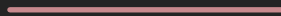


Growth ALCHEMY



PDF PLAYBOOK

Performance Creative



The ROAS-first ad playbook. Why creative, not targeting, is now the biggest lever on paid performance, and how to build ads that sell.

PDF GUIDE

Growth Alchemy

Creative is the new targeting

As platforms automated targeting and bidding, they handed advertisers one big lever they still control: the creative. Today, your ad itself is the targeting. The right creative finds the right person.

This changes how you should spend your effort. Endless audience tinkering yields less and less, while the gap between an average ad and a great one has never been wider in terms of return. This playbook is about building ads that earn their ROAS through the work the creative does, not the settings around it.

The mindset: stop optimising the machine, start feeding it better fuel. A high-performing creative makes mediocre settings look genius. A weak creative cannot be saved by any amount of optimisation.

What a ROAS-first ad does

Every high-performing ad does four jobs in sequence. Miss one and the whole thing leaks.

Job	Job to be done	If it fails...
Hook	Stop the scroll in 1-3 seconds	No one sees the rest
Hold	Keep attention with tension or value	They bounce before the point
Sell	Connect the product to their problem	Interest never becomes intent
Act	Make the next step obvious & easy	Intent never becomes a sale

The hook is 80% of the job

If the hook fails, nothing else matters. Test hooks relentlessly: the same body with five different openings often produces a 3-5x spread in performance. Hooks that work tend to lead with a sharp problem, a pattern interrupt, a bold claim with proof, or a relatable moment.

Build a creative testing engine

Winning creative is found, not guessed. Treat it like a portfolio: many small bets, fast reads, ruthless culling, then scale the winners.

The concept-angle-variation model

- Concept: the core idea (e.g. 'solves X in seconds'). Test a few concepts widely.
- Angle: the way you frame it (problem-led, social proof, founder story, demo).
- Variation: swap hooks, opening frames, captions on the winning angle.

This lets you find what works at the concept level, then squeeze maximum return from it at the variation level, instead of starting from scratch every time.

Structure tip: isolate proven winners in their own budget so they are protected and not starved by the platform spreading spend across weaker tests. Let the test campaign find winners; let the winner campaign scale them.

Judge creative by the right metric

It is easy to be fooled by a cheap click or a viral-feeling view. Judge creative on the metric that connects to money, and read the funnel to know which job is failing.

If this is weak...	The failing job is...	Fix the...
Low hook / hold rate	Hook or Hold	Opening 3 seconds, first line
Clicks but no sales	Sell or landing match	Offer clarity, page alignment
High cost per result	Whole-creative efficiency	Concept, or pause and reallocate
Good ROAS, low volume	Scale headroom	Add variations, raise budget gently

Cost per result and ROAS are the verdicts. Hook rate, hold rate and click-through are the diagnostics that tell you why. Read them together.

Your ROAS-first checklist

- ☐ Every ad has a deliberate hook tested against alternatives.
- ☐ Creative is built native to the platform and format.
- ☐ The product is tied to a real customer problem, not just shown.
- ☐ There is one clear, easy next step.
- ☐ Winners are isolated and protected in their own budget.
- ☐ Losers are killed quickly on a defined threshold.
- ☐ We judge on cost per result and ROAS, not vanity metrics.
- ☐ We always have fresh concepts in test to beat the current winner.

Want winning creative without the guesswork? We run the concept-to-scale engine for you, from hooks to testing to scaling. Get in touch at growthalchemy.com.

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