

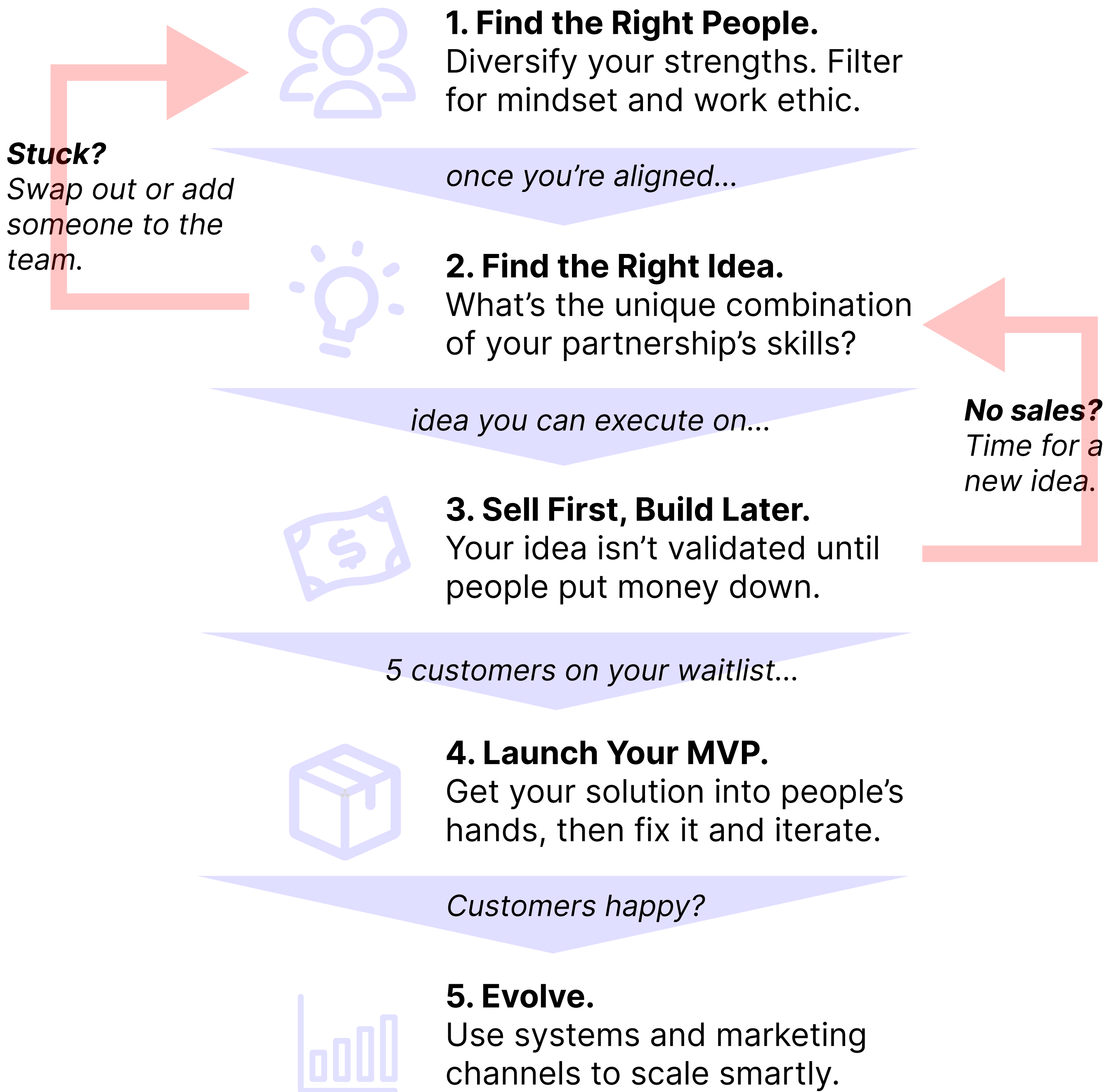
LOW THE RISK BUSINESS



**CHEAT
SHEET**

MICHAEL J. SULLIVAN

MY 5-STEP LOW-RISK BUSINESS BUILDING PROCESS



Move step-by-step, **validating at each stage** before committing more time & money.

Core insights for each step

Step 1: Find the Right People

- Great businesses start with the right partners, not ideas.
- Use a SWOT analysis to assess your skills & gaps.
- Look for partners who bring missing expertise or funding—not just “believers” in your idea.

Step 2: Find the Right Idea

- Copy + Improve: "Same but Different" — take a proven model & add a small twist.
- Test with the Envelope Method: If you can't explain how it makes money on an envelope, it's too complex.
- Look for a moat: Does your idea have built-in defensibility (brand, scale, exclusive access)?

Steps 3 & 4: Sell First, Build Later + MVP

- Pre-sell before building. If you can't get 5 people to pay you, pivot or adjust.
- Launch the simplest version (MVP). No fancy branding, no extra features.
- Use the "Affordable Loss" principle → Take small, low-risk bets instead of high-stakes investments.

Step 5: Evolve (Find Customers & Scale Smartly)

- Bullseye Method: Find the one marketing channel that drives 70% of your customers—ignore the rest.
- Systemize everything → EOS (strategy), StoryBrand (marketing), Topgrading (hiring).
- Expect growing pains: Every system breaks at 3, 10, 30, and 100 employees. Plan ahead.

Your quickstart checklist

Before you start, ask yourself:

- ✓ Does my idea pass the **Envelope Test?** (Can you explain how your business will make money on the back of an envelope? Inputs, expenses, and profit?)
- ✓ Have I validated it by getting **real customer interest?**
- ✓ Can I get at least **5 paying customers** before investing heavily?
- ✓ Do I know my **1-2 core marketing channels?**
- ✓ Am I prepared to **build systems**, not just hustle?

Next steps

Want the full playbook? My full "Low-Risk Business" ebook is 40 pages of exercises, systems, and walk-throughs for every step of this process.

[Get it here](#) for just \$29.

For more free resources & templates, check out girdley.com/products.

Thanks for reading!
- Michael

