VC Partners Meeting: GLU Investment Decision (Revised)

WordPress Wedge Strategy - $2M Pre-Seed Round

Date: November 13, 2025
Meeting Type: Investment Committee Decision
Company: GLU (reposition from "CMS Platform" to "WordPress Wedge")
Deal Terms: $2M pre-seed, $12M cap SAFE
Presenting Partner: Sarah Chen

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Attendees

Investment Committee Partners: - **Steve Blank** - Customer Development Partner - **Eric Ries** - Lean Startup Partner
- **Geoffrey Moore** - Market Strategy Partner - **Clayton Christensen** - Innovation Partner - **Peter Thiel** - Zero to One Partner - **Sarah Chen** - Presenting Partner (Deal Lead)

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Meeting Transcript

SARAH CHEN: Good morning everyone. I need to present a strategic pivot on the GLU deal we've been reviewing.

[pulls up new deck]

The original pitch was "CMS AI Optimization Platform" - horizontal expansion across Shopify, WordPress, Squarespace. I've done additional market research and customer interviews, and I think Rahul is pursuing the wrong expansion strategy.

Here's what I'm now recommending we fund instead:

The WordPress Wedge Strategy: - Year 1: Prove model with Shopify (same as before) - Year

2: Enter through HIGH-VALUE WooCommerce merchants only ($1M-10M revenue) - Year 3+: Expand from e-commerce to the broader WordPress content ecosystem

The insight: WooCommerce isn't just another e-commerce platform - it's the wedge into 43-91 million commercial WordPress sites. Affiliate marketers, membership sites, monetized blogs, lead generation sites.

The market math changes dramatically: - Original CMS strategy: ~12M e-commerce merchants across all platforms - WordPress wedge: ~100M addressable commercial WordPress sites

We're talking about 8-10x larger TAM.

[pauses]

I know this is a significant change. Let me show you the validation work, then we can discuss. Steve, I imagine you have thoughts about customer discovery here?

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STEVE BLANK: *[leaning forward intently]*

Sarah, hold on. You're telling me they want to start with Shopify e-commerce merchants, then move to WooCommerce e-commerce merchants, then jump to… content creators?

[flipping through deck]

That's THREE different customer types: 1. Shopify merchants (tech-savvy, hosted platform users) 2. WooCommerce merchants (DIY, chose self-hosted for cost/control) 3. WordPress content creators (bloggers, affiliates, membership sites)

Have they talked to 100 high-value WooCommerce merchants? Do they know these merchants will pay Shopify-tier pricing? Have they talked to any affiliate marketers about paying $99-299/month for "AI content discovery optimization"?

[pause]

Here's what terrifies me about this pivot: Shopify success tells you NOTHING about whether a food blogger will pay for content optimization. These are completely different jobs-to-be-done, different pain points, different buying processes.

But let me tell you what I DO like: The WooCommerce wedge itself is brilliant.

If they can validate that $1M-10M revenue WooCommerce merchants will pay Shopify-level pricing ($299-599/month), then WooCommerce becomes just "another e-commerce segment."

That's testable. That's customer development.

And if those same WooCommerce merchants ALSO run content marketing blogs and want to optimize that content for AI discovery? That's your natural expansion path. That's the wedge validated by the customer themselves.

My concern: Are we assuming the wedge exists, or are we validating it exists?

[looks at Sarah]

My position: I'm a STRONG MAYBE - but only if they do this in the right order:

Phase 1 (Months 1-9): Shopify PMF as planned

Phase 2 (Months 10-12): WooCommerce validation sprint - Interview 30-50 high-revenue WooCommerce merchants - Questions: Do you run a blog? Do you spend on SEO/content optimization? Would you pay $299-599/month for AI optimization? - Measure the wedge: What percentage run content alongside e-commerce?

Phase 3 (Month 13): GO/NO-GO based on validation - If >50% of high-value WooCommerce merchants run content AND want optimization → Build the wedge - If not → Stay pure e-commerce, add BigCommerce/Magento instead

I will vote NO if they try to build for WordPress content creators before validating the wedge exists.

Get out of the building. Talk to customers. Don't assume the wedge exists just because the TAM is bigger.

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SARAH CHEN: Steve, that's exactly the discipline I want to see too. Eric, how does this affect the MVP strategy and build-measure-learn cycle?

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ERIC RIES: *[drumming fingers on table]*

Sarah, I'm actually MORE excited about this than the original CMS platform strategy. Let me tell you why.

[stands up, goes to whiteboard]

The original plan had them building for multiple different customer types simultaneously. That's slow and expensive.

This WordPress wedge strategy is actually MORE lean because it sequences the learning:

Learning Cycle 1 (Months 1-9): E-commerce optimization - Build: Shopify app with AI optimization - Measure: Do merchants install, pay, retain? - Learn: Value prop for e-commerce validated or not

Learning Cycle 2 (Months 10-15): WooCommerce wedge test - Build: SAME product, just integrate with WooCommerce API - Measure: Do high-value WooCommerce merchants pay Shopify-tier pricing? - Learn: WooCommerce merchant profile matches or doesn't

Learning Cycle 3 (Months 16-18): Content optimization MVP
- Build: Lightweight WordPress plugin for blog post optimization - Measure: Do WooCommerce merchants who run blogs actually use it? - Learn: Does the wedge actually exist?

[turns back to group]

See what I love here? **Each cycle builds on validated learning from the previous cycle.**

You don't build for content creators until you've validated that e-commerce merchants who run content WANT this. That's proper lean methodology.

What concerns me about the original CMS strategy: they'd be building for WordPress publishers based on an assumption that "content is like products." That's a leap.

What I like about the wedge strategy: they validate WITH THE SAME CUSTOMER that the expansion makes sense.

[sits down]

But here's my requirement: The WordPress content MVP needs to be TINY. I'm talking:

- Just schema.org structured data for blog posts
- Just Google AI Overviews optimization (not all AI platforms)
- Just for WooCommerce merchants who already use Dyne for e-commerce

Measure: Do existing e-commerce customers adopt the content feature? If yes, THEN consider standalone content product for non-e-commerce WordPress sites.

My position: I'm a YES, but I want to see: - Month 12: WooCommerce merchant interviews (30+) with pricing validation - Month 18: Content optimization MVP with existing e-commerce customers only - Month 24: GO/NO-GO on standalone WordPress content product based on adoption data

Ship small, learn fast, expand only on validated demand.

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SARAH CHEN: So Eric sees this as MORE disciplined than the original strategy. Geoffrey, you've been quiet - does this change how you think about crossing the chasm?

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GEOFFREY MOORE: *[leaning back, thoughtful]*

Sarah, I need to challenge something in this strategy.

[pulls out paper, starts sketching]

You're proposing they go from Shopify merchants → WooCommerce merchants → WordPress content creators. Let me map where those customers sit on the adoption curve.

Shopify merchants: Early adopters. Tech-savvy, willing to try new tools, fast decision-makers.

High-value WooCommerce merchants ($1M-10M revenue): *[pauses]* Actually… these might also be early adopters. They chose WooCommerce for flexibility and control, not just cost. They're sophisticated.

WordPress content creators - affiliate marketers, bloggers: *[longer pause]*

This is where it gets interesting. The question isn't "are they early adopters?" The question is "which segment within content creators are early adopters?"

[writes on paper]

- **Tech bloggers, SaaS content marketers, digital marketing pros**: Early adopters
- **Lifestyle bloggers, recipe sites, personal brands**: Early majority to late majority

If they try to launch "AI content optimization for all WordPress sites," they're jumping the chasm. Death.

But if they launch "AI content optimization for WooCommerce merchants who blog" FIRST, then expand to "tech bloggers and digital marketers," they're building a bowling pin strategy. Success.

[looks up]

Here's what I actually LOVE about the wedge strategy: It forces proper segmentation automatically.

Year 2: WooCommerce merchant content (small, specific segment) Year 3: Tech-savvy content

creators (adjacent early adopter segment)
Year 4: Consider mainstream content creators (only if Years 2-3 succeed)

This is textbook chasm-crossing. You're not trying to sell to all 100M WordPress sites at once. You're picking specific beachheads.

My position: I'm a YES, with one critical requirement:

They must resist the temptation to go broad in Year 3.

When they have a working WordPress content product, the temptation will be huge: "Let's target ALL bloggers! 20 million sites!"

No. Target tech bloggers, SaaS content, digital marketing sites first. Establish dominance there. Then consider expansion.

[firm tone]

I want an explicit "beachhead segment definition" document at Month 18 that identifies EXACTLY which WordPress content creators they'll target and why. No vague "we'll go after bloggers" language.

I'll vote YES if they commit to segmentation discipline.

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SARAH CHEN: So Geoffrey is conditional yes pending proper segmentation. Clay, you're our jobs-to-be-done expert - how do you see this?

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CLAYTON CHRISTENSEN: *[looking up from notes, smiling slightly]*

Sarah, I think this might be more elegant than the original CMS strategy. Let me explain why.

[pulls out paper]

The original pitch had three different jobs: 1. Shopify merchants: "Help customers discover my products via AI" 2. WordPress publishers: "Help readers find my content via search" 3. Squarespace users: "Make my website visible to AI"

Three different jobs. Hard to master all three.

The wedge strategy has ONE job with three variations:

Core job: "Help people discover my content when they use AI to search/shop"

Variation 1 (Shopify): Content = products, Discovery = ChatGPT Shopping **Variation 2** (WooCommerce + blog): Content = products + blog posts, Discovery = multiple AI platforms **Variation 3** (WordPress content): Content = articles/courses/memberships, Discovery = ChatGPT/Claude/Perplexity

[looks up]

It's the same fundamental job - AI discovery - just applied to different content types.

This is actually more coherent than the original CMS strategy.

Here's why: A Shopify merchant who succeeds with product optimization might naturally think, "I should optimize my blog content too." That's the same job, extended.

But a Shopify merchant probably WON'T naturally think, "I should optimize my Squarespace website." That's a different context entirely.

The wedge strategy follows the job, not the technology platform.

[sketches diagram]

But let me raise one concern: **What if content creators have a DIFFERENT job than e-commerce merchants?**

E-commerce merchant: "I need sales. AI discovery must drive revenue." Content creator: "I need traffic. AI discovery must bring visitors for ads/affiliates."

The success metrics are different: - E-commerce: Conversion rate, average order value, direct attribution - Content: Page views, time on site, indirect monetization

[pause]

Sarah, have they validated that content creators will pay for a tool that optimizes for "AI traffic" when they can't track direct ROI the way e-commerce merchants can?

My position: I'm a YES with two requirements:

1. **Month 12 validation**: Prove high-value WooCommerce merchants will pay Shopify-tier pricing
2. **Month 18 jobs validation**: Interview 30+ content creators about AI discovery as a problem. Validate they'll pay $99-299/month even without perfect attribution.

If both validate, the wedge is real. If content creators won't pay without direct ROI tracking, then maybe the wedge doesn't exist for non-e-commerce sites.

I need evidence the job exists, not just market size data.

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SARAH CHEN: Clay raises the attribution challenge - content creators may have different success metrics. Peter, you've been quiet - what's your zero-to-one perspective?

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PETER THIEL: *[leaning back, fingers steepled]*

Let me tell you what I find fascinating about this pivot.

[pause]

The original CMS strategy was trying to create a monopoly by being "the AI optimization layer for all CMS platforms." That's horizontal integration.

The WordPress wedge strategy is pursuing **vertical integration** within the WordPress ecosystem.

[leans forward]

Here's the zero-to-one insight: **WordPress is not just a platform. It's an entire universe.**

43% of all websites run on WordPress. That's not a platform - that's the internet's operating system for content.

If GLU can become "the AI optimization layer for WordPress" - not just for e-commerce, but for all content - that's a monopoly.

The question is: What's the path to monopoly?

[stands up, paces]

Path A (Original CMS Strategy): - Be good at 5 platforms - Have 10-20% share of each platform - Never achieve monopoly in any single platform

Path B (WordPress Wedge): - Dominate Shopify e-commerce (20%+ market share) - Dominate high-value WooCommerce (20%+ market share)
- Dominate WordPress content optimization (20%+ market share) - Result: 20%+ of the entire WordPress commercial ecosystem

Path B is monopoly. Path A is competition.

[sits back down]

Here's what I love: The wedge strategy follows Peter's Law - "It's better to dominate one large market than to be mediocre in multiple markets."

WordPress IS the large market. 810 million websites. 43% of the internet.

Here's what concerns me: Will they resist the temptation to expand too fast?

The original CMS strategy was explicitly about expanding to 5 platforms. That's the wrong instinct. You want to own ONE ecosystem completely.

[firm tone]

My position: I'm a STRONG YES, but with monopoly milestones:

Month 12: >15% penetration of target Shopify segment **Month 24**: >20% penetration of high-value WooCommerce e-commerce **Month 36**: >20% penetration of target WordPress content creator segment

If they hit those numbers, they own the WordPress commercial ecosystem. That's a monopoly.

If they instead have 8% Shopify, 5% WooCommerce, 3% content creators, and they're pitching expansion to Squarespace? I want veto rights.

Monopoly first. Expansion second.

And here's the secret they might not realize: If they own 20%+ of WordPress AI optimization, they don't NEED to expand to other CMS platforms. WordPress is big enough to be a $10B+ company.

That's the zero-to-one insight: You don't need to be everywhere. You need to be the monopoly somewhere important.

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SARAH CHEN: *[nodding]* So Peter's seeing this as MORE focused on monopoly, not less. Let me summarize what I'm hearing:

Steve: Validate the wedge exists before building. Customer discovery on WooCommerce pricing and content needs.

Eric: Lean MVP approach - build small, test with existing customers, expand only on validated demand.

Geoffrey: Segment properly - don't go after all 100M WordPress sites. Build bowling pins.

Clay: Validate the jobs are similar enough. Content creators may have different ROI expectations.

Peter: This is the path to monopoly IF they resist expanding before achieving dominance.

[looks around table]

I've done some preliminary validation work that I want to share. Here's what I learned from 15 customer interviews:

High-Value WooCommerce Merchants (8 interviews): - 6 of 8 run content marketing blogs alongside their stores - Average marketing budget: $3,000-8,000/month - 5 of 8 said they'd pay $299-599/month for AI optimization "if it works" - All 8 currently pay for SEO tools (Ahrefs, SEMrush, Yoast)

This suggests the wedge might exist.

Successful Affiliate Marketers (7 interviews): - Average monthly revenue: $5,000-25,000 from affiliate commissions - All 7 spend heavily on SEO ($200-1,000/month on tools) - 4 of 7 said they'd pay $99-199/month for "AI discovery optimization" - 3 of 7 were skeptical about AI replacing Google search

This suggests content creators might pay, but market education needed.

[pause]

Based on this preliminary validation and your feedback, here's my revised recommendation:

Revised Investment Thesis: WordPress Wedge Strategy

What We're Funding: - Shopify PMF (Year 1) - same as before - Disciplined WordPress wedge validation (Year 2) - Expansion only on validated customer demand (Year 3+)

What We're NOT Funding: - Spray-and-pray CMS platform expansion - Building for content creators before validating wedge exists - Expansion before achieving segment monopoly

The Bet: If high-value WooCommerce merchants (1) will pay Shopify pricing AND (2) want content optimization too, then the WordPress ecosystem is the right expansion path. If not, we pivot to pure e-commerce (BigCommerce/Magento) instead.

Required Milestones:

Month 6: - Shopify PMF metrics on track (25+ paying customers) - Preliminary WooCommerce market research initiated

Month 12: - Shopify: >50 customers, >15% target segment penetration - WooCommerce: 30+ high-value merchant interviews completed - Validation question answered: Will they pay $299-599/month? - **GO/NO-GO**: If yes → build WooCommerce integration. If no → pivot to BigCommerce

Month 18: - WooCommerce: Product launched, first 10-20 customers - Wedge validation: Do WooCommerce customers want content optimization? - Measure: % of WooCommerce customers who also run content - **GO/NO-GO**: If wedge exists → build content MVP. If not → stay pure e-commerce

Month 24: - Shopify monopoly: >20% of target segment - WooCommerce traction: 30+ customers - Content MVP: If validated at Month 18, test with existing customers - **GO/NO-GO**: Expand to standalone content product OR stay e-commerce-focused

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What do you all think?

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STEVE BLANK: *[nods slowly]*

Sarah, the preliminary interviews are exactly what I want to see. 6 of 8 WooCommerce merchants running blogs is strong signal.

But I want those Month 12 interviews to be rigorous. Not "would you pay?" but "here's the pricing, here's what you get, sign up now."

Validated learning means seeing actual behavior, not stated intentions.

If they commit to 30+ interviews at Month 12 with actual pricing tests, I'll vote YES.

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ERIC RIES: *[enthusiastic]*

The sequenced validation is perfect. Month 12 GO/NO-GO on WooCommerce. Month 18 GO/NO-GO on content. That's exactly the pivot points I want to see.

And I love that content MVP is tested with existing e-commerce customers first. That's the leanest possible test of the wedge hypothesis.

I'll vote YES.

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GEOFFREY MOORE: *[thoughtful]*

Sarah, you mentioned "market education needed" for content creators. That's a yellow flag.

If we need to educate the market, we're trying to create demand, not capture existing demand. That's much harder.

My requirement: At Month 18, if they pursue content creators beyond WooCommerce merchants, they must target early adopters only - tech bloggers, SaaS content marketers, digital marketing professionals.

No mainstream lifestyle bloggers or recipe sites until Year 4 minimum.

I'll vote YES with that segmentation discipline.

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CLAYTON CHRISTENSEN: *[nodding]*

Sarah, your interviews showed "3 of 7 skeptical about AI replacing Google search." That's the jobs-to-be-done validation I need.

If content creators don't believe AI discovery is a problem yet, they won't hire GLU to solve it.

My requirement: Month 18 content validation must include: - Do content creators believe AI is becoming a discovery channel? - Will they pay even with indirect attribution? - What's the job they're hiring the product to do?

If those questions don't validate, stay in e-commerce where ROI is clear.

I'll vote YES with those jobs validation requirements.

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PETER THIEL: *[leaning forward]*

Sarah, here's what I want in the term sheet:

Monopoly-First Clause: If at Month 24 they have <20% penetration of Shopify target segment, they may NOT launch standalone WordPress content product.

Monopoly first. Expansion second.

If they achieve Shopify monopoly, then WooCommerce makes sense. If they achieve

WooCommerce monopoly, then content makes sense.

But no expansion without monopoly in the prior segment.

I'll vote YES with that monopoly milestone enforced.

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SARAH CHEN: *[looking around the table]*

So we have unanimous YES votes, contingent on validation milestones being written into investment terms.

Let me be clear about what we're agreeing to:

We're investing in: - The WordPress ecosystem opportunity (100M sites vs. 12M e-commerce) - The wedge strategy (WooCommerce as bridge to content) - The team's ability to validate assumptions before building

We're requiring: - Customer validation at each expansion stage (Blank) - Lean MVP approach with clear pivot points (Ries) - Proper market segmentation (Moore) - Jobs-to-be-done validation for content (Christensen) - Monopoly-first expansion discipline (Thiel)

We're NOT investing in: - Multi-platform CMS expansion - Assumed content creator demand without validation - Expansion before segment monopoly

[pulls out laptop]

The investment thesis is stronger than the original CMS platform strategy because:

1. **Larger TAM** (100M WordPress sites vs. 12M e-commerce)
2. **Natural expansion path** (wedge through WooCommerce merchants who blog)
3. **Better monopoly opportunity** (own WordPress ecosystem, not spread thin across platforms)
4. **Validated learning at each stage** (multiple GO/NO-GO decision points)

I'll draft the term sheet with these staged validation milestones. Rahul gets his $2M at $12M cap, we get board oversight and explicit validation gates.

If the wedge validates, this could be the AI optimization platform for the entire WordPress ecosystem - 43% of the internet.

If it doesn't validate, we pivot to pure e-commerce expansion (BigCommerce/Magento) which is still a solid business.

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Vote Count

In Favor: 6 (unanimous) - Steve Blank (conditional on rigorous customer validation) - Eric Ries (conditional on lean MVP with pivot points) - Geoffrey Moore (conditional on early adopter segmentation) - Clayton Christensen (conditional on jobs validation) - Peter Thiel (conditional on monopoly-first milestones) - Sarah Chen (deal lead)

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Investment Decision: APPROVED

Terms: - $2M investment at $12M post-money valuation cap (SAFE) - Board seat for Sarah Chen - Quarterly board reviews

Required Milestones:

Month 6: - Shopify: 25+ paying customers - Preliminary WooCommerce market research (10+ interviews)

Month 12 - FIRST GO/NO-GO GATE: - Shopify: >50 customers, >15% target segment penetration - WooCommerce: 30+ high-value merchant interviews with pricing validation - **DECISION**: Proceed with WooCommerce OR pivot to BigCommerce/Magento

Month 18 - SECOND GO/NO-GO GATE: - WooCommerce: 10-20 paying customers at $299-599/month - Wedge validation: % of WooCommerce customers who also want content optimization - Jobs validation: Content creator interviews (30+) on AI discovery problem - **DECISION**: Build content MVP OR stay e-commerce-focused

Month 24 - MONOPOLY CHECKPOINT: - Shopify monopoly: >20% of target segment - WooCommerce traction: 30+ customers - Content (if validated): MVP tested with existing e-commerce customers - **DECISION**: Expand to standalone content product OR continue e-commerce focus

Post-Meeting Notes

SARAH CHEN *(to team)*: I'll send Rahul the revised strategy and term sheet by end of week. Key message: "We're more excited about WordPress wedge than the original CMS platform strategy, but we need staged validation at each expansion point."

Action Items: - Sarah: Draft term sheet with WordPress wedge milestones - Sarah: Schedule call with Rahul to discuss strategic pivot - Sarah: Share preliminary WooCommerce interview findings - Legal: Prepare SAFE documentation with validation gates

Next Steps: - Term sheet to Rahul: Friday Nov 15 - Due diligence completion: Nov 22 - Funding close: Dec 1 - Board meeting #1: March 2026 (Month 6 milestone review)

Why This Deal Works Better (Post-Meeting Reflection)

All six partners saw the WordPress wedge as STRONGER than the original CMS platform strategy:

Original Strategy Risk: Horizontal expansion across different customer types (Shopify → WordPress → Squarespace) without clear adjacency

WordPress Wedge Advantage: Vertical integration within one ecosystem with natural expansion path

Key Improvements: 1. **Larger TAM** (100M sites vs. 12M) 2. **Better monopoly path** (own WordPress vs. spread thin) 3. **Validated expansion** (wedge through WooCommerce customers who blog) 4. **Clearer pivot points** (GO/NO-GO at each stage)

The Bet: WordPress ecosystem + wedge strategy + validation discipline = potential category-defining company

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Meeting Adjourned: 11:52 AM