



\$0-\$1M ARR, *made simple.*

Alternate title: How to waste your life and kill your startup. (Or not.)

Reframe

tl;dr.

The problem:

- Building a startup is overwhelming.
- There is no good guide to finding product-market fit.
- Your education & work experience are mostly counterproductive.

What's missing:

- A way to think about PMF that's more than abstract theory / magic
- An execution approach to \$0-\$1M ARR + PMF that works for smart B2B founders

Core thesis:

- **PMF for B2B companies is actually simple & straightforward.**
- You just need 3 interconnected insights: Demand, Supply, Distribution.
- The hard part: You can only find these insights in the trenches with customers.

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why pay attention to me?

Traditional business background

- McKinsey & Company, Harvard Business School

Got wrecked as a founder

- 2 years in pre-PMF hell, following all the traditional startup rules + playbooks
- Then, \$0-\$4M ARR in 2 years in “hail mary pivot”, breaking all the rules

Now obsessed with \$0-\$1M ARR

- Work with 10 B2B startups at a time as a weird quasi-fractional-cofounder
- Writing a book on \$0-\$1M ARR as I piece together what’s real



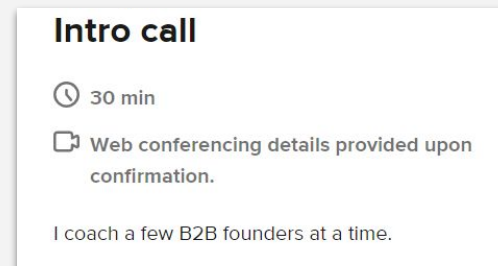
reach out on [linkedin](#)

I post regularly there (for some reason)



join the [newsletter](#)

smart GTM stuff for founders, weekly



grab time to [meet](#)

free advice, occasional availability
for coaching & consulting

who this is for.

- **Founders & exec teams**
- **At B2B software companies** (bootstrapped or funded - I don't understand B2C)
- **\$1k-\$50k average contract value**
- **Selling isn't easy, repeatable, predictable, and fast yet**
- **Founder selling** (or a few sales & marketing hires)
- **Want to get to Series A OR profitability ASAP**
- **OVERTHINKERS!** (especially: developers, MBAs, consultants)

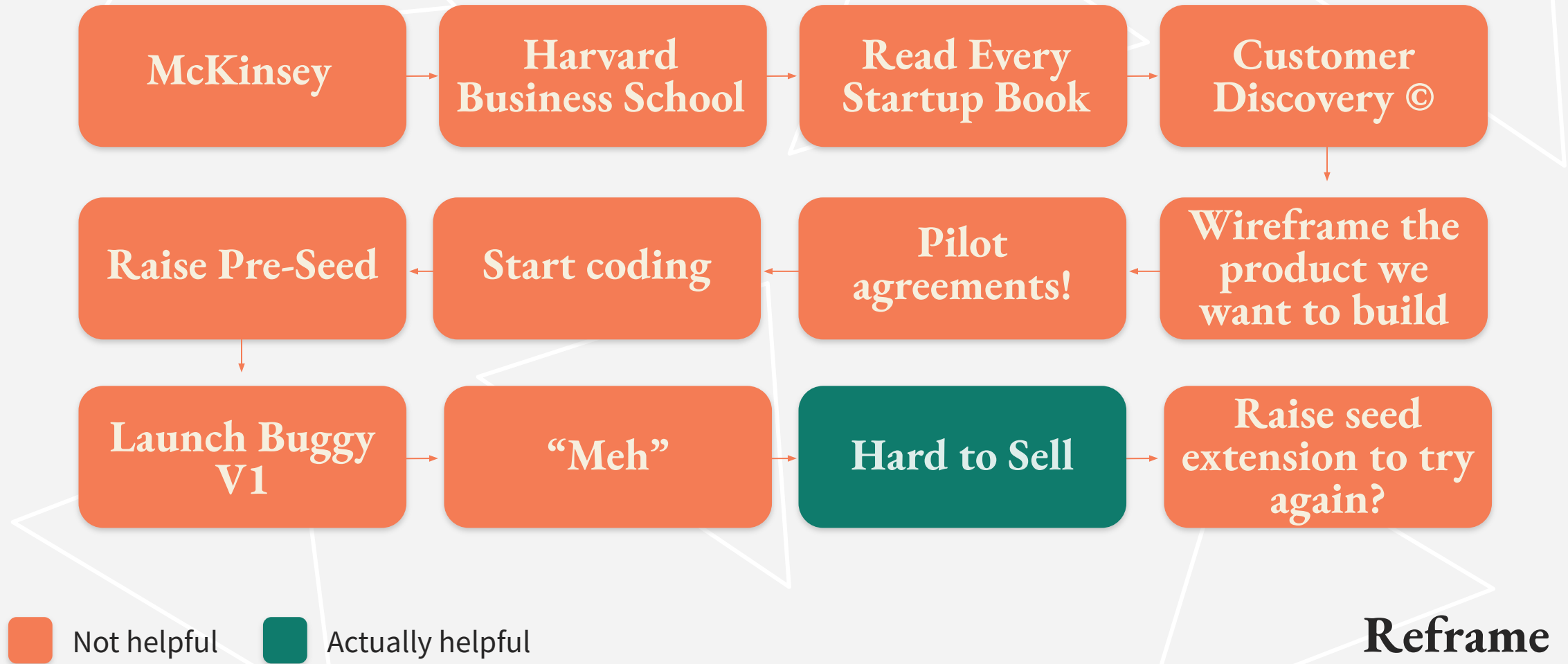
who this is NOT for.

- **Founders who follow the hype & view fundraising as the #1 goal**
- **Founders selling \$1M+ contracts to massive companies or gov't**
- **Founders who want to “go big or go broke”** (rather than building a solid company with the option to go big)
- **Founders who don't want to sell ever** (rather than using selling as a way to learn enough for PLG / marketing to work)

what you'll learn.

1. **Why smart people like you** - especially “product founders”, MBAs, consultants, developers, etc. - **have *such* a hard time with the 0 - 1 stage.** (And why there's a lot of bad advice out there that *sounds* right.)
2. **A set of frameworks & mental models for the \$0-\$1M+ ARR and product-market fit stage** that give you clarity and the confidence to focus on what matters, without feeling like you're missing something big & important. (It's way simpler and dumber than you think, so I have to give you a BUNCH of context to help you believe it.)
3. **A simple approach to execution that will set you up to succeed in the \$0-\$1M+ ARR / product-market fit stage** *with the least amount of pain.* It will still suck and you may still fail, but I believe this approach & these mental models give you the greatest chance of success. They've worked for me multiple times in different markets.

my journey to product-market fit.



2 wasted years.

Raised \$1.2M pre-seed in 2018

- 3 “pilot” customers
- 2 engineers
- Huge opportunity!

By March 2020

- ~5 or 6 BIG pivots & product re-do's later
- \$100k ARR, starting to maybe work?
- 6 months of cash left
- I was 29 years old, looked & felt like 59



quiz question:

Was March 2020 a good time
to be selling to companies
that clean office high-rises in
big cities?



“Hail Mary Pivot”

\$0-\$4M ARR in 2 years

tldr, I learned how to waste your life...

Misunderstand the subtle difference between:

1. What you want to build
2. What they want to buy

If you get this wrong, you can get *everything else* right, and you'll still fail.

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...and how not to waste your life.

If you have demand (revenue, growth, even profitability) - you can solve all other problems:

- Well-designed product
- Fancy website
- Hip brand
- Press coverage
- Top-tier investors
- Cool office & culture
- etc.

So: Survive by focusing on demand. Let other fires burn. Earn the right to other problems. **This deck shows you how.**

sections.

1 - Why smart, experienced people are set up to fail at finding PMF

2 - How to think about PMF & the path to it

3 - The three insights: Demand, Supply, Distribution

4 - Execution process on the path to PMF

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my thesis:

Any business can find PMF and scale to
\$1M-\$10M+.

All it takes is ***focusing on the right things...***
which is where smart founders (like you) fail.

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The background of the slide is light gray and features several white-outlined triangles of various sizes and orientations scattered across the space. Some triangles are large and positioned near the top or bottom, while others are smaller and more centrally located.

what it feels like as a B2B founder:

Reframe



The "list of things I think I need to do"

the answers aren't found in successful companies.

**Big successful companies do
SO MANY DIFFERENT
THINGS**

**What CAUSES their success, vs.
what emerges as a SYMPTOM of
their success?**

In most cases, 1-2 things drive success,
and success drives a lot of noise &
investment in things that don't work.

**Can you tell what's causal vs. what's
a symptom? Can anyone?**

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traditional business wisdom is *counterproductive*.

McKinsey, Harvard, etc. teach you how to
operate from 1 - 100.

But 0 - 1 is *wildly* different.

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what matters from 1 - 100.

Business stuff:

- Plans, roadmaps, logic
- Product excellence, scalability
- Systems, processes, culture

Character traits:

- Being well-rounded, not messing up
- Team player, consensus builder
- Speaking confidently

This is *counterproductive* in the “zero-to-one” stage...

...and it's conditioned into us from our education & work experience.

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what matters from 0 - 1.

Survival!!!!

- Find PMF, ASAP
- Don't run out of money

COUNTERPRODUCTIVE:

- What sounds good to investors
- How to scale to 1,000+ customers
- How to serve different customer segments
- Product roadmap
- Vision & how we think the world SHOULD work

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how not to find PMF.

“We need to validate our hypotheses.”

“We need to run experiments.”

“We need to build a 10x product.”

“We need a plan & roadmap.”

→ tons of work, your brain can't handle the complexity, your company fails.

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the epistemic mismatch. (why smart founders fail.)

WHEN you know something

ex-post
(after the fact)

**How to succeed
in 0 - 1**

ex-ante
(beforehand)

**How we're
taught to operate**

theoretical
(logic)

empirical
(evidence)

HOW you know something

“A-students don’t start something until they understand it...

D-students start something *because they don’t understand it.*”
- Bob Moesta

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summary: why smart founders fail.

Copying successful companies (without understanding what's causal vs. a symptom of growth)

Doing too many things (without choosing which markets & GTM motions are worth focusing on)

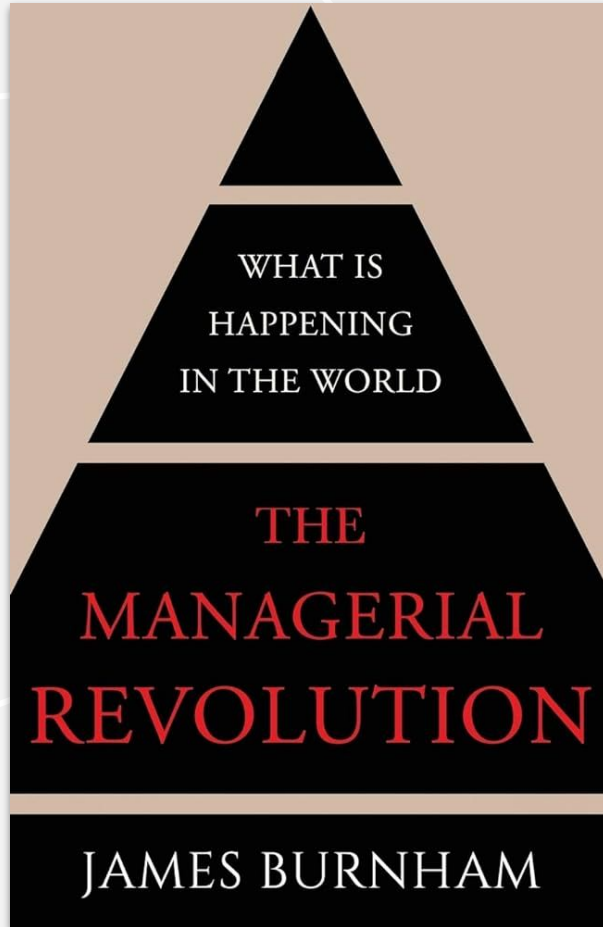
Thinking too broad, long-term, self-centered (you only resonate with theoretical customers or VCs, never grow)

LARPing (using all the hip words - discovery, experimentation, etc. - but missing what's really important)

Getting overwhelmed & taking no action (in extreme ambiguity, you learn empirically ex-post... what you need to do is simple!)

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aside, polite society isn't designed for 0-1.



We are in a managerial society (not a capitalist or socialist one).

Where success is characterized by “sounding right” while minimizing our risk / “skin in the game”.

Everything we've learned in school & work are designed to give us an edge in the managerial society... not to build something new.

Startups are how to escape.
Or not. IDK.

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PMF is simple.

3 Components of PMF:

- 1 kind of customer (Demand)
- 1 thing they buy (Supply)
- 1 repeatable GTM motion (Distribution)

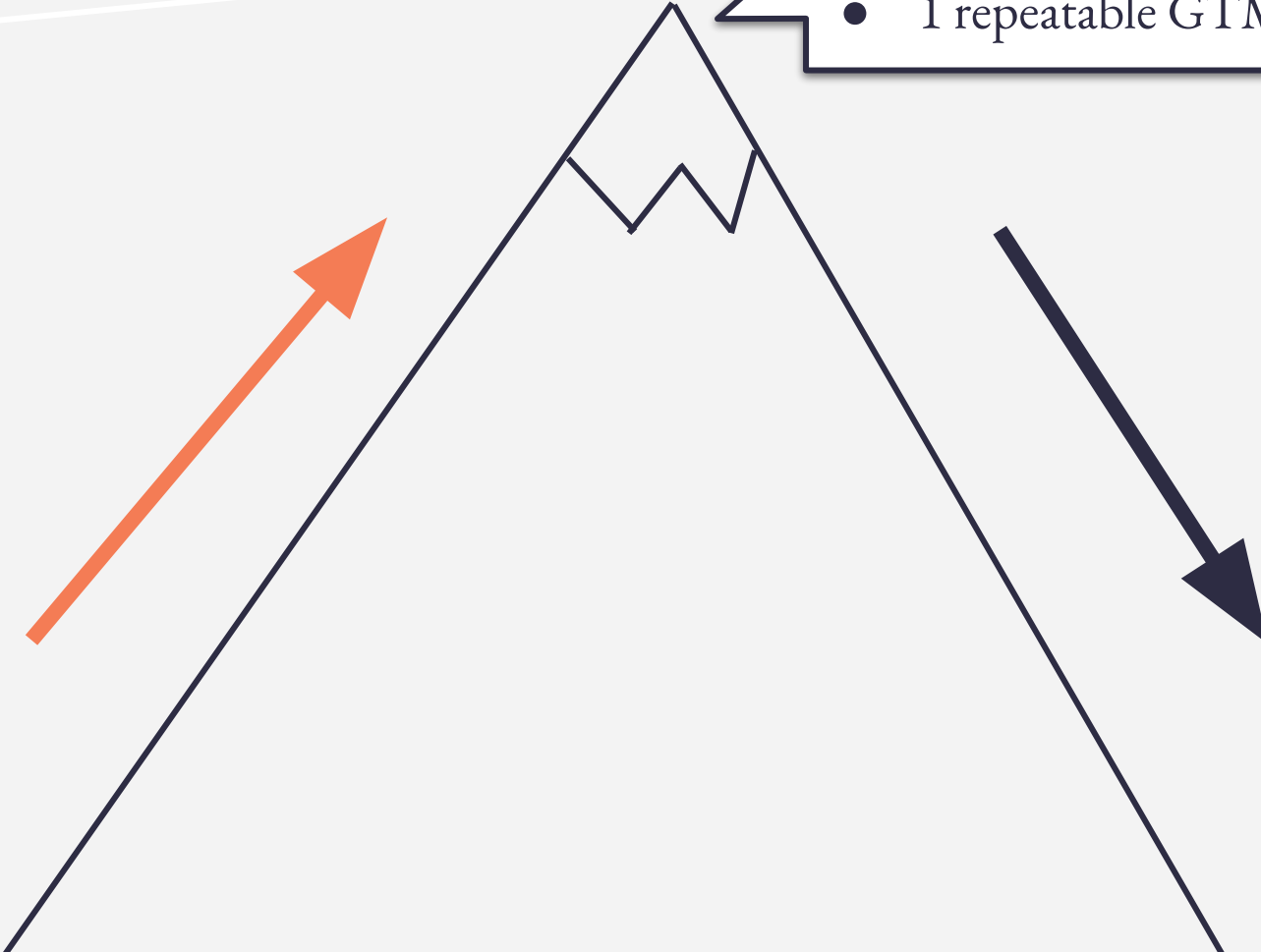
0 - 1

What matters:
Finding PMF

1 - 100

What matters:
Building a fast-growing
business

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the framework for product-market fit.

What *really* matters? Three interconnected pieces.

Demand.

You've found one *pocket of intense demand*.

Supply.

You deliver some *unique value* that matters.

Distribution.

You've built one *unfair GTM advantage*.

You have to figure these 3 things out before you run out of money.

Reframe

why there's so much bad advice.



1 - 100

What matters:
Building a fast-growing
business

**Most people have only ever seen post-PMF,
“when the business kinda works.”**

→ But going “uphill” (pre-PMF) is
TOTALLY different than going “downhill”
(post-PMF)

**Plus, founders who have gone 0-1 and are
now at 50... *tend to forget what really
happened 0-1.***

This is why I keep doing 0-1. Also because I’m
insane.

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when you get everything right *except* this:

**“I’m proud of the
product and team we
built.”**

(Startup Gravestone)

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product-market fit model:

MuukTest is a QA automation solution



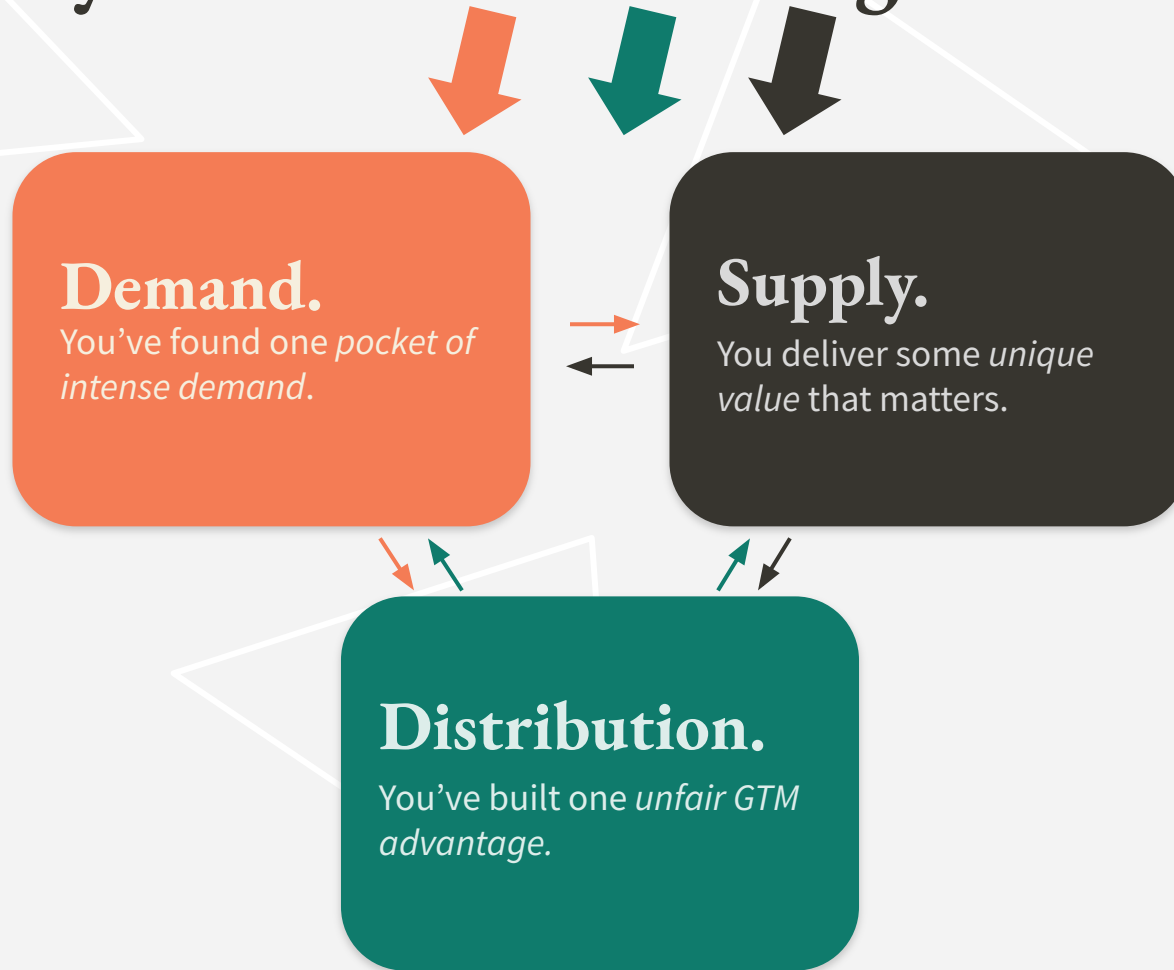
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product-market fit model: HOUR WORK

HourWork provides HR software for hourly workplaces



“ok, but how do you find these 3 things?”



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bad answers.

“experiments!”

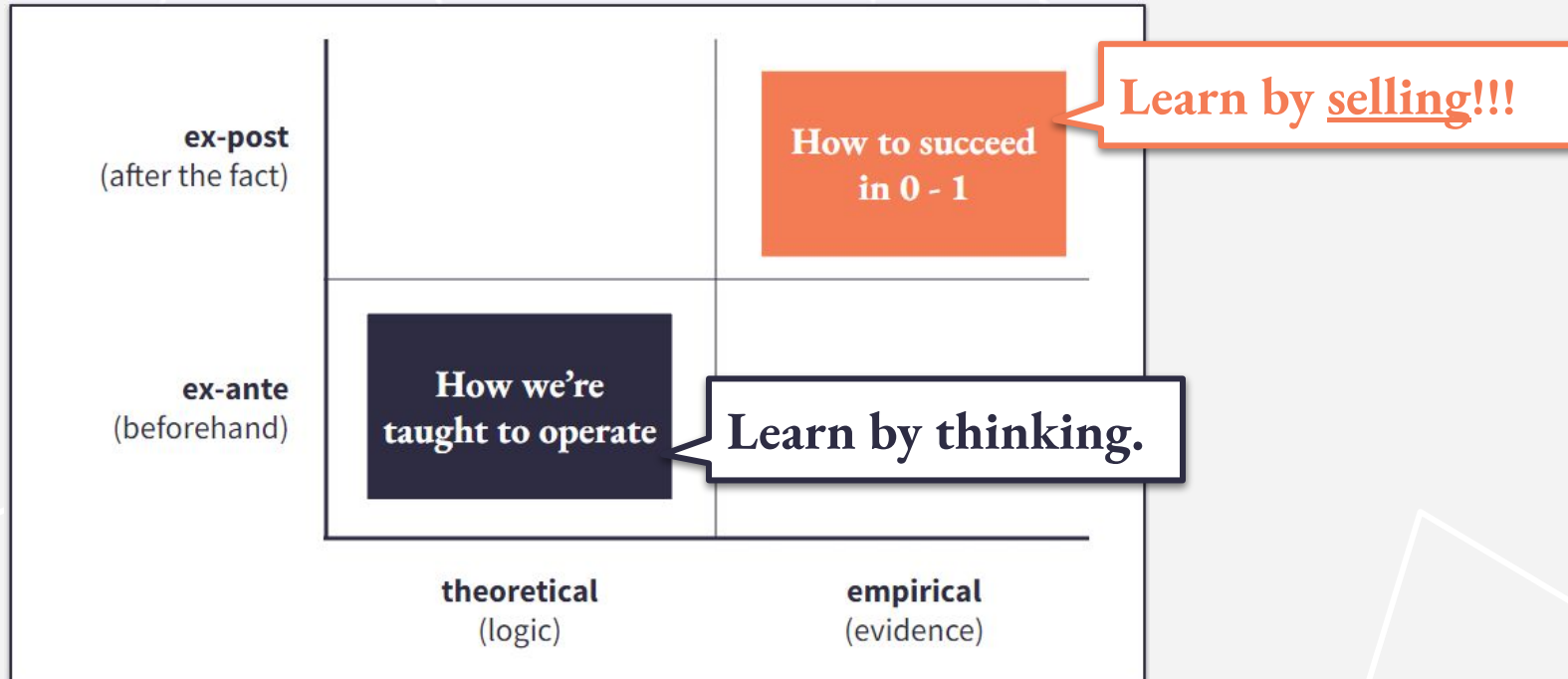
“demand validation!”

“customer discovery!”

“ayahuasca!”

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learn by selling (“how?” - next section)



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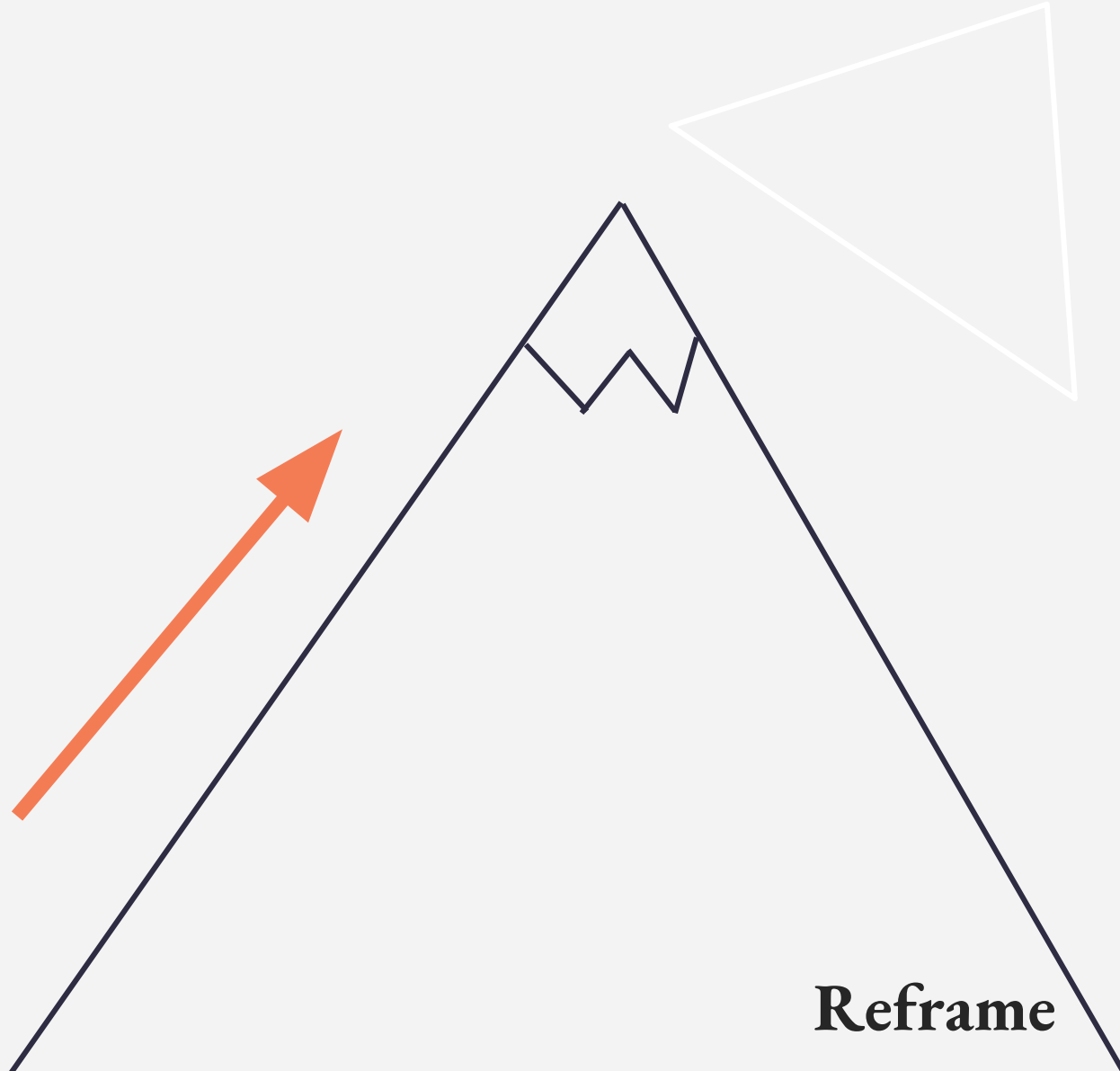
PMF is simple.

Path to PMF:

What matters:
Finding PMF

Components:
1x niche (demand)
1x offering (supply)
1x gtm channel (distribution)

Path:
Learn by selling,
not theorizing.



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INSIGHTS are upstream... & the hardest part.

Insight = You've figured out SOMETHING interesting.

Something that's missing.

Something that's important.

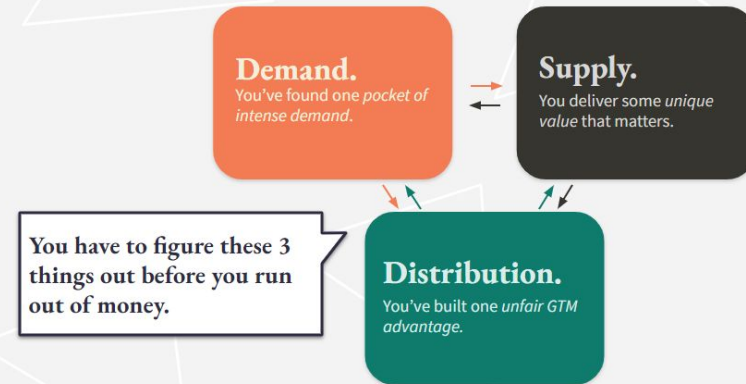
Something that's real.

There is no guaranteed formula for capturing valuable insights. However, I've seen:

- Focusing on GTM gives you real observations
- Having conversations (e.g., with co-founders, advisors, etc.) turns observations into insights
- Over time, refine insights to get less wrong & simpler

the framework for product-market fit.

What *really* matters? Three interconnected pieces.



Reframe

Reframe

insights tend to emerge from practice, not theory.

Unless you're 100% right from Day 1 (in which case, please suggest some lottery numbers.)

Every startup is 99% emergent, 1% planned (my example):

- Franchise customers started referring others, vs. others who didn't -> **Focus on franchisees**
- In onboarding calls, customers said they wanted to “pay for employee retention, not recruitment” -> **Build employee retention feature**
- Conferences seemed to work -> **10x conferences**

Simple exercise you'll repeat FREQUENTLY:

- What weird & interesting things have we observed recently? (insights)
- Who needs us, when? (demand)
- What exactly do they want to buy that we can uniquely provide? (supply)
- How do we get in front of them? (distribution)

what is demand?

Demand is the most important, but least understood, concept in business... *by far.*

Demand.

You've found one pocket of intense demand.

What Demand IS

People who *need* to change in order to accomplish something or solve something. Something in their world causes them to need to change. The more desperate they are to change, the better.

A “pocket” of demand is a group of people who need to change. This is narrower than you think, e.g., “*insurtech companies with outsourced development who have raised <\$2M, who have just hired their first engineering leader, and that leader has to fix a lot of bugs.*”

What Demand ISN'T

Anything to do with your product!! Your product (supply) is a *response* to demand. Demand is upstream of supply!

How to Find Demand?

Find one person who says, “**HELL YES! I need to solve this!**” (Then find others.)

3 ways to find “Hell Yes” Demand:

1. Go get firsthand experience doing the job
2. Narrow focus on one kind of customer
3. Spray, pray, and follow who pulls hardest

Ask, “**Why are they REALLY buying / not?**” forever.

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what is supply?

Every founder focuses on the product... which is just a piece of supply.

What Supply IS

The value you provide. This value is, in part, delivered by your software product. But your product is just a piece of the value you provide.

What matters is the unique value you provide in the context of Demand's alternatives. These alternatives usually include *not doing anything, using some clunky software they're already paying for, hiring an employee or contractor, or (maybe) working with another software company that's a direct competitor.*

What Supply ISN'T

It definitely isn't *just* your product & features - that's too narrow a frame. It also ISN'T what your product WILL BE IN YOUR LONG-TERM VISION. (They'll care when it's real.)

Supply.

You deliver some *unique value* that matters.

How to NAIL Supply

Sell 1:1, implement 1:1, and obsess over the words customers use in the sales & CS process comparing you with their alternatives. **Figure out what unique value you provide, and double down on that.**

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what is distribution?

Call it GTM, sales, marketing, whatever – it means “Getting Demand to buy our Supply.”

What Distribution IS

A system that turns people into raving customers. Three main pieces are relevant for early-stage B2B startups:

1. Generating sales meetings
2. Turning sales meetings into customers
3. Making customers wildly happy

Yes, this is “sales-led” - even if you aspire to build a product-led startup, you should start with a synchronous sales process to learn faster.

How to NAIL Distribution

Early-on, do whatever it takes to get customers.
(Leverage the founder’s brand to get cold meetings.)

As you figure out Demand + Supply, pick one distribution channel to become excellent at where you can develop an unfair advantage. **When you deeply understand demand + supply, distribution should be pretty obvious.**

Distribution.

You’ve built one unfair GTM advantage.

“good” by stage.

Demand.

First ~\$50k ARR

(Or 5-20 customers)

“They had enough demand to take a risk on us!”

~\$250k ARR

(Or ~30-100 customers)

Tighten, narrow to ONE “Hell Yes” kind of customer.

\$1M ARR

Have we saturated this segment yet? No? Continue.

Supply.

Mostly sell whatever they want to buy, expect to churn some to figure out “Hell Yes”

Figure out your **unique value** for “Hell Yes” customer, then double down on it!

Are we still winning? Yes? Great, let’s keep riding this unique value.

Distribution.

Founder selling - **get customers by any means necessary**. Every deal is difficult, pricing is >\$0 but doesn’t matter.

Tighten your sales process, start to hire. Focus on 1 GTM channel you can 10. **Other things start to break (e.g., CS)**

Can we 10x this GTM channel? Yes? Great, let’s do that & nothing else.

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10 biggest founder errors.

Demand.

- #1:** Not focusing on demand at all
- #2:** Multiple segments / vague segments (no choice)
- #3:** Theory vs. empirics

Supply.

- #4:** Spending too much time on Supply
- #5:** Not focusing on unique value for demand
- #6:** Mistaking “product” for “Supply”
- #10:** Building for investors or your vision... instead of customers

Distribution.

- #7:** Avoiding sales (& GTM generally)
- #8:** Trying too many things (it's hard to get any 1 thing to work)
- #9:** Pivoting quickly vs. figuring one thing out

do this: strategy write-up exercise.

The Framework for Product-Market Fit.

What *really* matters? Three interconnected pieces.



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in a doc, answer these questions:

- Who needs us?
- When do they need us?
- What do they need to achieve / solve?
- What do they want to buy?
- What alternatives do they have?
- What's our unique value vs. these alternatives?
- How do we describe this unique value to them, as simply as possible?
- What ONE unfair GTM advantage should we develop, based on what works now?

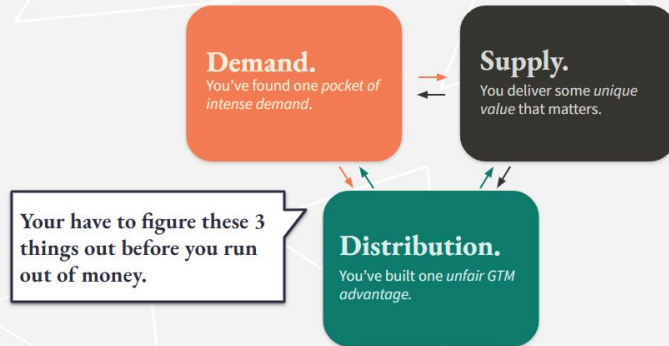
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where we are.

this is *strategy* (3-insight model)

The Framework for Product-Market Fit.

What *really* matters? Three interconnected pieces.



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next is *execution* (3 nesting dolls)

nesting doll 3: meta-execution

nesting doll 2: execution



how to focus (4 components):

1. Written strategy hypothesis
2. Biweekly business write-up
3. Biweekly problem-solving & focus session
4. Daily check-ins / check-outs

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Reframe

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empirics > theory.

“Hell Yes” Rule: Unless customers say “hell yes,” it’s a no.

Learn by Selling: Interviews + second-hand customer knowledge aren’t real.

Look in Customer Data: Find WHO works and WHAT works, in practice.

10x What Works: Do this before moving to something else.

“One-Customer” Rule: You can either act with 1 customer in mind, or 0.

Unscalable first: Do everything manually, then systematize, then scale.

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how it typically feels.

1. I have a great idea!
2. I'm a ***** idiot
3. (Repeat 1-2)
4. Wait... why don't I just focus on X value for Y customer
5. Hey, it's starting to work
6. (Firefighting)
7. We're at \$2M ARR?

“do things that don’t scale.” forever.

3-step process to get new things to scale. **Everything breaks when you skip steps.**

1 - figure it out

The “Magic” Stage

You can systematize, scale, & automate anything. **The hard part is figuring out what’s worth scaling.**

In the “figure it out” stage, you do things manually, hacky, super-fast, “by any means necessary” to get results and answers.

This is nearly impossible to outsource, and usually something only a founder can do well. So you’re doing things that don’t scale, forever.

2 - systematize it

The “Repeatable” Stage

When something works, figure out how to get someone else to be able to do it. This requires writing out instructions and steps. You can then outsource to a virtual assistant / contractor / employee.

“Give away your legos.”

In the “systematize it” stage, it’s good to have someone who’s very organized and process-minded to help write SOPs and outsource to contractors. **(It’s where operations people are helpful.)**

3 - scale it

The “10x” Stage

Once something is systematized and works... you can choose:

- **Should we 10x this? (If you have a repeatable growth channel that works, DO THIS before trying new growth channels)**
- Can we automate this?
- Or should we move to the next business bottleneck?

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how to learn by selling.

1. Find 1 “Hell Yes” customer by any means necessary
2. Sell their success to others just like them, by any means necessary (eventually kinda standardized)
3. Start to scale, debug things that break, make it easier to buy, refine your “3 insights” (when you start thinking about PLG/marketing)
4. 10x things until you can’t anymore, then figure out new things

learn by selling: the GTM system.

1 - pipeline

ONE primary engine to generate sales meetings

Early-on: Intros, founder magic, “whatever it takes.”

In time, pick ONE to nail:

- Outbound
- Conferences
- Ads
- Organic / social
- Partner
- etc...

2 - sales process

Simple process to turn sales meetings into customers

Early-on: [Use my “On Deck” demo template](#)

In time, iterate based on what works & doesn't

3 - success process

Simple process to turn contracts into raving customers & referrals

Early-on:

- Do everything manually
- Overdo it - fly out for onboardings, etc.

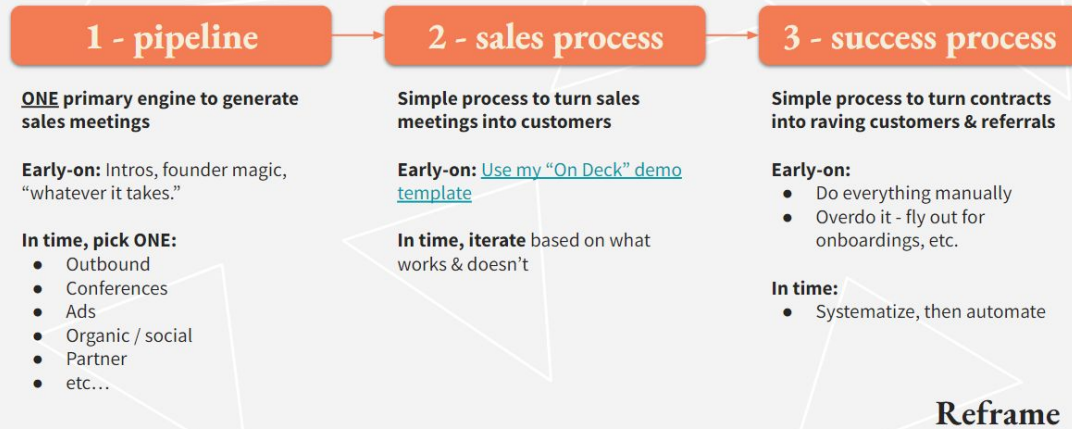
In time:

- Systematize, then automate

Reframe

nesting doll 2: execution.

learn by selling: the GTM system



where to focus:

- In the beginning: find a way to schedule a lot of sales conversations (pipeline)
- Then work on your sales process
- Then work on your success process
- Once you have v1 of all 3, then focus on:
 - The **GTM system's main bottleneck that's breaking things**
 - If no obvious bottleneck, how to 10x what's working (usually pipeline)

nesting doll 3: meta-execution.

nesting doll 2: execution

learn by selling: the GTM system



where to focus:

- In the beginning: find a way to schedule a lot of sales conversations (pipeline)
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how to focus (4 components):

1. Written strategy hypothesis
2. Biweekly business write-up
3. Biweekly problem-solving, focus & sprint planning session
4. Daily check-ins / check-outs (optional)

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simple \$0-\$1M business cadence.

It's not perfect, but it's good enough, and good enough is all you need.

biweekly state of biz writeup:

[Link to strategy doc](#)

- Basic GTM metrics + main goal
- Where we focused & what we did
- What we learned
- Key question / challenge / opportunity in focus
- Other backlog stuff on our minds

biweekly founder sync:

- Review state of biz writeup
- Dig into key question / challenge / opportunity
- Get clarity on what exactly to do in next 2 weeks
- (founder therapy as needed)

summary: execution to PMF.

1. You don't need complicated tracking, reporting, goal-setting, etc.

- a. If you're worried about this stuff & the business direction is unclear, you're focused downstream of what actually matters!

2. All you *really* need:

- a. A single strategy doc where you make the big upstream choices (demand + supply + distribution) -> **Can be 1 page!**
- b. A simple GTM system (pipeline -> sales -> success)... start w/ my templates!
- c. A recurring cadence to think & focus on the one thing that actually matters now (I suggest a biweekly write-up + focusing session)
- d. Optional but recommended -> a daily check-in / check-out system to make sure you (& your team) spent time on what actually mattered.

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mistake: building for investors

TLDR: Build for customers, then tell a big story to investors. [Link to article.](#)

The Two Boxes

A conversation I have with nearly *every* founder

FEB 24, 2023



Share



Hi all —

Thanks to a cooking accident (beware cutting carrots), I'm writing this with one hand. This week's post will be brief.

The biggest problem founders face is **where to invest their finite time and energy**. Every founder I speak with feels overwhelmed. I felt it too. There are a million things you could possibly do, and only a few that are actually worth doing.

It's like the old saying: "I know I'm wasting 50% of my marketing budget, I just don't know which half."

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mistake: overbuilding your first product

TLDR: Index for value. See my MIT accelerator presentation: [LINK](#)

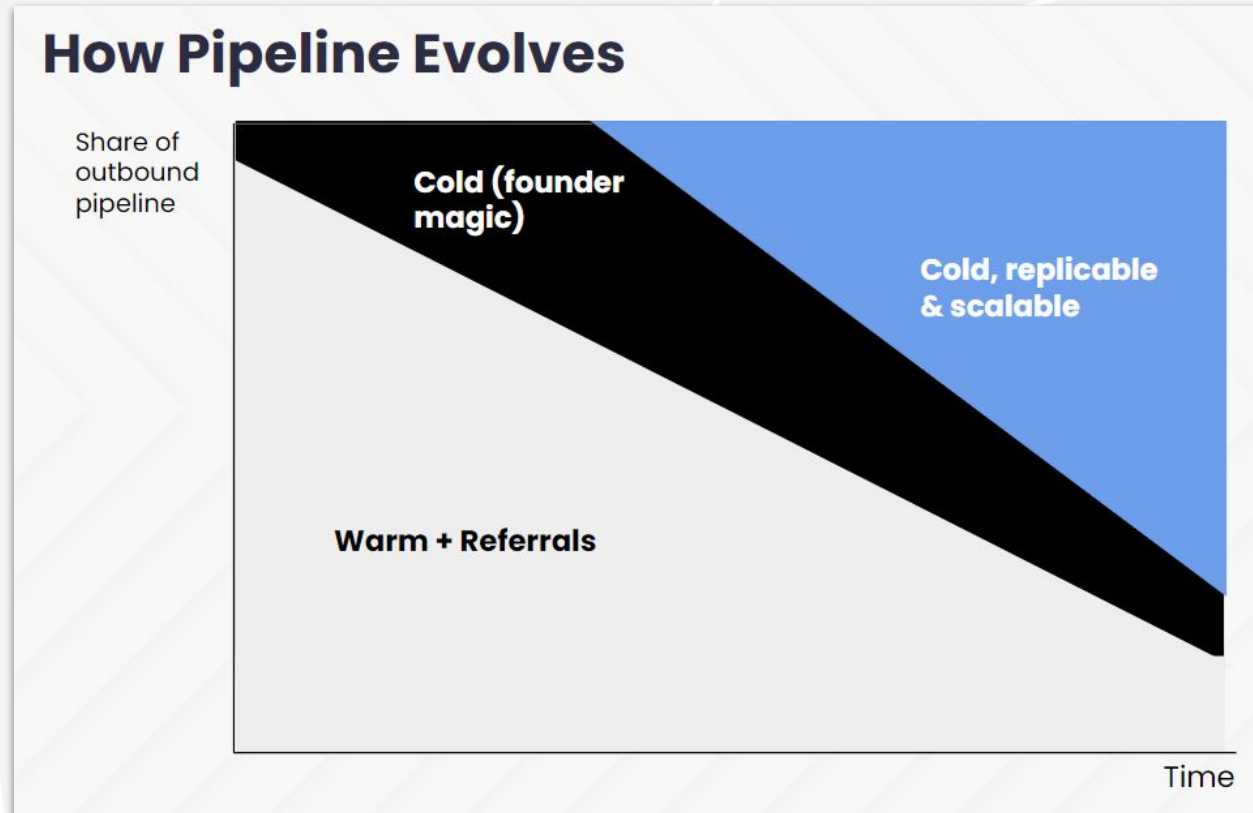
The Ratatouille Principle:

If you're helping your customers accomplish something awesome, they don't care if your "product" is a bunch of trained rats



mistake: following internet advice on outbound

TLDR: Figure out what works, then systematize, then automate. [LINK.](#)



mistake: copying playbooks

You're not crazy. Generic playbooks for outbound, inbound, generally don't work, no matter how many times you switch contractors / agencies. **This is especially true in building repeatable pipeline.**

Generic playbooks work in theory... but the hard part is making something work in your specific market with your specific product! (I have been burned by this so many times.)

There are 3 stages to get anything to work:

1. **Magic stage:** Figuring out what works in your situation
2. **Systematization stage:** Turning it into a repeatable thing
3. **Scale stage:** Boosting volume

The problem with playbooks is that they skip steps 1 & 2 (where you learn what actually works) and try to jump straight to 3. This rarely ever works.

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mistake: taking internet advice on sales demos

TLDR: Start with my template from an On Deck training. [LINK](#)

What we typically hear...

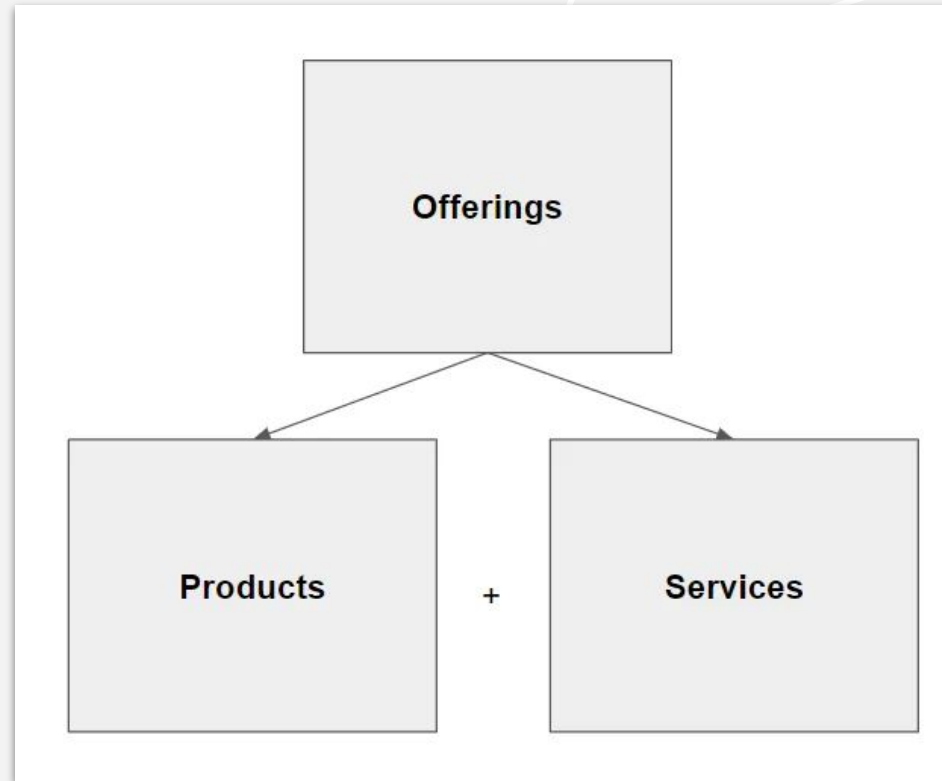
“We need to accomplish {goal} without {objection}.

We want {biggest outcome} but worry about {thing preventing action}.”

– Rob, {title}

mistake: putting too much weight on the product

TLDR: Remember that you're selling an OFFERING. [LINK](#).



Reframe

mistake: execution & mindset

TLDR: It is all a mental game. See my mistakes here: [LINK](#)

1. **Not prioritizing the most important thing I knew I needed to do, but didn't want to do.** This was usually related to sales, but often related to hard conversations or figuring out something new.
2. **Not finding mentors, advisors, coaches who'd actually done it before and could tell me what "good" looked like.** This led me to run into walls I could have avoided, and instead of finding experts I tried to create answers from first principles. Not smart enough to recreate every part of business. (Corollary: Being willing to pay for advisors, coaching, etc. And asking for help.)
3. **Not deeply understanding GTM - marketing, sales, growth, and the difference between each.** This now feels clear after scaling a few companies, but I didn't have a mental model for these, which mattered, and how to get started / figure each out.
4. **Not identifying my business's biggest bottleneck to growth and focusing there.** Feel like this is 80% of the job.
5. **Not prioritizing and systematizing regular reporting.** I got lost in the haze of execution, and often wouldn't build systems for reviewing data to find weak spots, improvement opportunities, and places to double & triple down.
6. **Trying (and failing) to multitask.** "Priority" is a singular word with no plural. Related: Managing my calendar to make time for my priority.
7. **Not being decisive enough.** Indecision is a decision to fail.
8. **Not moving fast enough.** Getting things to "done" immediately. Velocity is survival.
9. **Trying to be liked & not hurt others' feelings.** It's all Kumbaya until the business runs out of cash

Reframe

mistake: planning when you don't know anything

TLDR: Let the business unfold. [LINK](#)

Unfolding vs. Planning

★ Want help navigating product-market fit and go-to-market fit? Schedule an intro call with Rob here: [LINK](#) ★

[Return to the main Reframe Method doc](#)

You probably don't know where you're headed, and that's ok.

In the beginning, nobody does - and I have suspicions of whether anybody truly knows where their business is headed. Plans are always wrong, and generally useless: You learn as you go, your perspective shifts, and your business unfolds. At some point, you know enough to develop a strategy. At some point, you reframe how you describe your product and offering because it has unfolded into something new and different than what you had before.

And that is normal, that is how growth really happens. You may have some perspective on where you're headed. You might be an industry expert and have more visibility than most. But usually, you can't see far into the future.

I've launched a few successful products. Because I spent a ton of time building a firsthand understanding of the customer and market context, I had pretty strong conviction that the first step would be successful. But, critically, I genuinely didn't know where the product would go from that first step.

At the time, I believed this was a personal failure - that I just didn't have the mental horsepower to figure out where the product was headed. It's scary to admit you have no product roadmap, but hope that you'll be able to figure it out once the first version is "out there."

Now I realize that being okay with not knowing two steps out helps me focus on building something meaningful today.

Reframe

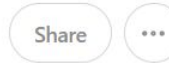
mistake: early hires

TLDR: Have high expectations, be uncomfortably direct. [LINK](#)

Don't make me fire you

A letter to new hires at early-stage startups

OCT 6, 2023



You may not like this letter... but it's not wrong.

Dear new employee,

I'm so excited to work with you! We have massive goals, a huge opportunity, and a motivated team coming together. I am trying to make this a career-defining opportunity for everyone on our team.

One thing you should know: Odds are I'll probably fire you in the next 3-6 months.

I don't want to do this. I'll feel awful about it. **Here's why I'll do it... and what you can do to avoid it.** Please, please, PLEASE read this closely. I want you to succeed!

Reframe

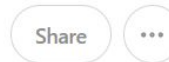
mistake: slowing down

TLDR: You can always move faster (and you should). [LINK](#)

Move faster

Reframing productivity in startups

SEP 15, 2023



Hi all —

I get the same question from every founder: “Do you think we’re moving fast enough?”

If you ask this question, you know the answer: **Hell no.**

I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about productivity. What got us to \$4M ARR in two years, after two years of meaningless wandering? And what’s taken Reframe from \$0 to \$500k ARR in 6 months?

What’s the common thread among the best-performing startups I’ve seen?


It’s not intelligence, hard work, or mental toughness (though all are needed).

The common thread: **Speed, driven by a different way to think about productivity.**

Reframe

mistake: “best practices” online

TLDR: Figure out your own unique advantage. [LINK](#)



Robert Snyder • You
Advisor to Early-Stage B2B Founders | Venture Partner | Founder @...
1w • 🌐

"Our cold outbound isn't working. I've tested a bunch of things. Nothing's really worked and I'm not sure what to do."

Hearing this from *basically* every B2B founder and sales leader. Whether you're at \$100k, \$1M, or \$10M ARR... selling SMB, mid-market, enterprise. It's really hard to stand out.

The challenges you're facing:

- Inbox overload
- Spam filters
- Nobody answering calls

The solutions you're exploring:

- Parallel dialers
- Rapid A/B tests on messaging
- Email domains, warming, etc.
- AI personalization
- Better templates & email writing tools

But this is what everyone's doing. It's not enough.

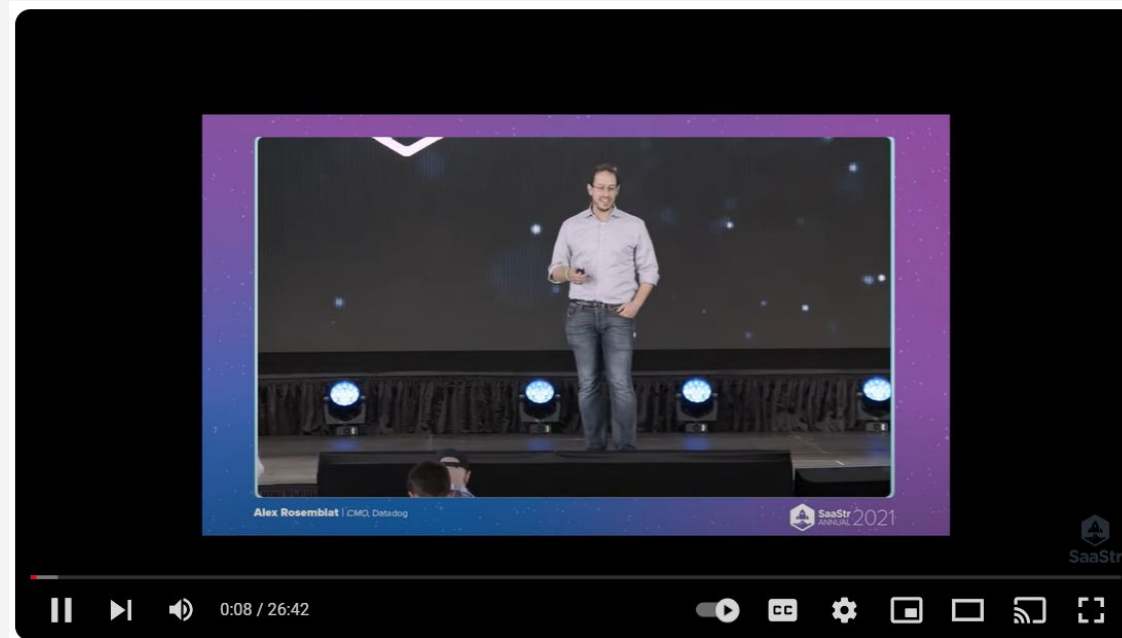
That's because you're missing the most important part...

Reframe

mistake: shiny objects, “new vs. more”

TLDR: 10x’ing what works is easier than figuring something new out.

AKA: why Datadog just did conferences to 100 sales reps. Seriously:



Reframe

mistake: getting too fancy on generating pipeline

TLDR: You can follow the basics in this 150-slide course I made last year to start. 90 mins per day, every day, will generally get you to figure out what works vs. not.

You don't need tons of automation, fancy tools, etc. Just need to figure out something that works. The fancy stuff prevents that. [LINK](#)

90-MIN PROSPECTING BLOCK (DAILY)

Have a plan so you can EXECUTE, not THINK.
Start with this, then think + adjust after 4 weeks.
Schedule it in the morning so *it actually gets done*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
30 mins cold email = 50 sequences	30 mins cold email = 50 sequences	30 mins cold email = 50 sequences	30 mins cold email = 50 sequences	30 mins cold email = 50 sequences
30 mins cold call = 10 calls	30 mins cold call = 10 calls	30 mins cold call = 10 calls	30 mins cold call = 10 calls	30 mins cold call = 10 calls
30 mins referrals = 1-3 calls	30 mins referrals = 1-3 calls	30 mins LinkedIn = 50 adds, 10 new conversations	30 mins referrals = 1-3 calls	30 mins referrals = 1-3 calls

mistake: listening to people who haven't done 0-1

They aren't bad people, but **unless you've been in the founder's chair** (ideally, recently and ALSO pivoted a bunch to find PMF), it's way easier to SOUND right than to actually BE right.

This stage is SIMPLE. People online tend to complicate it, because they haven't done it before. In theory, you can do a lot of things. In practice, you can't, so you should only focus on the most important thing, which is Demand > Supply > Distribution... learn by selling.

Online vibe:



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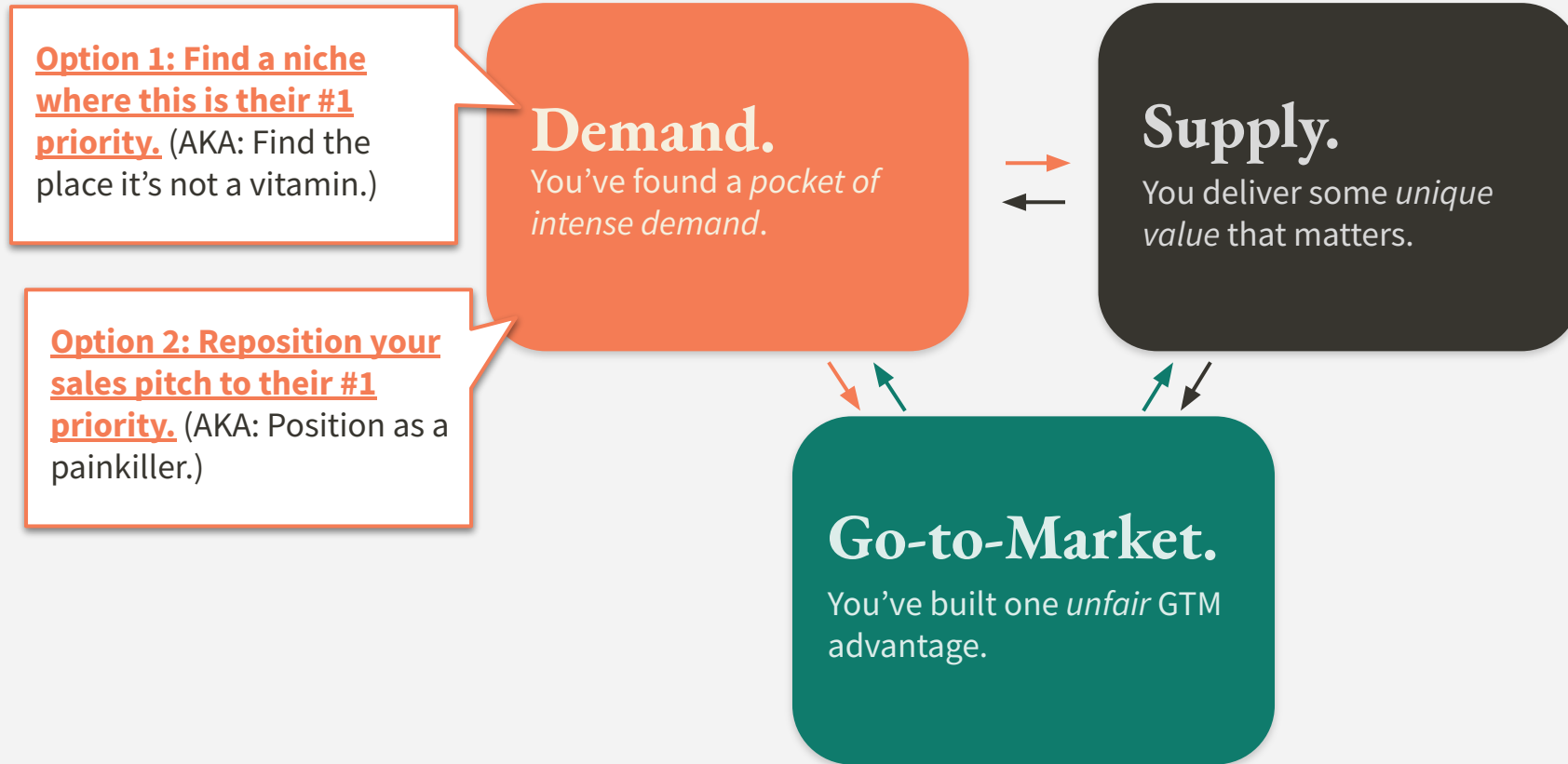
“First-time founders focus on Product... second-time on Distribution.”

Third-time on Demand?



“We’re a vitamin, not a painkiller.”

Two options for startups



like this? reach out.

I'm obsessed with building fast-growing, n=1 businesses. Mostly for the epistemic challenge.



I help B2B founders navigate
Product-Market Fit
from early revenue to scale



Robert Snyder
Advisor to Early-Stage B2B Founders | Venture Partner | Founder @ Reframe

Talks about #b2b, #sales, #marketing, #gtmstrategy, and #productmarketfit
Greater Boston · [Contact info](#)

 Reframe
 Harvard Business School

reach out on [linkedin](#)

I post regularly there (for some reason)



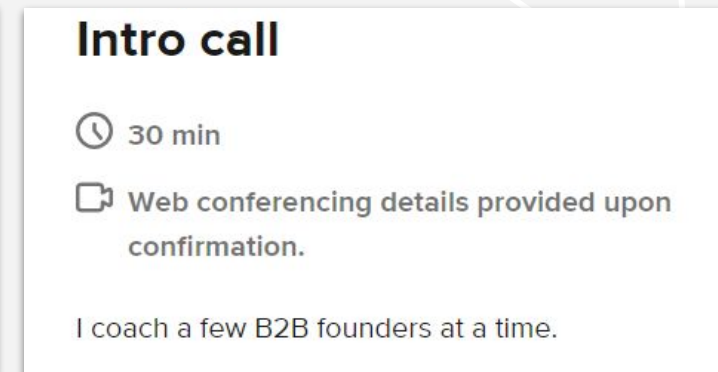


The B2B Growth Newsletter


The newsletter on B2B Startup Growth. Written by someone who's done it before. Delivered weekly on Fridays.


join the [newsletter](#)

smart GTM stuff for founders, weekly



Intro call

 30 min

 Web conferencing details provided upon confirmation.

I coach a few B2B founders at a time.

grab time to [meet](#)

free advice, occasional availability for coaching & consulting

Reframe