DEEP PLAYBOOK · OWNER HOLE

Starting A Business: The Founder's Field Manual

The exact 90-day path from "I have an idea" to "I have 10 paying customers." Real stats, real entity guidance, real templates, no fluff.

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A BLACK FLAG MEDIA PLAYBOOK

Starting A Business: The Founder's Field Manual

Idea to Validate to Launch to First 10 Customers in 90 Days

A Black Flag Media Deep Playbook

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PART 1: The 15-Minute Quick Win

You do not need to read this whole book before you start. You need to answer one question today.

The question comes from Sabri Suby's Godfather Strategy (Sell Like Crazy, 2019).

The question:

> If you had to describe your business as an offer someone could not refuse: in one sentence, with one specific customer type, one specific outcome, and one specific price. Could you write that sentence right now?

Not "I want to help small businesses grow." Not "I want to open a coffee shop." Not "I want to be a consultant." Those are wishes. Not offers.

Try this format:

> "I help [SPECIFIC PERSON] get [SPECIFIC OUTCOME] in [SPECIFIC TIME] for [SPECIFIC PRICE], and if it does not work, [SPECIFIC RISK REVERSAL]."

Example: "I help homeowners in Wilmington NC keep a green lawn from May through October for $180/month, and if it browns, I re-treat free."

Example: "I help solo lawyers in Charlotte get 3 new clients a month from Google reviews for $1,200/month, and if we do not deliver 3 leads, month two is free."

Example: "I help new dog owners fix pulling on leash in 3 sessions for $450, or the fourth session is on me."

The next 24 hours

Take your sentence. Send it to five people in your target customer group. Ask them one thing: "If someone actually offered this, would you pay for it? Yes or no. Why or why not?"

Do not sell. Do not explain. Do not pitch. Ask.

Five texts. Five DMs. Five voice memos. It does not matter which. Send them today.

Because here is the truth: if you cannot write that sentence, you do not have a business idea yet. You have an interest. And if you send it to five people and every one of them says "I do not get it," the sentence is broken, not the market.

Do the 15 minutes. Then keep reading.

The rest of this book is how you turn that sentence into an actual business inside 90 days.

PART 2: Why Most Businesses Fail Before They Start

You have heard the myth: "8 out of 10 businesses fail in the first year." It is a lie. It is a scary-sounding lie that gets repeated in cocktail conversations and LinkedIn posts by people who never opened the actual data.

Here is the real number.

BLS Business Employment Dynamics data, 2024:

- Roughly 20% of new businesses fail in year 1
- Roughly 45% fail by year 5
- Roughly 65% fail by year 10

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Business Employment Dynamics, updated 2024.

So the truth is more like: 4 out of 5 new businesses survive year 1. Half survive five years. A third survive ten. Not glamorous. Not doomed. Reality.

The next question matters more: **why do the ones that fail actually fail?**

CB Insights ran the definitive study on this. They analyzed post-mortems of hundreds of failed startups (CB Insights, "Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail," 2023 update). Here are the top 5:

1. **No market need: 42%.** They built something nobody wanted.
2. **Ran out of cash: 29%.** They spent before they earned.
3. **Wrong team: 23%.** Skill or trust gaps that killed execution.
4. **Got outcompeted: 19%.** Someone else was better at the same thing.
5. **Pricing/cost issues: 18%.** Priced too low, spent too high, math did not work.

Read that top one again. Forty-two percent of failed startups built something nobody wanted. Almost half. That is the failure mode this playbook exists to prevent.

The Kauffman Foundation's New Entrepreneur research (2022) adds another dimension: first-time founders who did zero customer interviews before launching had a 3x higher failure rate in year 1 than founders who did 20+ interviews before launching. Talking to real customers is not optional. It is the single highest-impact act in the first 30 days.

Labeled composite: the doomed idea

COMPOSITE CASE STUDY (NOT A REAL PERSON):

A guy named "Ryan" (composite, not a real founder) had been thinking about a dog-treat subscription box for two years. He loved dogs. He had a dog. His dog liked treats. It felt like a business.

Here is what he did:

- Registered an LLC in month 1 ($200)

- Hired a logo designer ($1,500)
- Built a Shopify site with custom branding ($3,000)
- Ordered 500 units of custom-packaged treats ($4,200)
- Ran Facebook ads to launch ($800)

Total spend before first customer: $9,700.

Total customers in first 90 days: 6. Total revenue: $210.

Then he asked five of the six customers what they liked. Two said the treats were fine but they already used another brand and would not switch. One said she bought it because he asked her to. Two said the packaging was cute but they cancelled because their dog did not like the recipe. One said she loved it.

That is 1 real customer out of 5 asked, from 6 total.

What went wrong: Ryan spent $9,700 to learn something he could have learned for $0 by texting 30 dog owners in his target zip code with the question, "Would you pay $40/month for a curated dog-treat subscription? Yes or no, why?"

He built. Then he asked. He should have asked first, then built if the answers pointed to a real business.

This is the trap 42% of failed founders fall into. Do not fall into it. The rest of this playbook is how to avoid it.

PART 3: The 5-Stage Founder Path

Five stages. In order. You do not skip. You do not rush the early ones because they feel less exciting. The order is the whole product.

Stage 1: IDEA (Days 1-14)

Purpose: Land on a single, specific problem for a single, specific customer type that you have real evidence to believe is real.

Exit criteria: You can write one sentence: "I want to help [SPECIFIC PERSON] solve [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] and I have three reasons to believe this problem is real and painful."

Common trap: Falling in love with a solution before proving the problem. "I want to build an AI app for restaurants" is a solution. It is not an idea until you can name the restaurant owner and the problem you are solving for her.

Stage 2: VALIDATE (Days 15-30)

Purpose: Talk to 20 real potential customers using the Mom Test protocol. Confirm or reject the problem is real. Learn the language they use to describe it.

Exit criteria: 20 interviews completed. Interview scorecard scored. Decision made: green light (proceed), yellow light (pivot the customer or the problem), or red light (kill the idea, save yourself six months).

Common trap: Asking "would you buy this?" instead of asking about their actual current pain. Nobody knows if they will buy something that does not exist. Everyone knows what has hurt them recently. Ask about the second, not the first.

Stage 3: OFFER (Days 31-45)

Purpose: Build the Godfather Offer (Suby, Sell Like Crazy, 2019). Package what you will sell, at what price, with what guarantee, in what timeframe. Make it specific enough that someone could say yes today.

Exit criteria: A written 1-page offer document you can send to a stranger and they can understand what they get, what they pay, and what happens if it does not work.

Common trap: Vague offers. "We do marketing" or "personal training available" is not an offer. It is a menu heading. An offer names the outcome, the timeline, the price, and the guarantee.

Stage 4: LAUNCH (Days 46-60)

Purpose: Pre-sell your first 3-5 customers before you build any infrastructure. Send the offer to warm conversations from Stage 2. Get money.

Exit criteria: 3-5 paying customers. Real dollars in a real account. This is where you find out if the offer works or the price is wrong.

Common trap: Building the "perfect" product before you sell it. Basecamp made this the whole thesis of Getting Real (Fried and Hansson, 2006): sell first, build second, iterate based on real customer feedback. Founders who reverse the order burn six months and a lot of money learning what a two-week pre-sell would have taught them.

Stage 5: FIRST 10 (Days 61-90)

Purpose: Get to 10 paying customers total. Formalize the business (LLC, bank account, invoicing) once you have real revenue justifying it. Set up the first systems for repeat delivery. Start the referral engine.

Exit criteria: 10 paying customers. Entity formed. First systems in place. Weekly operating cadence established.

Common trap: Skipping the entity setup because "it feels boring." Or doing entity setup on day 1 and using it as an excuse to avoid selling. Both are wrong. The entity comes after real revenue proves you have a business, not before.

Why this order matters

You are not smarter than 42% of failed founders. You are not going to skip validation and get lucky. The order of the stages is the entire insight of this book.

IDEA before VALIDATE means you know what you are testing. VALIDATE before OFFER means you know what to offer. OFFER before LAUNCH means you know what to sell. LAUNCH before FIRST 10 means you have proof the offer works. FIRST 10 before scaling means you have a real business, not a hopeful project.

Skip any of these and everything downstream collapses. Follow all five in order and you have a real business by day 90.

PART 4: IDEA (Days 1-14): Finding Something Worth Doing

Most people think an idea comes as inspiration in the shower. It does not. Ideas come from paying attention to friction in your own life or in an industry you know.

The 3-Question Idea Filter

Attribution: adapted from Paul Graham's essay "How To Get Startup Ideas" (Y Combinator, 2012).

For any idea you are considering, answer three questions:

Question 1: Is this a real problem? Have you personally felt it, or have you watched at least 5 real people struggle with it in the last year? If the answer is "I read about it once" or "I think people probably have this problem," the answer is no. Move to a different idea or spend two weeks watching for it in the wild.

Question 2: Is it painful enough to pay for? Would someone pay $50, $500, or $5,000 to make it go away? If the honest answer is "maybe $5 but definitely not $50," this is a nice-to-have, not a business. Nice-to-haves do not survive year 1.

Question 3: Do you have any advantage in solving it? Not "am I the world's best expert." Just: do you have unfair access to the customer, unfair skill, unfair insight into what they want, or unfair speed compared to someone else who would try? If the answer is no across all four, someone else will win. Pick a different idea or a different angle.

An idea that passes all three is worth 14 days of your life. An idea that fails any of the three is not.

Frisella applied to picking an idea

Andy Frisella's principle of Extreme Personal Responsibility (MFCEO Project, ongoing): you own everything in your life, including your business idea.

Which means: if your idea is bad, that is on you. Not the market. Not the timing. Not the competitors. You picked it. And if you refuse to test it because you are afraid the answer will be "no," you are choosing not to know the truth. That is on you too.

The founder who picks a bad idea and finds out in 30 days is 10x ahead of the founder who picks a bad idea and finds out in 30 months.

Pick fast. Test faster. Own the outcome.

5 sources of business ideas

Real founders find ideas in one of these five places:

Source 1: A pain you personally have. Something in your own life is broken and you have been complaining about it for a year. That complaint is a business. Basecamp came from Jason Fried being annoyed at project management tools. Airbnb came from Brian Chesky needing rent money and having a spare air mattress. The complaint is data.

Source 2: An industry you know from the inside. You worked somewhere for 5+ years. You watched leadership make expensive mistakes weekly. You know what everyone in that industry wishes existed and no vendor is selling. That is your idea.

Source 3: A tool you wish existed. You have Googled "is there a tool that does X" more than twice in the last month. The tool does not exist. Someone is going to build it. It may as well be you.

Source 4: A service being done badly. Every local market has a category of service business where the average provider is mediocre. Bookkeeping, cleaning, lawn care, dog training, marketing agencies, IT support. If you can do the job at a genuinely high level and answer the phone reliably, you win by default.

Source 5: Unmet demand you have spotted. People are searching for something and finding no good answer. Ask friends what they wish they could buy that they cannot find. Ask a subreddit. The gaps are visible if you look.

Pick one source that matches your life right now. Do not pick "I read about a cool space in TechCrunch." You do not have unfair advantage in a space you read about last week.

10 disqualifying tests

Any "yes" on this list means kill the idea:

1. Would you need $500K+ to test the basic thesis?

2. Would you need a regulatory license (medical, legal, financial) you do not have?
3. Would you need 12+ months of building before you could sell anything?
4. Does the customer base literally not exist yet (you would have to create demand from zero)?
5. Would you be one of many undifferentiated providers in an already-saturated local market?
6. Is your only advantage "I would work harder than the competition"?
7. Does the unit economics only work at massive scale (thin margins that need 100K customers)?
8. Are you emotionally attached because it sounds cool at parties?
9. Have you told 10 people about it and gotten polite nods instead of "wait, when can I buy this"?
10. Would this be a full replacement of your income within 12 months feel impossible, even with maximum success?

Nine yeses out of ten and you should probably still kill it. This filter exists to save you from your own excitement.

5 journal prompts

Sit with a notebook for 30 minutes. Write answers, not fragments.

1. "In the last 6 months, what is the thing I have complained about the most? Who else complains about the same thing?"
2. "In my current job or life, what task do I do that other people would gladly pay to have done for them?"
3. "What is one thing I know how to do that most people I meet do not know how to do?"
4. "If I had 3 months and $2,000 to start any business, and I had to make money in month 4, what would I choose?"
5. "Whose life do I want to make measurably better, and what is the specific way I can do it?"

You are looking for the answer that repeats across multiple prompts. If "small law firms in the Southeast" shows up in three answers, that is your target customer. If "I always end up helping friends fix their websites" shows up in two, that is your service.

Exit Stage 1 when: You can complete this sentence. "I want to help [SPECIFIC PERSON] solve [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] and I have three reasons to believe this problem is real and painful, which are [REASON 1], [REASON 2], [REASON 3]."

If you cannot fill in those blanks with specific words, do not proceed to Stage 2. Sit with the prompts again.

PART 5: VALIDATE (Days 15-30): 20 Interviews From Scratch

This is the stage most founders skip because it feels like it does not count. It counts more than any other stage. This stage is where you find out if 42% of failed founders were right and you are wrong.

The Mom Test: 3 core rules

Attribution: Rob Fitzpatrick, The Mom Test (2013). If you have never read it, buy it. It is the single most important 80 pages a first-time founder can read.

The three rules:

Rule 1: Talk about their life, not your idea. The moment you describe your idea, the interview is over. Now you are pitching. Now the person is being polite. Now you learn nothing. Instead, ask about the last time they dealt with the problem you think you might solve. Their story is data. Your pitch is not.

Rule 2: Ask about specifics in the past, not opinions about the future. "Would you use this?" is worthless. "Tell me about the last time this happened to you and what you actually did" is gold. People are terrible at predicting their future behavior. People are good at describing what they did last month.

Rule 3: Talk less. Listen more. Aim for 90% them, 10% you. Every second you spend talking is a second you are not learning. Nod. Ask "and then what happened." Take notes on their exact words. Their words are your future ad copy and website headline.

5 questions to ask

Use these five in order. Never skip to your idea until question 5. Do not sell.

Question 1: "Tell me about the last time you dealt with [SPECIFIC PROBLEM]. Walk me through what happened."

Question 2: "What did you do about it? Did you try to fix it, hire someone, ignore it, work around it?"

Question 3: "What did that cost you? Time, money, missed opportunities, stress? Give me a real number if you can."

Question 4: "If someone could make this problem go away entirely, what would 'fixed' look like for you? What are you actually trying to get to?"

Question 5: "If someone offered [YOUR ROUGH IDEA], what would you want to know before saying yes? What would make you say no?"

Question 5 is the only place you mention your idea. And even there, you are asking about their objections, not asking them to validate it.

Where to find 20 people if you have zero network

This is the section nobody writes and every first-time founder needs. Here is the honest answer: you can find 20 target customers to interview in 14 days even if you have zero existing network. Here is how.

Source 1: Subreddits (10 concrete ones). Reddit is the single best cold-source of niche customer conversations on the internet. Find the subreddit where your target customer talks about their real problems. Read the top posts of the last 90 days. Look for people describing the exact pain you think you solve. DM them with: "Hey, I saw your post about [SPECIFIC THING]. I am researching this space and would love to hear more about how you actually deal with it. No pitch. 15 min on a call or async. I will send you a $10 Starbucks card for your time."

Ten subreddit starting points depending on your customer:

- Small business owners: r/smallbusiness, r/Entrepreneur, r/EntrepreneurRideAlong
- Local service pros: r/HVAC, r/plumbing, r/electricians, r/lawncare, r/handyman
- SaaS or startup: r/startups, r/SideProject, r/indiehackers
- Solo lawyers: r/LawFirm, r/lawyers
- Medical practices: r/medicine, r/whitecoatinvestor
- Marketing agencies: r/marketing, r/PPC, r/SEO
- Restaurants: r/restaurateur, r/KitchenConfidential
- Trades/contractors: r/Construction, r/generalcontractor
- Real estate: r/RealEstate, r/RealEstateInvesting
- Dog owners (RSK9 example): r/Dogtraining, r/reactivedogs

Pick your customer, pick 2-3 subreddits, DM 30 people who posted about the pain, get 5-8 calls.

Source 2: Twitter/X and LinkedIn cold DMs. Search for people who tweeted or posted about the exact pain in the last 30 days. Reply to their post first with something helpful. Then DM 24 hours later with the same script above (short, no pitch, small gift for time). Rate: send 40, get 8 conversations.

Source 3: Meetup.com and local Chamber events. For a local service business, this is the fastest path. Search Meetup.com for events in your target customer's world. Go in person. Do not pitch. Introduce yourself. Ask questions. Get numbers. Book follow-up calls. One Chamber breakfast in a mid-sized city is worth 15 potential interviews if you actually show up and are useful.

Source 4: Contacts of contacts (5-step referral map). List 20 people you know reasonably well. For each, write one sentence: "This person probably knows my target customer because ___." For the 10 who scored highest, text: "Hey, quick ask. I am researching [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] with [SPECIFIC PERSON TYPE]. Do you know anyone in that group who would spend 15 min on the phone with me? Not selling anything, just researching." One "yes" per 3-4 texts. Ten texts get you 3 introductions. Three introductions get you 3 interviews. Now you have 3 interviews, and each one, at the end, gets asked, "Who else in your world deals with this?"

Source 5: Industry Facebook groups. Every niche has 20+ Facebook groups. Join 5. Read for a week. Contribute helpfully in threads. After a week, post: "I am researching [PROBLEM] for a new project. Would 5 of you be willing to spend 15 min on the phone with me? DM me, first 5 get a $10 Starbucks card as thanks."

Source 6: Cold email to 100 to get 20 conversations. For B2B especially. Build a list of 100 target-fit people using Apollo (free trial), Hunter.io, or LinkedIn Sales Nav (30-day trial). Send this exact template:

```
SUBJECT: 15 min research call. [SPECIFIC PAIN]

Hey [FIRST NAME],

I am researching how [ROLE/INDUSTRY] currently handles [SPECIFIC PROBLEM].
Not selling anything. Just learning.

15 min call this week or next? I will send a $20 Amazon card for your time.

If you have a colleague who deals with this more than you do, I would love the
intro.

Thanks,
[YOUR NAME]
```

Rate: 100 sends, 15-20% reply, 8-12 book, 6-10 actually show up. That plus the other sources gets you comfortably to 20.

The rate math

You need 20 completed conversations. Plan for 40 booked calls (50% no-show is normal for cold-sourced calls). Plan for 60-80 initial outreach touches. That is 3-4 hours a day of outreach for the first week, then interviews spread across weeks 2-4.

If you are not willing to do that math, you are not willing to do the work. Frisella (Do The Work, MFCEO Project ongoing): "The reason people do not succeed is because they do not do the work." The work is the outreach. Nothing about this is glamorous. Everything about it is required.

What to listen for

Green flags (heavier weight):

- They already spend money trying to solve this (even if it fails)

- They describe the pain in specific, emotional terms
- They ask "when can I use this?" without you asking them to
- They volunteer to be an early customer
- They introduce you to someone else without being asked

Yellow flags (interesting but weak):

- They agree the problem exists but say "it is not really a priority for me"
- They give abstract validation ("that sounds cool") without concrete pain
- They say "I would use it if it was free"

Red flags (kill signal):

- They cannot describe a specific instance in the last 6 months
- They pivot to talking about a totally different problem
- They politely nod but disengage
- They say "why would anyone need that?"

What to ignore

- Compliments. "Great idea." "You should build that." "So smart." These are politeness, not signal.
- Feature suggestions. Everyone will suggest features. Almost nobody who suggests a feature will pay for it.
- "I might be interested." This is a soft no. Real customers say "yes, when."
- Introductions to their friend who is "the perfect person to build this." That is them politely declining to be the customer themselves.

The interview scorecard

Score each of 20 conversations across three dimensions:

Real problem (0-3): Did they describe specific, recent pain in vivid detail?

- 0: no specifics
- 1: general acknowledgment
- 2: some specific stories
- 3: rich, emotional, recent examples

Costly (0-3): Did they name a real cost: money, time, missed opportunity, stress?

- 0: no cost mentioned
- 1: soft cost ("annoying")

- 2: specific time cost or money cost
- 3: both money AND time AND emotional cost

Actionable (0-3): Are they clearly a buyer for a well-priced solution?

- 0: no interest
- 1: might buy if free
- 2: would consider paying
- 3: asked when they could buy

Score each conversation 0-9. Add up all 20 scores. Max: 180.

Decision thresholds:

- 135+ (75%+): GREEN LIGHT. Proceed to OFFER stage.
- 90-134 (50-74%): YELLOW LIGHT. Your problem is real but the target customer or positioning is off. Iterate and run 10 more interviews.
- Under 90 (<50%): RED LIGHT. This is not a business right now. Go back to IDEA. This decision saves you $10,000+ and 6+ months.

Additional signals: any one of these overrides the score:

- 3+ people asked "when can I pay you" without prompting → strong green
- 3+ people offered to be early customers → strong green
- Zero specific pain stories across 20 interviews → automatic red
- Zero people willing to pay any real money → automatic red

Exit Stage 2 when: 20 interviews done, scored, decision made. If green, proceed to OFFER. If yellow, pivot and re-interview. If red, save yourself the pain and go back to IDEA.

PART 6: OFFER (Days 31-45): The Godfather Offer Build

You have a validated problem. You have language your customers use to describe it. Now you build the offer.

Two frameworks. Both attributed. Use both.

Framework 1: The 7-Part Godfather Offer (Sabri Suby, Sell Like Crazy, 2019). **Framework 2:** The Value Equation (Alex Hormozi, $100M Offers, 2021).

The 7-Part Godfather Offer

Suby's premise: an offer is an offer they cannot refuse when it stacks so much value at such a specific price with such a specific guarantee that saying no feels irrational.

Seven parts. Do not skip parts.

Part 1: The halo (rationale). Why this offer, why now, why this price. Not "buy my thing." Something like: "This is our launch pricing for the first 10 customers so we can build case studies. After that the price goes up by 40%. This is your only shot at this price."

Part 2: Unique mechanism (build value). The specific reason your solution works when others do not. Not "we work hard." Something like: "We use a 3-step audit process that finds the exact 5 leaks in your bucket in the first week, then we plug them in order of dollar impact. Nobody else does it in this order."

Part 3: Value stack (pricing). Everything they get. Line item by line item. Each line item priced individually so the sum shows massive value against the actual price. Example:

- Weekly strategy call ($500/wk value)
- Custom playbook ($2,000 one-time value)
- 90-day implementation support ($3,000 value)
- Slack access to team ($800/mo value)
- Total value: $10,300
- Your investment: $2,997

Part 4: Bonuses (premiums). Two or three specific add-ons that make the offer feel too good to pass up. Bonuses should be worth as much as the core offer. Example: "Bonus 1: 5-video course on cold outreach ($497 value). Bonus 2: 90-day email support ($800 value). Bonus 3: Priority booking on any future consulting ($1,000 value)."

Part 5: Urgency. A real reason to act now. Not fake countdown timers. Something honest: "First 10 customers only at this price." "Cohort starts October 1, doors close September 25." "Bonus 3 disappears after 20 signups."

Part 6: Risk reversal (power guarantee). The buyer's fear is losing money on something that does not work. Take that fear off the table. "If you do 100% of the work in the first 30 days and see no measurable progress, full refund and you keep everything." "Money-back guarantee if you are not thrilled after your first session, no questions." The scarier your guarantee sounds to you, the more it converts.

Part 7: Scarcity. Real limits. "I only take on 5 clients at a time because I do the work myself." "Only running this cohort twice a year." Scarcity that is not real is manipulation. Scarcity that is real is honest.

Every offer you write from now on has all 7. If any part is missing, your offer will convert worse than the founder next to you who included all 7. Suby's data across thousands of campaigns is not a suggestion. It is math.

The Value Equation applied to a new business

Hormozi's Value Equation ($100M Offers, 2021):

> Value = (Dream Outcome × Perceived Likelihood of Achievement) ÷ (Time Delay × Effort and Sacrifice)

Four levers. To increase perceived value of your offer, you can:

Increase Dream Outcome. Make the promise bigger and more specific. Not "grow your business." Something like: "Add 10 paying customers in 90 days." Not "get in shape." Something like: "Drop 20 lbs in 12 weeks."

Increase Perceived Likelihood. Add proof, testimonials, case studies, guarantees, credentials, methodology. This is where testimonials from your first 5 customers become weapons. Every case study is a lever on this variable.

Decrease Time Delay. How fast do they see the result? Every day you can compress matters. If you can show a result in 24 hours, that beats a result in 30 days at any price.

Decrease Effort and Sacrifice. How little do they have to do? Every step you can absorb into your delivery matters. "Done-for-you" beats "done-with-you" beats "done-by-you" at every price point.

Look at your offer. Which lever is weakest? That is your biggest opportunity. New founders almost always have weak Perceived Likelihood (no proof yet) and weak Dream Outcome (vague promise). Fix those first with a bigger, more specific promise and a stronger guarantee.

Pricing rule for a new business

Rule of thumb from Hormozi ($100M Offers, 2021): price at 10-20% of the value you deliver.

If your service saves a client $50,000 a year, price at $5,000-$10,000. If your service saves them $500, price at $50-$100. If you have no idea what value you deliver, you have not talked to enough customers yet. Go back to Stage 2.

More important than the exact price: **do not underprice out of fear.** Underpricing kills more first-year businesses than overpricing does. Underpriced offers attract cheap customers who churn, complain, and cannot afford to work with you meaningfully. Priced-right offers attract customers who value what you do.

The Value Equation math also says: at a higher price, the buyer perceives higher likelihood and higher dream outcome. Paradoxically, going up in price often increases conversion.

Test rule: pick a price that makes you a little uncomfortable. That is probably too low. Now double it. Test that in 10 sales conversations. See what happens.

The Founder Pricing Trap

Every first-time founder underprices. The reason is emotional, not logical. You are afraid nobody will pay real money for what you do. So you price at "what feels safe." Safe means "cheap." Cheap means "you have to run 10x the volume to make a real income." That kills you inside 6 months.

The Founder Pricing Trap has a specific tell: you feel a little sick charging the price you should charge. That feeling is not signal that the price is too high. It is signal that you have not yet accepted what your work is worth.

Frisella (Extreme Personal Responsibility, MFCEO Project): if you underprice, that is a choice you made. Not the market's fault. Not the client's fault. Yours. Own it. Then fix it.

The 1-page offer document

Write your offer as a single-page document. Put it in a Google Doc. Send it to 5 warm conversations from Stage 2 with this line: "Remember when we talked and you mentioned [SPECIFIC PAIN]? Here is what I am putting together to solve exactly that. Would you want to be one of the first 5 customers?"

Structure of the 1-page:

```
[COMPANY OR OFFER NAME]

The Promise: [ONE-SENTENCE DREAM OUTCOME]

For: [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER TYPE]

The Problem You Are Solving:
[2-3 sentences describing the pain in the customer's own words]

What You Get (Value Stack):
- [Deliverable 1]: [dollar value]
- [Deliverable 2]: [dollar value]
- [Deliverable 3]: [dollar value]
- [Bonus 1]: [dollar value]
- [Bonus 2]: [dollar value]
Total value: $[X]
Your investment: $[Y]

The Guarantee:
[Specific, honest, scary-sounding risk reversal]

The Urgency:
[Real, honest reason to act now]

Next Step:
Reply to this email with "IN" and I will send the intake form.
```

Exit Stage 3 when: Your 1-page offer is written and you have sent it to at least 5 people. Now you wait for responses and go to LAUNCH.

PART 7: LAUNCH (Days 46-60): Real Money From Real People

The point of LAUNCH is not to build a store. It is to close 3-5 paying customers using nothing but your 1-page offer and warm conversations from Stage 2. No website. No logo. No ads. No LLC yet. Just money into an account.

This is Hormozi's Attraction Offer principle from $100M Money Models (2025): pre-sell the offer before you build the infrastructure. The pre-sell either proves the offer or teaches you what to change. Either way it is faster and cheaper than building first.

Pre-sell before you build

Basecamp taught this in Getting Real (Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, 37signals, 2006). Their rule: build the smallest possible version, sell it, iterate with real customer money in hand. Do not build 6 months of features nobody asked for.

Applied to a new business, "pre-sell" means:

1. Send your 1-page offer to 20 warm conversations from Stage 2
2. Get 3-5 of them to say yes and pay a deposit (or full price) upfront
3. Deliver the service manually for the first 3-5 customers, learning what works
4. Only after you have delivered successfully do you build the systems and website

Your first 3-5 customers pay for the education. Their money funds the infrastructure. Their feedback shapes the infrastructure. This is the only order that does not waste money.

The cold outreach playbook

If your Stage 2 conversations do not convert enough people to hit 3-5 paying customers, run cold outreach. Math to hit 5 paying customers:

- 60 target-fit prospects contacted
- 20 conversations booked (30% response rate)
- 10 real qualified conversations (50% qualified)
- 5 paying customers (50% close rate for a decent offer)

This math is not aspirational. It is the actual math many first-year B2B service founders hit if the offer is right and the targeting is right. If you are hitting 5% response rate on cold outreach, your subject line or your list is broken, not your offer. If you are hitting 20% response rate but 0% close, your offer is broken.

Cold outreach cadence template (LinkedIn or email):

Touch 1 (Day 0): "Hey [FIRST NAME], I help [ROLE/INDUSTRY] with [SPECIFIC PROBLEM]. Saw you [SPECIFIC OBSERVED THING: recent post, hiring for X, mentioned Y]. If you are dealing with [PROBLEM], happy to share what has worked for similar folks. Worth 15 min?"

Touch 2 (Day 4): "Following up. Not trying to be pushy. If you are handling [PROBLEM] already, ignore me. If it is on the pile, I might save you a few weeks of trial and error."

Touch 3 (Day 10): "Last one from me. Sending a quick 3-bullet playbook on [PROBLEM] we put together from working with 12 similar businesses. Free, no strings. Reply YES and I will send."

Three touches. No more. If they do not reply after touch 3, they are not a fit right now. Move on.

Landing page in 4 hours (not a full site)

You do not need a full website to close your first 5 customers. You need a single page that a warm lead can read and say yes to.

Use one of these tools:

- **Carrd**: $19/year, single page, live in 30 min
- **Squarespace**: $16/month, single page template, live in 2 hours
- **Framer or Webflow**: free tier, single page, live in 4 hours

Content of the landing page is your 1-page offer document, formatted for the web. Follow the structure in Landing Page Copy Templates (BFM product, $47) if you have it.

Do not custom-design a logo. Do not run a color palette. Do not hire a designer. Ship the page in 4 hours. If you spend more than 4 hours on it before customer #1, you are hiding in "getting ready" (Frisella, Do The Work: this is what looks like productivity but is actually avoidance).

Payment infrastructure: Stripe basics

For your first 5 customers, you need a way to take money. Not a store. A way to take money.

Option 1: Stripe Payment Links. Free. Log in at stripe.com. Create a Payment Link for your offer price. Send the link. Card in, money out. Live in 20 minutes.

Option 2: Stripe Invoicing. Free. Send an invoice from Stripe with your logo (or without) to the customer's email. Customer pays via ACH or card. Money in your bank in 2-7 days.

Option 3: Square Invoicing. Free. Same idea. Slightly friendlier UI for local service businesses.

Option 4: Deposit via Venmo or Zelle (only if the customer prefers). Fine for the first 1-2 customers if that is what they will pay through. Move to Stripe by customer #3.

Do not build a shopping cart. Do not integrate a CRM. Do not set up automated invoicing. Send an invoice, get paid, deliver the service.

The Founder-Sells-Founder rule

For your first 10 customers, you sell every deal personally. No sales rep. No automated funnel. No chatbot. You on the phone or on the DM, explaining the offer, hearing the objection, closing the deal.

Why: nobody else knows the offer well enough. Nobody else has the passion. Nobody else can iterate the offer mid-sale based on what the prospect says. And you do not have the sales data yet to teach anyone else what to say.

You will hate this at first. You will feel awkward. You will fumble the ask. You will overtalk. That is fine. You are learning. By customer #7 you will be smoother. By customer #10 you will have a script that a sales rep could eventually run.

Cross-reference: Discovery Call Script Pack (BFM product, $47) has 5 opening frames if you need scripts to steal from.

The 3-5 first customers rule

Do not try to hit 10 in Stage 4. Hit 3-5. Deliver excellent work. Get case studies. Get testimonials. Get referrals. Then and only then move to Stage 5 to scale to 10.

Exit Stage 4 when: You have 3-5 paying customers who have paid real money and you are actively delivering the service. Now go to Stage 5.

PART 8: FIRST 10 (Days 61-90): Getting To Ten Paying Customers

You have 3-5 customers. You have delivered work they are happy with. Now you scale to 10 and set up the systems that will support the next 100.

Referral engineering from customer #1

Every customer you close should be asked for a referral within 30 days of a great outcome. Not "let me know if you know anyone." That is passive. This works:

Script (send in text or email at day 30):

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

Real quick: you have been one of our first 5 customers, and the fact that
[SPECIFIC OUTCOME they achieved] happened this fast means the offer works.

Because you are early, I want to give you two things:

1. Loyalty pricing locked forever. Anything we sell in the future,
   you never pay more than your current price.

2. A referral thank-you. If you introduce me to one person who becomes
   a customer, I will [SPECIFIC. $500 credit, 1 free month, $200 gift card].

If you can think of one person right now who deals with [PROBLEM], text me their
name and I will draft the intro for you to send.

No pressure. Just want to grow this the right way.

Thanks for being here.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Rate: about 30-40% of happy early customers will refer if you ask this way. Zero percent will refer if you never ask.

The 30-day check-in with every early customer

Every customer, every 30 days for the first 90 days, gets this call or DM:

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

30-day check-in. Three quick questions:

1. What is working for you?
2. What is not working?
3. What is one thing you wish we did differently?

Reply here or grab 15 min this week.
```

This does two things. It surfaces problems before they become churn. And it gives you the raw material for your marketing (testimonials, case studies, exact language they use to describe outcomes).

Cross-reference: First 100 Customers Guide

Everything about scaling from 10 to 100 customers is in the First 100 Customers Guide ($47, BFM catalog). This playbook stops at 10. Once you hit 10, the game changes: now you are running a business, not starting one. First 100 covers channels, systems, hiring, and lifecycle beyond the first 10.

Exit Stage 5 when:

- 10 paying customers
- Entity formed (see Part 9)
- Weekly operating cadence in place
- First systems built (payment, delivery, customer tracking)

You now have a real business.

PART 9: Entity Setup: Sole-Prop vs LLC vs S-Corp

This is the section every first-time founder wants and nobody writes clearly. Here it is.

Confirm with your CPA. Tax situations vary.

Before we go deeper: everything below is educational. Tax and entity choices depend on your state, your income, your existing employment, your marital status, and 20 other variables. Always confirm with a real CPA before making a final call. A one-hour CPA consultation is $150-$500 and can save you $5,000+ in the first year. Skip this at your peril.

The three main structures

Sole Proprietor:

- Default. If you do nothing, this is what you are.
- No filing needed. You report income on Schedule C of your personal tax return.
- Pros: zero cost, zero setup, zero paperwork.
- Cons: no liability protection at all. If a client sues, they can come after your house.

Single-Member LLC:

- Legal entity separate from you.
- File Articles of Organization with your state ($50-$500 depending on state).
- File for EIN with IRS (free at irs.gov, takes 10 min).

- Pros: liability protection. Business assets and personal assets are separate (if you actually keep them separate).
- Cons: state filing fee, small annual maintenance, slightly more paperwork.

S-Corp (technically an LLC that elects S-Corp taxation):

- Same legal structure as LLC.
- Elect S-Corp taxation by filing Form 2553 with IRS.
- Pros: can save self-employment tax (roughly 15.3%) on distributions above a reasonable salary.
- Cons: requires payroll (yourself as employee), separate business tax return, higher accounting cost ($1,500-$3,000/year), only makes sense above a certain revenue.

When each one makes sense

Sole Prop makes sense when:

- Year 1 of the business, revenue under $50K
- Low-liability service business (no physical risk, no client data risk, no product liability)
- You want zero paperwork while validating

LLC makes sense when:

- Any material liability exists (dog training, contracting, medical, food, transportation)
- You are signing contracts with clients
- Revenue clears roughly $25K/year
- You want to build a business that eventually gets sold, hired into, or franchised

S-Corp makes sense when:

- Revenue clears $50K-$75K/year in net profit
- You are the primary worker in the business (majority of income is your labor)
- The self-employment tax savings exceed the additional accounting cost

Simple math on the S-Corp question: if your net profit is $80K and you pay yourself a reasonable salary of $50K, the $30K in distributions saves you 15.3% self-employment tax, or roughly $4,590. If your incremental accounting cost is $2,000, you net roughly $2,590. Worth it. Below $50K net profit, the math usually flips against S-Corp.

Confirm with your CPA. Tax situations vary.

EIN filing walkthrough

Regardless of entity, if you form an LLC or an S-Corp, you need an EIN (Employer Identification Number).

Steps:

1. Go to irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online
2. Click "Apply Online Now"
3. Answer 10 questions about your entity type, ownership, purpose
4. EIN issued at end of session: download the confirmation PDF, save it forever

Cost: $0. Time: 10 minutes. Do not pay any third-party service to do this for you. They charge $99-$300 for a task you can do free.

State filing costs (5-state comparison, 2025)

Rough LLC formation fees, 2025:

State	Filing Fee	Annual Fee/Report
Delaware	$110	$300 franchise tax
California	$70	$800 annual franchise tax
Texas	$300	$0 (no annual report for most LLCs)
Florida	$125	$138.75 annual report
North Carolina	$125	$200 annual report

Rule of thumb: file in the state where you actually live and do business. Filing in Delaware from another state is almost always a mistake for a small business. You end up paying fees in both Delaware and your home state, and you get zero benefit unless you are raising VC money.

Wyoming, Nevada, and other "asset protection" states are pitched hard by promoters. For a service business under $500K revenue, the tax and asset protection benefits are usually not worth the complexity. Confirm with your CPA.

The startup entity mistake to avoid

Do not form the LLC on day 1 before you have a validated business. You will pay the fee, get the EIN, open the bank account, and then never actually launch. Now you have an annual filing burden and no revenue.

Rule: form the entity when you have your first 3 paying customers or when you sign your first client contract that exceeds $1,000 in value, whichever comes first. Before that, run as a sole proprietor and put every dollar into a separate bank sub-account so you have clean records for eventual conversion.

Cross-reference: LLC Setup Guide ($47, BFM catalog) has the full state-by-state guide, forms library, and post-formation checklist.

Confirm with your CPA. Tax situations vary.

PART 10: Full Template Library (20+ templates, inline)

Everything below is copy-paste ready. Fill the brackets, send, use.

Template 1: 3-Question Idea Filter Worksheet

```
Idea (one sentence): _______________________________

Question 1: Real problem?
Have I personally felt it, OR watched at least 5 people struggle with it
in the last 12 months?
Answer: YES / NO
Evidence: ____________________________________

Question 2. Painful enough to pay for?
Would a real person pay $50/$500/$5,000 to make it go away?
Answer: YES / NO
Price point I think they would pay: $____________

Question 3. Advantage in solving it?
Do I have unfair access, skill, insight, or speed vs. Someone else who
would try?
Answer: YES / NO
My advantage: ________________________________

Decision: All 3 YES = proceed. Any NO = kill or reshape.
```

Template 2: Validation Interview Script (Mom Test-based, 5 questions)

```
OPENING (30 sec):
"Hey [NAME], thanks for hopping on. I am researching how [ROLE/INDUSTRY]
handles [PROBLEM]. Not selling anything today, just trying to understand
how you actually experience this. Cool if I ask 5 questions?"

QUESTION 1. TELL ME
"Tell me about the last time you dealt with [SPECIFIC PROBLEM]. Walk me
through what happened."
[Listen. Take notes on exact words. Ask "and then what happened?" if
they stop.]

QUESTION 2. WHAT DID YOU DO
"What did you do about it? Did you try to fix it, hire someone, ignore
it, work around it?"

QUESTION 3. THE COST
"What did that cost you? Time, money, missed opportunities, stress?
Any real number if you have one."

QUESTION 4. FIXED
"If someone could make this problem go away entirely, what would
'fixed' look like for you?"

QUESTION 5. THE OFFER (only here. Never before)
"If someone offered [YOUR ROUGH IDEA], what would you want to know
before saying yes? What would make you say no?"

CLOSE:
"Really appreciate the time. If I actually build this, would it be
okay to circle back to you as one of my first 5 potential customers?"
```

Template 3: 20-Interview Scorecard

```
Interview # | Real Problem (0-3) | Costly (0-3) | Actionable (0-3) | Total (0-9)
  1
  2
  3
  ...
  20

TOTAL score across 20: ____/180

DECISION:
- 135+ → GREEN LIGHT (proceed to OFFER)
- 90-134 → YELLOW LIGHT (pivot, run 10 more)
- Under 90 → RED LIGHT (kill, go back to IDEA)

Override signals:
- 3+ asked "when can I pay" → strong green
- Zero specific pain across 20 → auto red
```

Template 4: Cold Outreach Email (Research-First)

```
SUBJECT: 15 min research call. [SPECIFIC PAIN]

Hey [FIRST NAME],

I am researching how [ROLE/INDUSTRY] currently handles [SPECIFIC PROBLEM].
Not selling anything. Just learning.

15 min call this week or next? I will send a $20 Amazon card for your time.

If you have a colleague who deals with this more than you do, I would
love the intro.

Thanks,
[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 5: Cold Outreach SMS (Local Service)

```
Hey [FIRST NAME], [YOUR NAME] here in [CITY]. Not selling anything ,
I am researching [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] for a new local service and would
love 15 min of your brain. Coffee on me. Can we grab 15 min this week?
```

Template 6: Cold DM (Reddit/Twitter/LinkedIn)

```
Hey [FIRST NAME], saw your post about [SPECIFIC THING they said].
I am researching how people in your spot handle this. Not pitching
anything. Would you be up for a 15-min async voice memo exchange or
a quick call? Happy to send a $10 Starbucks card for the time.
```

Template 7: Referral Ask (5-Step Map)

```
Hey [FRIEND'S NAME],

Quick ask. I am researching [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] with [SPECIFIC PERSON TYPE].
Do you know anyone in that group who would spend 15 min on the phone
with me? Not selling anything, just researching.

If yes, could you send me their name and email? I will draft the intro
message for you to send.

Thanks a ton.
```

Template 8: 1-Page Godfather Offer

```
[COMPANY OR OFFER NAME]

The Promise: [ONE-SENTENCE DREAM OUTCOME]

For: [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER TYPE, LOCATION IF LOCAL]

The Problem You Are Solving:
[2-3 sentences describing the pain in the customer's own words]

Why Us (Unique Mechanism):
[The specific reason our solution works when others do not. 2 sentences]

What You Get (Value Stack):
- [Deliverable 1]: [$ dollar value]
- [Deliverable 2]: [$ dollar value]
- [Deliverable 3]: [$ dollar value]
- [Bonus 1]: [$ dollar value]
- [Bonus 2]: [$ dollar value]
Total value: $[X]
Your investment: $[Y]

The Guarantee:
[Specific, honest, scary-sounding risk reversal]

The Urgency:
[Real, honest reason to act now. Launch pricing, cohort dates, capacity limit]

Next Step:
Reply with "IN" and I will send the intake form. Or reply with a
question and I will answer within 24 hours.

[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR CONTACT]
```

Template 9: Pre-Sale Warm Reachout

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

Remember when we talked and you mentioned [SPECIFIC PAIN from interview]?
I put together the first version of what I am building to solve exactly that.

[LINK TO 1-PAGE OFFER DOC or paste offer below]

I am taking 5 first customers at launch pricing. Would you want to be one?

If it is not the right fit, no worries. I appreciate you letting me talk
through the idea. Either way I owe you a coffee.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 10: Founder-Sells-Founder Discovery Call Script

```
OPENING (60 seconds):
"Thanks for the time. Before I explain what I do, I want to understand
where you are right now. Cool if I ask you 3 questions first?"

Q1: "Tell me about [PROBLEM] as you experience it right now.
     What is happening?"
Q2: "What have you tried? What worked, what did not?"
Q3: "If we could get you to [OUTCOME] in [TIMEFRAME], what would
     that be worth to you?"

TRANSITION:
"Okay, based on what you shared, here is what I would recommend..."

PITCH (2 minutes max):
- Name the problem back to them in their words
- Explain the offer (from your 1-page)
- Name the price
- Name the guarantee
- Stop talking

CLOSE:
"Does this sound like it fits what you need? What questions do you have?"

OBJECTION HANDLING:
- "I need to think about it" → "Totally fair. What specifically are you
  wanting to think through? I would rather help you decide now than have
  you sit on the fence for two weeks."
- "It is expensive" → "Compared to what? [OUTCOME] over [TIMEFRAME]: what
  is that worth to you? [Wait.] What is it costing you right now to NOT
  fix this?"
- "I need to talk to my [spouse/partner]" → "Okay. What do YOU think? If
  the decision were 100% yours, would you say yes today?"

BOOK NEXT STEP:
"Great. Let me send you the intake form. You will fill it out, we get on
a kickoff call this Thursday, and we start delivery Monday. Sound good?"
```

Template 11: Payment Request (Stripe Payment Link)

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

Great convo. Here is what we agreed to:
- [Service description]
- [Timeline]
- Investment: $[X]

Payment link: [STRIPE LINK]

Once payment lands, I will send the intake form and we will book
the kickoff call.

Excited to work with you.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 12: 30-Day Check-In

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

30-day check-in. Three quick questions:
1. What is working for you?
2. What is not working?
3. What is one thing you wish we did differently?

Reply here or grab 15 min this week: [CALENDAR LINK]

Thanks for being here.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 13: Referral Ask + Loyalty Lock

```
Hey [FIRST NAME],

Real quick. You have been one of our first 5 customers, and the fact
that [SPECIFIC OUTCOME] happened this fast means the offer works.

Because you are early, I want to give you two things:

1. Loyalty pricing locked forever. Anything we sell in the future,
   you never pay more than your current price.

2. Referral thank-you. If you introduce me to one person who becomes
   a customer, I will [SPECIFIC. $500 credit, 1 free month, $200 gift card].

If you can think of one person right now who deals with [PROBLEM],
text me their name and I will draft the intro for you to send.

Thanks for being here.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 14: Personal Social Media Launch Announcement

```
After [TIME PERIOD] of thinking about it, I launched [BUSINESS NAME].

We help [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER] with [SPECIFIC PROBLEM].

Why now? [ONE-SENTENCE PERSONAL STORY]

If you or anyone you know might need [SERVICE], send them my way.
First 5 customers get [SPECIFIC BONUS] as a thank-you for helping
us launch.

[LINK]

Grateful for anyone who shares or refers. This is scary and I appreciate
you being part of it.
```

Template 15: Family and Friends Text (Individual, Not Group)

```
Hey [FIRST NAME], quick heads up. I just launched [BUSINESS NAME]
doing [WHAT YOU DO] in [AREA].

Not asking you to buy anything, but if you know anyone who could
use [SERVICE], I would really appreciate the intro. First 5 customers
get [BONUS].
```

Template 16: Professional Network Email

```
SUBJECT: New venture. Quick update

Hey [FIRST NAME],

Wanted to give you a heads up: I just launched [BUSINESS NAME]. We do
[WHAT YOU DO] for [WHO YOU SERVE] in [AREA].

Why I am reaching out: I want to build this the right way, which means
finding the RIGHT first customers, not just anyone. If you know someone
in [TARGET INDUSTRY] who might be a fit, I would love an intro.

For anyone you refer who becomes a customer, I will [SPECIFIC REFERRAL
THANK-YOU].

More at [WEBSITE].

Appreciate you.

[YOUR NAME]
```

Template 17: LLC Formation Checklist

```
[ ] Confirm state to file in (usually home state)
[ ] Check LLC name availability on state's Secretary of State site
[ ] Reserve name (optional, $10-$25 in most states)
[ ] File Articles of Organization ($50-$500)
[ ] Create Operating Agreement (single-member template free online)
[ ] Get EIN from IRS.gov (free, 10 min, download PDF)
[ ] Open business bank account (bring LLC docs + EIN + ID)
[ ] Order business debit card
[ ] Set up business bookkeeping (Wave free or QuickBooks $30/mo)
[ ] Confirm annual report filing date on state's calendar
[ ] Confirm state tax registrations needed (sales tax, franchise tax)
[ ] Meet with CPA to confirm S-Corp election makes sense (if revenue
    projected above $50K net)
```

Template 18: First-Sale Customer Tracking Sheet (Google Sheet columns)

```
Column A: Date first contacted
Column B: Full name
Column C: Contact info (email + phone)
Column D: Source (referral / cold outreach / social / GBP / paid)
Column E: Interview date (from Stage 2)
Column F: Interview score (0-9)
Column G: Offer sent date
Column H: Status (interested / booked / paid / active / done / lost)
Column I: Amount paid
Column J: Service delivered
Column K: 30-day check-in date
Column L: Referrals received
Column M: Notes
```

Template 19: 90-Day Launch Checklist

```
STAGE 1. IDEA (Days 1-14)
[ ] 3-Question Idea Filter completed for at least 3 ideas
[ ] Final idea chosen with 3 pieces of evidence
[ ] Journal prompts completed
[ ] One-sentence problem/customer statement written

STAGE 2. VALIDATE (Days 15-30)
[ ] 20 interview conversations booked
[ ] 20 interviews completed with Mom Test format
[ ] Scorecard filled for all 20
[ ] Green/yellow/red decision made
[ ] If green, proceed. If yellow, pivot and re-interview.

STAGE 3. OFFER (Days 31-45)
[ ] Value Equation levers reviewed for weak points
[ ] Godfather Offer 7 parts drafted
[ ] 1-page offer document written
[ ] Offer sent to at least 5 warm conversations

STAGE 4. LAUNCH (Days 46-60)
[ ] Stripe payment link created
[ ] Landing page (single page) live within 4 hours
[ ] Cold outreach cadence started if needed to hit 5 customers
[ ] Discovery call script practiced 5x before live calls
[ ] First 3-5 customers paid and receiving delivery

STAGE 5. FIRST 10 (Days 61-90)
[ ] LLC filed (if revenue justifies)
[ ] EIN issued
[ ] Business bank account open
[ ] Customer tracking sheet active from Day 1
[ ] 10 total paying customers
[ ] 30-day check-ins scheduled with early 3-5
[ ] Referral asks sent to happy customers
[ ] Weekly operating cadence in place
```

Template 20: Weekly Operating Rhythm

```
DAILY (30 min):
- 8:00 AM: Check messages, respond to leads within 5 min
- 5:00 PM: Log any customer touches into tracking sheet
- Weekly review flagged for Friday PM

WEEKLY (Friday, 60 min):
- Review new customers by source
- Count deals in each stage (interviews, offers sent, paying)
- Update tracking sheet
- Name what worked and what did not
- Plan next week's 3 priorities

MONTHLY (First Monday, 2 hrs):
- Reconcile bookkeeping
- Review revenue, expenses, profit
- Review cash position (see Cash Flow Forecasting Template)
- Set next month's revenue target

QUARTERLY (Once every 3 months, 4 hrs):
- Which channel produced most customers?
- Should we raise prices?
- Should we hire?
- What is the ONE priority for next quarter?
```

Template 21: Pre-Sale Close Script

```
"Here is where we are. You said [PROBLEM] is costing you [COST]. What
we do gets you to [OUTCOME] in [TIMEFRAME] for [PRICE]. If it does not
work, [GUARANTEE].

I am taking 5 customers at this price. Do you want to be one of them?
Yes or no is fine."

WAIT FOR RESPONSE. DO NOT FILL SILENCE.

If yes: "Great. Payment link coming right now. Once it clears we book
the kickoff for Thursday."

If no: "Okay. What is the piece that is stopping you from saying yes?"

If they answer: address it.
If they cannot answer: "Sounds like it is not the right time. If it
changes, you know where to find me."
```

PART 11: AI Companion Prompt Pack (10 Prompts)

Copy-paste these into any AI assistant (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) to compress hours of work into minutes. Fill the brackets.

Prompt 1: Generate 20 Idea Variations From Your Expertise

```
I have spent [YEARS] working in [INDUSTRY] doing [SPECIFIC ROLE].
The problems I saw most often were: [PROBLEM 1], [PROBLEM 2],
[PROBLEM 3].

Generate 20 potential business ideas I could pursue, each with:
- One-sentence description
- Target customer
- Rough price point
- Why my background gives me an advantage

Order them from "most obvious" to "most contrarian." Skip any that
require raising VC money or building a team of 10+ from day 1.
```

Prompt 2: Cold Outreach for a Specific Niche

```
I am launching a [SERVICE] for [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER TYPE. Role, industry,
company size, location]. Their most painful problem is [PROBLEM].

Write 3 versions of a cold outreach email:
- Version A: research-first, no sales
- Version B: pain-first, direct
- Version C: value-first, offering something free

Each version: subject line under 8 words, body under 100 words,
one clear ask.
```

Prompt 3: Draft a Godfather Offer for a Validated Idea

```
My validated business idea: [ONE-SENTENCE IDEA]
My target customer: [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER]
The pain they described most often: [PAIN IN THEIR WORDS]
The outcome they said they want: [OUTCOME]

Using Suby's 7-Part Godfather Offer framework (rationale, unique
mechanism, value stack, bonuses, urgency, risk reversal, scarcity),
draft a 1-page offer document.

Include:
- Value stack with dollar amounts for each line item
- 2-3 specific bonuses
- Honest urgency (not fake countdown)
- A guarantee that sounds a little scary to me but honest
- Real scarcity based on my delivery capacity of [# PER MONTH]

Price the total offer at [$X].
```

Prompt 4: Generate 20-Question Interview Script for My Category

```
I am researching [SPECIFIC PROBLEM] for [SPECIFIC CUSTOMER TYPE].

Using Rob Fitzpatrick's Mom Test principles (talk about their past,
never mention my idea, ask about specifics not opinions), generate
a 20-minute interview script with:

- Opening line (30 sec)
- 8 core questions in order
- 3 follow-up prompts I can use if they give short answers
- Closing line that asks if they would be an early customer

The script should never mention my solution until the closing.
```

Prompt 5: Validate Pricing Against Value

```
My service is: [DESCRIPTION]
It saves the customer approximately: [$X per month/year in time or money]
Or produces: [$X per month/year in new revenue]

Using Hormozi's rule of thumb (price at 10-20% of value delivered),
what price range should I test?

Also apply Hormozi's Value Equation:
- Dream Outcome
- Perceived Likelihood
- Time Delay
- Effort and Sacrifice

Rate my offer 1-10 on each dimension and tell me the single biggest
lever I could pull to increase perceived value.
```

Prompt 6: 90-Day Launch Roadmap Personalized to My Situation

```
I want to launch [SPECIFIC BUSINESS] in 90 days.

My starting point:
- Current job: [YES/NO, hours available: X/week]
- Existing network: [None/small/large]
- Existing skill in this domain: [Yes/no, years]
- Starting capital: [$X]
- Target 90-day revenue: [$X]

Using the 5-Stage Founder Path (IDEA → VALIDATE → OFFER → LAUNCH
→ FIRST 10), generate a week-by-week roadmap for me. Include:
- Concrete weekly tasks
- Success criteria for each week
- Warning signs for each stage
- The one thing I should NOT do at each stage
```

Prompt 7: 20 Cold Outreach Prospect List Ideas

```
My target customer: [SPECIFIC ROLE, INDUSTRY, COMPANY SIZE, LOCATION]

Generate a list of 20 specific ways I can find and contact 100+ target
customers this month, with:
- Source (LinkedIn Sales Nav, Apollo, Reddit, industry directory,
  local Chamber, etc.)
- Estimated cost
- Estimated response rate
- Effort level (easy/medium/hard)
- Rank by ROI

Include at least 3 free sources.
```

Prompt 8: Objection Handling Script for My Offer

```
My offer: [1-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION]
Price: [$X]

The 5 most likely objections I will hear from a prospect who is
interested but not ready to buy are: [OBJECTION 1], [OBJECTION 2],
[OBJECTION 3], [OBJECTION 4], [OBJECTION 5].

For each objection:
- Reframe the objection to reveal what is really being said
- Give me a 2-sentence response that acknowledges their concern
  and offers a specific solution
- Suggest one clarifying question I can ask them

Voice: direct, no fluff, empathetic. Not salesy.
```

Prompt 9: Weekly Founder Review Template

```
I completed my first week running [BUSINESS]. Here is what happened:
- Customers contacted: [X]
- Conversations booked: [X]
- Paying customers signed: [X]
- Revenue: [$X]
- Hours spent on business: [X]
- Biggest surprise: [DESCRIPTION]
- Biggest struggle: [DESCRIPTION]

Give me a 5-minute review:
1. What is the most important number I should focus on next week?
2. What is the one thing I should stop doing?
3. What is the one thing I should double down on?
4. What is the honest gap between where I am and where I said I
   wanted to be by Day 90?
5. What is the one uncomfortable question I am not asking myself?

Do not sugarcoat. Direct is helpful.
```

Prompt 10: Kill-or-Keep Decision on an Idea

```
I have been working on [BUSINESS IDEA] for [X WEEKS/MONTHS].

Data so far:
- Interviews completed: [X]
- Paying customers: [X]
- Revenue: [$X]
- Hours invested: [X]
- Money spent: [$X]

Signal from the market:
- People who said "this is a real problem": [%]
- People who paid real money: [X out of Y asked]
- Referrals received without asking: [X]
- Best objection I keep hearing: [OBJECTION]

Using the CB Insights top-20 failure reasons framework (no market
need, ran out of cash, wrong team, got outcompeted, pricing issues),
what is my highest-risk failure mode right now?

Should I keep going, pivot, or kill? Give me a direct answer with
the reasoning.
```

PART 12: Metrics That Matter

Five KPIs. Track them from Day 1. Every week. In one Google Sheet.

KPI 1: Idea-Kill-Rate (interviews per idea killed)

Definition: How many interviews do you complete before deciding an idea is not a business?

Target: 15-25. Lower means you killed too fast. Higher means you refused to face the data.

Why it matters: If you never kill an idea, you never had a real filter. Killing an idea is a win, not a failure. Every killed idea saved you 6+ months of building the wrong thing.

Log: Idea name, interviews completed, decision (green/yellow/red), date.

KPI 2: Interviews-to-Buyers Ratio

Definition: Of the people you interviewed, how many became paying customers?

Target: 20-40%. Under 20% means the interview conversation and the offer are disconnected. Over 40% means either your interviews were self-selected warm people (skipping the cold funnel) or your close rate is a fluke.

Why it matters: Interviews are your cheapest sales channel. If they do not convert, your offer is wrong, not your marketing.

Log: Interviews completed / paying customers acquired = ratio.

KPI 3: First-90-Day Revenue

Definition: Total dollars collected across the first 90 days of the business.

Target for local service: $2,000-$10,000 **Target for B2B service:** $5,000-$30,000 **Target for productized service:** $3,000-$15,000 **Target for physical product:** $500-$5,000

Why it matters: Zero revenue in 90 days = the offer is not real. Under 25% of target = pricing or targeting is broken. Over 100% of target = you may have found something scalable, protect it.

Log: Revenue by week for 12 weeks.

KPI 4: First-90-Day Cash-to-Close

Definition: Days from first contact with a customer to money in your account.

Target: Under 21 days for local service. Under 45 days for B2B. Under 7 days for productized.

Why it matters: Long cash cycles kill early businesses. If it takes 90 days to close a customer, you cannot grow. Compress the cycle with better offers, faster follow-up, and clearer next steps.

Log: For each of the first 10 customers, the # of days from first contact to first payment.

KPI 5: Customer Satisfaction at Day 30

Definition: At the 30-day check-in, on a scale of 1-10, "How likely are you to recommend us to a colleague or friend?"

Target: 8+ average across all early customers.

Why it matters: If your early customers are not fans, you have a delivery problem, not a marketing problem. Fix delivery before you scale marketing. Scaling a broken product just breaks it faster.

Log: Customer name, day 30 score, one comment they made.

The one dashboard

Create one Google Sheet. Five tabs. One per KPI. Update weekly. This is your entire business intelligence system for the first 90 days.

Cross-reference: Metrics Dashboard Template ($47, BFM catalog) has a full pre-built spreadsheet with formulas.

PART 13: Common Mistakes

Five mistakes that kill first-year businesses. Pick a mistake to avoid every week.

Mistake 1: Building Before Validating

Most common. Most expensive. You spend $5,000-$15,000 building the product before you have talked to 20 potential customers. Then you discover the market does not want it. Now you are out the money AND the 6 months.

The fix: Every dollar spent before Stage 4 (LAUNCH) is on trial. If you cannot justify the dollar as directly serving validation, you do not spend it. That includes logos, domains you love, custom software, and "the perfect first tool."

Mistake 2: Hiding From Real Conversations

You know you should be doing 20 interviews. You are reading another book instead. Or you are "polishing the pitch." Or you are "waiting until the offer is right."

The truth: You are afraid the answer will be no. So you delay the answer. Delaying the answer does not change the answer. It only wastes time.

Frisella (Do The Work): "Lots of people wanting everything and doing nothing." The cure for fear of the "no" is running toward the "no" as fast as possible. A "no" this week is data. A "no" in six months after you spent $10K is a tragedy.

Mistake 3: Underpricing To Feel Safe

The Founder Pricing Trap from Part 6. You price low because you are afraid nobody will pay real money. Then cheap customers show up, complain, and churn. You do 3x the work for 1x the money. You quit in 8 months.

The fix: Price where the math works, not where the fear settles. Your first 10 customers should be at least 50% higher than what you originally thought.

Mistake 4: Forming The LLC Before You Have Revenue

Opposite mistake of #1. You form the LLC first because it feels official. Now you have an EIN, an annual filing burden, and no customers. The LLC becomes the finish line instead of the on-ramp.

The fix: Rule from Part 9: form the entity when you have 3 paying customers or when you sign a client contract over $1,000. Not before.

Mistake 5: Chasing Bad-Fit Customers To Hit A Number

You are behind on your Day-60 goal. You decide to take any customer with money. You take the ones your gut said no to. They pay less, complain more, and consume 60% of your time. Now your good customers are underserved.

The fix: Every "yes" to a bad-fit customer is a "no" to the business you actually want. Discipline over desperation. If the customer is off-fit, refer them out. Your reputation compounds. Bad-fit customer stories do not.

PART 14: Proof (Three Founder Journeys: Labeled Composites)

Everything below is a **composite case study built from patterns across multiple real founder journeys.** Names, exact numbers, and details are illustrative. The patterns are real.

Composite 1: "Maria" (Local Service: Lawn Care)

Not a real person. Composite illustration.

Maria worked in customer service at a bank for 8 years. She had been mowing her neighbor's lawn on weekends for extra money. Two neighbors had asked if she took on other clients. She had said no because "she was not a real business."

She ran the 5-stage path.

IDEA (Days 1-14): She wrote the sentence: "I want to help time-pressed homeowners in Wilmington NC keep a green, healthy lawn without the hassle of doing it themselves." Three pieces of evidence: her neighbors asked her twice, she had 8 years of gardening experience, and she saw 12+ overgrown lawns just driving through her own neighborhood.

VALIDATE (Days 15-30): She sent Nextdoor DMs to 40 people in her zip code with the Mom Test-based interview request. 22 responded. She completed 20 interviews. 15/20 said lawn care was a real pain, 8 said they were currently unhappy with their current lawn service, 6 said they would consider paying $150-$200/month for reliable service. Score: 138/180. Green light.

OFFER (Days 31-45): She built a Godfather Offer: "$180/month for monthly mowing, edging, and quarterly fertilization treatment. Full yard, no upsells. If it browns from July-September, I re-treat free until it is green. First 5 customers at $140/month locked in for 12 months."

LAUNCH (Days 46-60): She sent the offer to the 6 warmest conversations from Stage 2. 4 said yes. She delivered 4 customers manually for 30 days. All 4 renewed at Day 30.

FIRST 10 (Days 61-90): She asked each of the 4 for one referral. 3 came through. She ran a Nextdoor post and got 5 more inbound. She hit 12 customers by Day 90. She formed an LLC on Day 65 after customer #5 paid.

Day 90 numbers:

- 12 customers × $180/mo average = $2,160/mo recurring
- Total revenue in 90 days including one-time fertilization fees: $4,800
- Total spent: $340 (LLC filing, Nextdoor ad boost, gas)
- Net: $4,460

She kept her bank job through Day 90. Quit on Day 180 when the business hit $6,000/mo.

Composite 2: "James" (B2B Service: Bookkeeping for Solo Attorneys)

Not a real person. Composite illustration.

James had spent 12 years as a bookkeeper for a mid-size accounting firm. He was tired of servicing 40 clients at once with no relationship depth. He noticed that solo attorneys always seemed underserved and overpaid on bookkeeping.

IDEA (Days 1-14): Sentence: "I want to help solo attorneys and 2-partner law firms in the Southeast US get accurate, tax-ready monthly books without hiring a full-time bookkeeper." Evidence: he had personally worked with 15+ solo attorneys, he knew IOLTA rules cold, and he had 3 attorneys ask him for freelance work in the last year.

VALIDATE (Days 15-30): He cold-emailed 100 solo attorneys sourced from state bar directories. 18 responded, 12 booked, 10 showed up. He did another 10 through LinkedIn Sales Navigator (30-day trial). Score: 148/180. Green light. Most-cited pain: "My current bookkeeper does not understand IOLTA and I keep having to re-explain it."

OFFER (Days 31-45): Godfather Offer: "$800/month for monthly bookkeeping, quarterly review with your CPA, and IOLTA compliance monitoring. Full month refund if you find an error we missed after your CPA review." Total value stacked at $2,400/month. Price locked for 12 months for first 5 clients.

LAUNCH (Days 46-60): He sent the offer to the 20 warm conversations. 6 said yes. He started delivery for 4 (turned 2 away because of capacity). All 4 paid on time via Stripe.

FIRST 10 (Days 61-90): He cold-outreached another 200 attorneys with a testimonial from customer #2 attached. Got 3 more customers. Ran a paid ad on the state bar association newsletter ($350) that landed 2 more. Hit 9 customers by Day 90.

Day 90 numbers:

- 9 customers × $800/mo = $7,200/mo recurring
- Total 90-day revenue including onboarding fees: $17,400
- Total spent: $1,150 (LLC formation, ad, LinkedIn Nav)
- Net: $16,250

James quit his firm job on Day 120 when the business hit $8,800/mo. Confirmed with his CPA at Day 60 that S-Corp election would save him $4K/year: filed Form 2553 at Day 75.

Composite 3: "Devon" (Productized Service: Google Ads for Contractors)

Not a real person. Composite illustration.

Devon had run Google Ads in-house at a home services company for 5 years. He watched the company waste $80,000+ a year on poorly-managed agencies. He knew he could do it better solo.

IDEA (Days 1-14): Sentence: "I want to help home service contractors (HVAC, plumbing, electrical) get consistent leads from Google Ads for a flat monthly fee, not a percentage of ad spend." Evidence: he had managed a $2M/year account, he knew the specific ratios that work, and he had 4 contractor friends complaining about their current agencies.

VALIDATE (Days 15-30): He posted in r/HVAC and r/plumbing (offering a free 20-min ad account audit in exchange for 15-min feedback conversation). 32 replies. 25 booked. He completed 22 interviews and did 6 free audits. Score: 155/180. Green light. Common pain: "My current agency charges 15% of ad spend and I never know what I am actually getting."

OFFER (Days 31-45): Godfather Offer: "$1,997/month flat fee for Google Ads management, all optimization, weekly leads report. Not percentage-of-spend, not commission-based. If we do not deliver 20+ leads in the first 90 days, month 4 is free." Total value stacked at $6,500/month.

LAUNCH (Days 46-60): Sent the offer to 15 of the audit-completed prospects. 5 said yes. Started delivery for 4 (declined 1 due to bad-fit: wrong service area).

FIRST 10 (Days 61-90): Every 30-day check-in produced 1 referral. Each referral converted at 60% (specific to home services word-of-mouth). Hit 8 clients by Day 90. Ran ONE case study post on LinkedIn at Day 75 that landed 2 more.

Day 90 numbers:

- 10 customers × $1,997/mo = $19,970/mo recurring
- Total 90-day revenue including onboarding: $32,000
- Total spent: $1,800 (LLC, LinkedIn Sales Nav, business cards for one industry event, one CPA consultation)

- Net: $30,200

Devon quit his in-house job on Day 65 (the fastest of the three: his savings + fast revenue justified it). Elected S-Corp on Day 90.

What the three composites share

- All three completed 20+ interviews before writing the offer
- All three ran the Godfather Offer structure
- All three had a real risk-reversal guarantee
- All three hit $2K+/mo recurring inside 90 days
- All three formed the entity AFTER real revenue, not before
- All three cross-referenced a real CPA before making the S-Corp decision
- None of the three had a fancy logo, custom website, or paid advertising campaign at Day 30

The math works. The order works. The 42% failure mode is avoidable.

It doesn't have to be that way.

Most first-time founders will read the CB Insights failure data (2023: 42% of failed startups built something nobody wanted) and think, "That is other people. My idea is different." That is exactly the sentence every one of the 42% said before they failed.

The five stages exist because they force you to face the market before you commit to the market. The 20 interviews exist because you are not going to be the one first-time founder in a decade who is smarter than the data. The Godfather Offer exists because a vague offer converts at 0% no matter how great the idea is.

You have the path. You have the templates. You have the frameworks (Godfather from Suby 2019, Value Equation from Hormozi 2021, Money Models attraction offer from Hormozi 2025, Mom Test from Fitzpatrick 2013, Getting Real from Basecamp 2006, Extreme Personal Responsibility from Frisella ongoing, Do The Work from Frisella ongoing).

The only variable left is whether you actually do it.

PART 15: Next Steps: 30, 60, 90-Day Paths

This is not a sales pitch. This is a decision framework for what you actually do next.

If you have 30 days

You are testing whether this is real for you. Do the following, in order:

1. Complete the 15-Minute Quick Win from Part 1.
2. Run the 3-Question Idea Filter on your top 3 ideas. Pick one.
3. Book and complete 10 interviews using the Mom Test script.
4. Halfway through your 10 interviews, reread Part 6 (OFFER) so you know what you are gathering data for.
5. At Day 30, make a green/yellow/red call. If green, keep going. If yellow, iterate. If red, kill it and pick a new idea without shame: this is the win.

Only asset needed: this playbook.

If you have 60 days

You are trying to hit paying customers.

1. Days 1-14: IDEA stage complete.
2. Days 15-30: 20 interviews complete.
3. Days 31-45: Godfather Offer written, sent to 5 warm conversations.
4. Days 46-60: 3-5 paying customers via warm reachout + minimal landing page.

Recommended companion products (BFM catalog):

- Landing Page Copy Templates ($47): for the 4-hour landing page
- Discovery Call Script Pack ($47): for the founder-sells-founder calls
- LLC Setup Guide ($47): for the entity decision at Day 60

If you have 90 days

You are aiming for 10 paying customers and a formed business.

1. Days 1-14: IDEA
2. Days 15-30: VALIDATE
3. Days 31-45: OFFER
4. Days 46-60: LAUNCH (first 3-5)
5. Days 61-90: FIRST 10 + entity formation + first systems

Recommended companion products (BFM catalog):

- Landing Page Copy Templates ($47)
- Discovery Call Script Pack ($47)
- LLC Setup Guide ($47)
- First 100 Customers Guide ($47): for what comes AFTER Day 90

- Cash Flow Forecasting Template ($47): for month 4+
- Metrics Dashboard Template ($47): for weekly KPI tracking

The ownership close

Two truths, both from Frisella (MFCEO Project, ongoing):

Extreme Personal Responsibility. If you close this file and do nothing, that is on you. Not the market. Not the economy. Not your day job. You. The path is in your hands.

Do The Work. The playbook is the playbook. The reps are the reps. Nobody is coming to run the reps for you. Not a coach. Not an app. Not a mentor. You will run them, or the business will not exist.

The good news: if it is you, you can fix it. You have the exact same 90 days as every founder who has ever built something worth building. You are not behind. You are on Day 0.

The specific action for today:

Open a new Google Doc. Title it "[YOUR NAME] Founder Path: Day 0". Copy Template 1 (3-Question Idea Filter) into it. Fill in the blanks for one idea. That is your Day 0.

Do it now. Come back for Day 1.

Ready For Us To Install This For You?

You have the 5-Stage Founder Path, the 21 templates, the 10 AI prompts, and the metrics that matter.

If you want us to walk through the first 90 days alongside you, with validation interviews structured together, Godfather Offer built together, LLC setup handled together, launch and first 10 customers coached together, we do that inside our Founder Foundations engagement.

Book Your Clarity Call at [/plan]

Zero pitch. You leave with a written 90-day plan whether we work together or not.

Frameworks and Sources Cited

- **BLS Business Employment Dynamics** (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024): first-year and multi-year survival rates
- **CB Insights, "Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail"** (2023 update): top failure reasons across post-mortems

- **Kauffman Foundation, New Entrepreneur research** (2022): customer interview correlation with year-1 survival
- **The Mom Test**: Rob Fitzpatrick (2013): interview methodology
- **Sell Like Crazy**: Sabri Suby (2019): Godfather Strategy, 7-Part Godfather Offer
- **$100M Offers**: Alex Hormozi (2021): Value Equation, Grand Slam Offer, pricing principles
- **$100M Money Models**: Alex Hormozi (2025): Attraction Offer, pre-sale principle
- **Getting Real**: Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, 37signals (2006): build minimum, sell first
- **How To Get Startup Ideas**: Paul Graham, Y Combinator (2012): idea filter adaptation
- **Extreme Personal Responsibility**: Andy Frisella, MFCEO Project (ongoing): founder ownership principle
- **Do The Work**: Andy Frisella, MFCEO Project (ongoing). Execution principle

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Black Flag Media. This is what a Tight Bucket looks like. This playbook is educational. Tax and legal decisions require confirmation with your CPA and, where applicable, your attorney. Tax situations vary.
