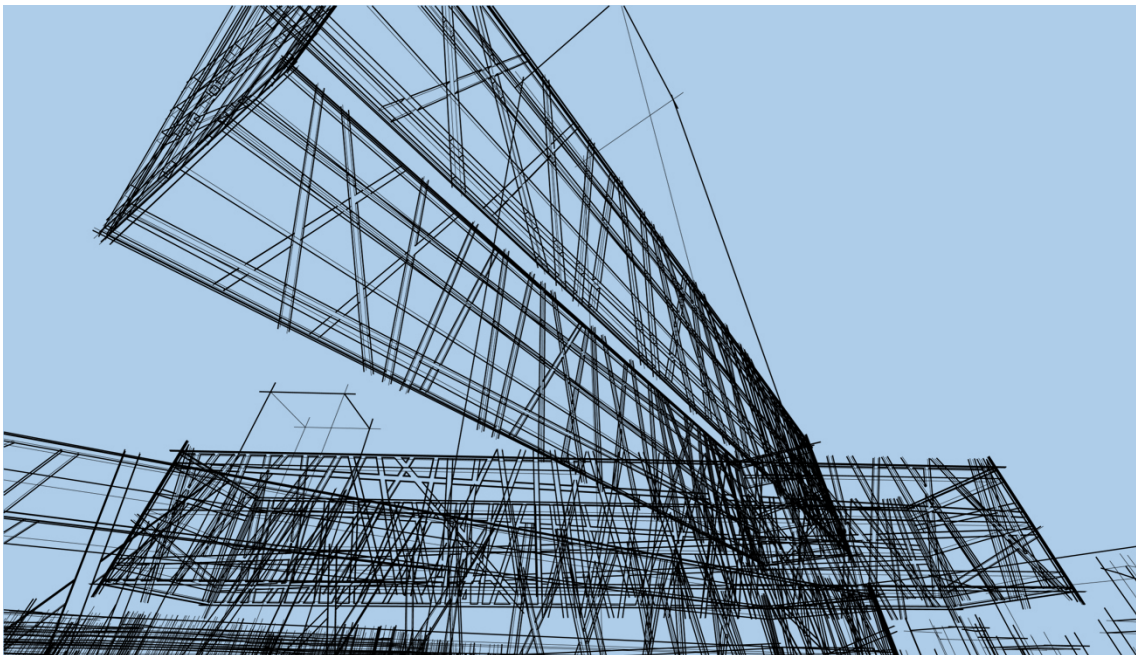




THE \$10 MILLION WALL

WHY AUSTRALIAN TECH COMPANIES STALL BEFORE THEY SCALE



Most Australian tech founders run into the same barrier: the \$10 million wall. The product is strong, the team is capable, and the market is real, yet growth begins to slow. The issue is not strategy or capital. It is the internal structure of the company that can no longer support its own weight. What worked at five million becomes the constraint at ten. AI did not create the wall, but it has made it impossible to ignore. This paper explains why the \$10 million wall exists and what separates the companies that break through it from those that stall beneath it.

by Hani Iskander, Partner @ Cube Capital

INTRODUCTION

On most evenings, Australia's technology sector operates out of phase with the rest of the world. Not metaphorically, but literally. A founder in Sydney might look up from his screen at 11:47 pm, not because he is inefficient or overzealous, but because San Francisco is just beginning its day. The United States accounts for more than half of the world's technology spending, and that simple fact bends the working rhythms of every Australian tech company that harbours global ambitions. Geography imposes its own economics.

One such founder, leading a SaaS company approaching \$8.7 million in recurring revenue, sits in the dim light of a home office in Surry Hills, watching a product announcement from a Boston competitor. His own product is solid, perhaps even elegant. His Australian customers are loyal. His team of thirty-seven is talented. Revenue grew 34 percent last year. By all conventional metrics, he is succeeding.

And yet the competitor on the screen appears to be playing an entirely different game.

They unveil AI-driven features that seem to arrive quarterly, each more advanced than the last. Their integrations extend across ecosystems he has not yet entered. Their messaging strikes with clarity and conviction. They speak with the confidence of companies that assume the market is expanding in their direction. As he watches, a quiet realisation settles in. His biggest barrier is no longer innovation, nor market demand, nor even competition.

It is internal. It is organisational. It is structural.

Australia has a name for the territory where he now stands: the "missing middle." The statistics are stark. Of the 2.7 million actively trading businesses in Australia, 98 percent have annual revenues below \$10 million. In the technology sector, the pattern is even more pronounced. While 234 Australian tech companies reached valuations exceeding \$100 million by 2024 (up from just 99 in 2021), the vast majority never cross this threshold. Thousands of promising technology firms grow to five or six million dollars. Only a fraction grow beyond ten.

Policymakers treat this phenomenon as a statistical curiosity. Founders experience it as something much more concrete.

A wall.

Invisible at first, then suddenly undeniable. The ten-million-dollar wall is not a financial milestone. It is the point at which the company's internal structure can no longer support its growth. Its decisions, habits, systems, processes, leadership, and communication begin to buckle under the weight of complexity. A company built for improvisation begins to fail at coordination. What once felt like momentum now feels like resistance.

This article is about that resistance. Why Australian technology companies stall before they scale, why AI has intensified the challenge, and why crossing the ten-million-dollar threshold now requires a deliberate redesign rather than incremental effort. It is about structure, not aspiration.

And for founders who recognise echoes of their own experience in these opening pages, it is also a map.

THE WALL INSIDE THE ORGANISATION

By the time an Australian technology company approaches ten million dollars in annual revenue, its challenges have almost nothing to do with technology. The product can be good, even excellent. Customers can be satisfied. The market can be demonstrably real. And yet the company begins to slow.

Not because demand has softened.

Not because competitors have outmanoeuvred it.

But because the organisation itself has reached the edge of its structural design.

A company that once operated through intuition now requires coordination. A company that once thrived on improvisation now needs consistency. A company that once succeeded through the founder's presence now requires systems that function in their absence.

This is the internal version of the ten-million-dollar wall: growth continues, but the company's ability to manage that growth does not.

Research from organisational design consultancies tracking mid-market companies reveals a troubling pattern. Decision latency (the time from problem identification to implementation) becomes the first casualty. Teams making technical decisions in more than 72 hours show 45 percent more rework and 30 percent longer feature delivery times than their faster-moving counterparts. What founders experience as "slowness" is actually entropy: the natural state of a growing business without the structure to channel its own energy.

Take the trajectory of a Melbourne-based payments platform founded in 2019. Between March 2023 and September 2024, it grew from \$6.2 million to \$11.4 million in annual revenue. The founder, a former financial services executive who had spent eight years at NAB, had built what customers praised as an elegant solution to cross-border transaction complexity. Engineering output remained high. Customer satisfaction scores held steady above 4.2 out of 5.

Yet something had changed.

Decisions that once took three days now required nineteen. Product roadmaps shifted quarterly rather than evolving systematically. The founder found himself spending 60 percent of his time mediating between teams: translating between engineering and sales, between product and customer success, between strategy and execution. He had become, without choosing it, the organisational interpreter. Every significant decision flowed through him because no clear alternative pathway existed.

Technical debt accumulated invisibly. Not the kind measured in code quality metrics, but the structural kind. Decisions deferred, ambiguities tolerated, conflicts smoothed over rather than resolved. The engineering team remained busy, sometimes overloaded, yet the pace of meaningful progress declined. Features shipped, but not in the right sequence. Meetings multiplied, but alignment did not.

The wall was inside the company long before it ever appeared in the financial statements.

For consulting firms, the internal wall manifests differently. Quality becomes inconsistent not because people care less, but because knowledge exists in individual heads rather than systematic processes. A Sydney-based technology consulting firm with forty-three staff, established in 2018, experienced this acutely. Senior consultants (the ones who had built the firm's reputation working on enterprise transformations for ASX-listed companies) became overstretched across too many simultaneous engagements. Junior consultants lacked the structured frameworks required to deliver consistently. Client escalations increased 40 percent year-on-year despite stable project counts. The founder, who prided herself on delivery excellence, found herself reviewing work she should have been able to trust.

The hybrid model presents its own structural tension. Companies operating both product and services lines face conflict at the seam between the two. Product wants focus, predictable development cycles, strategic roadmaps. Services wants flexibility, client responsiveness, bespoke adaptations. Both are correct. Both have legitimate needs. And both operate in ways that inherently conflict unless reconciled by a superior structure.

Absent that structure, the founder becomes the translator, the mediator, the referee.

In other words: the bottleneck.

Across these stories runs a single thread. The organisation behaves as though it is still five million dollars in size, even as the company's ambitions demand that it operate like a twenty-million-dollar firm.

AI AS AN ORGANISATIONAL STRESS TEST

Artificial intelligence did not create the ten-million-dollar wall.

It simply made it visible sooner.

Before AI's acceleration, a company could survive organisational drift for years. Decisions could be slow. Roadmaps could be loose. Delivery inconsistency could be tolerated. The market moved at a pace that allowed inefficiency to remain hidden.

AI removed that buffer.

McKinsey's 2025 State of AI research reveals a paradox: 88 percent of organisations now use AI regularly, yet only 39 percent report measurable impact on earnings before interest and tax. The gap between adoption and value capture is not a technology problem. It is an organisational one. AI accelerates whatever structure already exists. Strong structure becomes stronger. Weak structure fragments faster.

When a company has strong structure (clear roles, aligned teams, decision pathways, stable rhythms), AI acts as leverage. It sharpens insight, increases velocity, and enhances execution. It allows a mid-market firm to operate with the sophistication of a much larger one.

But when structure is weak, AI acts like a pressure gradient. Everything speeds up, including failure modes.

For the SaaS founder in Surry Hills, AI introduces complexity faster than the product company can absorb it. Model integration choices, data governance questions, rapid prototyping cycles, unpredictable model behaviour. None of these maps neatly onto the team's existing processes. What was once a stable engineering cadence becomes a swirl of uncertainty.

AI does not break the organisation. It exposes that the organisation was never designed to handle rapid iteration.

The Brisbane-based workforce management SaaS company learned this in late 2023. Founded in 2020, it had grown steadily to \$9.3 million in revenue by focusing on rostering software for healthcare and hospitality sectors. The executive team decided to integrate AI-powered scheduling into their core product. The market opportunity was clear: competitors were moving fast, and customers were asking for it. Engineering estimated four months to ship an initial version.

Twelve months later, the feature still had not launched.

Not because the technology was unworkable, but because every decision required alignment across teams that operated on different cadences with different priorities. Product wanted to perfect the algorithm. Sales promised specific capabilities to early-adopter customers. Customer success worried about support complexity. Engineering kept rebuilding as requirements shifted. Legal raised compliance questions that no one had anticipated.

The breakdown was not technical. It was structural. The company lacked the decision infrastructure required to coordinate cross-functional complexity at speed. AI did not create this deficit. It merely illuminated it.

For the consulting founder, AI destabilises the firm's value proposition in a different way. Clients expect sharper insights delivered faster and at lower cost. AI-enabled competitors automate significant portions of analysis and delivery. The firm's senior experts, once the core of its competitive advantage, now face an environment where expertise must translate into repeatable, AI-enhanced capability. Without a system for knowledge capture and standardisation, the firm becomes slower precisely when the market demands acceleration.

The cost of implementing AI tells its own story. Research from MIT Sloan finds that change management for AI initiatives costs three times the technology investment itself, driven by the need to overhaul workflows, key performance indicators, and decision rights. Maintenance costs run as high as initial development. These figures reflect a fundamental truth: AI integration is an organisational redesign challenge disguised as a technology project.

For the hybrid founder, AI deepens the divide between product and services. Product teams push for AI-led scale. Services teams push for AI-enabled customisation. Both intensify the demands placed on a company still operating with pre-scale structure.

In all three cases, AI functions as an accelerant. It accelerates clarity if the company is ready. It accelerates chaos if it is not.

The contrasting case illuminates the difference. An Australian fintech, founded in Adelaide in 2019, grew from \$7.1 million to \$23.8 million in revenue over eighteen months. The breakthrough came not from implementing AI features first, but from redesigning their product-delivery interface. They established clear boundaries between configurable and custom work.

They built decision pathways that did not require founder mediation. They created cross-functional teams with genuine authority to ship features without escalation.

Only after establishing this structure did they integrate AI into their underwriting processes. The technology deployed into an organisation capable of absorbing it. AI became a multiplier of existing capability rather than a source of friction.

The ten-million-dollar wall has always been an organisational challenge. AI did not change the nature of the wall. It changed how quickly companies collide with it, and how severe the impact becomes.

The question is not whether AI will expose organisational weakness. The question is whether companies will redesign before the exposure becomes fatal.

THREE PATTERNS OF FAILURE

Organisational capability is the least understood and most decisive factor in determining whether a technology company can grow beyond \$10 million. Founders often assume capability emerges naturally as the business grows. In reality, capability must be designed, built, tested, and reinforced. It does not arise from adding people. It arises from adding structure.

To understand capability, it helps to examine its absence. Companies that stall at the ten-million-dollar threshold exhibit three recurring patterns of structural failure. Not strategy failures. Not execution failures. Structural failures that compound silently until they become undeniable.

The Coordination Failure

At small scale, generalists thrive. Everyone touches everything. Decisions happen through proximity and conversation. This works beautifully until it does not.

Somewhere between thirty and fifty people, proximity breaks down. Teams form. Functions emerge. Specialists appear. And suddenly, the question "who decides?" no longer has an obvious answer.

The SaaS founder sees this when engineering output increases, but meaningful progress does not. Features ship, but not in the right sequence. Teams are busy, but not necessarily productive. Meetings multiply, but alignment does not. What he experiences as "slowness" is actually the first symptom of a company that has outgrown instinct-driven coordination.

At a Perth-based analytics platform founded in 2018, the turning point came when the leadership team mapped decision rights across seventeen critical decision types. Who owns pricing? Who approves partnership terms? Who decides feature prioritisation? Who controls engineering resourcing?

Before the mapping, decisions escalated by default. Three people believed they owned pricing decisions, which meant no one actually did. After the mapping, decision latency dropped from an average of 11 days to 2.5 days. Not because people worked faster, but because they no longer needed to discover who held authority every time a decision arose.

Role clarity, expressed not through job titles but through decision rights, reduces noise, accelerates execution, and prevents small problems from becoming strategic issues. Ambiguity creates drift. Drift creates friction. And friction, at scale, becomes the dominant force shaping the company's trajectory.

Research from management consulting firms tracking mid-market companies finds that high-performing organisations make decisions at appropriate speeds for their context: operational decisions in hours, tactical decisions in days, strategic decisions in weeks. Low performers make all decisions at roughly the same speed. Slowly. Because they lack the structure to differentiate decision types and assign them to appropriate levels.

Companies either design a decision flow or drown in it. Without structure, decisions escalate unnecessarily, and the founder becomes the backstop for everything. With structure, decisions are distributed intelligently across the company, increasing velocity and reducing dependence on any one person.

The Leadership Void

In early years, leadership is embodied in the founder. Beyond ten million dollars, leadership must become a system. A coordinated unit capable of absorbing complexity, maintaining alignment, and making decisions faster than the business can generate new issues.

The transition from founder-as-leader to leadership-as-system is perhaps the most difficult shift companies must make. It requires the founder to move from being the answer to every question to being the designer of the system that produces answers.

BCG research on large-scale reorganisations finds that 75 percent fail to deliver intended results. The companies that succeed do not simply reshuffle reporting lines. They redesign operating rhythms, decision pathways, and accountability structures. They treat the leadership system as infrastructure requiring explicit design, not an emergent property of hiring senior people.

Companies that scale have cadence. A predictable, disciplined cadence. Weekly reviews to catch problems early. Monthly reviews to align priorities. Quarterly reviews to recalibrate strategy.

Without rhythm, firms become reactive, lurching from urgency to urgency. Problems grow in the shadows because there is no systematic mechanism to surface them. Cadence turns chaos into signal.

At an Adelaide-based enterprise software company generating \$12.6 million in revenue, the executive team instituted what they called "the weekly pulse." A standing Monday morning session where each functional lead reported three numbers, three blockers, and three decisions pending. The format never changed. The meeting never exceeded forty-five minutes. But it created a detection system that caught misalignment before it compounded.

In the six months before implementing the rhythm, the company experienced four major project delays caused by cross-functional misalignment discovered too late. In the eighteen months after?

Zero.

The rhythm did not prevent problems from arising. It prevented problems from hiding.

The leadership system becomes the company's centre of gravity. It creates alignment faster than misalignment can accumulate. It surfaces problems before they metastasise. It ensures that cross-functional tensions are resolved through structure rather than through founder intervention.

The Interface Breakdown

This interface is the hinge on which tech companies rise or fall.

When strong, the product-delivery interface harmonises strategy, customer needs, roadmap, and execution. Customer insights inform product direction without creating ad hoc commitments. Product evolution happens at a pace that delivery can sustain. The boundary between standard and custom work is clear, defensible, and strategically aligned.

When weak, it creates a cycle of overpromising and underdelivering. Sales makes commitments product cannot support. Product builds features delivery cannot scale. Services teams work around product limitations rather than within product capabilities. The business oscillates between disappointing customers and exhausting teams.

A Canberra-based government technology platform founded in 2017 experienced this breakdown acutely. Sales, hungry for growth, began promising custom integrations to secure enterprise contracts. Product, focused on building a scalable platform, resisted one-off features. Services, caught between customer commitments and product constraints, built workarounds that became technical debt.

Revenue grew 40 percent year-on-year. Gross margin declined by 12 percentage points. Customer satisfaction scores dropped from 4.3 to 3.7.

The company was growing itself into fragility.

The fix required establishing what the CEO called "the configurable core." An explicit definition of what the product did well out-of-the-box, what could be configured within defined parameters, and what fell outside the product's scope entirely. Sales compensation shifted to reward contracts that fit the configurable core. Product roadmap decisions became transparent to the entire company. Services built expertise in maximising value within configuration parameters rather than building around them.

Eighteen months later, revenue had grown another 35 percent. Gross margin recovered to 68 percent. Customer satisfaction climbed to 4.5.

The interface had been redesigned.

Together, these three patterns (the coordination failure, the leadership void, the interface breakdown) form the structural anatomy of companies that stall. Not strategic failures. Not market failures. Structural failures that accumulate silently until they become visible in slowing growth, declining margins, and founder exhaustion.

THE REDESIGN

Breaking the ten-million-dollar wall requires a redesign. Not a reorganisation, not a hiring spree, not a new set of dashboards.

A redesign.

A deliberate reconfiguration of how the company thinks, decides, aligns, and executes.

Most founders attempt one of three responses when they feel the wall closing in. They intensify, they reorganise, or they hire a senior leader and hope the problem goes away.

None of these works.

Intensification means the founder steps deeper into the business, attending more meetings, approving more decisions, and personally unblocking more teams. This works briefly. Then the company grows increasingly dependent on the founder's intervention, and velocity collapses the moment the founder looks away. Intensification is not a strategy. It is the organisational equivalent of running faster on a treadmill. Activity increases, but distance travelled does not.

Reorganisation means the company redraws the org chart, introduces new titles, or shuffles reporting lines. But without new decision rights, operating rhythms, or interface structures, the reorganisation merely changes who is confused rather than reducing confusion itself. Org charts describe reporting relationships. They do not create capability.

Delegation by hope means a Head of Sales, COO, or VP of Product is hired with the expectation that they will "fix the business." But leaders cannot fix structure they did not design. Without clear authority, aligned incentives, and structural support, even exceptional hires become symbolic rather than transformative. The problem is not that the leaders are wrong. The problem is that they arrive into a system that was never designed to support leadership at that level.

The true redesign begins with a psychological shift. The founder must stop being the system, and start designing the system.

This is the moment where companies that scale begin to diverge sharply from those that stall.

For the SaaS founder, the redesign often begins with the product. A product leadership function must exist that is not simply the founder by another name. Strategy must translate into a roadmap. Roadmap must translate into priority. Priority must translate into execution. The company must stop building "what seems urgent" and start building "what compounds."

This requires explicit frameworks for prioritisation, clear ownership of the roadmap, and systematic mechanisms for incorporating customer feedback without allowing it to distort strategy. The founder's role shifts from deciding what to build to ensuring the system that decides what to build is functioning correctly.

For the consulting founder, the redesign begins with the middle layer. The creation of engagement leads, delivery managers, practice heads. These roles do not simply add supervision. They create consistency. They turn expertise into capability. They hold quality without the founder having to enforce it manually.

The middle layer becomes the organisation's quality-transmission mechanism. Senior expertise gets encoded into methodologies, junior consultants receive structured development, and the founder transitions from quality guardian to system architect.

For the hybrid founder, the redesign begins with formalising the boundary between product and services. What is configurable? What is custom? What is non-negotiable? What is strategically important versus merely attractive?

Without these boundaries, every decision becomes a negotiation. Boundaries turn negotiation into structure. They create clarity about what the product does well, what services enhance, and where customisation stops being strategic and starts being dilutive.

The redesign sequence matters. McKinsey research on workflow transformation finds that companies seeing EBIT impact from technology integration follow a consistent pattern. They clarify decision rights first, establish operating rhythms second, and only then layer in new capabilities.

The structure precedes the acceleration.

AI does not remove the need for redesign. AI requires redesign. AI introduces cross-functional implications that no single team can hold alone. It requires new data practices, new delivery patterns, new forms of customer support, and new rhythms of experimentation. It increases the strategic cost of internal misalignment. It accelerates both good decisions and bad ones.

Companies that integrate AI successfully do so after building the structures capable of absorbing acceleration. Companies that fail to integrate AI do so because acceleration without structure is simply chaos performed faster.

The organisations that get this right treat AI not as a feature set but as an operating capability that touches every function. They redesign their decision structures to handle the speed and uncertainty AI introduces. They build cross-functional teams that can move quickly without fragmenting. They establish clear governance around model behaviour, data quality, and customer expectations.

AI integration becomes evidence of organisational maturity, not a substitute for it.

WHY SOME COMPANIES BREAK THE WALL

Not all companies stall at the ten-million-dollar threshold. Some cross it with surprising speed. Others cross it slowly but steadily, accumulating strength as they rise. A few cross it almost without noticing, because they built the structure long before the revenue arrived.

These companies are not necessarily the ones with the best products, the largest markets, or the most charismatic founders.

They are the ones who make a fundamental shift earlier than others.

They stop relying on individual excellence and begin relying on organisational coherence.

This shift expresses itself in several recognisable patterns.

The founders who scale themselves out of the critical path do not try to replicate themselves. They replace themselves. Selectively, deliberately, and structurally. They remove themselves from decision loops that others can hold. They redesign their role so the organisation can operate at the speed it needs, not the speed they can personally sustain.

This is not a withdrawal from leadership. It is a transformation of it. The founder's energy shifts from solving today's problems to preventing tomorrow's. From answering questions to designing the system that generates answers. From being in every critical meeting to ensuring that critical meetings produce good outcomes without them.

Atlassian's trajectory illustrates this. Mike Cannon-Brookes and Scott Farquhar built the company from bootstrap to a \$6 billion IPO valuation in 2015 without external funding for the first thirteen years. Their approach was structural from the start: stateless services that enabled seamless scaling, event-driven systems that processed millions of API calls daily, automated systems that resolved 85 percent of production incidents without human intervention.

They designed systems that could operate without them.

The companies that achieve clarity faster eliminate ambiguity quickly. They make decisions about what they will not do. They refine priorities with discipline. They define what "good" looks like in every function.

Clarity increases velocity more than intelligence ever will.

Ambiguity is expensive. It forces every team member to interpret intent independently, which creates misalignment that compounds over time. Clarity reduces interpretation cost. It allows teams to move in parallel rather than in sequence. It turns coordination from a constant negotiation into a designed system.

The companies that build their leadership system early do not wait for chaos to create leaders. They design their leadership system (the people, the rhythms, the conversations, the expectations) long before the company becomes complex. The leadership system becomes the company's centre of gravity, creating alignment faster than misalignment can accumulate.

The companies that treat AI as a capability, not a feature, do not bolt AI onto existing workflows. They redesign workflows around AI. They treat AI not as an add-on but as an operating assumption.

Canva's evolution illustrates this approach. After establishing product-market fit and reaching \$65 billion valuation, they acquired Leonardo AI and invested heavily in generative capabilities. But the integration succeeded because Canva had already built the structural foundation: API-first design that enabled rapid partner integration, real-time collaboration infrastructure handling millions of concurrent users, distributed systems maintaining sub-second response times across 190 countries.

In these companies, AI accelerates what already works rather than amplifying existing dysfunction. Product teams build with AI-native assumptions. Service teams leverage AI to scale expertise without sacrificing quality. Leadership teams use AI to improve decision quality and speed.

The result is not just faster execution. It is fundamentally different execution. Work that could not have been done at all without AI-enabled capability.

The companies that cultivate coherence understand that coherence is the defining trait of companies that break the wall. Coherence between product and market. Coherence between strategy and execution. Coherence between customer needs and internal priorities. Coherence between the founder's role and the company's requirements.

Coherence is not the same as alignment. Alignment implies everyone agrees. Coherence means the company functions as an integrated system even when individuals hold different perspectives. Decisions flow through clear pathways. Priorities are understood consistently. Trade-offs are made transparently.

Coherence is the antidote to organisational drag.

These companies scale not because the founder becomes superhuman, but because the company becomes self-propelling. They grow beyond ten million in revenue not as a victory lap, but as the point where the company begins to behave like a mature, globally competitive firm, capable of operating with clarity, pace, and strategic intent in markets far larger than Australia's.

The missing middle stops being a structural trap.

It becomes a launchpad.

CONCLUSION

The ten-million-dollar wall is not a financial threshold.

It is a structural one.

It is the moment where the internal design of the company can no longer support the weight of its own ambition. It is where instinct, improvisation, and founder-driven coherence cease to be adequate. It is where growth demands an organisation capable of coordinating complexity rather than reacting to it.

AI has not made this wall harder to see.

AI has made it impossible to ignore.

Rapid iteration, rising customer expectations, global competition, and compressed development cycles have tightened the window in which companies must mature. Organisational weakness that once took years to reveal itself now becomes visible in months. The gap between companies with strong structure and those without is widening at an accelerating pace.

The companies that break the wall are not luckier or smarter. They redesign sooner. They clarify faster. They distribute decision-making deliberately. They build leadership systems before they need them. They treat AI as an organisational capability, not a novelty. They turn structure into an advantage.

For Australian technology firms, the implications are profound.

Our domestic market is too small for slow organisational maturation. With only 26 million people, Australia's local opportunity pales against the United States' 329 million or even the United Kingdom's 67 million. Our competitors overseas scale with resources we do not have. Our distance from major markets forces us to move faster, with more structural discipline, and with clearer organisational intent.

Yet Australia has produced a disproportionate number of technology unicorns. While representing just 1.6 percent of global GDP, we have created 2.3 percent of the world's billion-dollar tech companies: Atlassian, Canva, SafetyCulture, Airwallex among them. These companies succeeded not despite Australia's constraints, but in some ways because of them.

Distance creates opportunity. The companies that master organisational design despite Australia's constraints develop capabilities that translate into competitive advantages globally. They learn to operate with less margin for error, which makes them more resilient. They build systems that must work across time zones, which makes them more intentional about structure. They develop the discipline that comes from having no choice but to be excellent.

Breaking the ten-million-dollar wall is not simply a commercial milestone. It is a transformation. From a founder-dependent organisation to a system capable of compounding without constant intervention. It is the point where the company stops being defined by its origins and begins to be defined by its potential.

The missing middle is not destiny.

It is design.

And design can be changed.

What separates companies that scale from those that stall is not talent, capital, or market opportunity. It is the willingness to see the company as a system that can be redesigned, the courage to dismantle what works adequately in order to build what works optimally, and the discipline to treat structure as the foundation of every advantage that follows.

The wall exists.

But it is not immovable.

It yields to design, to clarity, to structure. And for those who approach it with intention, it becomes not a barrier but a filter: separating companies content with early success from those capable of sustained scale.

Back in Surry Hills, in that home office at 11:47 pm, the founder watching his competitor's announcement faces a choice. He can intensify his efforts, working longer hours, attending more meetings, becoming more deeply embedded in every decision.

Or he can step back and recognise what the competitor has already understood. That the next phase of growth is not about working harder within the current structure, but about redesigning the structure itself.

The wall is there.

Most founders see it only after they've collided with it.

By then, the competitor has moved, the market has shifted, and the team has learned to work around the founder rather than through the system.

The question isn't whether to redesign.

The question is whether there's still time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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He writes about organisational design, AI's impact on institutional structure, and why stability, not volatility, is the most radical idea of all.

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