

Building a Fundraising-ready GTM Strategy & Founder-led sales

Alper Yurder, Apr 2025



You're building something great—but is the world listening?

Early stage and fundraising feels like building mid-air—pitching, hiring, selling, and raising all at once. It's chaotic, but doable. Done documented



Forte No-Fluff Guides
Powered by AI & Exited-Founder experience



From Zero to One Million: Actionable Guide for Early Stage Startups

Your Product is Great, But Is the World Listening?

As a fellow SaaS founder, I know the struggle of building a product that you believe is simply great and everyone needs it to then realizing the hard part is getting others to believe in it. The real challenge is creating **demand**—making people feel like they need it urgently. This playbook takes you from zero to one million by building real traction, creating credibility, and scaling your product.

Your Handbook for Scaling Your Product & Creating Demand

Hey, I'm Alper — GTM Partner for founders scaling from traction to repeatable revenue, exited SaaS Co-founder & CRO

Step 8: Use Expert Roundups to Build Credibility

Feature Industry Experts to Gain Exposure

The best way to get noticed is to feature others—this builds relationships and brings exposure.

Let's make it happen:

- Reach out to 10–20 industry experts and invite them to contribute to an expert round-up.
- Promote these experts through your channels and ask them to share the content.
- Tip: By featuring experts in your content, you'll get the credibility that drives more traffic.

Why It Matters: Expert roundups build trust, social proof, and help you get featured on high-traffic platforms.

Here's an example to get you started: 15 Revenue Experts Share the Tactics Enable Buyers and C...



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Hi, allow me to introduce myself

I'm Alper. I'm a former founder & a B2B Sales expert with +15 years of experience building and scaling GTM:

Sales, GTM and 0-to-1 are the Story of My Life

- **Built, sold, and scaled from scratch** – from building scale ups to founding and exiting my own.
- **Lived the messy early days, the pivot** moments, the first 10 customers.
- This isn't theory – it's lived experience.



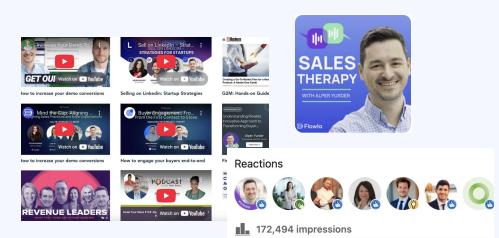
Operator First: \$50M Closed in Sales, Exited Founder, 10+ Startups Advised

- **Closed over \$50M in sales deals**
- **Raised funding**, built GTM engines, scaled sales teams
- **Advised 10+ startups** across B2B SaaS, fintech, edtech, AI, hrtech
- **Investor, mentor, and ex-founder** – I've sat on both sides of the table



Playbooks That Actually Work

- Playbooks generated 1,000s of leads with founder-led growth
- Built systems using founder brand, podcast, Spotify, outbound
- I don't just advise – I get hands dirty, embed, and deliver
- **No fluff. Just proven frameworks, repeatable systems, and results**



Slide 3 – Patterns I Saw

- Across companies, certain lessons repeat.
- Founders make the same mistakes over and over.
- My role now: help founders skip those mistakes.

The Startup Trio

The role of the “Hustler”: Crack GTM, Sales & Growth

HUSTLER

Sell the product



HACKER

Build the product

HIPSTER

Pimp the product

London startup founded by Turkish cousins raises \$1.3M for its B2B deal closing software, Flowla



BY ABHINAYA PRABHU · MARCH 28, 2023 · 3 MINUTE READ



How I work with Startups & Founders

[Schedule a call to discuss](#)

I work with startups as a GTM Partner to get more leads and close more deals in 3 ways:

1

CEO / Founder Mentoring

- **Weekly calls** to think clearly and move faster
- For founders who want a sparring partner to:
- **Bounce ideas & get clarity**
- **Unblock GTM & product direction**
- Leads, deals, strategy, founder brand
- **No heavy commitment – just honest, focused convos**

👉 Best for early-stage founders or those who need a “smart” person to figure out strategy & execution

2

Revenue Accelerator – Hands-on GTM Execution

- **Weekly sprints to execute founder-led GTM system** and achieve results monthly
- You get me 6 hrs/week to:
- **Build & execute GTM strategy**
- Shape your founder brand + messaging
- Create **inbound & outbound** growth loops
- **Set up CRM + sales systems**
- Joint sales calls, **close together**
- Ship content, test channels, track results

👉 Best for founders who want more than advice to get more leads, close more deals, but not full-time

3

Fractional Revenue/ GTM Leader

- 1.5-2 days/week – **full execution, leadership, and results**
- I embed as part of your team to:
- **Co-own GTM and sales motion** end-to-end
- **Lead strategy, ops, and team**
- Drive execution across marketing, content, outbound, and sales
- **Align your team and goals**
- Work as your interim GTM lead or right-hand

👉 Best if you want someone experienced to co-own GTM with you until you figure things out and hire full time



Founder-led sales stages

But a framework helps get results on a weekly coaching basis

STEP-1: Foundations & Strategy to reach Message-mkt fit	STEP-2: Building & Testing Pipeline for Demand Generation	STEP 3: Closing Deals: Sales-mkt fit	STEP 4: Optimizing and Scaling: Sales Playbook (→ hiring)
1. Understanding the Market and Customer (ICP- persona) 2. Crafting Your Value Proposition 3. Designing Your Sales Process (plg vs. slg, sales-assisted) 4. Setting Up Tools and Infrastructure	5. Lead Generation Tactics 6. Outreach Sequences 7. Improving conversion 8. Testing & recording test results	9. Building Authority, Trust & Social proof (inbound foundations) 10. Sales pitch & collaterals 11. Discovery-demo upskilling 12. Closing and Onboarding (CS handover or self-onboarding)	13. CRM essentials 14. Scaling demand generation 15. Establishing Partnerships 16. Sales playbook & onboarding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More replies- Before website update- Before outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More meetings- More winnable deals- Qualified leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trust, authority- Inbound deals- Improved closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Repeatable process- Increase volume- Hiring

Bi-weekly sprints: testing - iterating - improving conversion

HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST TWENTY CUSTOMERS

Scale Outbound	Test and Iterate Growth Channels
<p>Increase the outbound effort</p>  <p>grow from a niche audience to test different ICP</p>  <p>hire 2 SDRs to run this with you</p>	 <p>Set aside \$3,000 each month to test growth channels</p>
Refine Sales Playbook	Social Proof
<p>Record objections</p>  <p>Create a LEAD QUALIFICATION system</p>  <p>Choose a growth model PLG vs. SLG</p>	<p>Have your customers shoot quick videos for you and use them as testimonials</p> 
Content and Community Marketing	Influencer Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">TOFU content like LinkedIn insights and shortsMOFU content like guides & case studiesBOFU content like testimonials and demos	 <p>Get 5-10 industry influencers & collaborate, to get them mentioning your product. Offering them to be advisors or featuring them in expert round-ups.</p>

Phase 2: Getting First 20 Customers & Proving Repeatability

- 9 **Start outbound outreach with a niche audience** – Personal, thoughtful emails , even better linkedin messages > mass automated sequences.
- 10 **Leverage your network & communities** – Get introductions, ask for feedback, and join relevant Slack/LinkedIn groups. Don't be afraid to ask for favors.
- 11- **Document learnings & refine sales playbook** – Which objections come up? Which emails convert best? Iterate.
- 12- **Create early case studies & testimonials** – Proof = trust. Use happy customers to attract more. Don't be shy about asking for video testimonials.
- 13- **Start creating useful, shareable content** – LinkedIn posts, short videos, or guides—instagram, youtube, whatever works.
- 14- **Get 5-10 industry influencers talking about you** – Reach out, offer value, or collaborate to get them mentioning your product. We got most of our collaborators by offering them to be advisors or featuring them in expert round-ups.



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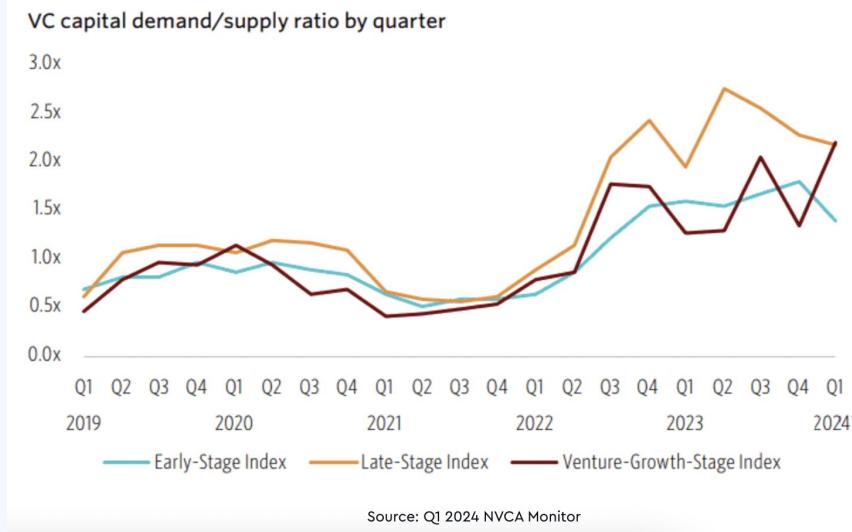
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The B2B Startup Landscape Today

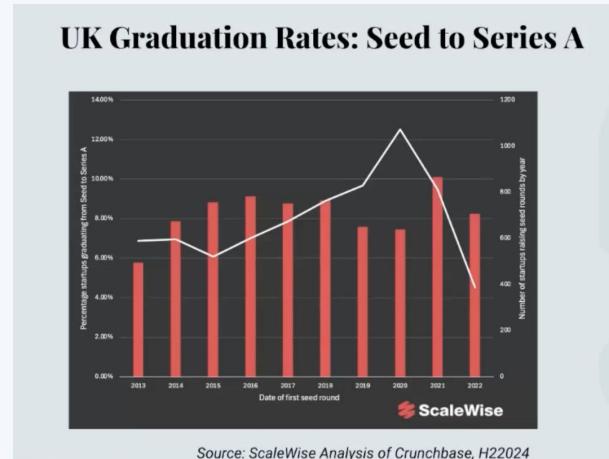
Money is scarce, competition much tougher

According to an outlook published by Wellington Management, distributions from VC funds [dropped a staggering 84%](#) from 2021 to 2023, further growing dry powder inventory and extending the allocation drought. Competition for fundraising will continue to be a trending theme among emerging companies in 2024.



The B2B Startup Landscape Today

Slowing graduation levels from Pre-seed to Series-A

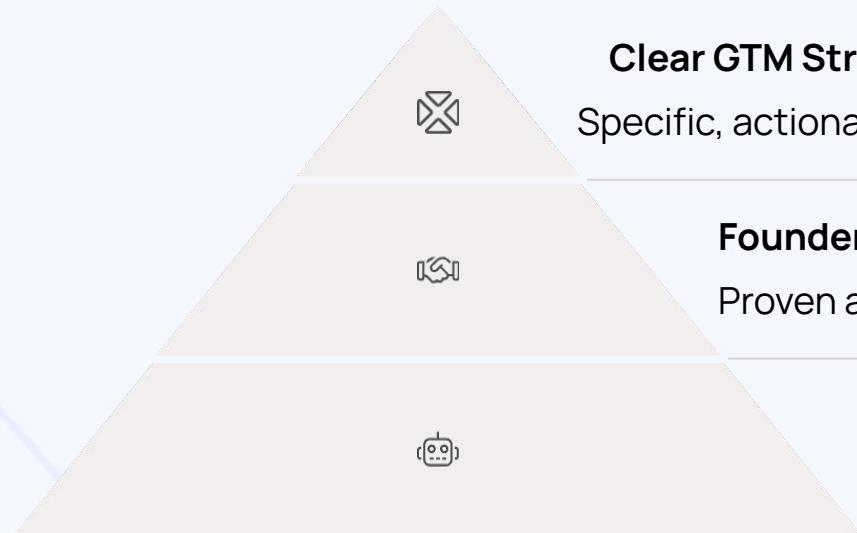


Market dynamics: Reduced VC funding, slowing graduation levels from pre-seed to Series-A

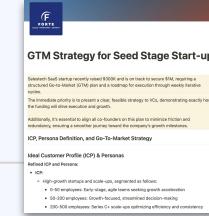
 Startups that nail their GTM and sales early are **3x more likely** to attract funding and scale.

Clear GTM roadmap makes fundraising easier

Clarity | Credibility | Repeatability: Show me how you're gonna spend my money?



See next page



Few things you might want to consider

Product Evolution

Still iterating toward product-market fit

Fuzzy ICP

Ideal customer profile needs refinement

Half-Baked Messaging

Value proposition lacks clarity

No Sales Motion

Haven't established repeatable process

And still—you need to raise.

Check out these real examples for inspiration:



- GTM Strategy for Seed Stage Startup



- GTM Roadmap for LegalTech Startup

Develop a **sales playbook**:

- Map out your sales process from **follow-ups**, and **closing**.
- **Refine** the process regularly. **At least 30%** by focusing on more sales.
- We also tested with free sign-ups and hand-over

HubSpot aircall

Free Sales Plan Template

Outline your company's sales strategy in one simple, coherent plan by HubSpot and Aircall.



Forte “No-fluff” How to Guides:

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These cover everything from:

- Building a GTM strategy that gets funded
- Founder-led sales
- Early traction to first 100 customers
- Positioning & Message-Market Fit
- Scaling trust & credibility
- Building inbound & outbound
- Scalable & non-scalable growth channels
- KPI tracking & growth loops
- And scaling what works into repeatable systems

The Growth Engine Playbook: A Tactical Guide for Scaling Early-Stage Startups

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51 Growth tactics for start-ups

Scalable vs. non-scalable channels: How to pick which?

CONCEPT: When it comes to growth strategies, you'll hear people talk about scalable and non-scalable channels.

These terms basically describe how easy it is to grow your efforts without having to throw more and more time or money into them as you scale.

1. Inbound to outbound strategy

2. Effective outbound strategies

3. Outbound strategy framework

4. Executing your outreach strategy

5. Bringing it all together - step-by-step

Your prospects will always check:
• Your LinkedIn profile, Your company website, Your content presence, Any visible social proof
If they don't find anything that builds trust or shows credibility, they won't respond.

ALSO!

Inbound marketing is a long-term growth engine. It's not just about traffic—it's about building authority, increasing organic visibility, and attracting your ideal customers.

Let's make it happen:

- Build a content hub with SEO-driven blog posts that answer your ICP's questions.
- Create content across the full funnel:
 - Top of Funnel (Awareness): Blog posts, LinkedIn content, podcasts.
 - Middle of Funnel (Consideration): Case studies, webinars, success stories.
 - Bottom of Funnel (Conversion): Demos, free trials, consultation offers.
- At Flowla, we launched an expert round-up blog featuring industry leaders. It got us organic bandwidth and media coverage, which drove consistent traffic.

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Import prospects who have reacted or commented

Reactions

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Executing Outreach: Find Message-market fit & then scale

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ADVANCED GTM & INBOUND AUT. ADVANCED CUSTOMER SUPPORT

+12 bonus tools for AI-powered & Advanced GTM to up your Start-up Game

What to do about it?

GTM roadmap - Founder-led sales - Figure your Growth loops to scale



Clarity over GTM strategy & roadmap:

- clarity over execution
- ensures more term sheets
- keeps you on track



crack founder-led sales before hiring:

- no one can sell before you can
- helps you build the right product
- keeps you from wasting resources



build authority, become familiar & trustable

- build your first 100 TRUE FANS
- become the obvious choice
- then turn inbound to outbound
- do all that with the right AI and workflows in weeks not months

We did it for Atria team - on the flight - towards their pre-seed Round

Atria AI secures £720,000 backing to revolutionise legal workflows with lawyer-grade AI



Atria AI, a pioneering provider of generative AI solutions tailored for the legal industry, has successfully completed its pre-seed funding round (£720,000) led by Fuel Ventures and a network of esteemed angel investors. This investment marks a pivotal step in Atria AI's mission to revolutionise legal workflows with cutting-edge artificial intelligence.

AtriaAI

Delivery

- Final
- ▣ Google Docs Atria G2M draft - with Alper ideas
- ▣ Draft sales plan
- ▣ Simple sales plan
- ▣ G2M Strategy One-pager Example
- ▣ G2M Strategy One-pager
- ▣ 20.11.24 - Post workshop summary
- ▣ 20.11.24 - Post workshop summary (1)
- ▣ 20.11.24 - Workshop G2M Alper Answers
- ▣ 20.11.24 - Workshop G2M Alper Answers (1)
- ▣ Workshop prep: Questions to reflect on
- ▣ 20.11.24 - Workshop prep. Questions to reflect on (1)
- ▣ 12.11.24- AtriaAI - Pre Kick-off - Original
- ▣ 12.11.24- AtriaAI - Pre Kick-off - Original (1)
- ▣ 31.10-7.11-AtriaAI - Discovery notes



We did it for Atria team - on the flight - towards their pre-seed Round

Starting Point

1

Mid-raise with product, pitch, and GTM all "in the air"

Our Approach

2

- ICP and positioning workshops
- Structured outbound campaigns
- Pitch deck refinement

Results

3

€700K raised

Ongoing mentor relationship



A few key takeaways for later in your journey:

GTM is more than sending 1000 emails hoping for 1 meeting

1

- Outbound only works with inbound
- Trust is the basis of sales
- Authority & credibility are the bases of product marketing
- Treat your go-to-market like your product. Test. Iterate. Improve.

"I sent this to 200 people and nobody replied..."

Is it the product?
Or is it your messaging?
Your positioning?
Your targeting?

"Nobody likes my product" is almost never true.

You don't need to hire 10 people and wait 6 months for results any more - AI is here

2

- Signal-based AI automations and outreach: honeysales, clay, salesforge
- SDR agents, content and commenting tools: texau, taplio, engage AI
- Napkin, Gamma creating presentations in a second
- Replit building websites, landing pages, Trojan horse in minutes



Product-market fit isn't a moment – it's a moving target.

3

- It evolves. It sharpens. It gets clearer over time.
- And the same is true for GTM, sales, and marketing.
- You need to iterate on them just like you do on product & tech.
- Treat go-to-market like a product problem – not just a sales problem.

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Drafts | Growth tactics for early stage start-ups

Category	Tactic Description
Email Outreach	Automated email sequences for lead nurturing.
LinkedIn Outreach	Using LinkedIn to connect with decision-makers in target companies.
Signal-Based Outreach	Custom outreach based on a specific trigger (e.g., funding round, press coverage).
WhatsApp Groups	Leveraging group chats for networking and lead generation.
Hot Circle (Family & Friends)	Asking friends to share your startup's launch on their personal networks.
VC Network	Getting introductions to connect you with investors.
Competitor Automation	Using automation to identify and reach out to the competition.
Competitor Prospect List Outreach	Screening LinkedIn to find recently funded competitors.
Using LinkedIn Sales Navigator to reach influencers of a hot	Targeting leads from competitor customer lists.

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Ready to Build Your GTM Engine?

How can I help you to grow your startup from 0 to 1 or from 1 to 10?

1

If you found this useful

- Share it with a founder who's figuring out their go-to-market
- Let me know your feedback or biggest takeaway on [LinkedIn](#)

2

Want help applying this to your business?

I work with early-stage founders as:
→ Fractional GTM Partner
→ Sales & Growth Advisor
→ Hands-on consultant to build your playbook & drive traction

- Book a free strategy call → fortegrowth.co
- Or check out my [one-pager on how I work](#)

3

Subscribe to my newsletter

 Want more GTM tips like this?

[Join 2000+ readers → Subscribe here](#)

If you're in London — join our monthly *Founder Therapy* drinks 

See you around — and good luck building something people *can't ignore*.



1. GTM Roadmap

A clear GTM strategy & roadmap

Why does it matter?

Before we begin, I'll suggest taking a day or two to audit your current GTM strategy.

When I start working with a startup to build their revenue engine, I do this exercise:

Whether you're a **founder leading growth** or an **early-stage operator owning GTM**, your first move should be to **create a clear, actionable GTM Roadmap**.

This isn't just a strategic exercise—it's a **foundational step** to driving growth.

👉 **This is essential, not optional:**

- Align your co-founders around a shared vision
- Build a short-to-long-term plan you can execute
- Show investors you're serious, structured, and ready to scale

GTM Strategy for Seed Stage Start-up

Salestech SaaS startup recently raised \$300K and is on track to secure \$1M, requiring a structured Go-to-Market (GTM) plan and a roadmap for execution through weekly iterative cycles.

The immediate priority is to present a clear, feasible strategy to VCs, demonstrating exactly how the funding will drive execution and growth.

Additionally, it's essential to align all co-founders on this plan to minimize friction and redundancy, ensuring a smoother journey toward the company's growth milestones.

ICP, Persona Definition, and Go-To-Market Strategy

Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) & Personas

Refined ICP and Persona:

- ICP:
 - High-growth startups and scale-ups, segmented as follows:
 - 0-50 employees: Early-stage, agile teams seeking growth acceleration
 - 50-200 employees: Growth-focused, streamlined decision-making
 - 200-500 employees: Series C+ scale-ups optimizing efficiency and consistency

GTM Roadmap / One-Pager Questions



1. GTM Roadmap

A clear GTM strategy & roadmap

Best Practice

Growth Motion Strategy

Fine-Tuned Growth Motion:

- Dual Approach (Bottom-up and Top-down) for Startups and Scale-ups:
 - Bottom-up: Target early-stage users and decision-makers
 - User-driven championing: AE experiences positive results → Advocates to decision-maker
 - Top-down: Initiate at leadership level

User Acquisition Strategy

Phased Go-To-Market Approach for User Acquisition:

1. Scalable Channels (initial focus in Q4):
 - Outbound Sales:
 - Focused LinkedIn outreach via 1st and 2nd-degree network connections
 - Warm introductions and referrals aligned with ICP
 - Cold Outbound:
 - Structured campaigns to reach broader user base
 - Built-in Virality:
 - Leveraging existing sign-up momentum through network effects
2. Non-Scalable Channels (Q4 parallel efforts):
 - Content Marketing:
 - LinkedIn-centric content: Targeted for high engagement with core personas
 - Multi-channel blog content and SEO-optimized website posts for enhanced discoverability
 - Word-of-Mouth (WOM):
 - Community engagement (e.g., RevGenius)
 - Specialized event participation (e.g., SaaStr, webinars, Product Hunt)
 - Public relations and social media presence to amplify brand visibility

Core Sections:

1. **Context & Focus** – What's the goal, recent funding, next milestones.
2. **ICP & Personas** – Who are we selling to? Pain points, buyer vs user, why now.
3. **GTM Motion** – Sales-led, product-led, bottom-up, top-down? What's the approach?
4. **Acquisition Channels** – Scalable vs non-scalable channels. What happens this quarter vs later.
5. **Execution Plan** – Next 180 days roadmap. Owners. KPIs. Weekly cycles for testing & learning.

✓ Do's:

- Be specific
- Prioritize
- Show how you'll learn fast
- Keep it short (1-2 pages)

Founder-led sales:

is not about hustling harder – it's about learning, recording, iterating: to build a repeatable, structured process early.

Why it Matters:

- ✗ Most founders delay building a sales process until they hire a team
- ✓ Documenting your sales motion early shortens sales cycles, and prepares you to scale faster.

What To Do:

- 1. Build Your Sales Playbook:** Document your end-to-end sales process:
- 2. Refine Weekly:** Treat sales like product development. Test, learn, iterate every week. Optimize follow-ups, qualification, pricing, hand-offs between Sales & CS.
- 3. Codify Everything:** Create a simple internal wiki or Notion page capturing:
 - Messaging, objections, scripts
 - Sales processes & steps
 - Playbooks for outreach, demos, closing tactics

2. Founder-led sales

The dashboard is titled 'Client Sales Playbook'. It features a sidebar with 'Tags' (Empty) and a main content area. The content area includes a section for 'Learnings for September 23' & Iteration' with a note about 'Quicker conversion: what we need to sell more!'. Below this are sections for 'Company Overview' (4 axis for the website), 'Pain points to solution', 'Products', 'Pricing', 'Process', 'Personas', 'Messaging' (with a note about 'G2M & Lead gen:'), 'Content architecture', 'CRM Guide', 'Compensation', 'KPIs', and 'Resources'.

3. Demand generation

From early traction to sustainable demand

Inbound & outbound work together to build **TRUST, AUTHORITY, CREDIBILITY**

Challenges:

Scaling beyond your network is tough.

Outbound channels are saturated, and inbound credibility is a must.

Sales cycles stretch past 6 months without pre-call education.

Building an inbound engine is resource-heavy, with costly scalable channels and tough guerilla marketing.

✗ Lack of expertise and experience means making errors, losing time, friction in team!

What does a founder need to do?

- ✓ **Build authority through** thought leadership and community engagement.
- ✓ **Amplify a clear message**, build social proof, and create trust and FOMO.
- ✓ **Bring more leads to awareness stage** and push them through to conversion.
- ✓ **Cultivate true fans**.
- ✓ **Test scalable and non-scalable growth channels at the same time**. Test-iterate-improve!
- ✓ **Prepare the way for scalability** and hiring/onboarding

Bringing it all together (1/ 4)

Scaling from Unknown to \$3M ARR

Steps 1-6 – Build The Foundation

1. Audit & Self-Review Your GTM

→ Use my 1-pager template to align co-founders, define 90/180/360 day plans.

2. Validate Problem & Message-Market Fit

→ Talk to customers early, get real feedback, use their language.

3. Define Your ICP & Personas

→ Focus on your best-fit customers. Avoid selling to everyone.

4. Build 100 True Fans

→ Find early believers who love your product and tell others.

5. Outbound to Test Messaging

→ Use outbound for feedback loops – test positioning, iterate fast.

6. Map the Buyer Journey & Moments of Trust

→ Understand your customers' decision path. Create content for each touchpoint.



Executing Outreach: Find Message-market fit & then scale

- 1 Inbound to outbound strategy
- 2 Effective outbound strategies
- 3 Outbound strategy framework
- 4 Executing your outreach strategy
- ★ Brining it all together - step-by-step

Takeaways:

- Start with clear positioning & messaging.
- Focus on the customer's world, not your product.
- Build trust at every interaction point.

Bringing it all together (2/ 4)

Scaling from Unknown to \$3M ARR

Steps 7-14 – Build Your Growth Engine

7. Build Inbound Engine

→ Create content that ranks, educates, and converts.

8. Expert Roundups for Credibility

→ Feature others – gain authority and backlinks.

9. Inbound + Outbound Loops

→ Make outbound touchpoints drive inbound traffic.

10. Founder-led Sales & Playbook

→ Turn your process into a system – repeat what works.

11. Scalable & Non-scalable Channels

→ Mix long-term bets (SEO, paid) with scrappy hacks.

12. Founder Brand & Content Leverage

→ People buy from people – show up on LinkedIn.

13. Non-scalable Experiments

→ Test fast: events, partnerships, communities.

14. Growth Tactics Deep-Dive

→ Run scrappy growth plays to unlock channels

Bringing it all together (3/ 4)

Scaling from Unknown to \$3M ARR

Step 14 – Growth plays you can test each quarter

Balance scalable & non-scalable growth tactics

Step-14 : Test Multiple Growth Channels and See what works

Growth hacks deep-dive:

14.1 Build Partnerships and Leverage Affiliate Marketing

Use Partnerships and Affiliates to Scale Faster

While paid ads and inbound marketing can work, non-scalable tactics like **partnerships** and **affiliate marketing** can give you a big boost in the early stages.

Let's make it happen:

- Find complementary brands or businesses that share your ICP and create **co-marketing** partnerships.
- Affiliate programs: Offer incentives (commissions, rewards) to individuals or businesses who refer paying customers to you.
- At Flowia, we grew through **strategic partnerships** with sales-related influencers and product demo platforms that aligned with our target audience. We also offered **affiliate commissions** for new customers brought in by our network.

Why It Matters: Partnerships and affiliate programs bring **trusted traffic** to your product, accelerating growth with minimal upfront investment. They're non-scalable but provide immediate traction and brand credibility.

Category	Tactics Example
Partnerships	Affiliate Program / Co-marketing
Community & Events	Event Sponsorship / Niche Slack Groups
Guerrilla Marketing	Viral Campaign / Founder Story Videos
Product Launch	Product Hunt / Webinars
Social Proof	G2 / Capterra / Media Features
Lead Gen Content	Webinars / Lead Magnets / Templates

Bringing it all together (4/ 4)

Scaling from Unknown to \$3M ARR

Steps 15-20 – Scale What Works

15. SEO & Organic Traffic

→ Win long-term with evergreen content & backlinks.

16. Paid Ads (Post-PMF)

→ Scale acquisition when you know it converts.

17. Scalable Sales Process

→ Create a machine for lead → customer conversion.

18. Quarterly Review & Iterate

→ Review experiments, cut what's not working.

19. Document Playbooks & SOPs

→ Capture processes for faster hiring & scaling.

20. Build Growth Loops Across Teams

→ Align sales, marketing, and product for compounding growth.

Takeaways:

- Double down on what's working.
- Build systems, not random tactics.
- Growth loops create compounding momentum.

Step 15: Build SEO to Grow Organic Traffic Over Time

SEO Is a Long-Term Play, But It Pays Off

SEO is a slow burn, but it provides consistent and cost-effective traffic over time.

Let's make it happen:

- Start with long-tail keywords that align with your ICP's pain points. For example, "how to streamline sales workflows in SaaS" or "best tools for SaaS sales teams."
- Write valuable content that answers these questions and optimize for SEO.
- Tip: At Flowla, we grew from a mere thousand visits a month to over 10,000 visits a day in a year by consistently writing SEO-optimized content and building backlinks.

Why It Matters: SEO may take time, but once you rank for relevant keywords, the traffic becomes predictable and scalable.

Step 16: Paid Ads: Test and Scale Once You've Found Fit

Focus on Paid Ads Only After Validating Your Product-Market Fit

Paid ads can accelerate growth once you know your messaging works and you have a customer base to target.

Ready to Build Your GTM Engine?

How can I help you to grow your startup from 0 to 1 or from 1 to 10?



1

If you found this useful

- Share it with a founder who's figuring out their go-to-market
- Let me know your feedback or biggest takeaway on [LinkedIn](#)

2

Want help applying this to your business?

I work with early-stage founders as:
→ Fractional GTM Partner
→ Sales & Growth Advisor
→ Hands-on consultant to build your playbook & drive traction

- Book a free strategy call → fortegrowth.co
- Or check out my [one-pager on how I work](#)

3

Subscribe to my newsletter

 Want more GTM tips like this?
[Join 2000+ readers → Subscribe here](#)

If you're in London — join our monthly *Founder Therapy* drinks 

See you around — and good luck building something people *can't ignore*.

One size fits noone

But here's a framework on how to make it happen in 20 steps:

Phase	Key Message	Steps
1. Strategy & Foundation	Strategy before Tactics. Validate, Focus, Align.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Audit & Self-Review GTM (align co-founders, 90/180/360 day plans)- Validate Problem & Message-Market Fit (talk to customers, use their language)- Define ICP & Personas (focus on best-fit customers)- Map Buyer Journey & Moments of Trust (create content for each touchpoint)
2. Early Traction & Demand Creation	Early traction is about focus, learning, iteration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Build a Tribe of 100 True Fans (over-deliver for early adopters)- Test Outbound for Message Validation (small, focused campaigns)- Build an Inbound Engine (content, SEO, social proof)- Run Expert Roundups & Collaborations (leverage others' authority)
3. Execution Systems	Systems > Hustle. Process beats luck.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Build a Simple, Lean Toolstack (start scrappy)- Create a Founder-led Sales Process (document, refine weekly)- Combine Inbound & Outbound into Growth Loops (outbound creates leads, inbound builds trust)
4. Scale Growth Channels	Balance Scalable & Non-Scalable Tactics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Refine Acquisition Channels (Paid Ads, SEO, Partnerships, Affiliates, Events)- Build a Founder Brand (be visible, share lessons)- Test Non-Scalable Growth Tactics Quarterly (guerrilla marketing, product launches, community events)

One size fits noone

But here's a framework on how to make it happen in 20 steps:

Phase	Key Message	Steps
5. Scale Execution & Teams	Codify What Works, Build a Growth Culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Document Your Playbook (messaging, ICP, processes)- Create Internal Growth Loops (marketing → sales → product → community)- Prepare to Hire & Scale (build SOPs, hire for growth roles)
6. Optimize & Iterate	Test, Analyze, Scale Smart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Measure KPIs quarterly (conversion, CAC, LTV)- Optimize best-performing channels- Test 1 new growth experiment per quarter
7. Capture & Systematize	Build Your Growth Playbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Document messaging, ICP, processes, content- Build SOPs for onboarding & scaling- Create Notion/Google Docs Wiki
8. Build Growth Loops	Create Compounding Growth Across Teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Align Marketing → Sales → Product- Weekly content & growth syncs- Turn customers into content & advocacy

No-fluff GTM Execution towards \$1M and beyond

Step 1: Validate the Problem and Find Message-Market Fit

Step 2: Define Your ICP & Buyer Personas with Precision

Step 3: Build a Tribe of 100 True Fans

Step 4: Create an Outbound Strategy to Test Messaging

Step 5: Spend 1-2 days mapping the buyer journey & focus on building "Moments of Trust"

Step 6: Build a Simple, Effective Toolstack

Step 7: Build an Inbound Engine

Step 8: Use Expert Roundups to Build Credibility

Step 9: Combine Inbound and Outbound for Growth Loops

Real-World Example:

Step 10: Cracking Founder-led Sales & Creating a structured sales process

Step 11: Refine Acquisition Channels: Combine Scalable and Non-Scalable Channels for Sustainable Gro...

Step 12: Create Founder Brand

Step 13: Test and Optimize Non-Scalable Growth Channels

Step-14 : Test Multiple Growth Channels and See what works

Growth hacks deep-dive:

14.1 Build Partnerships and Leverage Affiliate Marketing

14.2 Sponsor Industry Events and Join Communities

14.3 Guerrilla Marketing: Create Buzz with Low-Cost, High-Impact Tactics

14.4 Use Product Launches to Create Buzz and Drive Demand

14.5 Get Featured on Review Sites and Industry Publications

14.6 Create Webinars and Lead Magnets to Capture Leads

Step 15: Build SEO to Grow Organic Traffic Over Time

Step 16: Paid Ads: Test and Scale Once You've Found Fit

Step 17: Build a Scalable Sales Process and see where you can improve win rates

Step 18: Measure, Optimize, and Iterate Every Quarter

Step 19: Capture Everything in a Central Playbook and Prepare to Hire

Step 20: Create Growth Loops Across Sales, Marketing, and Product

HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST FIVE CUSTOMERS

Mastering Message-Market Fit	Refine & Validate Your Message
<p>Talk to 100s of potential prospects to nail Message-Market fit</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Note how they describe your product, use it as your website copy</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Create your Ideal Customer Profile and be extremely specific about who you're selling to.</p>	 <p>Go to events, network and test your MESSAGE with real people</p>
Invest in Customer Success from day 1	Run a structured demo & discovery process
 <p>Create first VIDEO DEMO and showcase on Website, LinkedIn and sales calls.</p>	<p>Ask the right questions, understand pain points without pitching directly.</p> <p>A SIMPLE PROCESS:</p>  <p>Discovery Follow up workshop</p> <p>Decision Trial period</p>
Build a feedback loop	Track every interaction
 <p>Record all your calls with a recorder like Fathom</p>	 <p>Create a Slack channel with product and marketing to share the recordings</p>
	<p>Use a Google Sheet or Notion, use Intercom or start with free Hubspot or Pipedrive from get to.</p> <p>▶▶▶▶ Continue reading on the next page!</p>

Phase 1: Laying the Foundations (0–5 Customers)

- 1 **Talk to 100s of potential prospects to nail Message-Market fit** – Validate the problem and understand how they describe it in their own words.
- 2 **Nail your ICP & Persona to a T** – Be extremely specific about who you're selling to. Niche, niche, niche
- 3 **Create a simple, compelling positioning statement** – Nail your "What do you do?" answer in one sentence.
- 4 **Build a feedback loop** – Collect insights from early conversations and feed them back into product & messaging – use tools like @fathom to capture every convo
- 5 **Make an offer people can't refuse** – Early customers need incentives (discounts, exclusivity, hands-on support), stellar customer service, 24/7 on slack
- 6 **Create a simple sales process** – Even if it's just a Notion page, define how you qualify, pitch, and close leads. Iterate this bi-weekly
- 7 **Run a structured demo & discovery process** – Gain the confidence to ask the right questions, understand pain points, don't pitch too early.
- 8 **Track every interaction** – Use a Google Sheet or Notion, or start with free Hubspot or Pipedrive from get to.



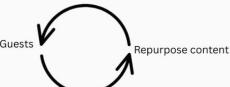
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HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST 100 CUSTOMERS

<h3>Build a Media Hub</h3> <p>Start a blog ↓ create checklists, templates, ↓ and whitepapers to establish authority</p>	<h3>Expert Driven Content Strategy</h3>  <p>Do expert roundups, invite guests for video interviews, and repurpose content</p>
<h3>Run a Podcast or be a Guest on One</h3> <p>Talk to industry leaders ↓ use this as a wedge to get in front of your buyer, and their network ↓ when they share it with their network</p>	<h3>Performance Marketing</h3>  <p>LinkedIn Ads SEO Ads Retargeting</p>
<h3>Guerilla Marketing</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Do your PH launch 2 Send perks to influencers and ask to share 3 Create a quarterly almanac to feature your buyers (as experts) 	<h3>Scale Outreach</h3>  <p>Automate what works Hire sales help Start layering in PLG tactics if applicable.</p>

Phase 3: Scaling to 100 Customers (Demand Generation & Market Credibility)

15. **Build a media hub** – Start a blog, create checklists, templates, and whitepapers to establish authority.
16. **Launch an expert-driven content strategy** – Do expert roundups, invite guests for video interviews, and repurpose content.
17. **Run a podcast (or guest on existing ones)** – Talk to industry leaders and potential customers, make your brand “cool.”
18. **Use paid & organic demand gen tactics** – LinkedIn ads, SEO-driven blogs, and retargeting (only after nailing messaging).
19. **Optimize your conversion funnel** – Make it easy to book a demo, show social proof, and test different CTAs.
20. **Systematize and scale outreach** – Automate what works, hire sales help, and start layering in PLG (product-led growth) tactics if applicable.

One size fits noone

But here's a framework on how you can build this for yourself

STEP-1: Foundations & Strategy to reach Message-mkt fit	STEP-2: Building & Testing Pipeline for Demand Generation	STEP 3: Closing Deals: Sales-mkt fit	STEP 4: Optimizing and Scaling: Sales Playbook (--> hiring)
1. Understanding the Market and Customer (ICP- persona) 2. Crafting Your Value Proposition 3. Designing Your Sales Process (plg vs. slg, sales-assisted) 4. Setting Up Tools and Infrastructure	5. Lead Generation Tactics 6. Outreach Sequences 7. Improving conversion 8. Testing & recording test results	9. Building Authority, Trust & Social proof (inbound foundations) 10. Sales pitch & collaterals 11. Discovery-demo upskilling 12. Closing and Onboarding (CS handover or self-onboarding)	13. CRM essentials 14. Scaling demand generation 15. Establishing Partnerships 16. Sales playbook & onboarding
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More replies- Before website update- Before outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More meetings- More winnable deals- Qualified leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trust, authority- Inbound deals- Improved closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Repeatable process- Increase volume- Hiring

Bi-weekly sprints: testing - iterating - improving conversion

Proven methodology, flexible approach

One size fits no one - working with Forte

Once we identify your need, we will decide on our ways of working and its cost to your business.



Strategist & Coach

After initial sales audit, align on goals and objectives.
Work 3-4 hours per week together to achieve goals based on your stage.
Usually a 12-16 - week programme before reaching next stage



Hands on Implementation

More hands on than coach.
Document, iterate and improve processes.
Manage or co-manage sales and marketing resources
1-2 days a week



Fractional CRO

Typically 3-6 months engagement. Prepare foundations before the arrival of your sales leader - head of or CRO.
2-3 days a week.

Different founders - Different needs

Does any of that resonate?

1

From 0 to 1

2

Learning to sell before I hire

3

Scaling Sales from Seed 2 Series-A

- Need to build traction
- Need to raise funding
- What's a GTM strategy, how can I create one?
- So many priorities, where do I focus?
- Aligning timelines of product-sales-marketing
- Division of labor btw. co-founders

- We have a working product
- We raised some money and building MRR
- BUT
- Why are my reply rates so low?
- Why am I ghosted after a demo?
- Why does it take so long to close a deal?
- How can I generate more demand?
- Why am I losing to competition?

- We got so far but revenue stalled
- or we're growing but not in a sustainable way
- How do I build a Founder Brand to help our growth?
- Need to improve onboarding, activation, customer support
- Is my playbook right? Why are people not implementing it?
- Hiring/ Firing problems

“Raising pre-seed, going beyond first traction”

“Maybe 10K MRR, raised \$1-2M, cracking founder-led sales”

“I thought we figured all this before, but some things keep coming back”

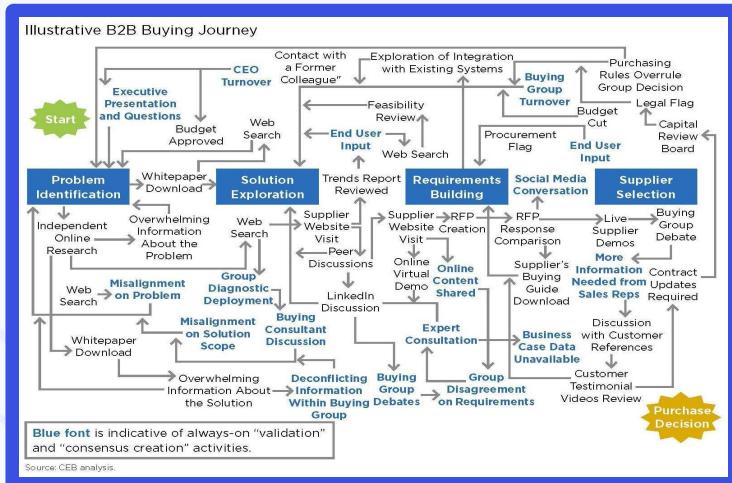
The B2B Startup Landscape Today

Add to that: buyers overwhelmed, and less eager to try new products than ever

77% of buyers thought their last purchase was **too complex or difficult**.

82% reported doing **their own research** before purchasing.

More choice, more scrutiny, longer sales cycles, less enthusiasm to try new products



Have your sales cycles gotten longer in 2024?

You can see how people vote. [Learn more](#)

Yes, much longer

58%

About same

35%

Shorter than last year

7%



Hi, allow me to introduce myself

I'm Alper. I'm a former founder & a B2B Sales expert with +10 years of experience building and scaling GTM – and today I work with early stage founders as a GTM Partner in 3 ways:

1

Gtm Advisor

- Build GTM Strategy & Roadmap
- Help you iterate product & GTM
- **Support fundraising**
- Enhance your marketing effort



2

Sales & marketing consultant

- Tackle a specific problem for a defined period & deliverables
- **Consult on projects** – building playbooks, audits, and strategies for your team to run.



3

Fractional Revenue Leader

- Working side-by-side with you like an operator.
- **GTM engine from ICP to funnel**
- Content & outbound loops
- **Founder-led sales** into repeatable process
- Own early sales & weekly iterations
- **Co-founder as Service**

