📄 GLU GEO — Geoffrey Moore Bowling Pin Model & Customer Psychology

How Moore’s Market Adoption Framework Applies to GLU GEO

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1. Introduction

This document explains the logic behind **Geoffrey Moore’s Bowling Pin Strategy** and how it applies to **GLU GEO’s go-to-market sequencing**.

It covers:

- The structure of Moore’s bowling pin model
- Why the first pin matters more than any other
- How customer psychology shifts as markets mature
- How GLU’s wedge segment (Shopify $5–50M) fits Moore’s criteria
- How later adjacent segments fall naturally into place

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2. What Is the Bowling Pin Model?

The Bowling Pin Model is an extension of Moore’s *Crossing the Chasm* framework.
It describes how technology companies expand **sequentially**, not broadly, by winning:

One tightly defined niche → then using it to knock over adjacent niches.

Each niche is a **bowling pin**, and the path through the market is a **bowling lane**.

Moore’s logic:

1. Choose a niche with urgent, expensive pain

2. Solve it completely (the “whole product”)
3. Win reference customers
4. Use those references to win the next adjacent niche
5. Repeat

This creates **momentum**, not chaos.

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3. Why One Pin at a Time?

Most early-stage technology companies fail because they:

- try to serve too many customer types
- dilute product focus
- produce feature sprawl
- create unrepeatable sales cycles

Moore argues:

> “When you try to serve everyone, you serve no one.
> Momentum requires concentration.”

Winning one niche **completely** is more valuable than winning many niches **partially**.

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4. Customer Psychology: How It Changes Over Time

Customer psychology evolves across four market phases.

Understanding this is essential to applying the bowling pin model.

4.1 Phase 1 — Visionaries (Early Adopters)

These customers:

- feel urgent, painful problems
- are willing to experiment

- tolerate immature products
- bet on speed and advantage over stability
- buy with emotion as much as logic

They *want* to be first.

This is who GLU sells to in its first wedge.

4.2 Phase 2 — Pragmatists (Early Majority)

These customers:

- avoid risk
- require proof and references
- want predictable ROI
- look for industry standards
- need category clarity
- demand that the whole product be complete

Pragmatists will not buy until they see *their own peers* adopting a solution.

This is why the first bowling pin must be a small, coherent, self-referential segment.

4.3 Phase 3 — Conservatives (Late Majority)

These customers:

- buy only when something is a de facto standard
- want minimal disruption
- evaluate vendors by size, not innovation
- rely on RFPs, procurement, and IT

They dislike risk so much that new categories rarely start with them.

4.4 Phase 4 — Skeptics (Laggards)

These buyers:

- prefer to do nothing
- resist new technology
- purchase only under coercion (compliance, regulation, mandate)

They are not core to a startup's strategy.

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5. Why the First Pin Must Match Visionary Psychology

A perfect first pin:

- has burning pain
- needs immediate relief
- buys quickly
- forgives rough edges
- spreads the word
- creates references

Shopify merchants with $5–50M in revenue match this profile exactly.

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6. GLU GEO's Perfect First Bowling Pin

For GLU GEO, the first pin is:

Shopify merchants doing $5–50M with structured-data and AI discoverability pain.

They have:

• Urgent, expensive pain

If their products don't surface correctly in AI-generated answers, they lose revenue immediately.

• Homogeneous workflows

All mid-market Shopify merchants operate with similar:

- tech stacks

- schemas
- KPIs
- growth motions

This makes implementation repeatable.

• High reference density

They talk constantly—Reddit, DTC Slack groups, Twitter, founder forums, Shopify Plus communities.

If you win 3, you can win 30.

• Ability to onboard fast

They can adopt GLU in hours, not months.

• Budget and authority

They use growth budgets, ops budgets, and marketing budgets—no IT gatekeepers.

This is exactly the psychology Moore describes for a perfect first pin.

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7. How GLU's Adjacent Pins Line Up

Once the first pin is won, Moore's model says:

> "The second and third pins fall more easily because the reference set expands."

GLU's adjacency path is:

1. Shopify $5–50M
2. Larger Shopify merchants
3. WooCommerce mid-market
4. BigCommerce & Magento
5. Enterprise structured content (AEM, Sitecore, Hybris, custom platforms)

Each segment:

- has similar workflows

- shares pain around AI discoverability
- becomes easier to win once the previous pin is dominated

This is a true Moore-style “bowling alley.”

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8. Why This Strategy De-Risks GLU’s GTM

Moore’s bowling pin model reduces risk by:

- focusing engineering
- concentrating go-to-market
- accelerating references
- aligning product with a single repeatable workflow
- making growth sequential, not scattered

It avoids the classic startup failure mode:

“Going broad too early.”

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9. Summary

GLU’s market dynamics are a textbook application of Moore’s bowling pin model:

- The first niche has painful problems
- Customers act like early adopters
- The product can feel complete early
- Reference density is high
- Adjacent markets sit directly downstream
- Customer psychology shifts predictably

This combination gives GLU:

- a credible wedge
- a roadmap for expansion
- a narrative investors understand
- and a GTM motion built for compounding momentum