


# From Zero to GTM Engine with Founder-led sales & AI

Alper Yurder, May 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



**Premium**

Alper Yurder

Fractional CRO | GTM Strategy & Execution for Seed to Series B...  
London, England

hubble

Profile viewers 4,157

Post impressions 191,579

Go to Sales Navigator

#### 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 to Enable Buyers and CL...

#### How to Close

Alper Yurder

Follow for more GTM tips!

You and 608 others

2,222 comments · 9 reposts

Import prospects who have reacted or commented

#### Reactions

Like Comment Repost Send

150,985 impressions

View analytics

# Hi, allow me to introduce myself

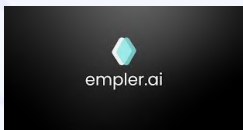


I'm Alper. I'm a **former founder & a B2B Sales expert** with +10 years of experience building and scaling GTM – and today I work with **early stage founders as a GTM Partner in 3 ways:**

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

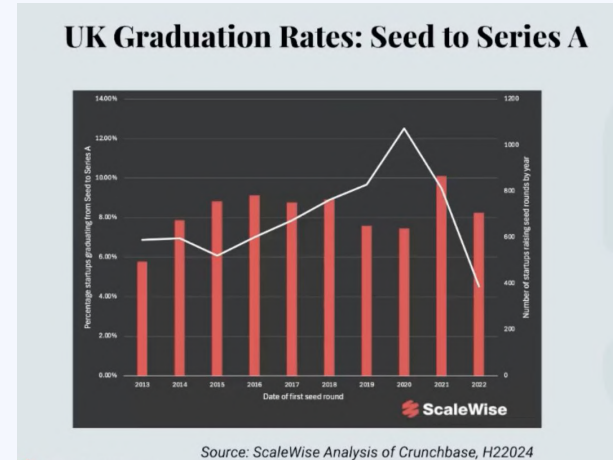
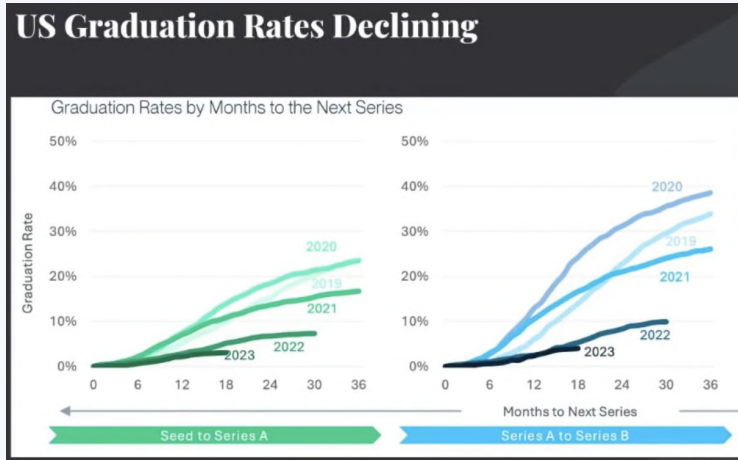
## Fractional Revenue Leader

- 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**



# 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 path to Growth: The VC expectation

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



## Clear GTM Strategy

Specific, actionable plan to reach customers



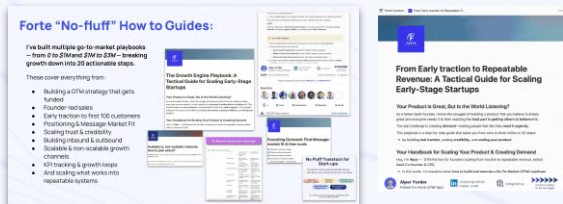
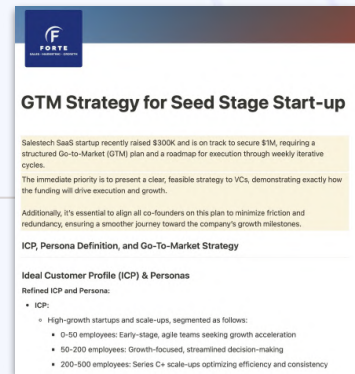
## Founder-Led Sales

Proven ability to close deals yourself



## Efficient customer acquisition at scale

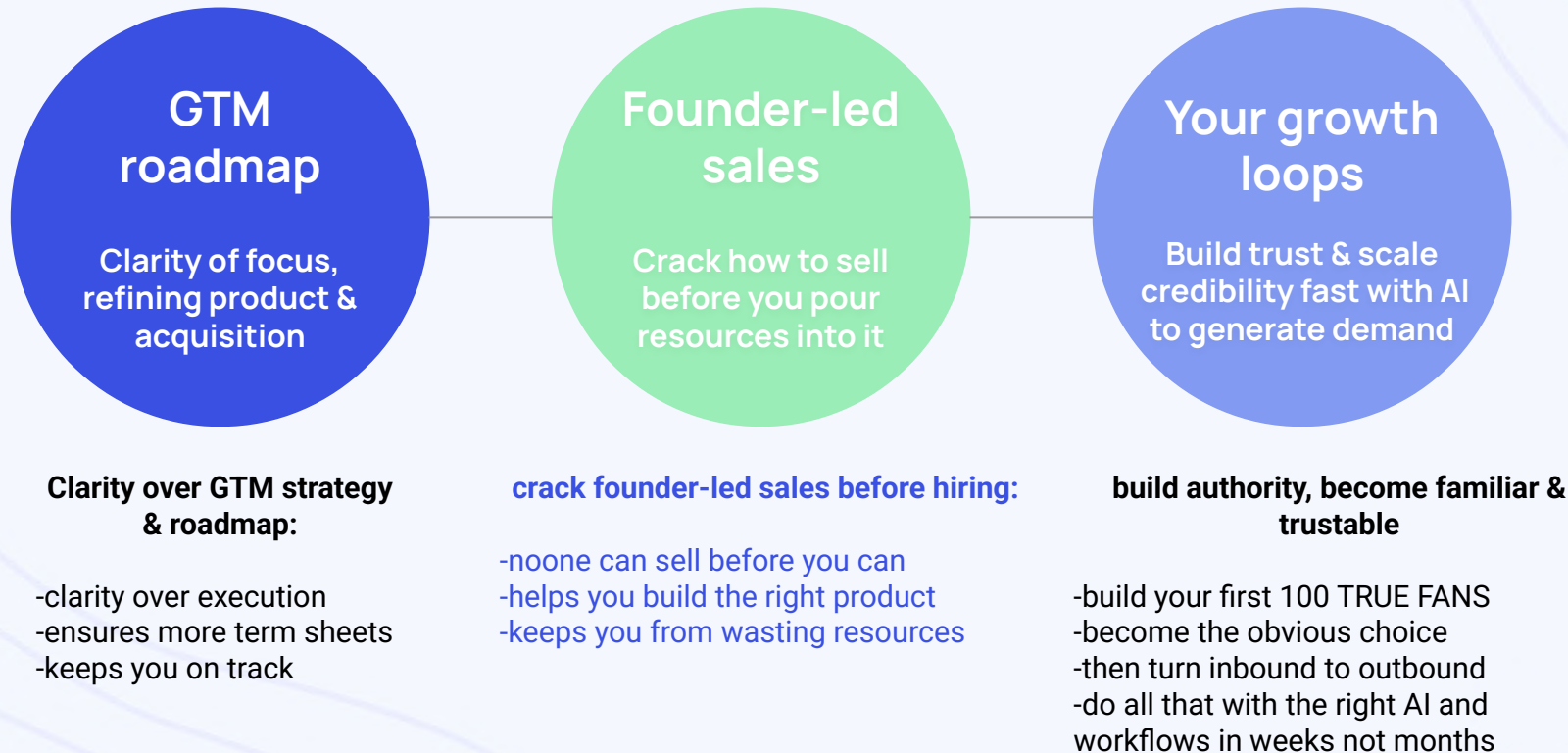
AI-powered demand gen: do more with less



See next page

# The antidote:

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



# 1.Small Team, Big Results with AI

You don't need a large staff for GTM success  
The right tech stack = powerful marketing & sales engine



## ChatGPT

Generate messaging,  
copy, and emails to  
accelerate your  
communication efforts.



## Manus/ Replit

Quickly prototype ideas  
without extensive  
development resources.



## Napkin / Gamma

Create engaging  
LinkedIn content to  
build your professional  
presence.



## Honeysales

Set up automated,  
trigger-based  
outreach to potential  
customers.

**Even solo founders can build and scale faster with AI**



## 2. Audit Your GTM Foundation



### ICPs & Personas

Clearly defined ideal customer profiles and detailed buyer personas.



### Messaging & Positioning

Compelling value proposition and market positioning strategy.



### Sales Assets

Website, presentation decks, and other materials to support sales.



### Sales Motion

Defined sales approach, supporting tools, and team structure.

*Exercise: Rate yourself 1–5 on each element above.*



#### Tactical Tip:

Record calls with Fathom, extract key insights, and share in Slack to align product, tech, marketing, and sales.

#### Self-Review Your GTM Strategy

When I work with startups—whether in an advisory, consulting, or hands-on role—I follow the same process I used to scale my own SaaS company.

You can **run the same process yourself** using this GTM One-Pager Questions Template.

Here's how:

##### 1. GTM Audit

Start by assessing your current position with the linked template.

##### 2. Independent Reflection

Each co-founder fills it out separately—take a walk, reflect solo, and come prepared.

##### 3. Collaborative Workshop

Come together for a half-day session to align on answers and lock in your strategy.

##### 4. Write the Roadmap

Capture the essentials in a 1-page GTM roadmap that outlines your growth strategy over the next 90 / 180 / 360 days.

#### Check out these real examples for inspiration:



• GTM Strategy for Seed Stage Startup



• GTM Roadmap for LegalTech Startup

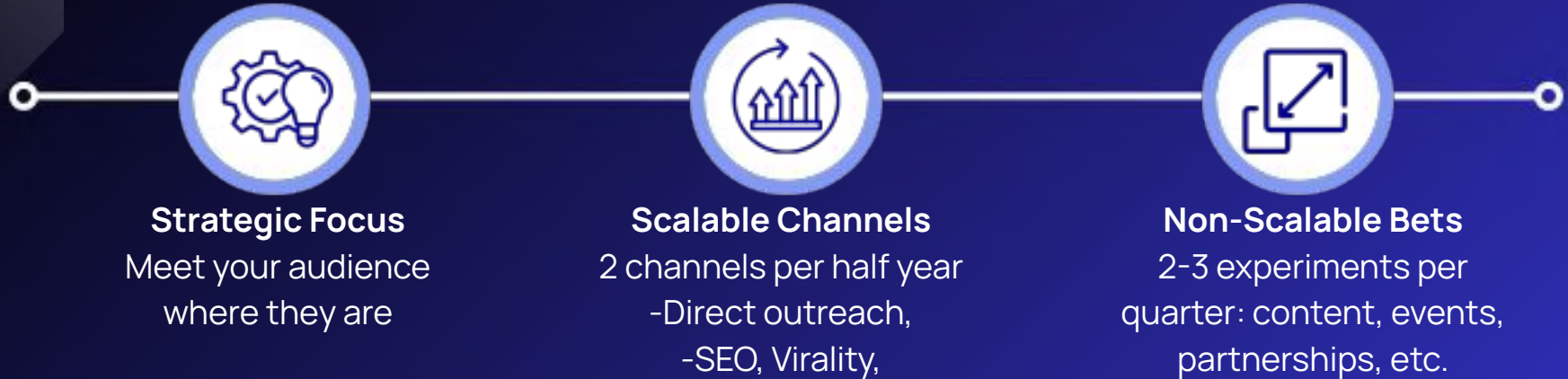
FATHOM



slack



# 3. Build your 1-year GTM Roadmap



Every startup needs 2 scalable channels + quarterly tests (events, affiliates). Find your mix in our Channel Playbook & 50 Tactics Cheatsheet.

## 4.Choosing Acquisition Channels

How will you acquire new leads?

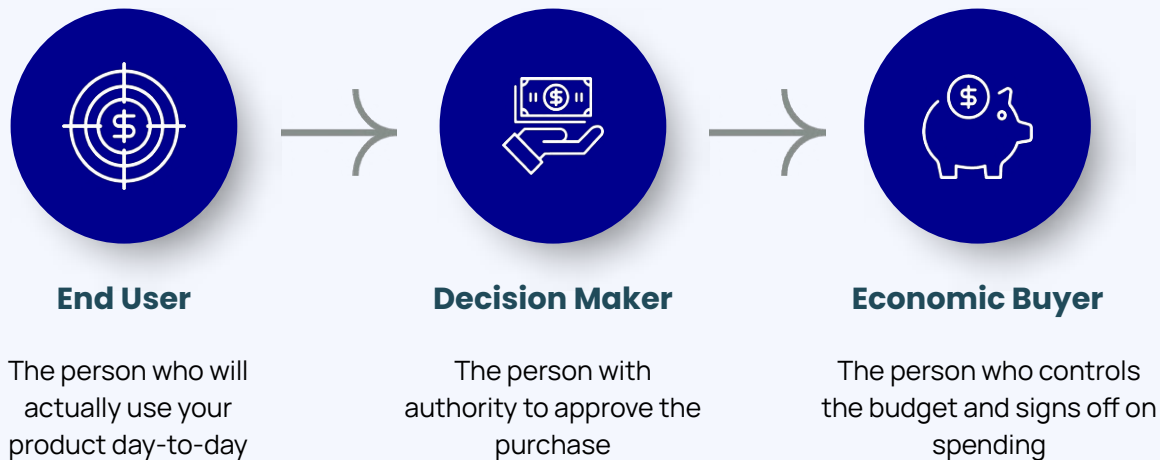
1. Scalable Channels	2. Non-Scalable Tactics	3. Decision Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Sales</li> <li>• Referral Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry Events</li> <li>• Personal Invitations</li> <li>• Affiliate Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target audience size</li> <li>• Typical sales cycle length</li> <li>• Buyer behavior patterns</li> </ul>
<p>✓ These channels can grow with your business and provide consistent results</p>	<p>✓ These tactics may not scale indefinitely but can provide valuable growth opportunities</p>	<p>✓ Base your channel selection on these key factors to ensure alignment with your business model</p>

- **For tactical implementation:**  
Connect with 2000 ICPs on LinkedIn,
- Send 10-20 personalized DMs daily using Dripify,
- Run small weekly campaigns, and document learnings to refine your approach.
- Build a GTM Campaign database to track results.



## 5. Define Your Sales Motion based on your buyer

### A- The Buyer Panel:



### B -Top Tips:

- ✓ Understanding who you're selling to is crucial for defining your sales motion.
- ✓ Different buyer types require different approaches.
- ✓ Consider which growth motion best matches your target audience:

### Growth Motions: SLG vs. PLG, Top-down vs. bottom-up

- Sales-led for complex, high-touch products;
- Product-led for self-service offerings;
- Content-led for education-driven purchases.
- Test different pricing and positioning strategies, and use tools like Flowla to track interactions with your sales collateral.

## 6. Outbound - Find Message-Market Fit

### Why Outbound Works

- Feedback
- Clarity
- Predictability

### Why so hard?

- Attention span
- Tool overcrowd
- Without inbound fails

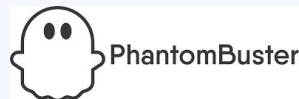
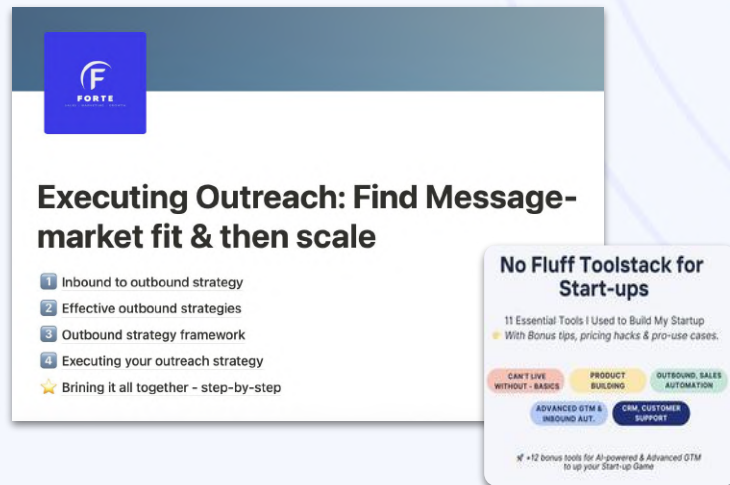
### Tool Stack

- LinkedIn + Sales Navigator, prospecting tools
- Signal based & smart: Clay, Relevance AI, Honeysales
- Salesforce for warm-up and automation



### Tactical Implementation:

- Start small with linkedin, networking, what resonates
- Use how your audience describes, not feature heavy
- Once resonates, than outbound: Test-iterate-improve
- Always iterate, never do more than 2-300 at a time



# 7. Scale Trust & Credibility

## Case Studies

Detailed success stories from satisfied clients

## Testimonials

Use Senja or similar for Love Walls



## Events & Awards

PR events, launches like PH launch are great



"Flowla provides a one-stop-shop for all pieces of our sales process. Our customers consistently cite it as differentiator that sets us apart from competitors."

Kelly McIntosh, Head of Revenue Operations



## 💡 Tactical Implementation:

- Once you land 5–10 clients, scaling = trust.
- This month, focus on: 70% Authority, 20% Credibility, 10% Relatability.
- Use tools like Easygen/XGenerate for content, Fathom for call-based testimonials, and Riverside + Luma to launch founder podcasts or webinars.



# 8. Build Your Founder Brand First

**1,000+**  
Leads Generated

From founder-only content strategy

**3X**

**Engagement Rate**

Compared to company content

**52**

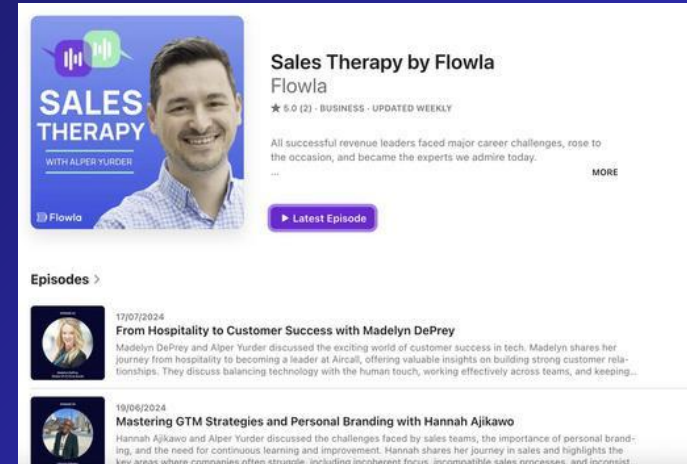
**Weekly Posts**

Consistent sharing builds audience

💡 **Your inbound strategy needs four pillars:**

- People buy you before your product.
- A founder's personal brand builds trust faster than company posts.
- Share wins, failures, and behind-the-scenes weekly to stay human and relatable.

Want a full system? Grab our LinkedIn Flywheel Guide for a step-by-step brand-building framework.





# 9. Inbound Without Trust = Fail



## TOFU: Top of Funnel

Value posts, hooks, and attention-grabbing content to attract initial interest



## MOFU: Middle of Funnel

Email sequences, case studies, and deeper educational content for engaged prospects

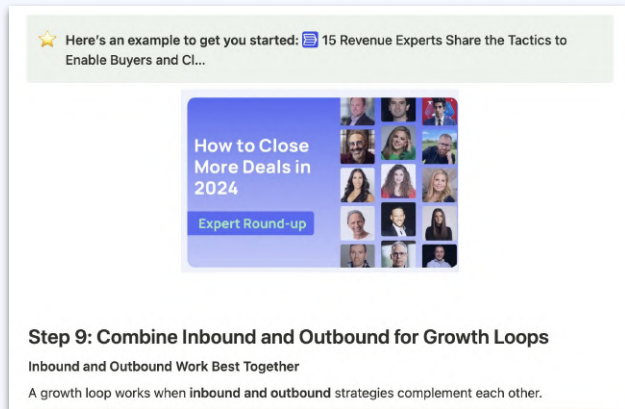
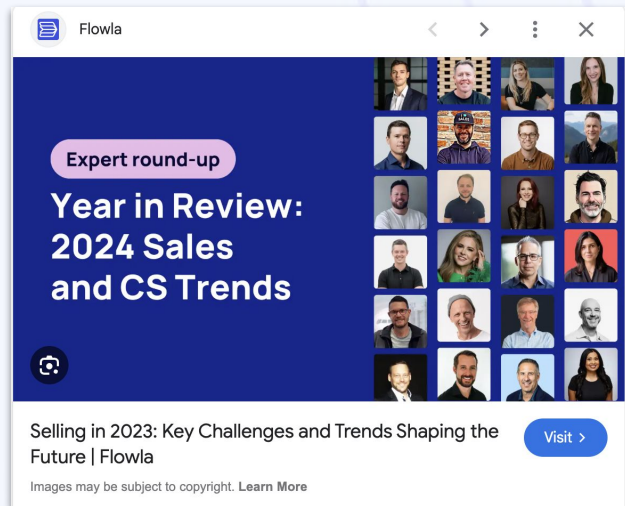


## BOFU: Bottom of Funnel

Comparisons, pricing details, and content addressing common objections







### Your inbound strategy needs four pillars:

- Authority, Expertise, Credibility & Relatability →
- Founder Story (personal connection), Problem/Solution Posts (credibility), Customer Quotes (social proof), and SEO Pages (search capture)
- **Exercise:** Brainstorm 10 trust-building content ideas. Use Ahrefs for keywords and LinkedIn comments to spot what resonates.





# 10. Your AI Growth Stack

What	Tool(s)	Why
Landing Pages / MVPs	<b>MANUS</b> <b>Typeform</b>	Launch fast, test demand
Decks & Presentations	 <b>Gamma</b>  <b>Tome</b>	Beautiful slides, fast storytelling
Messaging / Copywriting	 <b>copy.ai</b> <b>Jasper</b>	Fast iterations, outbound/email cop
Lead Enrichment	 <b>Clay</b>  <b>Apollo</b>	ICP targeting, triggers, automation
Call Recording	<b>Fathom</b>  <b>Otter.ai</b>	Post-call learnings, transcripts

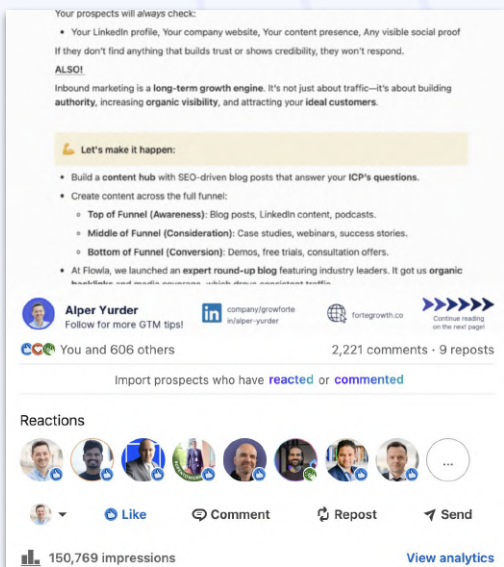
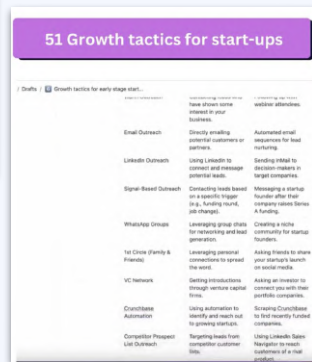
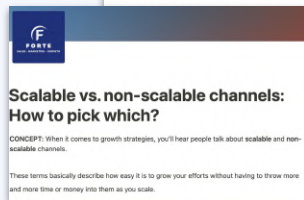
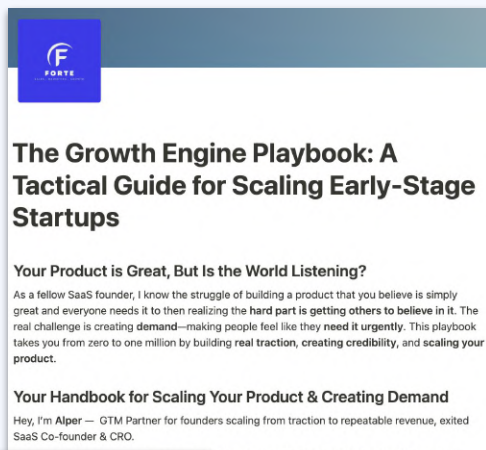
For personalized recommendations on GTM automation workflows or templates that might benefit your specific situation, feel free to reach out directly.

# Forte “No-fluff” How to Guides:

I've built multiple go-to-market playbooks — from *0 to \$1M* and *\$1M to \$3M* — breaking growth down into 20 actionable steps.

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



# 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



# 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, salesforce
- 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.



# 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](https://fortegrowth.co)
- ✓ Or check out my [one-pager on how I work](#)

3

## Subscribe to my newsletter

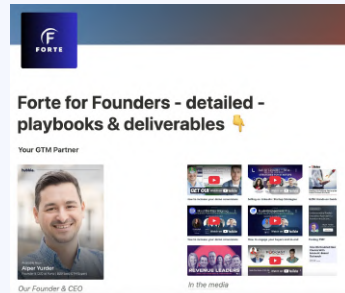


Want more GTM tips like this?

[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*.



# From Zero to GTM Engine with Founder-led sales & AI

Alper Yurder, May 2025





# 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](#)

[No-fluff GTM Execution towards \\$3M 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](#)

[Step 6: Build a Simple, Effective Toolstack](#)

[Step 7: Build an Inbound Engine](#)

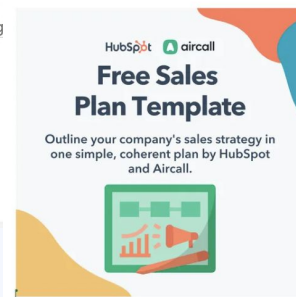
[Step 8: Use Expert Roundups to Build Credibility](#)

[Step 9: Combine Inbound and Outbound for Growth Loops](#)

[Real-World Example:](#)

Develop a **sales playbook**:

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





# Round

## Starting Point

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

## Our Approach

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

## Results

€700K raised

## Ongoing mentor relationship

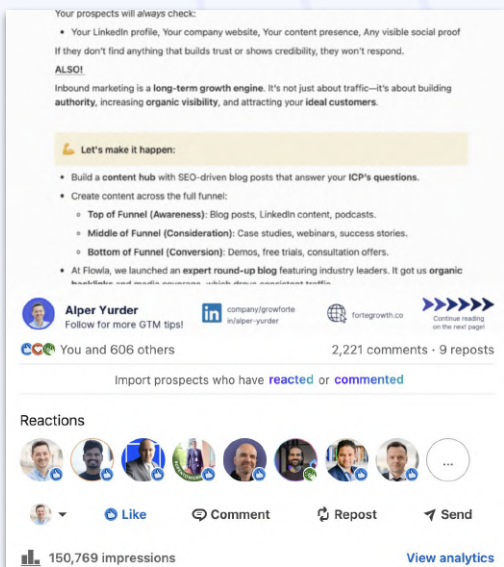
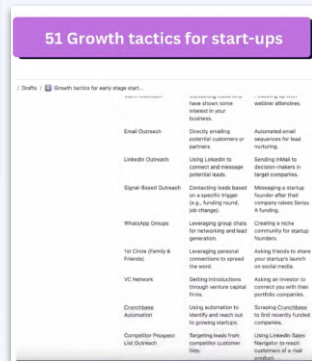
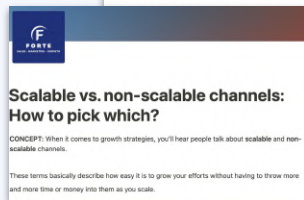
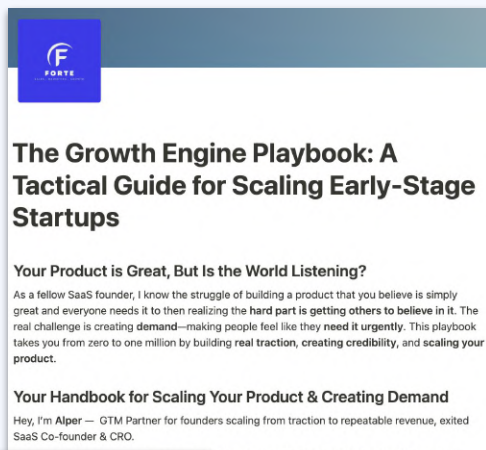


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# 1. GTM Roadmap

## 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.

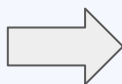
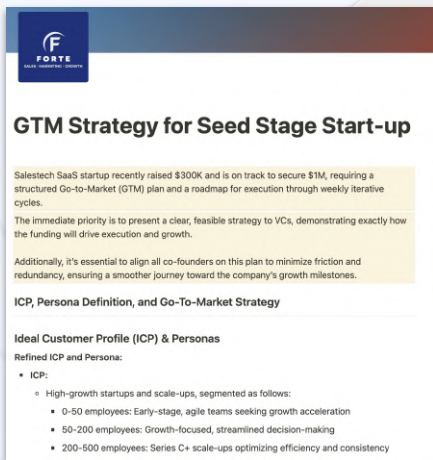
When I start working with a startup to build their revenue engine, I do this exercise:

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 Roadmap / One-Pager Questions](#)

# 1. GTM Roadmap

## A clear GTM strategy & roadmap

Best Practice

### 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)

#### 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., SaaSr, webinars, Product Hunt)
    - Public relations and social media presence to amplify brand visibility

## Founder-led sales:

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

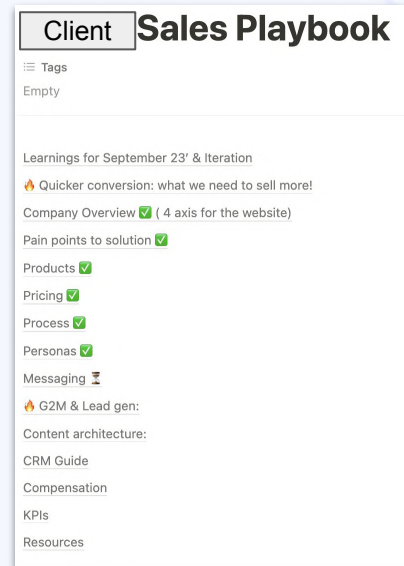
### Why it Matters:

- ✗ 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



### 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.

#### 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

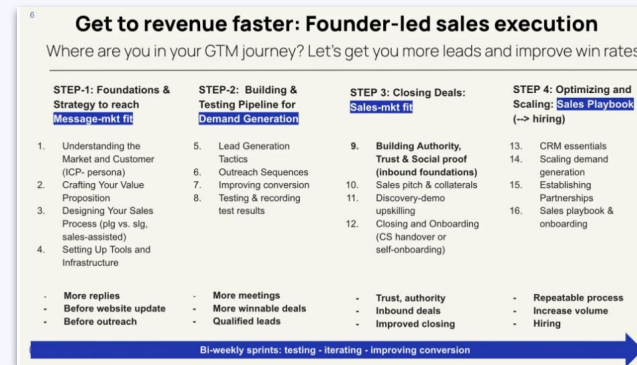
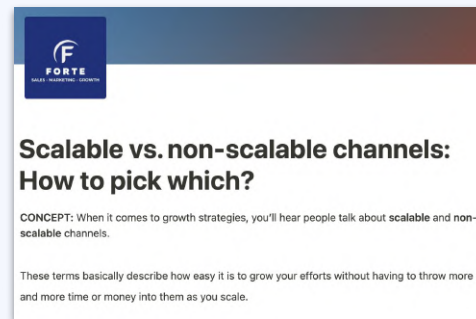
→ People buy from people – show up on LinkedIn.

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

# One size fits noone

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

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

## 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

Talk to 100s of potential prospects to nail Message-Market fit



Note how they describe your product, use it as your website copy



Create your Ideal Customer Profile and be extremely specific about who you're selling to.

## Refine & Validate Your Message



Go to events, network and test your MESSAGE with real people

## Invest in Customer Success from day 1



Create first VIDEO DEMO and showcase on Website, LinkedIn and sales calls.

## Run a structured demo & discovery process

Ask the right questions, understand pain points without pitching directly.

### A SIMPLE PROCESS:



Discovery



Follow up workshop



Decision



Trial period

## Build a feedback loop



Record all your calls with a recorder like Fathom



Create a Slack channel with product and marketing to share the recordings

## Track every interaction



HubSpot



Intercom



Use a Google Sheet or Notion, use Intercom or start with free Hubspot or Pipedrive from get to.

## 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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Follow for more GTM tips!



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in/alper-yurder



fortegrowth.co



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## HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST TWENTY CUSTOMERS



### 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 favours.

**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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## HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST 100 CUSTOMERS

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

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
- More replies
  - Before website update
  - Before outreach

## STEP-2: Building & Testing Pipeline for **Demand Generation**

5. Lead Generation Tactics
  6. Outreach Sequences
  7. Improving conversion
  8. Testing & recording test results
- More meetings
  - More winnable deals
  - Qualified leads

## STEP 3: Closing Deals: **Sales-mkt fit**

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)
- Trust, authority
  - Inbound deals
  - Improved closing

## STEP 4: Optimizing and Scaling: **Sales Playbook** (--> hiring)

13. CRM essentials
  14. Scaling demand generation
  15. Establishing Partnerships
  16. Sales playbook & onboarding
- 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

- 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

“Raising pre-seed, going beyond first traction”

2

Learning to sell before I hire

- 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?

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

3

Scaling Sales from Seed 2 Series-A

- 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

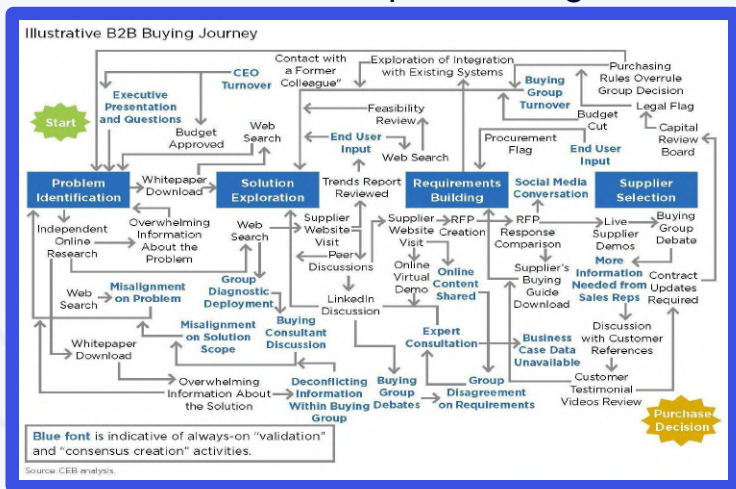
“I thought we figured all this before, but some things keep coming back”

# 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%

# Clear path to Growth: The VC expectation

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



## Clear GTM Strategy

Specific, actionable plan to reach customers



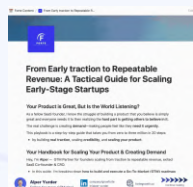
## Founder-Led Sales

Proven ability to close deals yourself



## AI-Powered Demand Gen

Efficient customer acquisition at scale



See next page

# Clear path to Growth: The VC expectation

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



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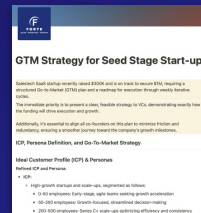


## AI-Powered Demand Gen

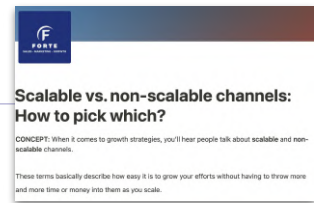
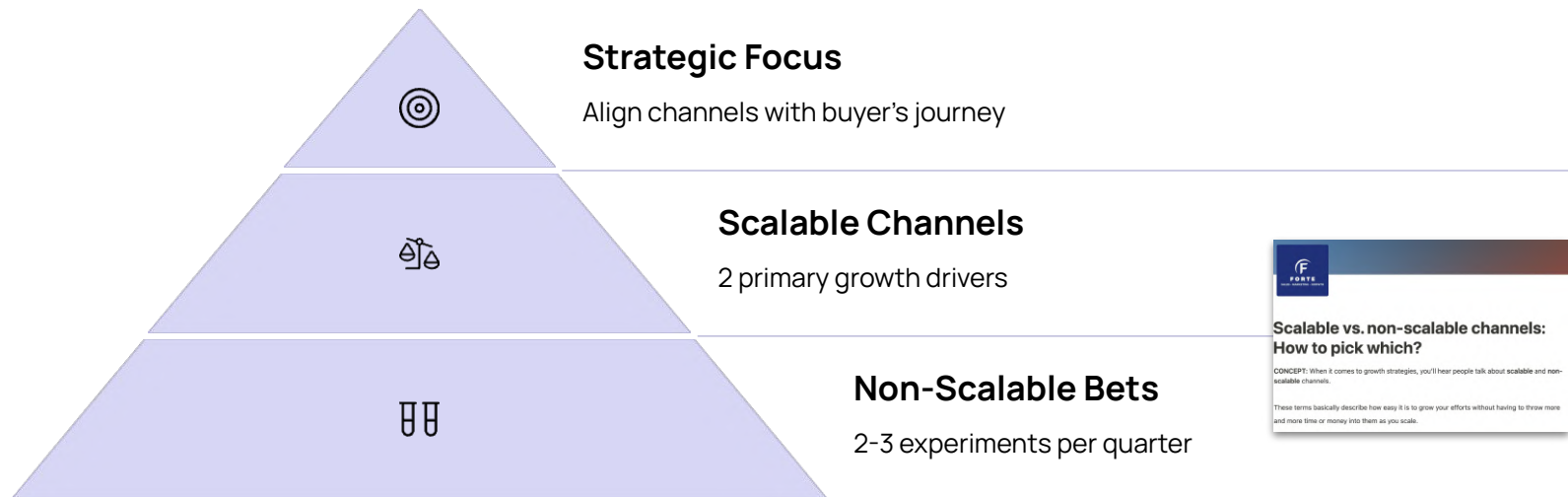
Efficient customer acquisition at scale



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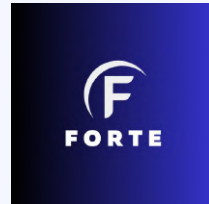
# Build Your 1-Year GTM Plan



- Every startup needs a balanced growth plan: 2 scalable channels (like sales or referrals) + quarterly tests with non-scalable tactics (like events or affiliates).
- Check out our playbooks: *How to Pick Channels* and the *50 Growth Channel Cheatsheet* to find your mix.

# From Zero to GTM Engine with Founder-led sales & AI

Alper Yurder, May 2025





# The Startup Trio

the GTM Hustler to your Product & Tech Hipster-Hacker: Be the Hustler or Find the Hustler



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

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



# 3 (Cont'd): Choosing Acquisition Channels

How will you acquire new leads?



## SCALABLE CHANNELS

- Direct Sales
- Referral
- SEO

✓ These channels can grow with your business and provide consistent results as you scale.



## NON-SCALABLE BETS

- Industry Events
- Personal Introductions
- Affiliate Marketing

✓ These channels can grow with your business and provide consistent results as you scale.



## DECISION CRITERIA

- Average ticket size
- Typical sales cycle length
- Buyer behavior patterns

✓ Base your channel selection on these key factors to ensure alignment with your business model.



**For tactical implementation, follow this flow:**

- Connect with 2000 ICPs on LinkedIn,
- send 10-20 personalized DMs daily using Dripify,
- run small weekly campaigns, and document learnings to refine your approach.
- Build a GTM Campaign database to track results.



# 5. Map Your Sales Process



## Discovery

Initial qualification and needs assessment



## Demo

Product showcase and value demonstration



## Follow-up

Address questions and overcome objections



## Close

Secure agreement and finalize details



## Onboarding

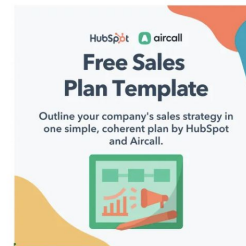
Ensure successful implementation




Let's make it happen:


Develop a **sales playbook**:

- Map out your sales process from **lead generation** to **discovery calls**, **product demos**, **follow-ups**, and **closing**.
- **Refine** the process regularly. After refining Flowla's sales process, we reduced **sales cycles** by **30%** by focusing on more structured **follow-ups** and **qualifying leads** better.
  - We also tested with free sign-ups. vs book a demo, different pricing strategies, Sales-CS hand-over

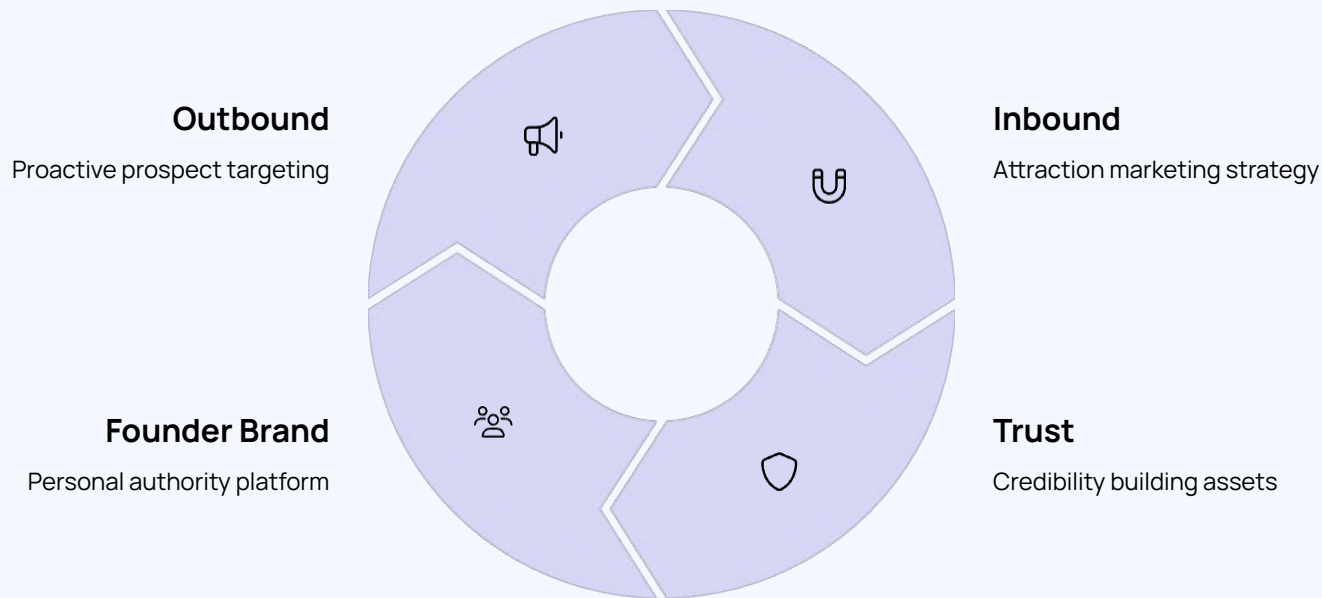


**Why It Matters:** A documented sales process allows you to **optimize** every step of your sales cycle and **scale** effectively.

Here's the Hubspot example  [Hubspot playbook](#)

 **Be aware of common leaks in your sales funnel:** weak follow-up processes, dependency on a single champion within the organization, and unclear value propositions can all derail deals. These issues become more pronounced as you scale.

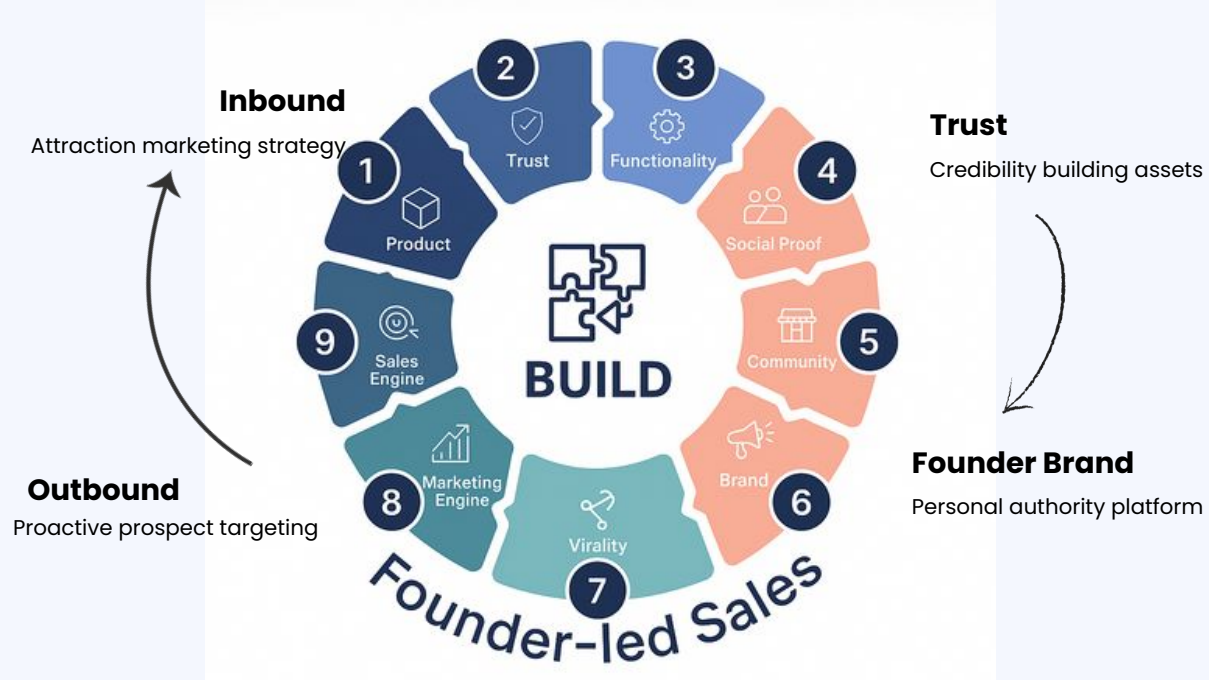
# 10. Scale Systems, Not Chaos



A complete GTM strategy integrates all four components: outbound prospecting, inbound marketing, trust-building assets, and founder brand development. To implement effectively, create a 90-day roadmap with specific milestones, establish weekly GTM rituals to maintain momentum, and develop a targeted strategy for acquiring your next five clients.

For additional accountability and support, consider joining our Accountability Cohort where you can connect with other founders on similar journeys.



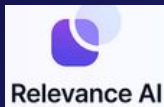


# Outbound - Find Message-Market Fit



## 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
- 🌟 Bringing it all together - step-by-step



### Why Outbound Works

- Provides fast feedback on messaging
- Forces clarity in your value proposition
- Drives predictable revenue generation

### Best Practices

- Prioritize relevance over volume
- Use personalization instead of templates
- Focus on trigger-based outreach rather than mass blasts

### Tool Stack

- LinkedIn + Sales Navigator for prospecting
- Clay, Relevance AI, Honeysales for targeting
- Salesforce for warm-up and automation

Effective outbound strategy isn't about volume—it's about relevance and timing. By focusing on quality over quantity and leveraging trigger-based outreach, you can significantly improve your conversion rates and accelerate your path to message-market fit.

# 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.

