeting

You told Meta who to show your ad to. You picked interests, age ranges, locations. You optimised placements manually.

- → Interests: Fitness, cooking, travel
- → Age: 25–35
- → Location: New York
- → Stacked look-alike audiences
- → Manual placement selection

This is dead. Meta's AI outperforms human targeting every time. Trying to override it just limits the algorithm's ability to find buyers.

✓ New Approach: Creative Targeting

Meta's AI reads the signals in your creative — the words, the setting, the actors, the tone — and builds the audience around your ad. Your creative IS your targeting.

- → Broad targeting, no manual restrictions
- → One ad set per concept
- → 3–5 hook variations per concept
- → Let Meta allocate budget automatically
- → Win with better creative, not smarter targeting

The TLDR: **let Meta do the targeting**. Your job is to build creative that signals exactly who your newsletter is for, and Meta finds them for you.

> *"Your success on Meta is determined entirely by your ability to nail creative research and copywriting."*
>
> — The Feed Media Newsletter Ad Playbook

// 03 — RESEARCH

Borrow what's already working

Research has two goals: fast-track your account by borrowing what's already working in the market, and understand your customer well enough to stay ahead of what will work next.

// SOURCE 01

Customer Feedback

Mine your existing readers. Download survey responses, pull your highest open rate subject lines, read your email replies. Feed it all into Claude or ChatGPT with this prompt:

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Using this reader feedback, give me details on: Newsletter benefits, reader pain points before subscribing, newsletter features, reader objections before subscribing, and reader failed solutions. Add supporting quotes under each section.
```

› Highest open rate subject lines

› Survey responses (download as CSV)

› Email replies from readers

› High-CTR links (what topics they click)

› Most popular sponsor categories

// SOURCE 02

Reddit

Reddit communities are a goldmine — real people expressing real frustrations in their own words. The exact language they use becomes your ad copy.

Step 1: Visit "map of reddit" to find subreddits in your niche

Step 2: Sort top posts for all time — look for themes with 100+ comments

Step 3: Note dream outcomes, stated problems, language patterns

// SOURCE 03

Competitor Ads

Ads that have been running for 60+ days are working. Nobody runs a losing ad for two months. Use Foreplay.co to find newsletter ads by niche.

For each winning ad, write down:

› Structure of the hook (not the words — the framework)

› The problem being solved

› Which audience is called out

› The benefit implied (what life looks like after)

Copy the structure. Never copy the words.

// SOURCE 04

Organic Content + Audience Discussions

Find creators in your niche who are already publishing viral content. They've battle-tested hooks for your exact audience. Look at what they post, what performs, and how they frame problems.

When talking to founders or writers close to content production, focus your conversation on three themes:

› Dream outcomes: what different reader segments want

› 1st and 2nd-order problems blocking those outcomes

› Benefits and features of your newsletter that solve each problem

// 04 — COPYWRITING

The ad concept framework

Every ad starts with a concept. Build this before you write a single word of copy. Each ad concept addresses one dream outcome, one specific problem, at one awareness level.

// AD CONCEPT TEMPLATE

Dream Outcome	What does the reader ultimately want? (e.g. "Perform better at work")
Problem	Which specific fear or blocker is this ad targeting? (e.g. "Someone using AI will get promoted over me")
Awareness Level	Where is the reader on the awareness spectrum? (Unaware → Problem → Solution → Product → Fully aware)
Hook	`[ Build this next using the hook formula below ]`
Body	`[ Use the value formula to demonstrate benefit ]`

// BUILD A MATRIX

For each dream outcome your readers have, brainstorm 5–10 problems. For each problem, build 3–4 ad variations. A newsletter with 2 dream outcomes × 6 problems × 3 ads = 36 concepts. That's a full creative programme. Most newsletters ship 3 ads and wonder why nothing sticks.

Market Awareness Levels

Meet your reader where they are. The less aware the audience, the harder the sell — but the larger the market. 80% of winning newsletter ads sit at Problem Aware or Solution Aware.

Unaware

They have a symptom but don't know they have a problem

`Call out the symptom`

Problem Aware

They've diagnosed the problem but don't know the fix

`Call out the problem`

Solution Aware

They want what a newsletter does — but don't know yours exists

`Call out the painkiller`

Product Aware

They're comparing you to a competitor

`Call out your edge`

Fully Aware

They're sold — they just need a reason to act now

`Give them urgency`

Hook Formula: There Are 3, Not 1

Every ad has a stated hook, a visual hook, and an audio hook. They work together. Most founders only think about the stated hook. That's why their ads underperform.

Stated Hook

The text that appears on screen or is spoken in the first 2 seconds. Must hit all three:

① Calls out the audience or problem

② Implies a payoff or benefit

③ Drives curiosity — leaves a gap

Visual Hook

The first frame the viewer sees before they choose to watch. Could be a comment overlay, a surprising setting, a pattern interrupt, or text that creates intrigue.

Example: A comment that says "No idea how to use AI at work… what do I do?" overlaid on a talking head creates instant relatability.

Audio Hook

For sound-off viewers (the majority), the on-screen text or caption IS the hook. For sound-on, the first words out of the creator's mouth close the loop on the visual.

All three must work together and reinforce the same concept.

01

Audience / Problem

"You" or a specific audience. Who is this for?

02

Payoff / Benefit

What good thing happens, or what bad thing do they avoid?

03

Curiosity Gap

Leave something unresolved. Force them to keep watching.

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Example hook that drove 25,000+ subscribers:
"If you're not delegating research and PowerPoint to AI at work…
you're gonna be outperformed by the guy who does."
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① Audience: "you" at work | ② Payoff: avoid being outperformed | ③ Curiosity: what happens if I don't?

The Value Formula (Body Copy)

Your body copy needs to demonstrate value. Value is a formula, not a feeling. Maximise the top half. Minimise the bottom half.

// HORMOZI VALUE EQUATION

$$\frac{\text{Dream Outcome} \times \text{Perceived Likelihood}}{\text{Time Delay} \times \text{Effort \& Sacrifice}} = \text{VALUE}$$

// MAXIMISE ↑ DREAM OUTCOME

Make the outcome feel real

- Amplify the emotion behind the outcome
- Define it with specific numbers
- Relate it to their deepest desires
- Paint a vivid before/after picture
- Offer multiple outcomes in one product

// MAXIMISE ↑ LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVEMENT

Make it feel achievable

- Social proof: reader counts, company names
- Highlight your expertise or credentials
- Offer a step-by-step system
- Call out a specific audience ("for busy founders")
- Show before/after results

// MINIMISE ↓ TIME DELAY

Make the win feel fast

- Highlight the first quick win ("in 5 minutes")
- Accelerate results with specific timelines
- Use time-limited offers
- Automate or streamline the process
- Set a clear results timeline

// MINIMISE ↓ EFFORT & SACRIFICE

Make it feel easy to start

- Done-for-you positioning ("delivered to inbox")
- Provide templates, tools, and checklists
- Eliminate the most common barrier upfront
- Make it free or ultra-low friction to start
- Position as an all-in-one solution

> // USE MULTIPLE TACTICS IN A SINGLE PIECE OF COPY

> The highest-converting newsletter ads stack 3–5 value tactics together. Social proof + multiple outcomes + easy to start in a single 30-second video. Don't choose one — layer them.

// 05 — DESIGN & CREATIVE FORMAT

Your copy is the fuel. Design is the vehicle.

Don't put rocket fuel in a Honda CRV. Your creative format must match the quality of your concept. Here are the formats that actually win for newsletters.

- Sticky Note
- Text-over-video
- Listicle
- Voiceover
- Tweet / X Post
- Lead Magnet
- Notes App
- Pen & Paper
- Reddit Thread
- Testimonial
- Testimonial Mash-up
- Features Feature
- Before & After
- Greenscreen

Tutorial	Reaction Video
Customer Review	POV
Comment Response	Street Interview
Podcast Clip	ASMR

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// YELLOW = HIGHEST PERFORMING FOR NEWSLETTERS
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The 12 highlighted formats are what the best newsletter brands rely on most. Sticky notes, text-over-video, and listicles are low-production and high-converting. Notes app ads look native and drive strong CTR. Reddit thread ads leverage social proof passively.

Booking Creators

1 **Source via Insense or Fiverr**

Both platforms give you access to UGC creators across niches. Insense is more structured for performance creative. Fiverr works for budget testing. Don't use expensive influencers for initial testing — find working-class creators who deliver consistently.

2 **Match the creator to the audience**

Your ad concept says who it's for. Your creator should visually represent that person. Running an ad for time-poor professionals? Don't book a 22-year-old in a student apartment. The viewer should see themselves in the creator within the first second.

3 **Direct with a template, not vibes**

Write a brief that specifies: hook variation text, B-roll shots needed, framing requirements (head space, no backlit, no background noise), and tone. Don't leave interpretation to the creator. You're buying their face and delivery — not their creative direction.

// 06 — CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Structure your campaigns right

Sign-ups do not equal quality readers. How you structure and optimise your campaign determines whether you get engaged subscribers or dead weight that tanks your open rate and CPM.

Optimising for Quality (clicks, purchases)

Use when your goal is reader quality over volume. Meta optimises for subscribers who actually engage.

- → Automatic budget allocation per campaign
- → Meta uses its full signal set to find engagers
- → Slower scale, but better list health
- → Measure: newsletter CTR per concept vs. CPL

Optimising for Sign-ups only

Use manual budgets per campaign — Meta can only see lowest cost lead, not which ads drive quality readers.

- → Manual budgets required — Meta can't self-allocate
- → High risk of attracting freebie-seekers
- → Can scale faster but watch open rate closely
- → Kills your CPM if readers don't engage

Recommended Campaign Structure

Use single campaign set-ups. Only change the hook or actor between ad variations — not the concept. This lets Meta isolate what's winning.

// CAMPAIGN	**Single campaign — one objective**	Broad targeting
// AD SET	**Champion ad set — your current best concept**	3-5 hook variations
// ADS	**Hook variation 1, Hook variation 2, Hook variation 3**	Same body, different hook
// AD SET	**Challenger set 1 — new concept test**	1 concept × 3 hooks
// AD SET	**Challenger set 2 — another concept test**	1 concept × 3 hooks

// THE RULE FOR KILLING ADS

An ad running for 60+ days at your target CPL is your champion. Don't touch it. A new challenger ad needs to beat your champion's CPL within its first week of

> meaningful spend before you allocate more budget. Kill losers fast. Scale winners hard.

QUICK REFERENCE

The complete process checklist

STAGE	ACTION	OUTPUT
Research	Mine reader surveys, email replies, high-CTR links	Benefits, pain points, objections list
Research	Map of Reddit → top posts → viral threads	Dream outcomes + problem language
Research	Foreplay.co → competitor ads running 60+ days	Hook structures, awareness levels, formats
Research	Watch high-performing organic creators in your niche	Battle-tested hooks to borrow
Copywriting	Define 2–3 dream outcomes your readers have	Core audience clusters
Copywriting	Brainstorm 5–10 problems per dream outcome	Ad concept matrix
Copywriting	Assign awareness level to each concept	Messaging depth guide

STAGE	ACTION	OUTPUT
Copywriting	Write 3 hook variations per concept (stated + visual + audio)	Hook library
Copywriting	Write body copy using 3–5 value tactics per ad	Full ad scripts
Design	Choose format matched to the concept's tone	Creative brief per ad
Design	Brief creator via template (framing, B-roll, hooks)	Recorded UGC assets
Launch	Set up: 1 campaign → champion + 2 challengers	Live campaign structure
Launch	Measure CPL vs. newsletter CTR per concept	Quality + cost data
Launch	Kill losers in week 1. Scale winners after 2 weeks.	Optimised ad account