

12 Experiment Alternatives to A/B Tests

Typical time in 2026
AI turns most of these into hours instead of days

Test smaller, learn faster. Pick a test by what you have available.

NO BUILD NEEDED

**Wizard of Oz**

1-2 days

Do it by hand before you build it.
e.g. A colleague answers the “chatbot” chats for a week.

**User Testing**

1 week

Talk to people first when the idea is still vague.
e.g. 5 interviews, a customer panel, or the street.

**Webinar / YouTube Live**

1 week

See if people give their time before their money.
e.g. “How I solve X”, promoted with a few ads.

**Pre-sale / Crowdfunding**

1-2 weeks

Sell it before it exists.
e.g. A pre-order page with an early-bird price.

NO DEVELOPER NEEDED

**Fake Door**

hours

Build only the button and count the clicks.
e.g. “Watch Video Resume” → “Not available for you yet”.

**Separate Landing Page**

1 day

One page per idea, measure sign-ups.
e.g. A no-code page for a new proposition.

**Manual CMS Data**

hours

Fake a feature with content edits.
e.g. A hand-placed “Recommended” label on a few products.

**Email Campaign**

1-3 days

Fast, cheap and hardly any politics.
e.g. Two offers or subject lines to one segment.

PAID REACH

**Search Ads**

3-7 days

Test propositions on people who are already searching.
e.g. Three headlines, compare the click-through.

**Social Ads**

3-7 days

Test a new audience, or even a new brand name.
e.g. Visuals × copy × targeting.

LIGHT DEVELOPMENT

**A/B Test: Text Only**

1 day

Change one visible title, and make it a big change.
e.g. Your homepage headline, nothing else.

**A/B Test: CSS Only**

1-2 days

Hide, resize or recolour, without new code.
e.g. Hide a distracting block on mobile.

Pro tip from Ward: many of these tests are proof that your idea deserves an A/B test, or even development.