



The AI App Builder's Checklist

Eight laws to build and scale an AI app. Run your product against them in about ten minutes.

Building your app was the easy part. These eight checks decide whether it finds real customers or stalls after launch. Check every box you can defend honestly.

1. Customer Truth

- ☐ I can name the painful problem, exactly who has it, and why they would pay to solve it.
- ☐ My app clearly beats prompting a raw model directly for that job.

2. Positioning Is Survival

- ☐ I can state who I serve, the one job I do, and why me over other apps and a raw model.
- ☐ My wedge is narrow and specific, not "AI tool for everyone."

3. Unit Economics That Survive Scale

- ☐ I know my cost per active user, including inference.
- ☐ I know my margin after model costs, plus CAC, LTV, and payback period.
- ☐ My margins still work at 10x my current users.

4. Distribution

- ☐ I have one repeatable channel that produces customers without paying per click.
- ☐ I can name exactly how a new user finds me next week.

5. A Moat Beyond "Better AI"

- ☐ My advantage is more than the model I happen to use.
- ☐ I am building at least one of: proprietary data or feedback loop, workflow lock-in, earned trust.

6. Decision Velocity

- ☐ I have three goals across growth, economics, and retention.
- ☐ I filter every new model and feature against those goals before building.

7. Talent and Users Follow Trust

- ☐ My early users are treated as co-builders and shape the roadmap.
- ☐ The people who worked with me early would do it again.



8. Built to Run Without Me

- ☐ My prompts and evals are documented.
- ☐ I would know within a day if a model update broke my output.
- ☐ The app can run for a week without me watching it.

SCORE IT: 18-20 checks, you have the fundamentals. 12-17, you have a roadmap. Under 12, stop building and fix the gaps first.