



A WORKING DIAGNOSIS • FROM THE BRANDING SERIES

The Offer Test

Six questions that show you exactly why strangers say no to your offer. Answer them honestly, score the result, and you'll leave with a ranked list of what to fix first.

Takes about 20 minutes • Bring a pen • Score your current offer, as it exists today



Why strangers say no

You've watched it happen. Someone finds your business, looks around, asks a question or two, and disappears. No objection you can argue with. Just gone.

That silence has a cause. Every offer stands on six decisions, whether you made them on purpose or by accident: **audience, pain, problem, solution, offer, design**. When strangers keep saying no, one of those six is broken. Guessing which one is expensive. Testing them in order is fast.

That's this document. One decision per page. Each page gives you the question, a pass or fail test, and a company that got the decision right in public. Then you score your offer on the Value Equation, and the fix order falls out on its own.

- 1 Print it, or write straight into the PDF.** The lines and boxes are meant to be filled. A read-through without a pen changes nothing.
- 2 Score the offer you sell today.** The one on your website right now, at its real price. You can't fix an imaginary version.
- 3 Go in order.** The six decisions stack. A wrong audience makes every answer after it wrong too, no matter how good your logo is.
- 4 Be brutal.** A flattering score costs you money for another year. A failing grade on this paper is free.



Who is this for, and can they pay you?

Every offer starts with a person. Before pain, before price, before the logo, you pick who you serve. Picking "anyone with a wallet" reads to a stranger as "built for nobody in particular." And the second half of the decision matters just as much: your person has to afford you without wincing.

THE NO IT CAUSES

When the audience is wrong, the no sounds like silence, or "I can't afford this." Neither is about your product. You aimed at people who can't pay, or people you can't reach.

PASS / FAIL TEST

- ☐ I can describe my buyer in one sentence: who they are, what they run, roughly what they earn.
- ☐ That buyer can pay my price without financing it or flinching.
- ☐ I know where at least 100 of them already gather: a feed, a room, an association, a list.

☐ PASS ☐ FAIL All three checked = pass. Miss one = fail.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Ferrari. Enzo Ferrari's rule was to build one less car than the market demanded, and the company still caps production on purpose. The result is a buyer list that can pay any price and a brand that never discounts. They chose the person first. Everything else flows from that choice.

My buyer, in one sentence:

Where 100 of them already gather:



What hurts enough that they'd pay today?

People buy to make a feeling stop. If your buyer only kind of wants what you sell, they'll agree it's nice and never pull out a card. Real pain is something they complain about without being asked, and would pay this week to end. Vitamins get postponed. Painkillers get bought at midnight.

THE NO IT CAUSES

"Sounds great, maybe later." Later means never. There's no urgency because nothing hurts, so your follow-up emails go into the same pile as everyone else's.

PASS / FAIL TEST

- ☐ My buyer complains about this pain unprompted. I've personally heard a real one say it out loud.
- ☐ They'd pay money this week to make it stop, at full price, without being chased.

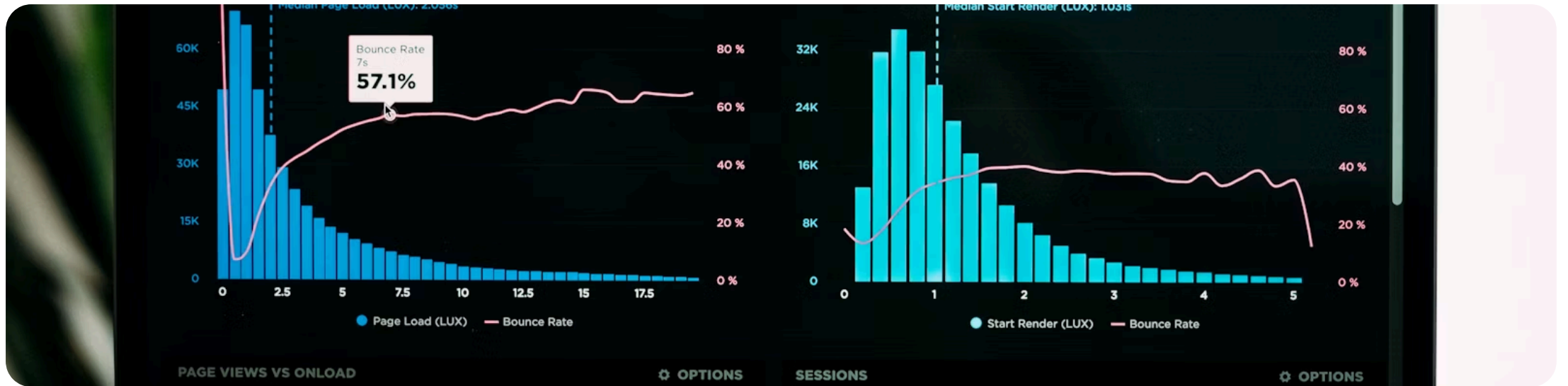
☐ PASS ☐ FAIL Both checked = pass. If you've never heard the complaint out loud, fail.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Uber. The company's own founding story starts on a snowy Paris night in December 2008, when Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp couldn't get a cab. Standing on a cold curb with no ride coming is pain you feel in your shoes. Millions of strangers had stood on that same curb, which is why they adopted the fix instantly.

The pain, in my buyer's exact words (not mine):

The last time I heard a real person say it:



What's actually causing the pain?

Pain is what they feel. The problem is the mechanism producing it. Confuse the two and you'll sell symptom relief to someone who has already bought symptom relief twice and got burned. Naming the true mechanism is what makes a stranger trust you before you've proven anything, because you sound like the first person who understands their situation.

THE NO IT CAUSES

"I tried something like that. It didn't work." You're paying for the last vendor's sins, because to this buyer you sound exactly like them.

PASS / FAIL TEST

☐ I can state the mechanism behind the pain in one sentence a stranger would nod at.

☐ If that mechanism disappeared tomorrow, the pain would disappear with it.

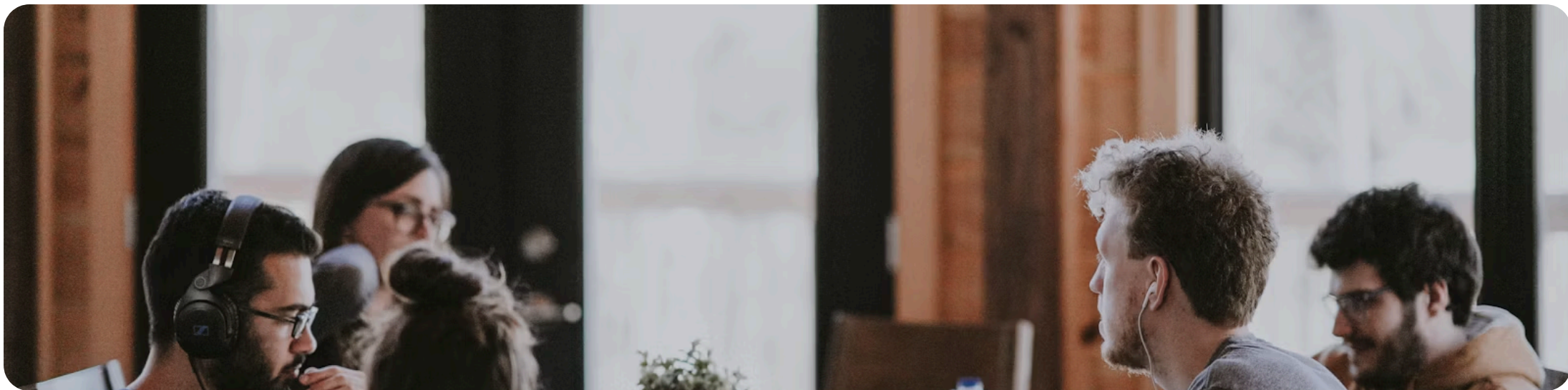
☐ PASS ☐ FAIL Both checked = pass. If your sentence describes the feeling instead of the cause, fail.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Netflix vs. Blockbuster. Reed Hastings has long told the story of a \$40 late fee on Apollo 13 as the spark for Netflix. The fee was the pain. The problem was a business model that made money by punishing its own customers; Blockbuster reportedly collected around \$800 million in late fees in a single year at its peak. Netflix removed the mechanism itself with subscriptions and no late fees, and Blockbuster couldn't follow without gutting its own revenue.

The mechanism, in one sentence:

What my buyer already tried that failed (and why):



Does your fix remove the problem?

A real solution removes the mechanism you named on the last page, so the pain can't come back while your solution is in place. Anything that only softens the symptom drops you into a price war with every other painkiller on the shelf, and the cheapest one wins that war.

THE NO IT CAUSES

"How is this different from ___?" If a stranger can't see the difference inside two minutes, there is no difference in their mind, and the cheaper option takes the sale.

PASS / FAIL TEST

- ☐ My solution removes the mechanism. The problem stays gone while it's in place.
- ☐ I can show it working, live or recorded, in under two minutes, start to finish.

☐ PASS ☐ FAIL Both checked = pass. If your demo needs a slide deck, fail.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Dollar Shave Club. Michael Dubin's 2012 launch video attacked the real mechanism behind razor frustration: overpriced blades locked behind drugstore glass. Decent blades shipped to your door for a few dollars removed the mechanism entirely, and the 90-second video was the two-minute demo. Unilever bought the company four years later for a reported \$1 billion.

What my solution removes (the mechanism, gone):

How I'd show it working in under two minutes:



Who carries the risk when they say yes?

The offer is the deal itself: what they get, what they pay, and what happens if it fails. Strangers assume it will fail, because everyone before you promised too. The strongest offers move that risk from the buyer's side of the table to yours, with a written guarantee or pay-on-results terms. When you carry the risk, saying yes stops being brave.

THE NO IT CAUSES

"Let me think about it." Thinking is the polite exit. It means the risk of being wrong still sits on them, and walking away is the only safe move you've left them.

PASS / FAIL TEST

- ☐ If the offer doesn't work, I eat the loss. A guarantee, a redo, or a refund is stated in writing where the buyer can see it.
- ☐ My offer answers "what if it doesn't work for me?" before the buyer has to ask it.
- ☐ PASS

☐ FAIL

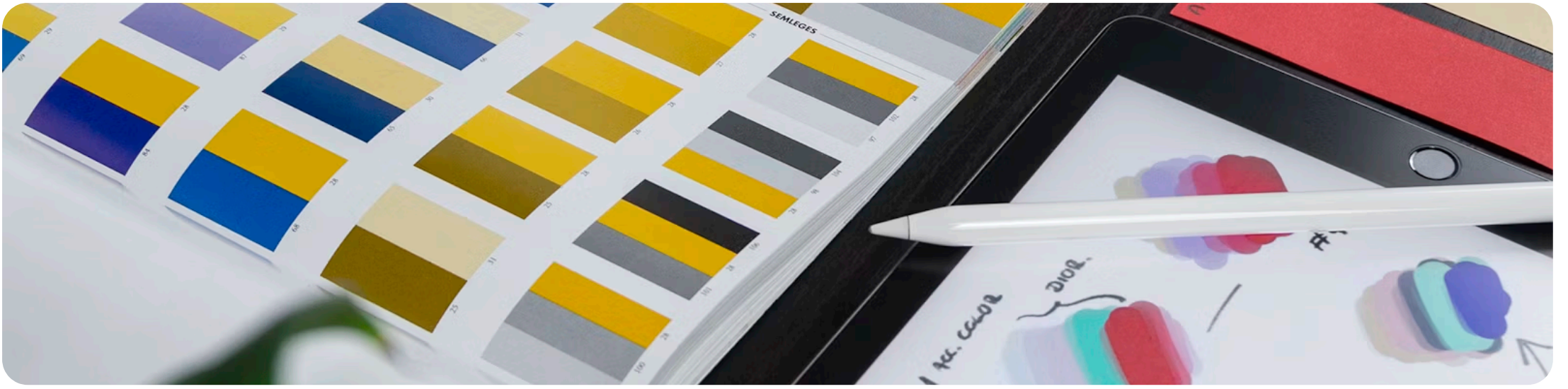
Both checked = pass. If your guarantee lives only in your head, fail.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Domino's. Through the 1980s, Domino's grew into a national brand on one sentence: 30 minutes or it's free. The seller carried the entire risk of the promise. The company retired the guarantee in 1993 after safety lawsuits, but by then the offer had already built the empire. One sentence, risk on the seller, and strangers said yes at scale.

My guarantee, in one sentence I'd put in writing:

What saying yes costs my buyer beyond money (time, effort, embarrassment):



Does the look tell the truth about the price?

Design comes last on purpose. It's the paint on a finished offer, and paint can't fix a cracked frame. Once the first five decisions hold, though, the look does one enormous job: it prices you before you say a word. A premium promise wrapped in a \$50 template reads as a lie, and a stranger who spots a lie leaves without asking questions.

THE NO IT CAUSES

This is the no you never hear. No reply, no call, no form fill. The look answered their real question, "can I trust this at this price?", before you got a chance to.

PASS / FAIL TEST

- ☐ A stranger seeing only my homepage or packaging would guess my price within 20% of the truth.
- ☐ Every place a stranger meets me (site, proposal, invoice, business card) tells the same visual story.

☐ PASS ☐ FAIL Both checked = pass. Actually ask a stranger; your own guess doesn't count.

PROVEN IN PUBLIC

Tiffany & Co. The blue box is so tied to the promise that the color itself is trademarked: a custom Pantone shade called 1837 Blue, named for the founding year. People photograph the box before the jewelry. That's design doing its real job, confirming the price before anyone reads a word.

The price a stranger would honestly guess from my homepage:

Where my look and my promise disagree today:

Now put numbers on it.

Buyers run this math without knowing it. Desire and belief push the value of your offer up. Waiting and hassle drag it down. Score each factor on your current offer, 1 to 10, where 10 is always the best case.

VALUE =

DESIRE × LIKELIHOOD

TIME × SACRIFICE

1. DESIRE: how badly they want the outcome

1 = mildly nice · 10 = they think about it in the shower

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2. LIKELIHOOD: how much they believe it'll work for them

1 = pure hope · 10 = proof from someone just like them

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3. TIME: how fast they see the first result

1 = months of waiting · 10 = a win the same week

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4. SACRIFICE: what saying yes costs them beyond money

1 = it takes over their life · 10 = almost nothing changes

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

TOTAL

/ 40

32+ means your no's are fixable with polish. 24 to 31 means one factor is dragging the rest. Under 24 means the problem is structural: go back to Decision 1 and re-pick.

THE FIX ORDER

1. Sacrifice → 2. Time → 3. Likelihood → 4. Desire

Start at Sacrifice and walk the order. The first factor scoring 7 or under is this week's project. Why this order? The bottom of the equation is fully yours to change this week: cut setup steps and deliver a first win faster. Likelihood comes next and is built with proof (the guarantee from page 7 does heavy lifting here). Desire moves last. You channel desire that already exists toward your offer, and if it's genuinely missing, the honest fix is re-picking your audience on page 3.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SCORE

You now know why they say no. The course teaches the fix.

This test diagnoses. It tells you which of the six decisions is failing and which lever of the Value Equation is dragging. The build-out lives in **The Branding Course**: six modules, one per decision, in the same order you just worked through. How to re-pick an audience that can pay, how to structure a guarantee you can afford to honor, how to make the look price you right. Owners who make these six decisions on purpose get read differently in their market: customers stop haggling and competitors start copying.

\$499 while we record it. \$1,000 the day it ships.

Here's the honest reason for the discount: we're recording The Branding Course right now. Buy during recording and you pay \$499 instead of \$1,000, your price and lifetime access are locked, and you get the full course the day it ships plus every update after. When recording wraps and the course launches, the price goes to \$1,000 and stays there. No countdown timers. The deadline is the recording schedule.

Lock in the early bird price → deskwolf.ai/branding

Rather talk it through first? Book a free call at deskwolf.ai/discover and bring your page 9 scores. We'll walk the fix order with you, whether or not you ever buy the course.

Curious what we build for clients? The demo line at (909) 757-0141 walks you through a real booking flow.