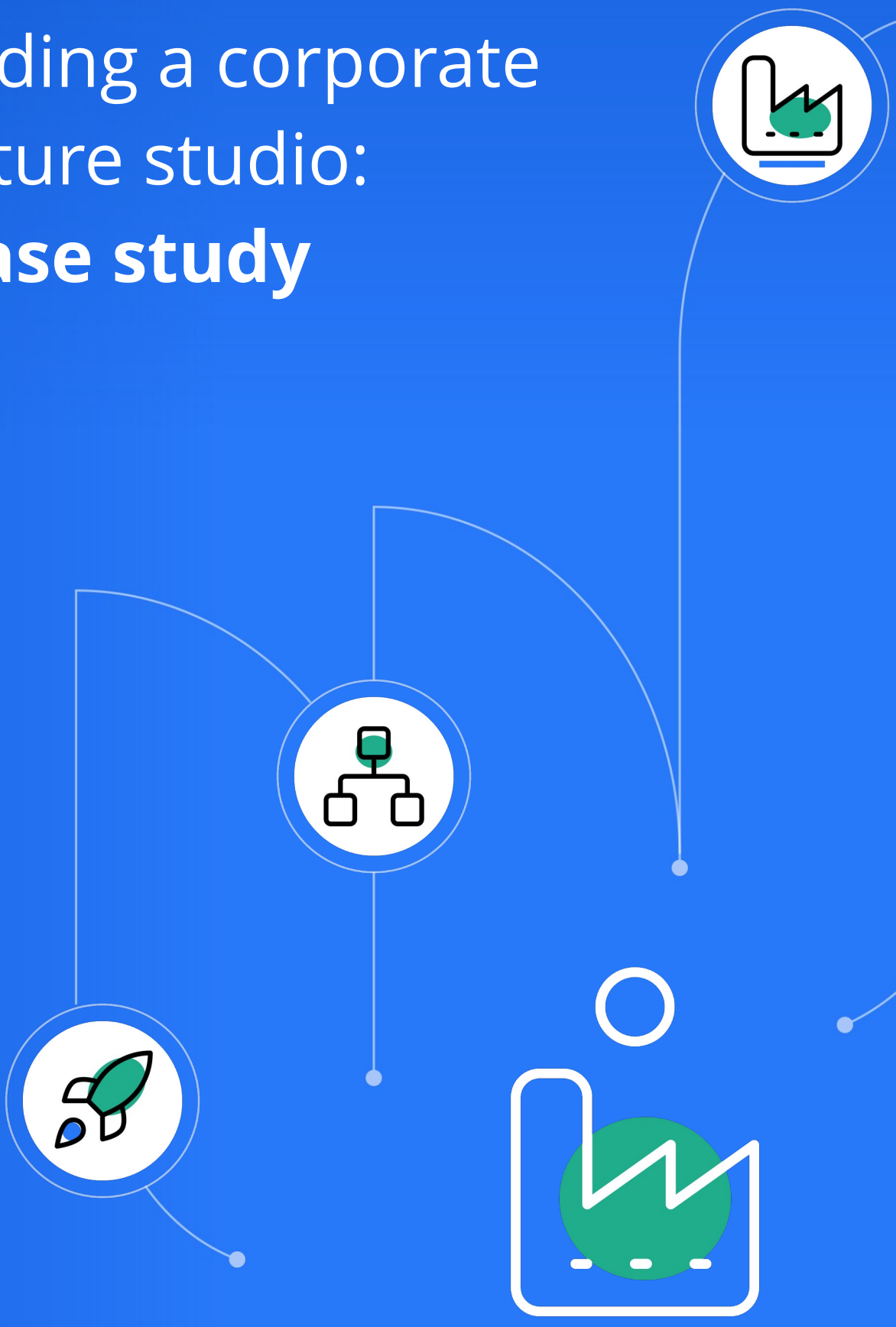
Stryber

Building a corporate venture studio: **A case study**



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A venture studio, from the ground up

Stryber designs, builds and runs a venture studio for a large Swiss conglomerate – and hands it over to the client's own team

Our client, a large Swiss conglomerate with divisions in multiple industries, wanted to build new digital businesses. But innovation happened at random: the group had no clear innovation strategy and no blueprint for taking a new business from seed to scale.

Together with the top management team, Stryber designed a bespoke innovation framework and set up a new digital business unit outside the core organization: a venture studio with the mandate to grow ideas into companies.

Stryber built the studio from the ground up, ran its venture building operations for three years, and then transferred all operations and know-how to the studio's own team.

40+
people in the venture studio team

Close to 30
ventures, either built or invested in

Project at a glance

CLIENT
Large Swiss conglomerate with divisions in multiple industries (name confidential)

INDUSTRY
Diversified

REGION
Switzerland

PROJECT TYPE
Venture studio: build, operate, transfer

OBJECTIVE
Build new digital businesses systematically, outside the core organization

PROJECT TIMELINE
Three years in charge of venture building operations, then full hand-over

TEAM
Two Stryber co-founders in interim executive roles and an initial operating team

METHODS & TOOLS
Innovation governance framework · Investment theses · Stage-gated venture building

OUTCOME
Venture studio with a team of 40+ and a portfolio of close to 30 ventures

The headline results: a studio that runs on its own

Within three years, the venture studio grew into a unit with its own team, portfolio and governance, and took over all operations from Stryber.

- ✓ **Venture studio with a team of 40+**
- ✓ **Close to 30 ventures built or invested in**
- ✓ **Operations and know-how fully transferred**

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From random ideas to a venture engine

Before the engagement, the group had no systematic way to create new businesses. Four issues stood out:

No clear innovation strategy

Across the group, innovation happened at random, if at all.

No customer-centric framework

No framework or blueprint was in place to develop innovation in a customer-centric way.

No path from seed to scale

There was no blueprint for taking a new business from the seed stage to the scale stage.

The innovator's dilemma

New ventures needed the input and expertise of the business units, yet had to be incubated outside existing boundaries.

The solution: three building blocks

01

A bespoke innovation framework

Designed with the top management team. It delivers faster results at lower risk through an iterative process that feeds into learning loops.

02

A dedicated venture studio

A new digital business unit with its own governance structure, operating model, strategic sectors and budgets.

03

A blueprint to build and invest

A best-in-class blueprint and organization for corporate venture building, corporate venture capital and M&A.

STRYBER'S ROLE

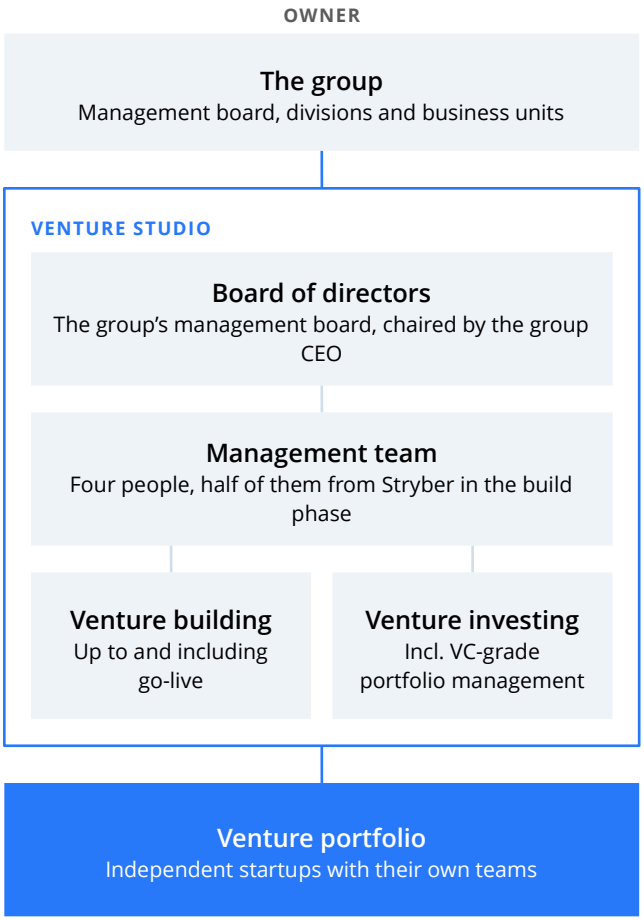
- ✓ Moderating the strategic process with the top management team
- ✓ Running venture building operations for three years, as half of the four-person management team
- ✓ Building the venture studio from the ground up
- ✓ Hiring entrepreneurial talent for the venture studio and its ventures

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Close to the group, outside the core

The venture studio works outside the core organization, with a team of its own and a governance that keeps the group's top management directly involved.

GOVERNANCE AT A GLANCE (SIMPLIFIED)



KEY GOVERNANCE INSTRUMENTS

Two instruments, jointly developed

1 Innovation governance framework

Sets out how the group and the studio work together – including "10 commandments" such as pure customer focus.

2 Investment theses

A clear thesis for each search field guides all company building and investment decisions.

FIVE SEARCH FIELDS

- E-commerce
- Fintech
- Digital health
- Logistics tech
- Community, lifestyle & happiness

A MIXED TEAM

Stryber specialists work alongside people hired exclusively for the studio.

The operating principle: build, operate, transfer

BUILD
Stryber sets up the studio and staffs the initial operating team.

OPERATE
Stryber runs venture building while the studio hires and trains its own team.

TRANSFER
All operations and know-how move to the studio's own team.

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From signal to startup

The studio turns market signals into independent companies in a stage-gated process. Typically, it takes six to nine months from the selection of a topic to the end of the MVP market test.

1. **Scout**
   Tens of thousands of startups worldwide are monitored systematically, alongside signals from inside the group.
2. **Shortlist**
   The signals are analyzed and condensed into a shortlist of the most promising business ideas.
3. **Validate**
   A one-week topic validation sprint analyzes the business model in depth.
4. **Prototype**
   A prototyping phase follows if the outcome of the sprint is positive.
5. **MVP market test**
   A minimum viable product stays in the market for a couple of months to generate enough data.
6. **Carve-out**
   If the core hypotheses are validated, the venture becomes an independent startup with its own legal entity, management team and operations.

Three criteria every venture must meet

Customer value
It improves customers' quality of life.

Attractive business
The business model is financially attractive in itself.

Right to play
The group's assets can support the venture in the scale-up phase.

The venture building funnel

14,000+	240+	20+	6–9 months
signals shortlisted	ventures validated	MVPs built and launched	from topic selection to the end of the MVP market test

Venture building only, excluding M&A and venture capital activities; the studio's first four and a half years.

Build or invest: for every topic, the studio makes a make-or-buy decision. If a business model can be built, the studio starts the venture itself; otherwise, it invests in an existing company.

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Corporate assets, startup speed

VENTURE EXAMPLE

An e-commerce venture with its own last-mile delivery

One of the studio's first ventures shows how the model works. Starting from a market signal, the team validated the topic, prepared the MVP and served the first test customers – all in less than three months.

When the MVP ended with a go decision, funding was secured and the venture was spun off as an independent company to enter the growth stage.

After two years, the venture had achieved product-market fit and was ready for scale. For the next growth phase, it was merged with an existing online offering of the group to benefit further from the parent's brand and customer base.

< 3 months
from the initial idea to the first customers

> 5%
of households in the delivery area ordering from the venture

CORPORATE ASSETS

Six group assets that gave the venture a head start

Data
Access to the group's product data

Operations
Use of the group's supply chains and existing sites

Infrastructure
Rental of expensive components and support in real-estate scouting

Legal
Support with legal questions and contract drafting

Human resources
Employment contracts and recruiting support through the group's employer brand

Brand and storytelling
Customer acquisition and PR linked to the group's brand

From topic validation to spin-off decision

LESS THAN THREE MONTHS

Topic validation › MVP preparation › First test customers › Go-live › MVP end: go decision › Funding secured, spin-off decision

Where ventures go after the studio

- Run by the studio as portfolio companies
- Merged with an existing business of the group
- Handed over to companies of the group
- Acquired by a market leader

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Outcomes & impact: fully handed over

A studio that stands on its own

Built from the ground up and initially operated and backed with Stryber resources, the venture studio grew into a team of 40+. Within three years, it built or invested in close to 30 ventures.

Stryber then transferred all operations and know-how to the studio's own team.

40+
people in the venture studio team

Close to 30
ventures, either built or invested in

3 years
of venture building operations run by Stryber

2 of 4
management team seats held by Stryber in the build phase

What made it work: seven success factors

01
Clear governance
An innovation governance framework between the group and the studio.

02
Coordinated focus
Investment theses give innovation a clear, shared direction.

03
C-level sponsorship
The management board sponsors the studio; the group CEO chairs its board.

04
Content-driven lead
A clear, content-driven lead by Stryber for the development phase.

05
Build, operate, transfer
Operations start with Stryber resources; new hires and training bring them in-house.

06
No resource recycling
All studio staff are new hires, selected in a rigorous application process.

07
Independent venture teams
After spin-off or go-live, startups get their own teams, recruited mostly externally.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Long-term know-how is built inside the organization, not kept outside.

About Stryber

Stryber builds and executes high-impact programs that create credible equity stories and scalable new businesses.

Planning a venture studio of your own? Reach out to Stryber: www.stryber.com


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