

How to Make Your Funnel Profitable Faster

The 10 Split Tests That Made the Biggest Difference



Lessons from 90 Days of Building a Real Funnel with Paid Traffic

Jonathan Howkins

Welcome



I'm Jonathan — and I'm not here to sell you the dream. I'm here to show you the reality.

Last year, I generated \$121,827 from a single \$27 guitar course.

- No high-ticket offers.
- No flashy launches.
- No guru tactics.

Just one product, Facebook ads, and consistent daily work. This year, I'm documenting my journey to double that to \$240K — openly and in real time.

That means you get to see:

- real dashboards
- actual ad spend
- daily revenue numbers
- and honest reactions when things don't go to plan (because they won't)

Every day, I share what I'm seeing in Ads Manager, the decisions I'm making, and what I'm learning — without polish, editing, or hindsight.

If you're a course creator who's tired of theoretical advice and wants to see what actually works in practice, you're in the right place.

I'm a small business owner just like you — proving that success doesn't require expensive courses or flashy tactics.

It requires persistence, testing, and focusing on what your audience actually wants.

This is entrepreneurship without the BS.

Welcome to the journey.

Introduction: Why Most Split-Test Advice Is Misleading

If you spend any time in the funnel world, it can feel like you're supposed to be testing constantly;

- New headlines.
- New hooks.
- New creatives.
- New funnels.

The problem is that most split-test advice is:

- Written in hindsight
- Based on edge cases
- Or disconnected from real constraints like budget, attention, and emotional energy.

Over the past 90 days, I've been documenting — publicly and honestly — what it's like to build and scale a real funnel using paid traffic.

Not just what worked. But what didn't. And why.

What follows are the 10 split tests and decisions that actually made a meaningful difference to the economics of the funnel.

- Some were obvious in retrospect.
- Some were uncomfortable at the time.
- One of them involved doing nothing at all.

1. Pricing the Front-End Offer: \$9.95 vs \$27

What was tested

The core front-end offer price was increased from \$9.95 to \$27, with no other meaningful changes to the funnel.

What happened

Conversion rate stayed almost exactly the same. Revenue per buyer — and overall profitability — increased dramatically.

Why this mattered

This single test changed the entire economics of the funnel. With a higher front-end price:

- Each customer was worth more
- Ads could be run more aggressively
- Margins improved without more complexity
- Scaling became calmer and more resilient

The key lesson

Many buyers are not buying price — they are buying the outcome. In some cases, a very low price can actually signal:

- Low value
- Low seriousness
- or a “small” solution

What to do

- Test price before rebuilding your funnel
- Keep everything else identical
- Track conversion rate and revenue per visitor
- Let the test run long enough to be meaningful

Pricing is the fastest way to transform profits — without touching ads or copy.

2. Adding an Order Bump at Checkout

What was tested

An order bump was added at checkout — a small, complementary offer presented at the point of purchase.

What happened

Average Order Value (AOV) increased immediately, without any change to:

- ads
- traffic volume
- or conversion rate on the core offer

Why this mattered

This was the first moment where profitability improved without touching acquisition.

It showed that:

- the funnel already had latent value
- not every improvement needs more traffic
- backend changes can outperform front-end tweaks

The key lesson

Before trying to get more customers, extract more value from the customers you already have.

What to do

- Add a simple, highly relevant order bump
- Keep the price low enough to feel “obvious”
- Don’t over-explain — clarity matters more than persuasion

Learn More here...

<https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-5-order-bumps>



3. Testing Different Order Bump Offers (Not All Bumps Are Equal)

What was tested

Different order bump ideas and positioning were tested — not just whether a bump existed, but what it actually was.

What happened

Some order bumps increased AOV. Others: reduced checkout completion.

Why this mattered

It disproved the idea that “any order bump is good”.

Relevance mattered more than:

Price
Cleverness
Or perceived value

The key lesson

An irrelevant order bump introduces friction at the worst possible moment.

What to do

Make sure your order bump:

- Solves the next problem
- Feels directly connected to the main purchase
- If conversion drops, remove or rethink it — don't force it

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-6-new-order-bump](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-6-new-order-bump)



4. VSL vs Non-VSL Sales Page

What was tested

A Video Sales Letter (VSL) was tested against a copy-led sales page.

What happened

The assumption that “VSLs always convert better” did not hold true automatically.

Performance depended on:

- clarity
- structure
- execution

Why this mattered

Many creators waste time building VSLs when the real issue is message clarity.

The key lesson

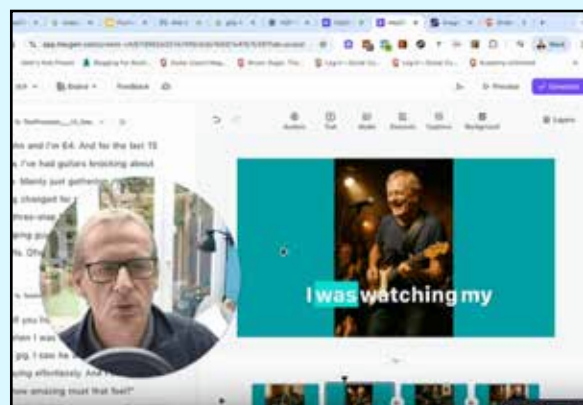
Format does not save weak communication.

What to do

- Don't default to VSLs
- Choose the format you can execute clearly
- Test structure before rebuilding formats

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-14-vsl-challenge-ai](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-14-vsl-challenge-ai)



5. Front-Loading the Pitch in the VSL

What was tested

The core promise, mechanism, and outcome were moved earlier in the video.

What happened

Engagement improved and conversions increased.

Why this mattered

It aligned the VSL with how people actually behave:

- short attention spans
- fast judgement
- early decision-making

The key lesson

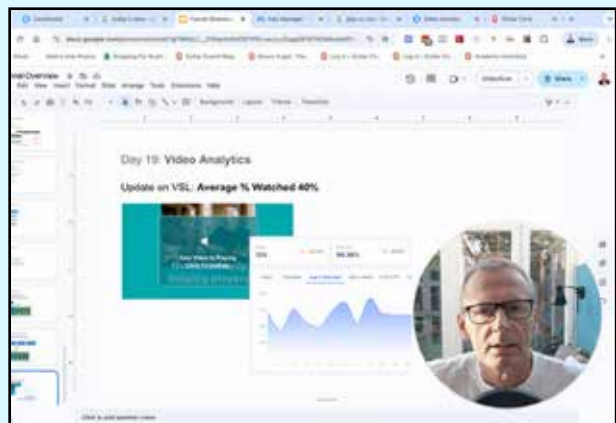
People don't need more suspense — they need clarity.

What to do

- Answer “what is this and who is it for?” immediately
- Earn attention by being clear, not mysterious
- Respect the viewer's time

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-19-doubled-conversions](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-19-doubled-conversions)



6. Repositioning the Upsell (Without Changing the Product)

What was tested

The upsell product stayed the same, but its framing changed.

Instead of: “Would you like this as well?”

It became: “This is the logical next step.”

What happened

Upsell acceptance increased.

Why this mattered

It showed that resistance wasn't about price or content — it was about context.

The key lesson

Positioning determines perceived necessity.

What to do

- Frame upsells as continuation, not add-ons
- Show how they complete the journey
- Avoid optional language

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-30-upsell-rethink](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-30-upsell-rethink)



7. Cart Abandon Email Recovery

What was tested

A simple cart-abandon email sequence was introduced.

What happened

Sales were recovered from people who:

- had high intent
- but didn't complete checkout

Why this mattered

These were customers the ads had already paid for.

The key lesson

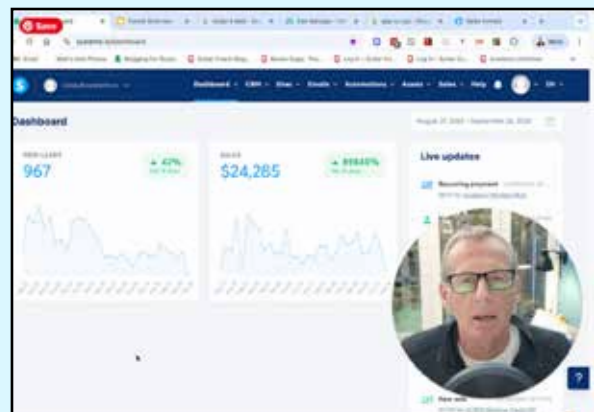
Recovery systems often outperform acquisition tweaks.

What to do

- Add a basic cart-abandon flow
- Keep it simple and human
- Don't over-automate

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-26-cart-recovery](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-26-cart-recovery)



8. Retargeting vs Sending Traffic Back to the Core Offer

What was tested

Whether retargeting ads were actually profitable versus focusing traffic on the main funnel.

What happened

Retargeting underperformed expectations.

Why this mattered

It challenged a widely accepted “best practice”.

The key lesson

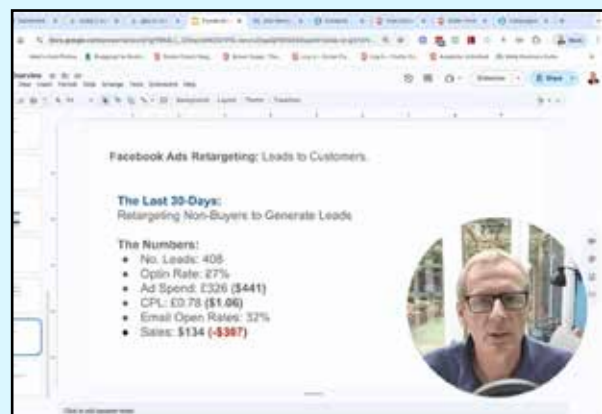
Common advice isn't universal — your funnel economics matter more.

What to do

- Test retargeting instead of assuming it works
- Compare it honestly against core traffic
- Follow the data, not dogma

Learn More here...

<https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-10-retargeting-losses>



9. Letting Winning Ads Run Longer

What was tested

Winning ads were allowed to run without frequent creative changes.

What happened

Performance stayed stable — often better than when ads were refreshed too quickly.

Why this mattered

It reduced noise and false conclusions.

The key lesson

Impatience often looks like optimisation.

What to do

- Define clear criteria for creative fatigue
- Avoid changing ads out of boredom
- Protect clean data

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-37-auto-pilot](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-37-auto-pilot)



10. The Most Overlooked Test: Doing Nothing (Deliberately)

What was tested

The funnel was left alone — intentionally.

What happened

Some of the clearest learning of the entire quarter emerged.

Why this mattered

It revealed how much interference distorts understanding.

The key lesson

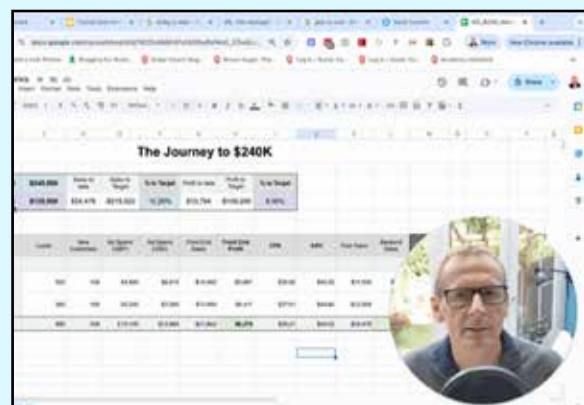
Restraint is a competitive advantage.

What to do

- Schedule observation periods
- Resist unnecessary tweaks
- Let systems reveal their behaviour

Learn More here...

[https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/
blog/day-35-review](https://www.jonathanhowkins.com/blog/day-35-review)



Before You Go... One Important Thing

If you've made it this far, you'll have noticed something. None of the split tests in this report worked in isolation.

Each one:

- built on what came before
- depended on timing and context
- and only made sense because of the decisions around it

That's the part most funnel advice leaves out.

Why This Report Exists

This report is a snapshot from a much longer journey. I'm publicly documenting an entire 12-month process of building and scaling real funnels — sharing:

- the decisions as they're made
- the mistakes while they're still uncomfortable
- the reasoning before outcomes are guaranteed
- and the lessons while they're still fresh

The goal isn't to teach tactics. It's to show: how to think while building funnels — not just what to build.

What Comes Next

Over time, all of this is being shaped into a structured programme called:

The Funnel Blueprint

This won't be a traditional course. It's being built as a living system, made up of:

- monthly reports
- action checklists
- daily insight digests
- quarterly summaries
- and ongoing reflections

It's designed to:

- save people time
- reduce expensive mistakes
- provide clarity during uncertainty
- and support real decision-making

Why I'm Not "Launching" This Yet

Because the value comes from documenting the journey honestly — not rushing to sell it.

Some parts already exist. Some are still being built. The most useful insights are often the ones that emerge mid-process, not at the end.

When it's ready to be shared more widely, you'll hear about it.

- No countdown timers.
- No pressure.
- No artificial urgency.

If You Want to Stay in the Loop

If this report resonated, the simplest thing to do is:

- keep an eye on your inbox
- follow along as new insights are shared
- and decide later if the Blueprint is right for you

You'll be the first to know:

- when new resources are released
- when deeper breakdowns are available
- and when the Blueprint opens more fully

One Last Thought

Most people don't struggle because they lack information. They struggle because:

- they're making decisions without context
- they're reacting instead of observing
- and they don't know what not to change

If this brief report helped even a little with that, then it's done its job. Thanks for taking the time to read it —and I'll keep you updated as the journey continues.

Jonathan

