The Founder Launch Kit

Eight production-ready documents to take your startup from idea to first customers — no fluff, no theory.

WHAT'S INSIDE

These templates are written for early-stage founders — pre-seed through seed — who need to move fast and communicate clearly. Fill in the bracketed fields and make each document your own.

GETTING STARTED

How to Use This Kit

Every document in this kit is production-ready. That means you do not need to rethink structure, rewrite from scratch, or spend hours on formatting. Your only job is to replace the bracketed fields with information specific to your startup and your market.

The brackets — written as [YOUR TEXT HERE] or described in italics — are deliberate placeholders. They mark the decisions only you can make: your customer, your problem, your numbers, your voice. Everything else is already written.

The order matters.

Work through the documents in sequence. The ICP (Document 02) feeds your pitch deck. Your customer interviews (Document 03) validate the ICP. The MVP definition (Document 04) flows from what you learn in those interviews. The go-to-market plan (Document 06) only works once you know who you are selling to and what you are selling.

A note on voice.

These templates are written in direct, clear language — the same voice used across FounderFAQs. When you fill in the blanks, match that directness. Investors, customers, and advisors respond better to founders who say exactly what they mean than to founders who dress up uncertainty in corporate language.

> **REMINDER:** Do not share this document publicly. These templates are for your internal use and for sharing with investors, advisors, and your immediate team.

DOCUMENT 01

01 Pitch Deck Script

This is a slide-by-slide narrative script. Copy each slide's text directly into your presentation tool of choice — Slides, PowerPoint, or Notion. The structure follows the sequence investors expect: problem before solution, market before product, traction before the ask.

Each slide contains the text you should write. Keep visuals minimal. The words carry the argument.

SLIDE 1 — COVER

Company Name: *[Your startup name]*

Positioning Statement: *[One sentence: what you do, for whom, and why it matters]*

SLIDE 2 — PROBLEM

Most [target customers] struggle with [core problem]. Today they manage this by [existing workaround], which leads to [specific consequence 1], [specific consequence 2], and [specific consequence 3].

The result is wasted time, lost revenue, and a compounding gap between where they are and where they need to be.

SLIDE 3 — SOLUTION

[Your startup name] solves this by [core mechanism — one sentence].

We give [target customer] the ability to [specific capability] without [the painful thing they currently have to do]. The result is [primary outcome] in [timeframe].

SLIDE 4 — MARKET

Total Addressable Market (TAM): *[$ size or number of potential users globally]*

Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM): *[$ size of the segment you can realistically reach]*

Initial Beachhead: *[Specific niche you are targeting first and why]*

SLIDE 5 — PRODUCT

[Your startup name] is built around three capabilities:

[Core capability 1] — [what it does and why it matters to the user]
[Core capability 2] — [what it does and why it matters to the user]
[Core capability 3] — [what it does and why it matters to the user]

Users can get started in [timeframe]. There is no [painful onboarding step they expect].

SLIDE 6 — BUSINESS MODEL

Model type: *[Subscription / usage-based / marketplace / other]*

Starter tier: *[Name] — $[X]/month — [who it's for and what's included]*

Growth tier: *[Name] — $[X]/month — [who it's for and what's included]*

Scale tier: *[Name] — Custom — [enterprise or high-volume customers]*

SLIDE 7 — GO-TO-MARKET

We acquire users through [primary channel], supported by [secondary channel]. Our initial distribution relies on [specific tactic — e.g. founder-led outbound, community seeding, SEO].

We do not spend on paid acquisition until we have validated [specific activation or retention metric].

SLIDE 8 — TRACTION

Users: *[Number of active users or signups]*

Revenue: *[MRR or ARR, or 'Pre-revenue' if applicable]*

Growth: *[Month-over-month growth rate]*

Retention: *[% of users who return week-over-week or month-over-month]*

Key proof point: *[One signal that demand is real — e.g. paid customers, waitlist, LOIs]*

SLIDE 9 — TEAM

[Founder name] — [Role]. [One sentence on relevant experience or why you are the right person to build this.]

[Co-founder name, if applicable] — [Role]. [One sentence.]

[Advisor or notable supporter, if applicable] — [Context.]

SLIDE 10 — THE ASK

Raising: *$[amount]*

Use of funds: *[3–4 specific uses: e.g. product, hiring, acquisition, runway]*

Runway: *[X months of runway this round provides]*

What we will have achieved by then: *[Specific milestone — e.g. $X ARR, X customers, specific product release]*

DOCUMENT 02

02 Ideal Customer Profile

Your ICP is not a persona. It is a precise description of the exact company or person who has the most urgent version of the problem you solve, the budget to pay for a solution, and the authority to make a purchasing decision. Fill this out before you write any marketing copy, send any outbound messages, or build any features.

Be ruthless. The more specific this document, the more useful every other document in this kit becomes.

The Primary Customer

Job title or role: *[e.g. Head of Operations, Founder, Growth Lead]*

Company type: *[e.g. B2B SaaS startup, e-commerce brand, professional services firm]*

Company size (employees): *[e.g. 10–50, 50–200]*

Company revenue range: *[e.g. $500K–$5M ARR]*

Industry: *[Be specific — not 'tech' but 'vertical SaaS for logistics']*

Geography: *[e.g. US-based, English-speaking markets, Southeast Asia]*

Their Core Problem

Write this in their language, not yours. If you have done customer interviews, pull exact phrases from those conversations.

What is the problem they experience, in their own words?

____

____

____

What does this problem cost them? (time, money, reputation, missed opportunity)

____

____

When the Problem Becomes Urgent

Problems become purchasing decisions when a trigger event occurs. Identify the trigger.

Trigger 1: *[e.g. They just hired their 10th employee and coordination is breaking down]*

Trigger 2: *[e.g. A key customer churned and they need to understand why]*

Trigger 3: *[e.g. They missed a quarterly target and the team is looking for a fix]*

How They Evaluate Solutions

Primary buying criterion: *[e.g. Speed of implementation — they cannot afford a 6-month rollout]*

Secondary buying criterion: *[e.g. Ease of integration — they are not technical and need no-code setup]*

Primary objection: *[e.g. 'We already tried a tool like this and it didn't stick']*

How you address that objection: *[e.g. 'We offer a 14-day hands-on onboarding — not just a trial']*

The Decision Process

Who identifies the problem?: *[Role]*

Who evaluates solutions?: *[Role]*

Who signs off on the purchase?: *[Role — budget owner]*

Typical evaluation timeline: *[e.g. 2–4 weeks from first contact to decision]*

> **FOUNDER NOTE:** If you cannot fill in all of these fields with confidence, you need more customer conversations before writing any marketing copy. Use Document 03 to run those interviews.

DOCUMENT 03

03 Customer Discovery Interview Script

Customer discovery is not a sales call. It is a listening exercise. Your goal in each conversation is to understand the problem as the customer experiences it — not to pitch your solution. The moment you start selling, you stop learning.

This script gives you a conversation structure that surfaces real pain, real behavior, and real buying signals. Run at least ten of these interviews before drawing any conclusions.

Before the Call

Interviewee name: [ ]

Company: [ ]

Role: [ ]

How you found them: *[referral / cold outreach / community / other]*

Date: [ ]

Opening (2 minutes)

Say this at the start of every call, word for word:

"Hi [name], thanks for making the time. I am talking to [describe customer type] to understand how they currently handle [describe the problem area]. This is not a sales call — I am not pitching anything today. I am just trying to learn from people who are living this problem. Everything you share stays between us. Does that work?"

Then wait. Let them respond. Do not fill the silence.

Core Questions (15–25 minutes)

Q1 Walk me through how you currently handle [the problem area]. What does that look like on a typical week?

Notes: ____

Q2 When was the last time this caused a real problem for you? What happened?

Notes: ____

Q3 What was the most frustrating part of that situation?

Notes: ____

Q4 Have you tried to fix this before? What did you try? What didn't work about it?

Notes: ____

Q5 How much time or money do you think this problem costs you per month, roughly?

Notes: ____

Q6 If this problem disappeared tomorrow, what would change for you?

Notes: ____

Q7 Who else in your organization is affected by this?

Notes: ____

Q8 Who would be involved in a decision to bring in a new tool or solution for this?

Notes: ____

Closing (2 minutes)

"This has been incredibly useful. Before we wrap up — is there anything about this problem that I haven't asked about but that you think I should understand?"

[Listen fully.]

"Would you be open to staying in touch as I continue to work on this? And is there anyone else you think I should speak with who deals with this challenge?"

[Get the referral before hanging up.]

After the Call — Notes to Capture

Most painful moment they described: [ ]
Exact phrase they used that surprised you: [ ]
Current workaround or tool they use: [ ]
Who else is involved in decisions: [ ]
Buying signals heard: *[e.g. 'If something could do X, I would pay for it immediately']*
Red flags or disqualifiers: [ ]
Referrals to follow up with: [ ]

DOCUMENT 04

04 MVP Definition Document

This document answers a single question: what is the smallest version of your product that proves the core hypothesis and delivers real value to real users? Everything else comes later. The discipline here is cutting, not adding.

Share this document with your co-founder, your first engineering hire, and any advisors reviewing your roadmap. If everyone agrees on what is in and what is out before you build, you will ship faster and argue less.

The Core Hypothesis

Write one sentence that your MVP either proves or disproves.

We believe that [specific customer] will [take this action] to solve [specific problem] because [specific reason].

The Target User for This MVP

Who, specifically, is this MVP for?: *[One sentence — tighter than your full ICP if necessary]*

How will you recruit the first 10 users?: *[Personal network / community / cold outreach / other]*

The Happy Path

Describe the shortest possible journey from 'user arrives' to 'user gets value.' Write it as a numbered sequence of steps. If it takes more than five steps, cut something.

Step 1: *[Describe the step]*

Step 2: *[Describe the step]*

Step 3: *[Describe the step]*

Step 4: *[Describe the step]*

Step 5: *[Describe the step]*

What This MVP Includes

Only list features that directly support the happy path above.

Feature 1: [Feature name] — *[Why it is essential to the happy path]*

Feature 2: [Feature name] — *[Why it is essential to the happy path]*

Feature 3: [Feature name] — *[Why it is essential to the happy path]*

What This MVP Explicitly Does NOT Include

List everything you are deliberately leaving out. This section protects you from scope creep.

Not in scope 1: *[Feature or capability]* — *Reason: [why it can wait]*

Not in scope 2: *[Feature or capability]* — *Reason: [why it can wait]*

Not in scope 3: *[Feature or capability]* — *Reason: [why it can wait]*

Not in scope 4: *[Feature or capability]* — *Reason: [why it can wait]*

Success Criteria

The MVP is successful if, within [X weeks], the following is true:

Activation metric: *[e.g. User completes core action within 10 minutes of signup]*

Value delivery metric: *[e.g. User achieves stated goal without asking for help]*

Retention signal: *[e.g. User returns at least twice in the first 14 days]*

Willingness-to-pay signal: *[e.g. At least 3 users say they would pay $X/month for continued access]*

BUILD RULE: If a feature does not directly move one of the four success metrics above, it does not belong in the MVP. Schedule it for a future release and write it down somewhere so you don't lose it — just don't build it yet.

DOCUMENT 05

05 Pricing Architecture

Pricing is a positioning decision before it is a revenue decision. The tiers you choose, the names you give them, and the features you include at each level communicate who you are built for and what you believe your product is worth.

This document gives you a three-tier structure. Customize the names, prices, and included features based on what you learned in your customer interviews.

Pricing Philosophy

In one sentence, describe the core value metric — what do customers get more of as they pay more?

Tier 1 — Entry

Tier name: *[e.g. Starter / Solo / Essentials]*

Monthly price: *$[X]/month*

Annual price (if applicable): *$[X]/year (saves $[Y])*

Who it is for: *[The individual or smallest team trying the product]*

What is included:

- ✓ *[Feature or limit 1]*
- ✓ *[Feature or limit 2]*
- ✓ *[Feature or limit 3]*

What is NOT included at this tier: *[The key feature that drives upgrade]*

Tier 2 — Growth

Tier name: *[e.g. Growth / Team / Pro]*

Monthly price: *$[X]/month*

Annual price (if applicable): *$[X]/year (saves $[Y])*

Who it is for: *[Small teams who are past validation and need scale]*

What is included:

- ✓ *[Everything in Tier 1, plus: feature or limit 1]*
- ✓ *[Everything in Tier 1, plus: feature or limit 2]*
- ✓ *[Everything in Tier 1, plus: feature or limit 3]*
- ✓ *[Everything in Tier 1, plus: feature or limit 4]*

Tier 3 — Scale

Tier name: *[e.g. Scale / Enterprise / Business]*

Pricing model: *Custom — [annual contract, seat-based, or usage-based]*

Who it is for: *[Larger teams or companies needing advanced control, SLAs, or dedicated support]*

What is included:

- ✓ *Everything in Tier 2, plus:*
- ✓ *Dedicated onboarding support*
- ✓ *Custom integrations or API access*
- ✓ *SLA and uptime commitments*
- ✓ *Quarterly business reviews*

Pricing Design Principles

Tier 1 should remove all friction to try. If the barrier is too high, you will not learn fast enough. Tier 2 should capture the majority of your revenue — price it where the core value is undeniable. Tier 3 should align with customer expansion, not just seat count.

Do not offer a free tier until you have proven people will pay. Freemium works as a growth strategy, not as a validation strategy.

> **PRICING TEST:** Before you publish these prices, ask five potential customers: 'At what price would this feel like a steal? At what price would you hesitate? At what price would you walk away?' Their answers will calibrate your tiers faster than any spreadsheet model.

DOCUMENT 06

06 30-Day Go-To-Market Plan

This is not a marketing strategy. This is a sprint plan. Thirty days. One primary goal: get your first paying customers and learn enough to know what to do in month two.

Fill in the specific actions you will take each week. Keep each task small enough to complete in a single day. If it takes more than one day, break it down further.

Primary goal for this 30-day sprint: *[e.g. 5 paying customers / 50 activated users / $1,000 MRR]*

Primary channel for this sprint: *[e.g. Founder-led outbound / community / LinkedIn / referrals]*

Who is accountable for execution?: *[Name — this works better when one person owns it]*

WEEK 1 — FOUNDATION

Set up the infrastructure for everything that follows. Nothing customer-facing yet — just the systems and clarity you need to move fast.

- ☐ Finalize your one-sentence positioning statement
- ☐ Publish or finalize your landing page
- ☐ Write and review your ICP (Document 02)
- ☐ Identify 30 specific people to contact in Week 2
- ☐ Set up your CRM or tracking sheet
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*

WEEK 2 — FIRST CONTACT

Reach out personally. No automation yet. The goal is conversations, not conversions.

- ☐ Send personalized outreach to 30 target contacts (10 per day)
- ☐ Post 3 times on the platform where your ICP spends time
- ☐ Schedule and run at least 5 discovery calls
- ☐ Onboard your first 1–3 users, however you can get them
- ☐ Capture every objection and every piece of positive feedback
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*

WEEK 3 — ACTIVE ACQUISITION

Double down on what worked in Week 2. Add one new channel.

- ☐ Follow up with every Week 2 contact who did not respond
- ☐ Ask your first users for referrals and testimonials
- ☐ Launch in one community where your ICP is active
- ☐ Publish one piece of content that demonstrates expertise
- ☐ Run a second round of outreach to 20 new contacts
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*

WEEK 4 — OPTIMIZE AND COMMIT

Review what happened, find the highest-leverage channel, and prepare to scale it.

- ☐ Review your activation data — where are users dropping off?

- ☐ Improve the single biggest drop-off point in your onboarding
- ☐ Identify which acquisition channel produced the most results
- ☐ Define your Month 2 goal based on what you learned
- ☐ Set up a repeatable system for whichever channel worked best
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*
- ☐ *[Add your own task for this week]*

Weekly Review Questions

At the end of each week, answer these three questions before starting the next:

→ What worked — and why?

→ What did not work — and what would I change?

→ What is the most important thing to do in the next 7 days?

DOCUMENT 07

07 Landing Page Copy

Your landing page has one job: get the right person to take one action. Every word either supports that or gets in the way. This template gives you the copy structure. You fill in the specifics. Then cut by 30%. Write for the person who lands on your page in the middle of experiencing the problem — not someone calmly evaluating options. They are frustrated. They are searching for a way out. Talk to that person.

HEADLINE

Your headline must do three things: identify the customer, name the problem, and imply the solution. Write at least five versions and test them.

Option A: *[Version 1 — problem-focused]*

Option B: *[Version 2 — outcome-focused]*

Option C: *[Version 3 — customer-focused]*

Chosen headline: *[The one you will use]*

SUBHEADLINE

One sentence that expands on the headline. Name who you help, what you help them do, and what they avoid.

Subheadline: *[Company name] helps [target user] achieve [primary outcome] without [old painful method or tool].*

PROBLEM BLOCK

Write 2–3 sentences. Do not describe your solution here. Describe their life before your solution. Make them feel seen.

Problem narrative: *[Write 2–3 sentences from the customer's perspective — what they experience, what frustrates them, what they've tried that hasn't worked]*

SOLUTION BLOCK

Introduce your product. Keep it to what it does and what that means for the user.

Solution statement: *We built [company name] to [do this specific thing]. That means [specific user] can finally [achieve this outcome] — [in this timeframe / without this barrier].*

SOCIAL PROOF

One strong testimonial beats a page of feature descriptions.

Testimonial 1: *"[Exact quote from a real user — get permission first]." — [Name, Title, Company]*

Testimonial 2: *"[Second testimonial if available]." — [Name, Title, Company]*

PRIMARY CTA

One button. One action. No menu of options.

CTA text: *[e.g. Get Early Access / Start Free / Request a Demo]*

Supporting line below CTA: *[e.g. No credit card required. Cancel anytime. / Set up in under 5 minutes.]*

FAQ BLOCK

Address the top 3 objections as questions. Keep answers to 1–2 sentences each.

Q1: *[Most common objection, written as a question]*

A1: *[Direct, honest answer]*

Q2: *[Second most common objection]*

A2: *[Direct, honest answer]*

Q3: *[Third most common objection]*

A3: *[Direct, honest answer]*

DOCUMENT 08

08 Advisor Agreement

This is a simple, plain-English advisor agreement template. It covers the essentials — what the advisor commits to, what equity they receive, and how it vests. This is not a substitute for legal advice. Have a qualified attorney review any agreement before signing.

Fill in the bracketed fields. The equity range and vesting schedule are standard for early-stage advisory relationships, but negotiate based on the advisor's actual contribution and involvement.

ADVISOR AGREEMENT

(Template — Not Legal Advice — Consult an Attorney Before Use)

This Agreement is entered into as of: *[Date]*

between: *[Company legal name] (the "Company")*

and: *[Advisor full name] (the "Advisor")*

1. Advisory Services

The Advisor agrees to make themselves reasonably available to the Company to provide strategic guidance in the area of [describe area: e.g. product strategy, enterprise sales, fundraising, technical architecture]. This includes:

— Responding to founder questions within [X] business days when possible
— Making relevant introductions to investors, customers, or partners where appropriate
— Attending [X] check-in calls per quarter (estimated [X] hours per month total)
— Providing feedback on materials, strategy, or decisions when requested

2. Equity Compensation

In consideration of the advisory services described above, the Company agrees to grant the Advisor an option to purchase [X]% of the Company's fully diluted shares (the "Option"), subject to the following terms:

Equity grant: *[0.10% – 1.00% depending on stage, involvement, and advisor value]*

Vesting schedule: *[24 months, vesting monthly / 36 months, with 6-month cliff]*

Exercise price: *[Fair market value at date of grant, per 409A valuation]*

Acceleration: *[Single trigger / double trigger / none — discuss with your attorney]*

No cash compensation will be paid. The Option is subject to the terms of the Company's standard option agreement and equity incentive plan.

3. Confidentiality

The Advisor agrees to keep all Company information, strategy, financials, and customer data confidential and not to disclose them to any third party without prior written consent from the Company. This obligation survives termination of this agreement.

4. No Conflict of Interest

The Advisor represents that entering into this agreement does not conflict with any other obligation they have. The Advisor agrees to disclose any potential conflicts that arise during the term of this agreement.

5. Term and Termination

Initial term: *[e.g. 24 months from the date of this agreement]*

Either party may terminate this agreement with [30] days written notice. Upon termination, the Advisor retains any vested equity but forfeits unvested options.

6. No Employment Relationship

This agreement does not create an employment relationship. The Advisor is an independent contractor. The Advisor is not entitled to benefits, workers' compensation, or any other employee protections.

Signatures

FOR THE COMPANY

Authorized signature: ______________________________

Printed name and title: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

ADVISOR

Signature: ______________________________

Printed name: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

A NOTE FROM FOUNDERFAQS

These templates work best when you treat them as living documents.

Every section you fill in should change as you learn. Your ICP will shift after your first ten customer interviews. Your pricing will adjust after your first twenty sales conversations. Your pitch deck will evolve after your first ten investor meetings. That is not failure — that is how good companies are built.

The founders who move fastest are not the ones with the best ideas. They are the ones who talk to customers, ship early, and update their assumptions on a weekly basis. These documents give you the scaffolding. The decisions are still yours.

If you found this useful, the FounderFAQs newsletter publishes practical answers to the questions founders ask most — on fundraising, product, go-to-market, hiring, pricing, and everything in between. Visit founderfaqs.com to subscribe.
