LAUNCH READINESS

The Launch Readiness Checklist

31 questions to pressure-test the strategy behind a launch — before execution ever begins.

Most failed launches aren't an execution problem. They're a strategy problem that only becomes visible during execution. By the time a launch is underperforming, the real issue is usually something that should have been settled months earlier: an unclear positioning, a market that was never shaped to receive the product, or a stakeholder strategy that was assumed rather than built. This checklist starts where the real work starts — before Day 1, not on it.

> *A launch rarely fails because of poor execution. It fails because the strategy, positioning, and market shaping weren't set right from the start — long before execution began.*

1. Strategy & Positioning Foundation

Was the direction set correctly before any execution began?

- [ ] We defined a clear, differentiated strategic narrative before building any tactical plans.
- [ ] Our positioning has been tested with actual target stakeholders, not just internal teams.
- [ ] We started shaping the market's understanding of the problem before the product arrived, not after.
- [ ] We know precisely what belief or behavior needs to shift in the market for this launch to succeed.
- [ ] Key opinion leaders and champions were engaged before launch, not recruited during it.
- [ ] Our strategy would still hold up if the launch date shifted by six months.

2. Launch Excellence & Mechanics

Is the plan operationally real, not just a slide?

- [ ] We have a named owner for every workstream, not just a RACI chart.
- [ ] Our Day 1 plan has been stress-tested against a delayed approval or supply disruption.
- [ ] We know exactly which sites, regions, or accounts launch first, and why that sequence was chosen.
- [ ] Field and account teams have been trained on the plan, not just informed of it.
- [ ] We have a defined trigger for revisiting the plan if early signals underperform.
- [ ] Someone outside the core team has pressure-tested this plan for blind spots.
- [ ] Demand planning is finalized, and product codes are set up internally and with external distributors, well ahead of launch.

3. Portfolio & Lifecycle Sequencing

Does this launch make sense in the context of everything else in the portfolio?

- [ ] We've mapped how this launch affects the revenue and positioning of existing products.
- [ ] We have a clear point of view on what gets deprioritized to make room for this launch.
- [ ] If this is a biosimilar, generic, or follow-on entrant, we have a defined cannibalization strategy.
- [ ] We've sequenced markets by readiness and opportunity, not just by regulatory timing.
- [ ] There is alignment between global, regional, and local teams on the sequencing logic.
- [ ] We've defined what success looks like at 6, 12, and 24 months, not only at launch.

4. Market & Stakeholder Strategy

Have we planned for the real decision-maker — a committee, not a consumer?

- [ ] We've mapped every stakeholder in the approval chain: payers, tender boards, MOH, KOLs.
- [ ] We understand what evidence or economic argument each stakeholder actually needs.
- [ ] We have a tender or formulary strategy, not just a clinical value story.
- [ ] Our pricing and access strategy has been tested against realistic budget constraints.
- [ ] We've identified which competitor moves could disrupt our stakeholder strategy mid-launch.
- [ ] We have a plan for the specific committee or institutional process, not a generic playbook.

5. Cross-Functional Alignment

Will this plan survive contact with every function that has to execute it?

- [ ] Medical, Regulatory, Finance, and Supply Chain have all reviewed and signed off on the plan.
- [ ] We've resolved disagreements between functions before the plan reached leadership.
- [ ] Finance has validated the forecast assumptions the plan is built on.
- [ ] Supply chain has confirmed it can actually support the sequencing we've committed to.
- [ ] There is one single version of the plan, not a different one per function.
- [ ] Leadership has seen this plan framed the same way it will be defended in the room.

Scoring guide: Fewer than 23 checks? That's not a red flag on your team — it's a sign the plan hasn't been pressure-tested by someone outside it yet. And if most of your unchecked boxes are in Section 1, that's the highest-leverage place to start: the strategy and positioning work, not the execution plan built on top of it.

Need an extra pair of eyes, or a second review of your strategy and launch plan?

Book a free 30-minute strategy call to pressure-test the direction before it's set in motion.

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