

AI Launch Week Checklist

A practical, no-hype checklist for indie AI builders launching on Product Hunt, Hacker News, Reddit, X and directories.

by FiftyUsers · fiftyusers.com · Free resource

1. Two to four weeks out: foundations

- ☐ Write a one-sentence pitch: who it's for + what it does + why it's different. Test it on someone outside tech.
- ☐ Make the product usable without a sales call: working signup, clear first step, no broken onboarding.
- ☐ Landing page shows a real screenshot or short demo above the fold, plus one clear call-to-action.
- ☐ Set up basic analytics and UTM-tagged links per channel so you know where users came from.
- ☐ Record a 30–90 second demo video/GIF of the core "aha" moment.
- ☐ Prepare an email list or waitlist so launch-day visitors who aren't ready to try can still follow along.
- ☐ Pick a launch date that avoids major holidays and big tech-event days in your audience's region.

2. Warm up your accounts (start early)

- ☐ Product Hunt: create/complete your profile with real photo, bio and links. Engage genuinely — comment on and try other launches in the weeks before.
- ☐ Reddit: participate in target subreddits before you post. Many have karma/account-age requirements and self-promotion rules — read each sidebar.
- ☐ Hacker News: have a real account with some genuine comment history; HN users notice brand-new accounts.
- ☐ X / LinkedIn: share build-in-public updates (what you're building, lessons, screenshots) so launch day isn't your first post.
- ☐ Tell your existing network (friends, customers, communities) the date in advance — personally, not in bulk spam.

Warming means becoming a real participant, not farming karma. Communities spot drive-by promoters quickly.

3. Product Hunt: rules and prep

- ☐ Read Product Hunt's current launch guidelines and FAQ before you schedule — rules change.
- ☐ **Never** buy upvotes, join vote-exchange groups or use bots. PH detects vote manipulation and can penalize or remove launches.
- ☐ Don't ask for "upvotes" directly; ask people to check out the launch and share honest feedback.
- ☐ Prepare: name, tagline (short and specific), description, thumbnail, gallery images, optional video, topics, and maker team.
- ☐ Write a first "maker comment": why you built it, who it's for, what's free, what feedback you want.
- ☐ Schedule the launch. PH's daily cycle starts at 12:01 AM Pacific Time — launching at the start gives you the full day.
- ☐ A hunter is optional; you can launch your own product.
- ☐ Offer something for the community if it fits (extended trial, discount) — keep it honest.

4. Hacker News etiquette

- ☐ Use "Show HN:" only for something people can actually try (no landing pages behind a signup wall or waitlist-only pages).
- ☐ Use a plain, factual title — no marketing superlatives.
- ☐ Post a first comment with the backstory, how it works technically and what you'd like feedback on.
- ☐ Never ask friends to upvote or share a direct link for voting — HN penalizes voting rings.
- ☐ Reply to criticism calmly and specifically. Thoughtful replies often matter more than the post.

5. Reddit & community etiquette

- ☐ Check each subreddit's rules: some ban self-promotion, some only allow it on specific days or threads.
- ☐ Write a native post for each community — a story, lesson or question — not the same link pasted everywhere.
- ☐ Disclose that you're the maker.
- ☐ Stagger posts over days; cross-posting identical content to many subs at once looks like spam.
- ☐ Stay and reply. Leaving after posting is the fastest way to get ignored or removed.
- ☐ Discord/Slack communities: post only in designated showcase channels.

6. Directories

- ☐ Prepare a reusable kit: logo (square + wide), 3–5 screenshots, short (~60 char) and long descriptions, pricing, categories, founder name, links.
- ☐ Prioritize directories relevant to your audience (AI tool directories, dev tool lists, indie SaaS lists) over sheer quantity.
- ☐ Track each submission: URL, date, status (pending/live/rejected), whether it's free or paid, and listing link.
- ☐ Expect delays — many directories review manually and can take days to weeks. Submit early.
- ☐ Be skeptical of paid "guaranteed traffic" listings; check whether the directory actually has visitors before paying.

7. Launch-day timeline (Pacific Time)

12:01 AM	Product Hunt launch goes live. Post your maker comment immediately.
Early morning	Personal messages to your network: "We're live — would love your honest feedback." Share on X/LinkedIn with demo.
Morning (US)	Show HN post if you're doing HN the same day (or pick a separate day to spread effort). Reply to every PH comment.
Midday	Email your waitlist. Post a progress/behind-the-scenes update on X.
Afternoon	Keep replying everywhere. Fix any bugs users report — and say so publicly.
Evening	Thank-you post. Note what questions came up most for your FAQ.
11:59 PM	PH day ends. Screenshot results; capture testimonials (with permission).

Be awake and responsive for most of the day. Fast, real replies from the maker are one of the few things fully in your control.

8. Week after launch

- ☐ Follow up personally with everyone who signed up or commented.
- ☐ Stagger community posts (Reddit, niche forums) over the following days rather than all at once.
- ☐ Write a short, honest launch retrospective — these often travel further than the launch itself.
- ☐ Pitch relevant newsletters with a specific angle, not a generic press release.
- ☐ Check directory statuses and resubmit or fix rejected listings.
- ☐ Review analytics by channel and decide where to double down.

Platform rules change — always check the current Product Hunt, Hacker News and subreddit guidelines before launching. This checklist contains no guaranteed outcomes. Want this done for you? FiftyUsers (fiftyusers.com) prepares your launch kit — we never buy upvotes or promise rankings.