

Hi there

I get a lot of questions about distribution from founders, across pretty much every channel.

So I put together this short document with a few questions I hear again and again. They're also questions where I see a lot of bad advice online from so-called experts.

I hope it helps you get more clarity on your distribution and avoid some common mistakes.

And if you want to save time, avoid testing things that won't work, stop wasting budget, and get a clear outside view, I can help.

I'll review your product, landing page, channels, and positioning, then send you a report with exactly what I would change immediately.

It'll be ready in 48 hours. Order here:

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What's the main distribution mistake founders make?

It's not an obvious one but it's probably choosing a channel before understanding the buyer's cognitive flow.

Founders always tell me, "We'll do SEO," "We'll try TikTok," or "I know Meta Ads," but they never take the time to map the path from latent pain to active intent to purchase triggers. So they are basically throwing content into random rooms.

You shouldn't start anything before you have answered these questions: when the user is most annoyed, embarrassed, impatient, or actively comparing solutions, what tab are they in, what query are they typing, who are they asking, and what proof would make them move now?

I'll give an example, for a resume tool. If you try to distribute that, you should probably attack "I have an interview tomorrow" searches, LinkedIn anxiety, and career subreddits. The intent is quite high there.

Meanwhile, if you're selling the same thing through generic productivity TikToks, well you are paying to educate cold users who may be six steps away from buying.

Most failed distribution is not bad copy or bad ads but bad placement in the buyer's brain.



Where can I see real examples of businesses with great distribution?

Most well-known online businesses are well-known for a reason: they have great distribution.

But the problem is that their distribution is often hard to copy. They usually rely on tactics that work at scale, with a big audience, strong brand, paid acquisition, partnerships, or years of momentum behind them. Those tactics probably will not work the same way for you, especially if you are just starting out.

A better approach is to look for smaller online businesses that already have proven revenue or profitability. Then study how they actually get customers.

There is a site called [Steal What Works](#). I am not affiliated with them, but they sell a very useful database with 300+ profitable solo internet businesses. For each business, they break down the distribution strategy behind it.

Honestly, I think it is worth getting it and spending one or two hours, maybe even a few hours, reading through the examples. It is a great source of inspiration.



Does LinkedIn still work for distribution?

Yes, but not the way everyone has been doing it for the last two years.

Recently, we all figured out that brands could not sound corporate anymore, so we got the whole wave of founder-led content. But it's done now. Posts like "I launched my SaaS six months ago, here are the 7 lessons I wish I knew" don't work anymore. Anyone can generate that with ChatGPT in 12 seconds.

Where LinkedIn still works extremely well is when you have a very niche tool, solving a painful problem and you become the only person on LinkedIn seriously documenting that problem.

Then people are actually happy to find you. They think: "finally, someone with the same problem and ... this person thinks about it every day".

Then, if you post about your research and share really cool insights, every week they see you move the problem forward a little bit. They start trusting your judgment because ... you are clearly spending more time on this than they ever could.

After three months of seeing your posts, they have clicked with you 10 times: "yes, I have this problem", "yes, I had never thought about it that way", etc. And when you keep showing that those insights are now built into the tool you're selling ... well, the purchase becomes obvious.



Can X actually work as a product distribution channel?

In 95% of cases, I'd say no, because X is not a place where people want to "discover your product". It is a status arena where people try to look smart, win arguments and build their own audience.

If you post links, launch threads, or "share value" like it is LinkedIn, the algorithm will bury you and the users will mentally classify you as a promoter, not as part of the conversation.

The "build in public" strategy works though. Also, another trick is when your product creates assets people already want to share. It works even better in high-conflict niches like finance, politics, AI, real estate, geopolitics, sports betting, or founder drama.

For example, a geopolitical data tool can spread because macro investors want charts to argue with each other. An AI eval tool can spread because nerds want evidence that one model is better than another.

The key is that the asset helps the user make their own point. Your branding is secondary. They repost it because it gives them ammunition, not because they want to promote you.

But ... if they do, congratulations: you've basically cracked the code. People do your marketing for free, and X becomes a distribution goldmine.





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Is SEO really “dead”?

SEO is still worth doing, but not if your plan is to produce 1,000 generic blog posts in a week.

The big shift is that AI has destroyed the old scarcity: before, ranking was partly about being one of the few people who wrote a decent article on a topic, but now anyone can generate thousands of “okay” pages.

Google itself says AI search is creating longer and more complex sessions, with AI Mode queries reportedly 3x longer than traditional searches. So, clearly, demand did not disappear; it became more conversational, more specific, and more answer-oriented.

I would think of it like this: if an LLM can answer your article from memory, your content is surely dead (don't bother writing it). However, if your content adds fresh data, personal experience, proprietary examples, or a sharp opinion, it still has a chance.

Today, if I had to guess, I would say maybe 90–99% of new AI-assisted content will create almost no durable search value, but the top 1–10% can get a lot of clicks, because it is what both humans and AI systems want to cite.

So the right question is not “is SEO dead?” but “do I have evidence, data, experience, or a point of view strong enough that Google and LLMs cannot replace me?”.



How do you get backlinks?

My honest answer is: stop trying to “get” them, because most backlink work is just SEO theater.

Backlinks used to be scarce, costly, and hard to fake, but now you can buy them, rent them, swap them, hide them in expired domains, or shove them into some “best tools” page, so of course Google learned to discount most of that junk aggressively.

I know many SEO “experts” will disagree, but I’m 99% confident from my own experience. I’ve had sites with a ton of backlinks that did nothing, and sites with almost no backlinks that took off because the page was just obviously the best answer.

Google is not stupid enough to treat a paid DR 70 directory link, an expired-domain link, and a real citation from a journalist using your original data as the same signal.

People obsess over DR like it’s a Google metric, but, well, it’s not; it’s an Ahrefs and Semrush proxy, and a link from a “DR 90” domain can be worthless if it comes from a context Google reads as platform residue.

The benchmark I use is simple: would a serious analyst link to this page even if SEO did not exist? If the answer is no, don’t build links, build the asset: proprietary data, benchmarks, pricing study, or anything that makes someone stop and think, “Damn, I need this in my article.”



Are free tools good for SEO?

SEO “experts” love to talk about this because it sounds smart: you give value upfront, Google likes useful stuff, users like useful stuff, and on paper, it sounds like the cleanest growth loop in the world.

From my experience, it does not work like that. Now, with Claude Code and the whole AI coding stack, every founder can ship a calculator, a generator, a checker, or a “free audit” in a weekend. So, for me, “build a free tool for SEO” is already old advice. The average tool will be invisible.

If you want a free tool to rank, it has to be genuinely unique and useful. People need to actually want it, the job has to be painful enough, and ideally, nobody has built that exact version before.

A tool can rank if it is useful and different, but that still does not mean it will bring customers. A good free tool should not solve the problem once and send the user away.

Let’s say you sell software to make TikTok ads at scale. A weak free tool would be a “TikTok caption generator”: the user gets one caption, copies it, and leaves. A much better tool would be a “TikTok ad fatigue checker” where you upload your last 10 ads, and it tells you which hooks are dying, which formats are overused, and what new variants you should test next.

Now the output does not close the problem, it opens it: “I’m doing things wrong, I need better software”. That is where your product becomes the obvious next step.



When does Instagram start pushing your content for you?

The first real pull usually appears after 10 to 30 tightly related posts, because the recommendation system needs enough signal density to understand your topic, audience, and expected engagement curve.

Internally, you can think of it as a sequence of test buckets: first your followers and adjacent users, then small interest clusters, then broader lookalikes if retention, rewatch, saves, shares, and profile conversion beat the cohort benchmark.

That is why “two weeks” can be true for a sharp creator and “three months” can still fail for someone posting vague founder thoughts, generic carousels, and random memes in the same account.

The rule to remember is: one strong video can spike, but durable pull only comes when the system can predict repeat performance from a recognizable content primitive.

My rule of thumb is simple: by week 2 you want signs, by week 6 you want repeatable outliers, and by month 3 you either have an audience-algorithm fit problem or a content-quality problem, not an “Instagram is not showing me” problem.



Can you really grow on Instagram using only carousels?

Yes, but you need to stop judging carousels with Reels metrics, because they are not built for the same job: Reels are reach machines, carousels are trust machines.

A Reel can give you 800,000 random views from people who will never check your account, while a good carousel might get 4,000 views but 10 people DMing you because they feel you actually understand their problem.

A Reel is a cheap lottery ticket: it can hit 100k views because someone laughed for 7 seconds, but most viewers have no clue who posted it and no intention to buy anything.

Yes, carousels ask for more effort, so 70–90% of people will drop before slide 2 or 3. But ... a carousel gives you something Reels will never give you: 30 to 90 seconds of active attention from a qualified person.

If you sell taste, thinking, or expertise, carousels should be your main format. But, yeah, if you sell personality, entertainment or a “wow effect” refusing Reels is clearly self-sabotage.





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Are TikTok influencers still a thing?

Yes, but it is not the same as before. The dead version is “take my product, say it’s great, post it to your audience”. People will see it’s an ad before the creator finishes the first sentence and they will scroll away.

I would rather spend \$5k on 30 micro-creators than on one polished mid-tier creator because the first setup gives you 30 different hooks, personas, objections, and chances to find a weirdly specific winning angle.

Most assets will be average, 10–20% will be worth testing in paid media, and maybe 2–5 pieces will become real winners. That is not failure ... this is just how it works now, just like early Google Ads worked by testing many keywords and letting a tiny minority carry the account.

So, yes, most UGC will be mediocre, and that is fine. The system works because a few assets become paid winners, not because every creator “performs”. It is like running a small army in a very operationally efficient way.

Also, I would not over-brief them. It needs to feel authentic. Everyone hates fake, everyone hates promotion, and everyone hates AI-slop. I would use creators to detect language-market fit: the exact hooks, small insecurities, social situations, excuses, and emotional triggers that make someone think, “Okay, that’s me.”



Is Reddit a good idea?

Worth it, but for a minority of products: maybe 10% to 20%, because most products are not naturally discussed there.

It works well when the products are connected to public curiosity, comparison, frustration, or setup-sharing, like devtools, hobby gear, indie games, browser extensions, and specific workflow tools.

But, I have never seen expensive, internal, generic, or enterprise products working well there (probably because the “buyer” is not asking strangers for recommendations).

A strong post in a 50k to 500k member subreddit might produce 300 to 5,000 clicks and 10 to 300 signups, but a slightly promotional post might get you banned forever, so it’s tricky.

So I would only invest if Reddit already contains visible demand for the exact pain, not just people who theoretically match your ICP.

That said, when Reddit fits, I think it is one of the few organic channels worth taking seriously in 2026. It is now one of the main places Google and AI search pull from when people look for honest opinions, alternatives, comparisons, and “is this actually good?” answers.

So, one useful thread can keep showing up in search, influence AI answers, and create trust before the user even lands on your site.



Should you start a newsletter to distribute your product?

Marketing “experts” love to recommend newsletters because it’s the only channel where you actually own your audience. That’s true, you’re not one brutal algorithm change away from losing your visibility overnight.

But I’d be pretty strict here: most newsletters I’ve seen are useless. They don’t create buying intent. They send recycled LinkedIn posts or generic industry news into an inbox that is already overloaded. So, all you’re getting are weak open rates, high unsubscribes, and ... zero product education (you’re not giving people any reason why your product matters).

I would only do a newsletter if your product solves a recurring problem and the email can repeatedly show the problem, the insight, and how your product solves it. So the real question is: “Can we send something every week that makes the reader feel the cost of not using our product?”

Here’s an example that works well. Let’s say you’ve built a tool that tracks emerging consumer trends across the internet. Write one that shows the product at work: “Our tool spotted 5 early consumer signals this week”. Then, show screenshots from the tool, the source posts it found, the growth rate behind each signal, the sentiment, etc.

It works because the reader sees your product doing the job they care about: finding signals before anyone else, without any manual work.



Should you quickly test a landing page with Google Ads?

It sounds smart because paid search gives you traffic immediately, unlike channels like SEO. But honestly, no. Not if your plan is to throw \$50, \$100, or \$300 at it and “see if it works.”

Yes, marketing “experts” recommend this because it sounds clean in theory: launch ads, send traffic to the landing page, measure conversions, learn. But anyone who has actually done it knows it’s just a big mess. Google Ads stays in learning mode, the algorithm has no idea who your real buyer is and a lot of your clicks come from bots, random countries, competitors and people who were never going to buy.

Then you look at the numbers and say, “The page didn’t convert.” No. You sent 87 questionable strangers to a cold page, got three confused form fills, paid \$200, and now you think you learned something about the market. Well, you probably didn’t.

Expecting strategic insight from \$200 is basically asking a slot machine for customer research. So, I would rather do the unsexy thing: manually find qualified prospects, show them the page, ask what they understood, ask what felt weak, ask what would stop them from booking, and listen to the objections in their own words. Yes, it’s long, it’s painful, but it will make you richer in the long-term.





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