



# A Guide to Launching Your Startup

YL Ventures' Value-Add Playbook



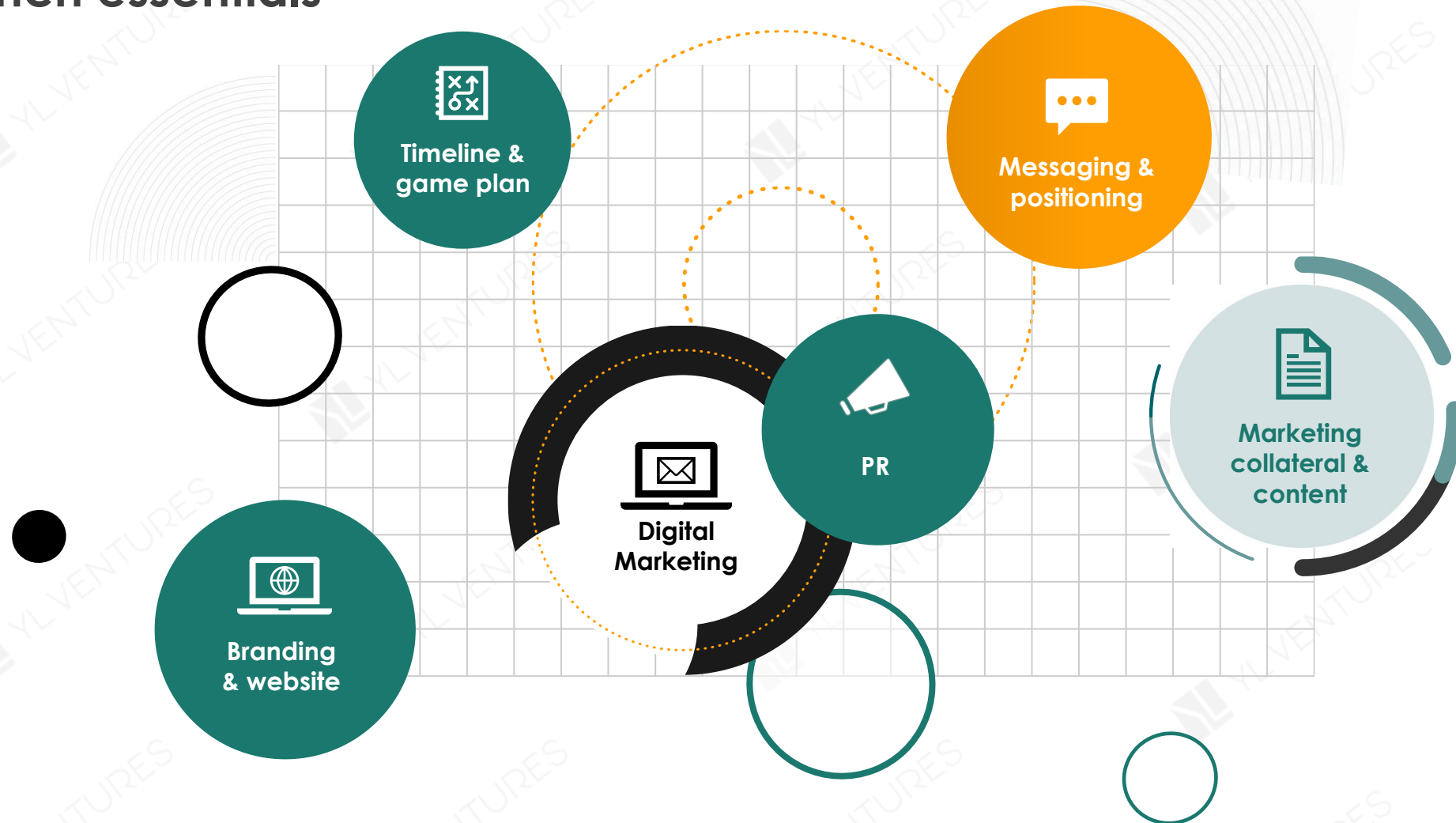
## Congratulations on your seed round! Now what?

Your seed round will take you from ideation to realization.

Your company's launch is your first exposure to the world. This is an important milestone in building your brand, generating leads and receiving the critical feedback necessary for preparing your product's market entry. A first impression is crucial, so make it count!

**Launching a new startup can be a complex process, but a well-organized game plan, guidance from value-add investors with industry connections and a strong network of service providers can make all the difference.**

# Launch essentials



## Launching in 3... 2...1...

Emerging from stealth requires a strategic game plan and a well-thought-out timeline.



### Determine your desired level of maturity

Understand who your customers are and what is your company's ability to deliver. We recommend to launch as early as possible in order to gain the most from market feedback and conquer your category. You don't need a product to launch, as post-launch feedback can provide necessary guidance for improvements and adjustments. However, you must have a strong value proposition and a clear strategy for the way forward.



### Evaluate your competition and target audience

It's important to ask the right questions - are you claiming a new space or do you have established competition? Are others getting ready to launch in your category? Launching without understanding your landscape will place you at a disadvantage from the get-go.

## Launching in 3... 2...1...

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### How long is the launch process?

Map out your requirements, including collateral, branding essentials, budget constraints and dedicated professionals who will help you generate them. Three months is appropriate, from start to finish.



### Choose a date for your launch

Conflicting events, conferences and holidays could detract attention from your launch and make you lose valuable momentum, so put time and consideration into choosing your launch date.

## Messaging & positioning: Who are you, and why should the industry care?



Messaging and positioning tells your target audience what **value you deliver**. A cohesive messaging and positioning strategy should **translate technology into values**, and align your company around **a vision**, which is far more valuable than just a product.

Messaging is **an ongoing process**. It begins before your launch and continues throughout your startup's lifecycle.

Fine-tuning your message using **customer feedback, A/B testing and guidance from investors** will help you tweak and improve your messaging to better resonate with your customers' needs.



Work with a seasoned messaging professional with experience in your domain.

# Messaging & Positioning: Guidance and Tips

## 1 Target audience

Your positioning must coincide with a specific target market. Once you find it, you can start tailoring your messaging accordingly.

## 2 What problem are you solving?

Your product should aim to resolve an existing and substantial pain point in your category. Make sure your customers know why they need you by articulating and defining the problem space.

## 3 What's your secret sauce?

Your customers need to know why you are better than other solutions. Finding your differentiation should be your first priority.

## 4 Listen to your customers

Before launching, engage with potential customers to gain insight and feedback about your message. Structure your tone and pinpoint your key value proposition accordingly.

## 5 Be consistent

Develop one clear message and use it on all relevant channels. You don't want to confuse your audience.



Collateral by launch: Press release, introductory blog, customer deck, FAQ for journalists, downloadable content (for example, a one pager).

## Branding: Designing your visual identity

Your brand tells your story, generates an emotional response and distinguishes you from your competition. Building a compelling visual representation will create a lasting impression, amplifying your message and generating more leads.



Come prepared to the design process: research existing brands for inspiration, explore what you like and what you don't like and decide what to do differently.



Decide on your tone of voice and personality, and design your brand elements around them (logo, color scheme, icons, etc.)



Your brand design should serve your messaging - make sure they are aligned.



## Traffic, leads and conversion:

Your website is the cornerstone of your marketing collateral

**1**

### Your message

Define your messaging and create website copy before you start designing to ensure a smoother design process and alignment with your messages.

**2**

### Find your flow

Find a flow for your brand, tone and what you stand for, and design your website around that. Use a designer throughout the collateral building process.

**3**

### The platform

Your website management tool should accommodate independent design, easy updates and frequent changes, such as Webflow, Wix, WP.

**4**

### Wireframing

Build a wireframe based on content structure. Check out other startups for structure inspiration and to help you determine which pages you need.

**5**

### SEO is key

Implement SEO from the start, as you build your website. Using keywords will increase your visibility in web searches and help bring potential customers to your page.

**6**

### Analytics is next

Monitor your website performance using tools such as Google Analytics, HotJar, Tracking Pixels, Event Pixels, and Search Console. Set the tools as you develop your website.

# Digital Marketing: A critical part of brand existence

Social media helps brands reach wide audiences in a cost-effective manner while enabling critical performance measurement and audience engagement.

## 1 Create social media accounts

Where is your audience's social presence? Look at blogs, forums and communities.

## 2 Engagement

Encourage team members to interact with posts and use their personal profiles to accelerate engagement. Don't forget to follow fellow industry leaders and prospective leads!



## Digital Marketing: A critical part of brand existence

### 3 Generate a buzz

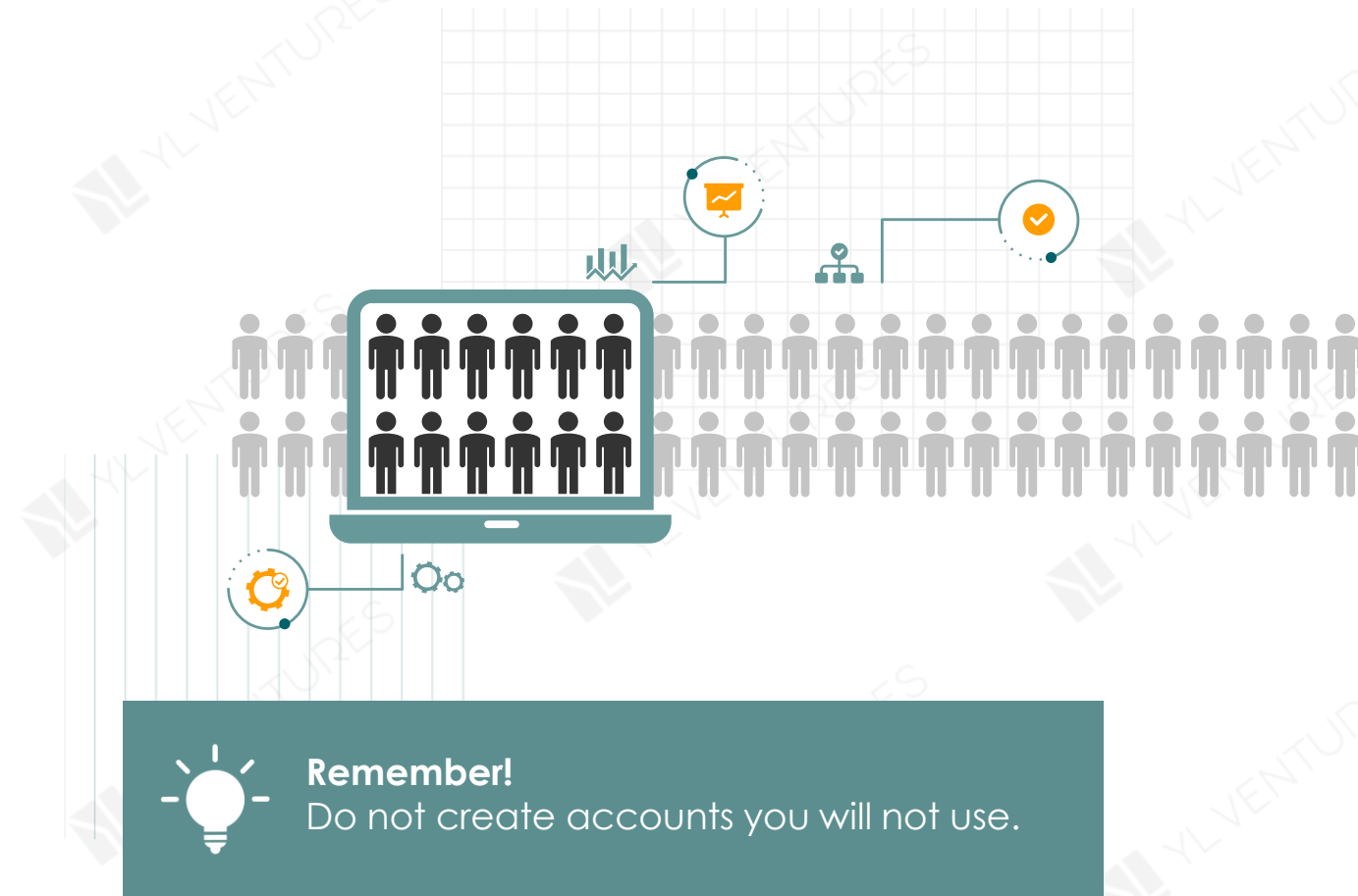
Build up social media pages before your launch without infringing on embargo. But remember, it doesn't look good if you have only one post on your profile, so plan ahead and be consistently active!

### 4 Tracking

Track engagement and interactions for each social platform to understand where you stand.

### 5 Testing

Use social media platforms to test out your messaging within your target audience with an A/B testing campaign. It can provide you with valuable feedback at little cost.



#### Remember!

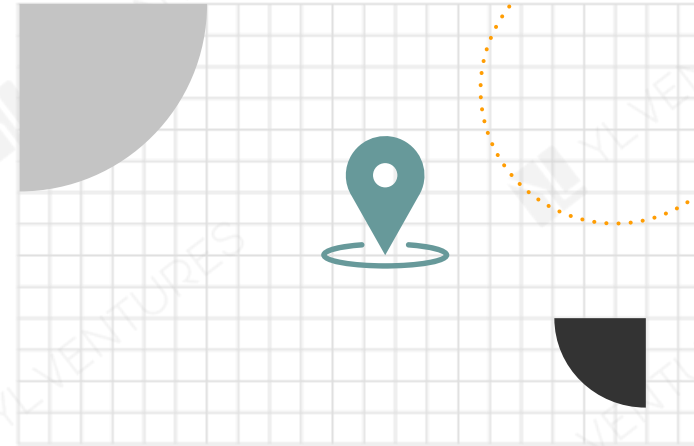
Do not create accounts you will not use.

## Spread the word: **The PR process**

### Where will you launch?

Decide where your geographical focus is according to where your target customers and possible R&D hires may be located.

\*For Israeli cybersecurity startups we recommend starting with the US and Israel.



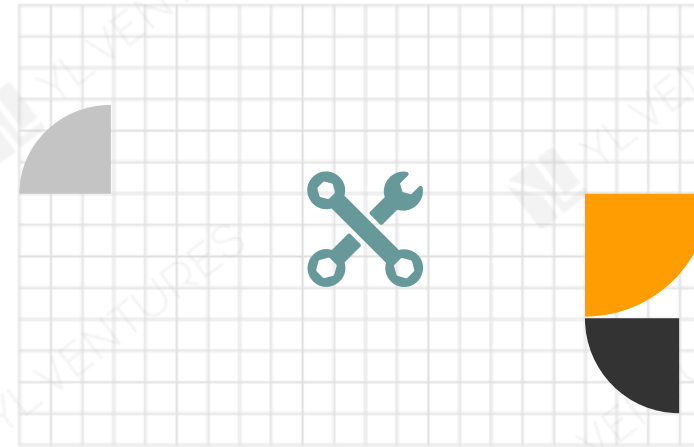
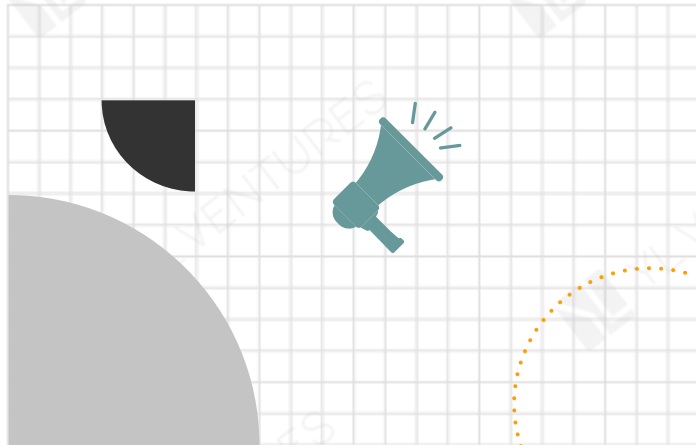
### Consult the pros.

While PR can be carried out independently, we recommend relying on a local professional agency that specializes in your domain. However, don't miss direct touchpoints with reporters whenever possible.

## Spread the word: **The PR process**

### Build your PR toolkit

You will need several deliverables for the launch: Press releases, FAQs, team photos and, if applicable, a product dashboard scheme. Don't forget to ask your PR firm to prep you for interviews with journalists.



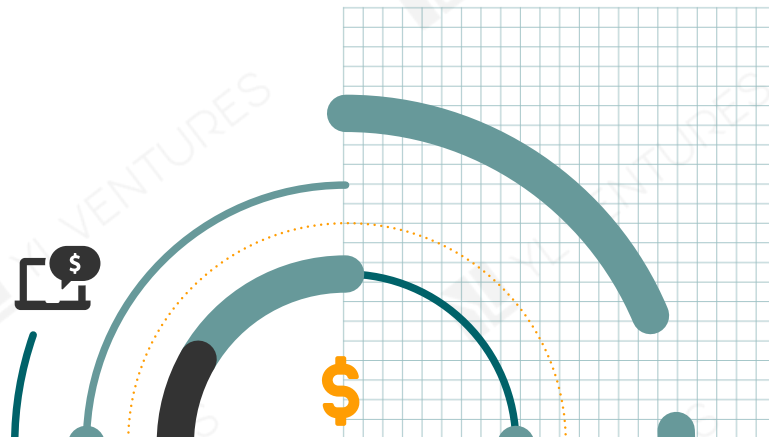
### Go for an embargoed announcement

This is the world's first introduction to your company. For maximum exposure, set an embargo date and share the news with as many journalists as possible before you launch.

## Money well-spent: Building your launch budget

It may be tempting to go high-end when planning your launch, but remember that your marketing identity is in "beta mode" and will only cement at a later stage of maturity.

We suggest leaning on value-add investors and advisors for professional-grade services at lower costs.



### 1 Don't overspend from the start.

Spend the amount that will provide a strong first impression for your launch, but don't overdo it right from the get-go. Remember, there will be numerous changes to your messaging and brand throughout your first year, and you should plan your budget accordingly.

### 2 Think about services you may need

You will need a budget for branding, website, PR and more. Try to lean on your investors' professional team and service providers for added value.

### 3 Assess expenditures

How much do you need to spend to communicate your value-add? Consult with investors and advisors for ball-park figures.

## Our final tips for your journey



**Spend time and resources on asking the right questions before you start.** Establish your identity, your voice and what your goals are, to guide all of your collateral under a single, unified strategy.



**Be open to constructive criticism.** Leverage your investors and their network and industry contacts for honest feedback prior to launching - you'll need it.



**Get everyone on board.** Your launch is a significant milestone for your company. Individual insights from your trusted team and investors is essential.

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## Thank you!

**YL Ventures funds and supports brilliant Israeli tech entrepreneurs from seed to lead. Based in Silicon Valley and Tel Aviv, YL Ventures manages over \$300 million and exclusively invests in cybersecurity.**

YL Ventures accelerates the evolution of portfolio companies via strategic advice and U.S. based operational execution, leveraging a powerful network of CISOs and global industry leaders. The firm's track record includes investment in Israeli cybersecurity unicorns Axonius and Orca Security, as well as successful, high-profile portfolio company acquisitions by major corporations including Palo Alto Networks, Microsoft, CA, and PR.







# Thank you!

If you have any questions, we encourage you to reach out to [sharon@ylventures.com](mailto:sharon@ylventures.com) or visit us at [www.ylventures.com](http://www.ylventures.com)

