

**<3>**

A close-up shot of Patrick Collison, CEO of Stripe, smiling broadly. He has short, light-colored hair and is wearing a dark blue t-shirt. The background is dark with vertical purple light bars. The text is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

**Patrick Collison, CEO of Stripe, interviewing  
Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia.**

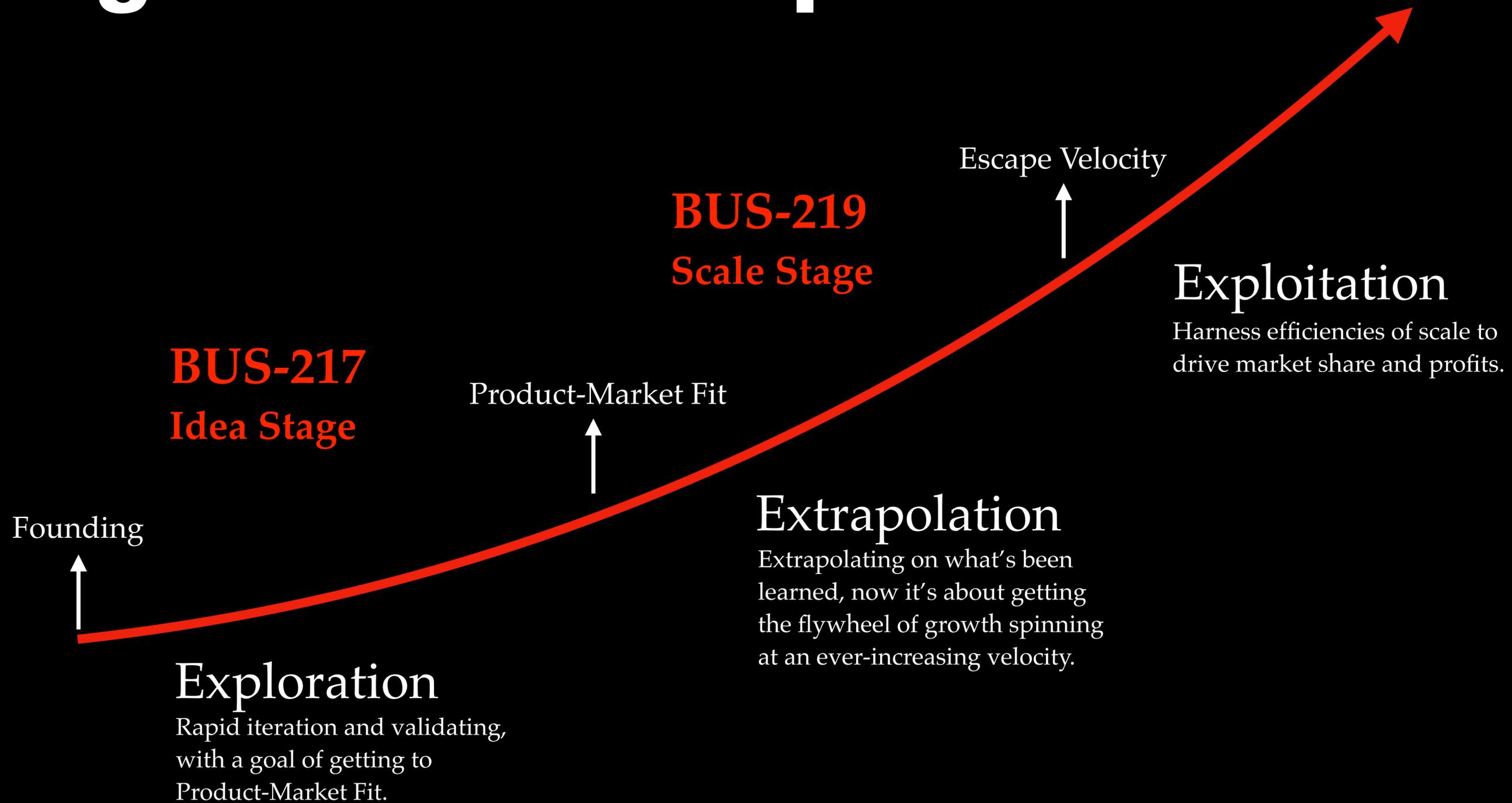
**“I work all the time.**

**But it's not really work; it's dreaming of how we can be better, it's imagining the future, you're fantasizing, you're dreaming**

**I mean, that's incredible”.**



# Stages of a startup venture.



# BUS-219

**Flywheel of Growth**  
Jan 20

**Barriers to Scale**  
Feb 3

**Hack 'n Grow**  
Jan 27

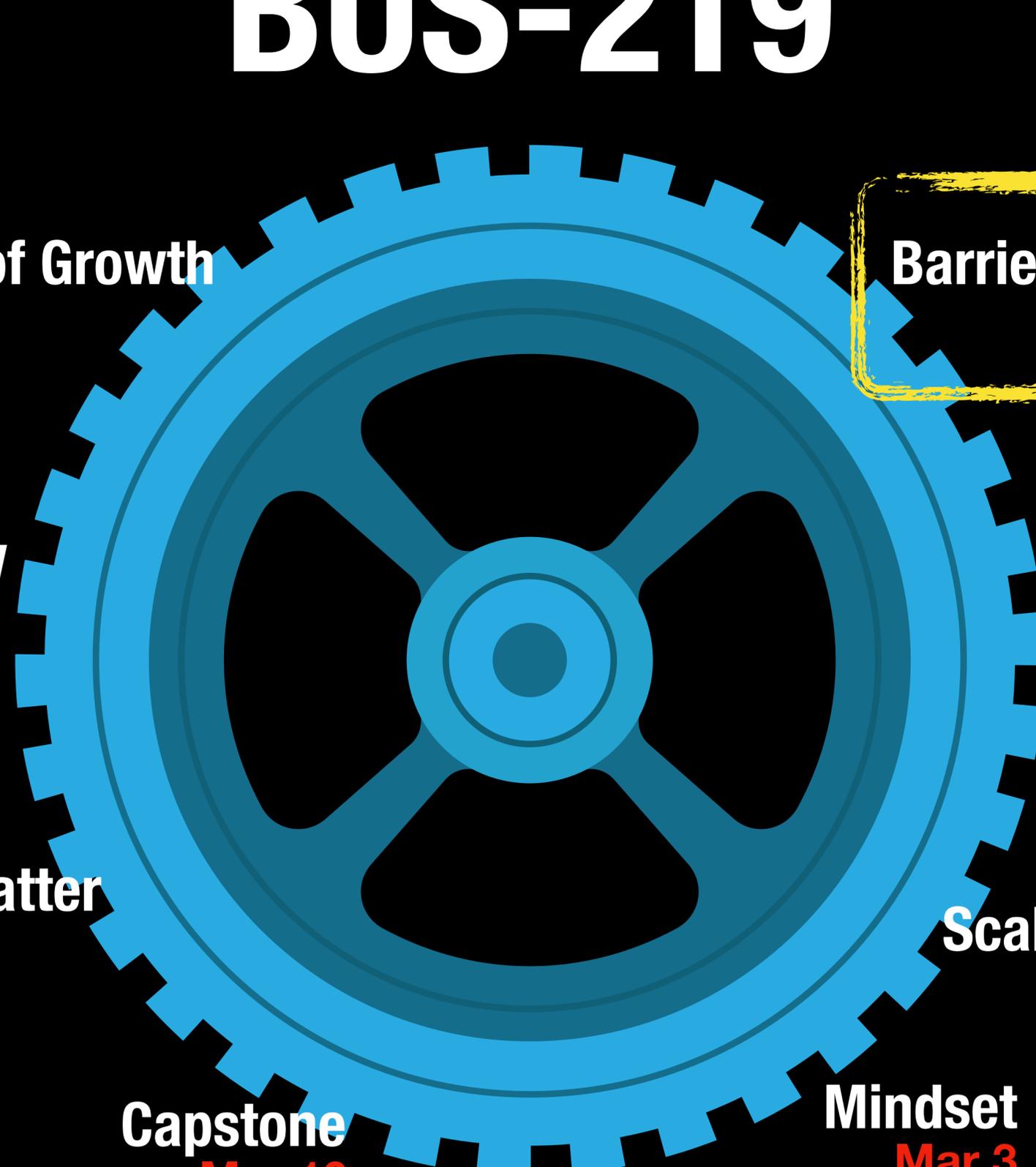
**Flywheel Fuel**  
Feb 10

**Metrics that Matter**  
Feb 25

**Scaling the Team**  
Feb 18

**Capstone**  
Mar 10

**Mindset**  
Mar 3



**For startups, what are some barriers to scale?**

**We all want to scale our startup.**

**But scaling also introduces risk.**

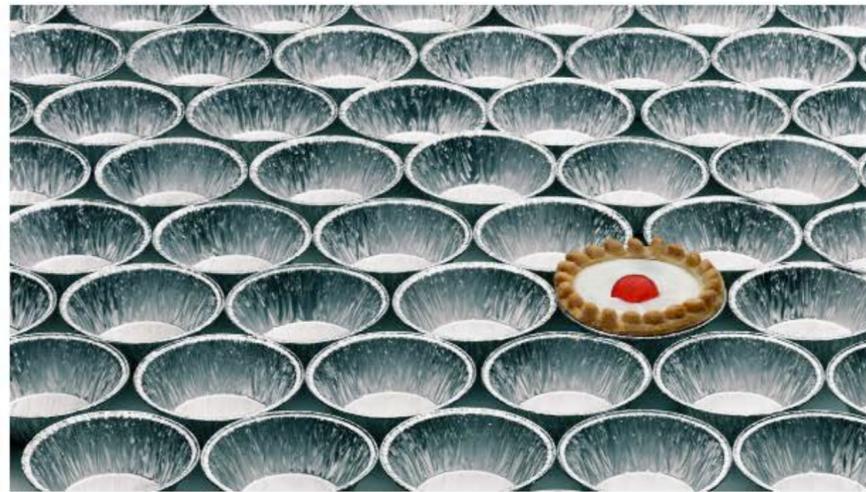


Entrepreneurship

# Research: When Should Startups Scale?

by J. Daniel Kim and Saerom (Ronnie) Lee

October 2, 2024



Jonathan Kitchen/Getty Images



## The Risks of Scaling Early

In our [recent research](#), we analyzed large-scale data from Burning Glass Technologies and Crunchbase. This data included 6.3 million job postings from 2010 to 2019 listed by 38,217 U.S.-founded startups. We discovered that when startups begin scaling, they typically hire their first manager and salesperson to coordinate a growing workforce and expand their customer base.

Leveraging this insight, we used the first job postings for these two roles to capture the timing of when a startup begins to scale. Our analyses revealed that early scaling (within the first 12 months of founding) increases the risk of failure by 20 to 40%. Furthermore, this risk of failure is particularly prominent for two-sided platform companies. However, we also found that when startups incorporate experimentation through A/B testing, the adverse effect of early scaling on the likelihood of failure decreases.

So, what's driving the dynamic between scaling speed, experimentation, and failure? We propose that it boils down to one pivotal force that every startup must navigate: commitment risk. Scaling requires committing to an idea, strategy, or product, even if it's not fully refined. The risk underlying this commitment is heightened when startups scale prematurely, as they lock themselves into a particular direction before fully developing their concept.

I will post to [bus219.org](https://bus219.org)

most manager and salesperson to coordinate a growing workforce and expand their customer base.

Leveraging this insight, we used the first job postings for these two roles to capture the timing of when a startup begins to scale. Our analyses revealed that early scaling (within the first 12 months of founding) increases the risk of failure by 20 to 40%. Furthermore, this risk of failure is particularly prominent for two-sided platform companies. However, we also found that when startups incorporate experimentation through A/B testing, the adverse effect of early scaling on the likelihood of failure decreases.

So, what's driving the dynamic between scaling speed, experimentation, and failure? We propose that it boils down to one pivotal force that every startup must navigate: commitment risk. Scaling requires committing to an idea, strategy, or product, even if it's not fully refined. The risk underlying this commitment is heightened when startups scale prematurely, as they lock themselves into a particular direction before fully developing their concept.

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

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**Product**

**Team**

**Market**

**Cash/Capital**

**Systems**

**Mindset**

**Capacity**

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

**Product**



**With a tech product, maybe it breaks with more than 100 users.**

**Team**

**Market**

**With a consulting company, the product is the humans.**

**Cash/Capital**

**Systems**

**With a fruit company, maybe the fact that the product is perishable is a barrier to scale.**

**Mindset**

**Capacity**

**With a social media company, the product is the number of users.**

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

Product

Team



You'll need a different (probably larger) team to go from 10 customers to 1,000 customers.

Market

Cash/Capital

Systems

Mindset

Capacity

In my own career, a barrier to scale was often me.

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

Product

Team

**Market** →

Maybe you've realized that you have PMF for 1,000 customers but not for the next 10,000.

Cash/Capital

Systems

Maybe your CAC for the first 1,000 was really cheap and easy but the next 10,000 is going to be completely different.

Mindset

Capacity

Maybe your TAM/SAM/SOM is just too small.

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

Product

Team

Market

**Capital/Cash**

Systems

Mindset

Capacity



**Capital means you need to buy a an expensive machine to expand production.**

**Cash may mean that you have positive CAC:LTV, but you have to buy a bunch of ads and then wait six months for that cash to cycle back to you.**

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

Product

Team

Market

Cash/Capital

**Systems**

Mindset

Capacity



**In the early days of a startup, everyone on the team is handling everything, ad hoc.**

**That works fine at first (and is good!).**

**But having the engineering team do customer service with 10,000 customers will be a disaster.**

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

Product

Team

Market

Cash/Capital

Systems

**Mindset**

Capacity



The mindset for finding PMF is different from the mindset of scaling.

Our March 3 class will be all about mindset.

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

---

**Product**

**Team**

**Market**

**Cash/Capital**

**Systems**

**Mindset**

**Capacity**



**Particularly with manufacturing firms, production capacity and sourcing can often be a barrier to scale.**

# Typical Barriers to Scale:

Product

Team

Market

Cash/Capital

Systems

Mindset

Capacity

## The Launch Path Canvas 2.0

Name of Startup Venture: Rejuvenated Knives Name: Martin Kalberer  
 One Sentence Description: Professional sharpening for home cooks and professional chefs, with easy pickup and delivery.

<p><b>Problem</b></p> <p>One clear sentence that articulates the problem your startup solves.</p> <p>People want sharp knives but not another errand.</p>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <p>How does your venture solve the problem you have articulated? Keep this short and concise!</p> <p>Make knife sharpening as easy as ordering online, with fast booking and flexible scheduling built around the customer's calendar.</p>	<p><b>Why it Matters</b></p> <p>Why is this a problem worth solving?</p> <p>Many households invest hundreds of dollars in knives and then neglect them, making them dangerous to use and shortens their useful lifespan.</p>	<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>This is a list of competitors and alternatives. When a customer looks at alternative ways to solve the problem your startup solves, what will they see?</p> <p>There are many options including DIY, sharpening stands at farmers' markets and hardware stores. Some people just buy new rather than sharpen.</p> <p><a href="#">Link to a full visualization.</a></p>	<p><b>ICP</b></p> <p>What do you think your startup's Ideal Customer Profile will be?</p> <p>Busy professionals and families who care about their investment in knives and other tools. They are already comfortable using online services and prioritize quality and efficiency in many things that they do.</p> <p><a href="#">Link to a more personas.</a></p>
<p><b>Path to PMF</b></p> <p>What is your plan for getting to Product-Market Fit?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Began by running the service for family and friends, refine offering based on input.</li> <li>Built the website and online ordering and tracking system.</li> <li>Now running online ads and continuing to optimize the funnel and refine the service.</li> </ol>	<p><b>PMF Metrics</b></p> <p>As you work your way toward Product-Market Fit, what are the key metrics that matter?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new customers each month.</li> <li>Number of repeat customers each month (retention).</li> <li>Customer satisfaction survey/NPS score.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Distribution</b></p> <p>What are your distribution channels? Direct to consumer, or via resellers, or?</p> <p>Direct-to-consumer, via our website or mobile app.</p>	<p><b>Positioning</b></p> <p>Within this landscape of competitors and alternatives, how is your venture positioned?</p> <p>The key to our positioning is the convenience. Of all the ways to get sharpening, we provide the Uber-like convenience of frictionless pickup and delivery.</p>	<p><b>Trigger</b></p> <p>What makes someone suddenly be in the market for what your startup provides?</p> <p>A kitchen event (injury or just struggling with a dull knife) can be a trigger, or a guest in your kitchen making a comment.</p> <p>Also, a purchase of a new knife makes you realize how bad your old ones are.</p>
<p><b>Economics</b> <a href="#">Link to spreadsheet.</a></p> <p>What are the Unit Economics for this venture, what do we expect the CAC&lt;LTV to look like, and what are our capital needs?</p> <p>Unit Economics:        One average order. Our AOV is \$80, cost is \$48, so gross profit is \$32 (40%).</p> <p>Customer Economics (CAC:LTV goal):        Our goal is to get to a CAC of \$25, LTV of 4 orders (\$128)</p> <p>Enterprise Economics (runway):        Currently profitable on a small scale, so infinite runway. This will change when we scale.</p>		<p><b>Capital Strategy</b></p> <p>What source and structure of capital will best align interests between founders, employees, shareholders, and investors?</p> <p>Bootstrap operation until the business is ready to expand into new metro markets.</p>	<p><b>Unfair Advantage</b></p> <p>What unique advantage does your startup have that may help to defend from competitors?</p> <p>Our door to door workflow builds a sticky customer base because we keep direct customer data and can re-engage them on a predictable cycle, unlike one-off farmers market transactions.</p>	<p><b>Top 3 Benefits</b></p> <p>What are the top 3 benefits that your product or services provides to customers?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convenience. Turns sharpening into a 2 min task, book now and pay later, no credit card number shared</li> <li>No boxes, no labels, no searching for bubble wrap, just a quick doorstep handoff</li> <li>Quality you notice immediately, cleaner cuts, less effort, and fewer frustrating slips on tomatoes, onions, and herbs.</li> </ol>

The original Business Model Canvas was developed by Alexander Osterwalder and published in this great book: Osterwalder, Alexander; Pigneur, Yves; Clark, Tim (2010). Business Model Generation: A Handbook For Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. Strategyzer series. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 9780470876411 This version is to align with my book, The Launch Path: Getting from a startup idea to a launch-ready venture, ISBN 979-8989090402. Feel free to use, adapt, copy, and change.

# What are likely to be your barriers to scale?



Feb 3, 2026 9:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

# Midi Health Surpasses \$1B Valuation, Igniting a New Era for Women's Health

Share [in](#) [X](#) [f](#) [✉](#) [🔗](#) [...](#)

*After setting the clinical standard in perimenopause and menopause care, the company is scaling a comprehensive, AI-enabled healthcare platform for women across every life stage*



# Midi

## MIDI HEALTH

### RELEASE SUMMARY

Midi Health, the fastest growing women's telehealth company, today announced it raised \$100 million in a Series D financing round.

### RELEASE VERSIONS



The expert care women  
have been waiting for.

# MidiHealth



**Jill Herzig**  She/Her · 2nd

Co-Founder and Head of Brand Innovation

New York, New York, United States · [Contact info](#)



Midi Health

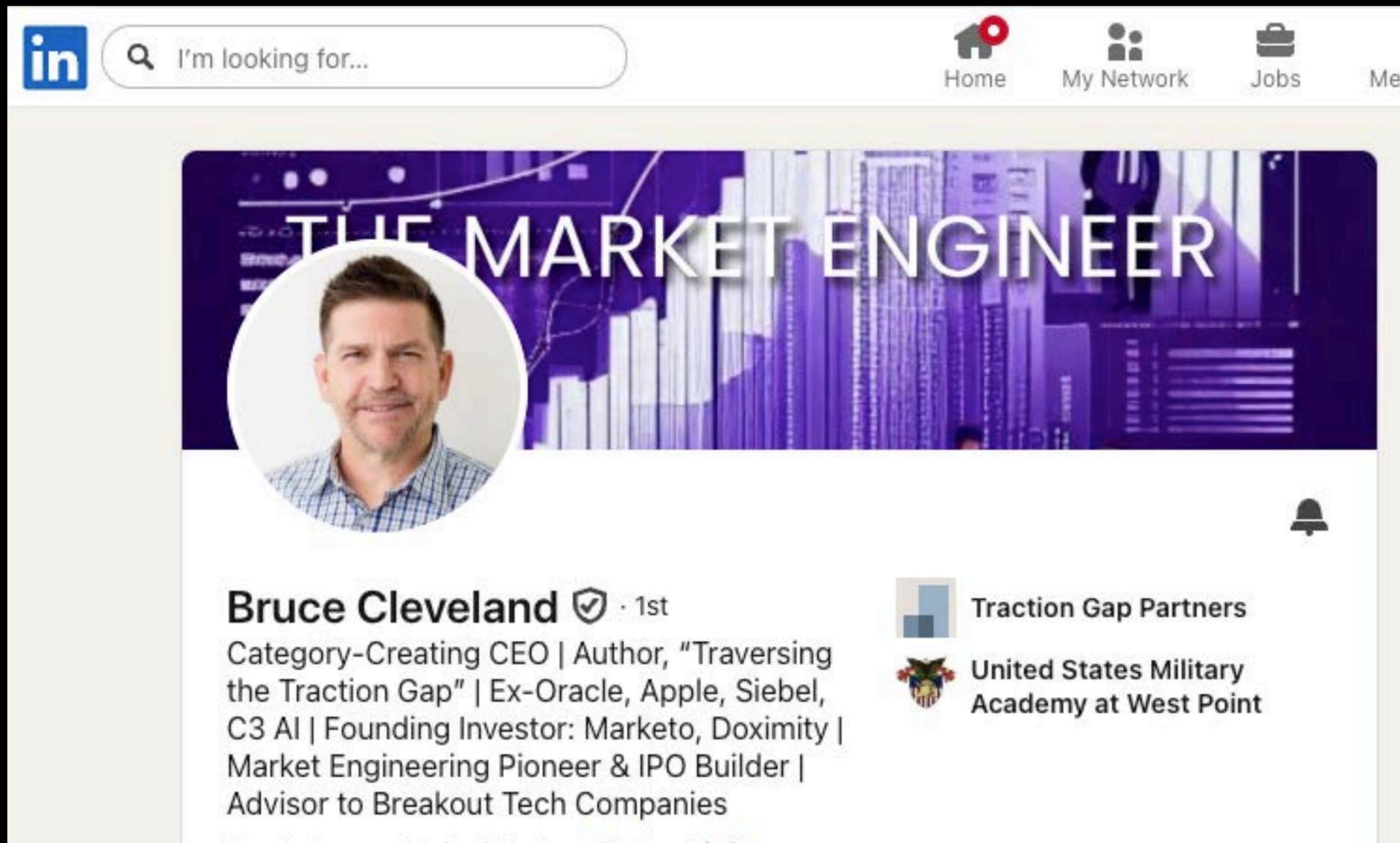


Yale University

**Ten minute break.**

WILDCAT  
THE GREAT OUTDOORS

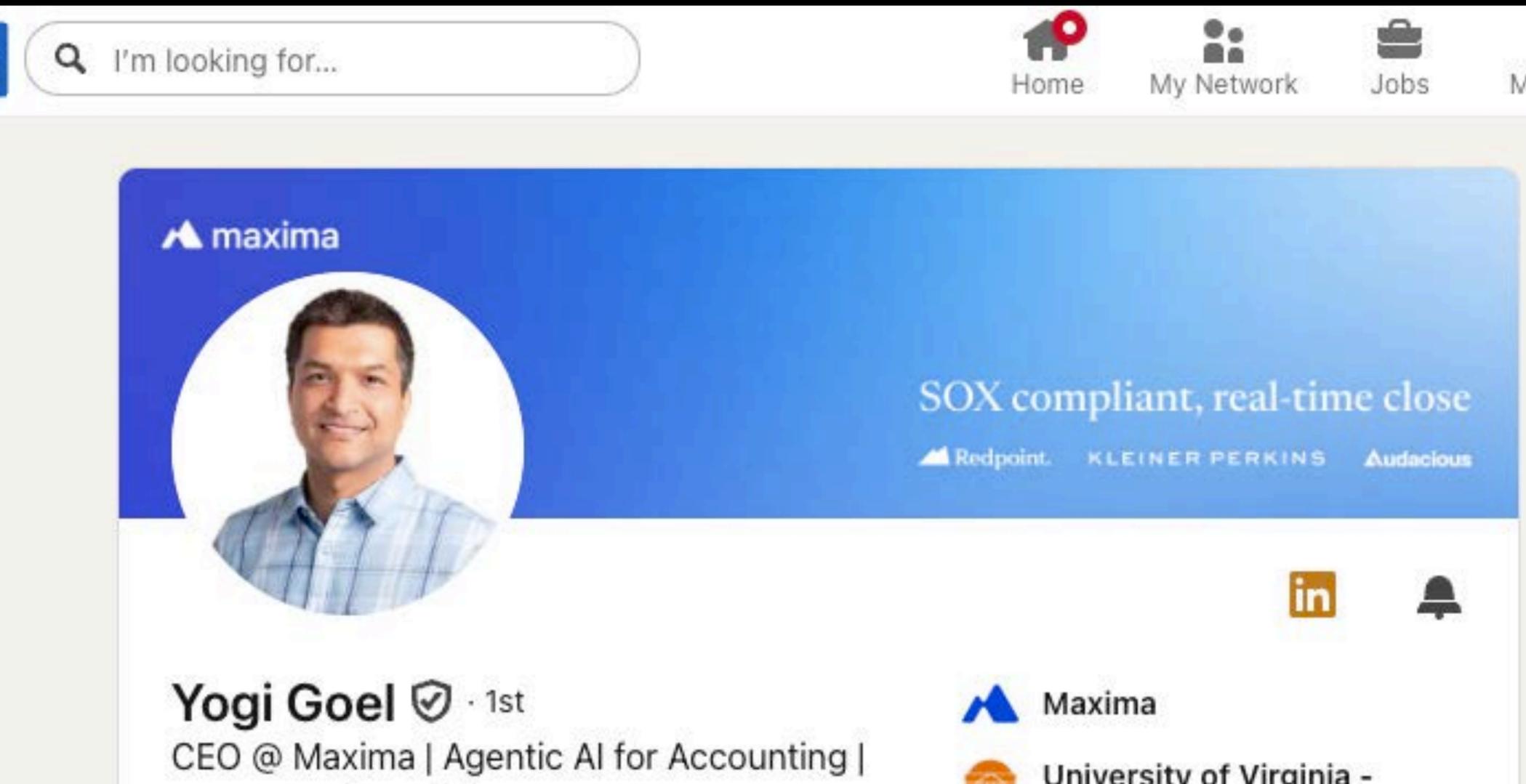




**He'll be here in  
the classroom  
with us on  
March 3.**

**Bruce Cleveland, legendary venture capitalist.  
Author of Traversing the Traction Gap**





**He'll be here in the classroom with us on Feb 10.**

# Yogi Goel, Founder & CEO of Maxima

**Took BUS-217 in 2024. In 2025 raised \$41M from Kleiner Perkins, Redpoint, and Audacious.**

 **Avia Haimovich** 9:05 PM

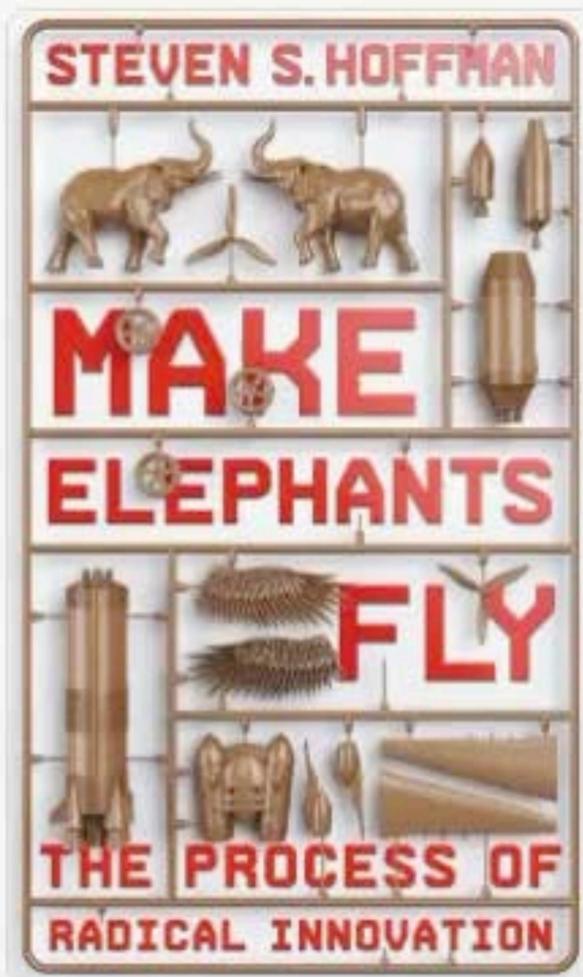
My book recommendations: *The Miracle Morning for Entrepreneurs* by Hal Elrod and *Atomic Habits* by James Clear. Both really helped me build healthy routines that boosted my productivity and helped me reconnect with myself and my goals.



 **Veronika Moroian** 10:52 PM

I read "Make Elephants Fly" over the holidays and I think it's a fantastic book that every entrepreneur should read. Enjoy!

IMG\_2254 ▼





**Priya T** 2:38 PM

Thanks all for sharing your book recommendations. I needed a consolidated list so sharing it with you in case it's helpful:

### **Book recommendations from the channel**

#### **Habits & self-mastery**

- *Atomic Habits*
- *The Miracle Morning for Entrepreneurs*
- *Man's Search for Meaning*
- *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

#### **Startups & building companies**

- *Zero to One*
- *The Monk and the Riddle*
- *Shoe Dog*
- *The Launch Path*
- *Make Elephants Fly*

#### **Decision-making, power & strategy**

- *Principles*
- *Never Split the Difference*
- *The 48 Laws of Power*
- *Gut Feelings*

#### **Ideas & storytelling**

- *The Tipping Point*
- *The Proverb Effect*



## BUS-219 Recommended Reading

Here is some recommended reading you might enjoy. Many of the concepts presented in this course have been drawn from these influential books and blogs.

[The Lean Startup](#) This book by Eric Ries is the source of many of the concepts and terms that have become part of everyday conversations around Silicon Valley. Nice, easy read.

[Four Steps to Epiphany](#) Steve Blank's seminal work. If you want to read the background thinking behind *The Lean Startup*, this is it (warning: it's a bit dense and a bit hard to read – Eric Ries's book above distills the same concepts down into more readable form).

[The Launch Path](#). Gotta plug my own book.

[The Hard thing about Hard things](#). This book by Ben Horowitz is one of my favorites. Funny, profane, and insightful.

[Traversing the Traction Gap](#) This book is from long-time Silicon Valley venture

# Hack 'n Grow

☆ #hack-n-grow

👤 30 🎧 ⌵ 🔔 🔍 ⋮

💬 Messages ↻ Add canvas +



**Martin Kalberer** 🗨️ New hire 🙌 5:15 PM

For [Rejuvenatedknives.com](https://rejuvenatedknives.com) (Your Amazon and Uber for knife sharpening) one of the most important things I had to learn was how people actually search for sharpening services online. Because most people aren't used to having someone come to their home, I noticed a common pattern: they start with something like "knife sharpening..." and then choose the "near me" suggestion in Google. The phrase "knife sharpening near me" gets the most clicks and it prompts Google to prioritize shops and listings close to the user's current location.

That insight pushed me to establish multiple physical locations around the Bay Area and promote them through Google Maps. I partnered with local UPS Stores and mailbox businesses to create convenient drop off "depots" where customers can leave their knives.

Later, I realized something even more important: because these searches are extremely localized, it works best when the physical location is located near the ICP, higher end neighborhoods, not just randomly in a city center. That approach has performed significantly better than choosing locations based on general convenience alone.

Building this business, I've leaned a number of hacks for digital marketing, e-commerce websites, social media campaigns and finding good partners. Ping me anytime

👍 2 😊

# Hack 'n Grow



**James Milin** 7:40 AM

Workhelix helps companies know & grow the ROI of their AI investments.... One hack and grow thing we could do would be to publish some sort of tool on our website that estimates a companies ROI by having them input some firm level data (e.g. industry, revenue, headcount, etc.). That would A) give us qualification on potential leads and B) help prospects see the kinds of benefits they could & should expect from working with us.

# Hack 'n Grow



**Dennis Khvostionov** 8:03 AM

I think the easiest and most accessible way right now is to issue a press release. Press releases are cheap and should have links to content or a blog on your website. Recently press releases have been getting picked up quite a lot for AEO (ChatGPT, Google, Perplexity, etc... ).

Bonus: If the content / idea is compelling it's also a great way to get inbound journalist inquiries.

# Challenge and Support

☆ # challenge-and-support

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🗨 Messages 📄 Untitled +



**Ellie Amanova** 12:53 PM

Hey everyone, sharing my biggest challenge right now.

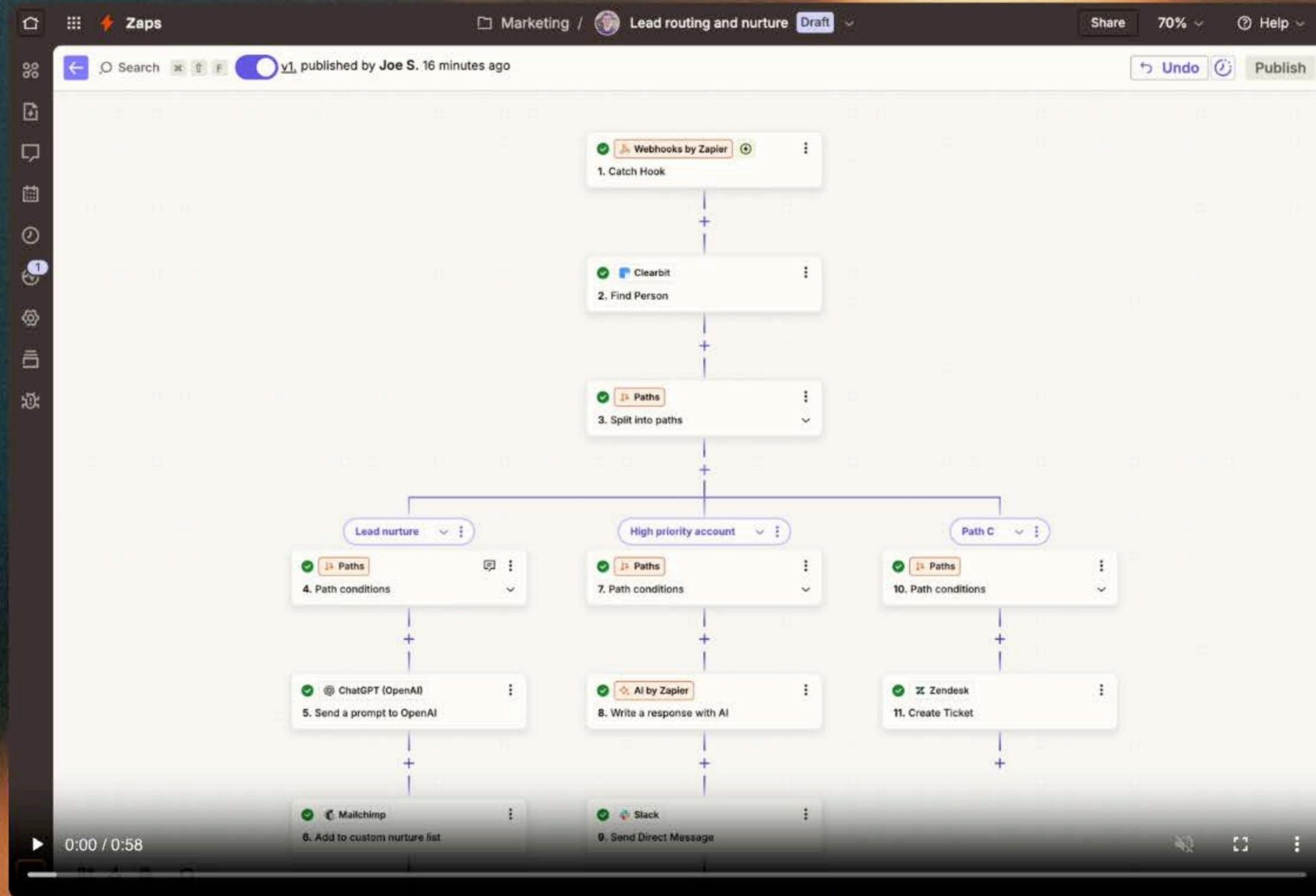
I'm doing discovery for a product that helps small businesses get through IRS audits. We helped one business through an audit, and now my goal is to find ~10 more small business owners who are currently under audit. I want to work alongside them as an extension of their accounting team: help gather and organize documents, take on the tedious parts, and learn firsthand how they used to work and where automation would be most helpful.

The tricky part: people don't talk about IRS audits publicly, so it's hard to find them through cold outreach. Any ideas, thoughts, or related experience would be super appreciated.



6 replies Last reply 4 days ago

# Zapier



# Zapier

**When Wade Foster, Bryan Helmig, and Mike Knoop attended Startup Weekend, they hacked together a way to automate the transfer of data from one web application to another. For example, maybe every time a new lead was entered into a Google spreadsheet, you also wanted it automatically added to your Salesforce database.**

**It was a cool piece of code, but it wasn't yet clear that this could grow into an actual company. By the end of the weekend, they had, as co-founder Wade Foster said, "a barely functioning prototype and no clue what people wanted."**

# Zapier

**They started trolling online forums in search of the integrations that people were looking for. For example, they would find a post from someone hoping to import PayPal transaction data into the Highrise CMS, and they'd add that to their list of integrations they could build.**

**One day they saw a guy post that he was looking for a particular data integration, so they contacted him directly saying they would build the integration into their product if he paid them \$100.**

**He said "Sure, no problem, how do I send you the money?".**

**They had no idea how to answer, because they didn't even have a bank account for the company yet.**

# Zapier

**They continued to build integrations, prioritizing the ones that people not only asked for, but also were willing to pay for.**

**They took some seed funding, but wanted to “seedstrap” the company from there because they don’t like venture capitalists.**

**Today they have over \$300 million in Annual Recurring Revenue and are highly profitable.**

**Sequoia was so frustrated that Zapier wouldn’t take any of their delicious venture capital that they finally bought some employee shares on the secondary market - at a valuation of \$5 billion.**

# Zapier - Key takeaways:

**Like most successful founders, they began with a problem worth solving.**

**But “a barely functioning prototype and no clue what people wanted” doesn’t make a company.**

**They trolled discussion forums to learn what people wanted, and then prioritized building features people were willing to pay for (that’s actual PMF).**

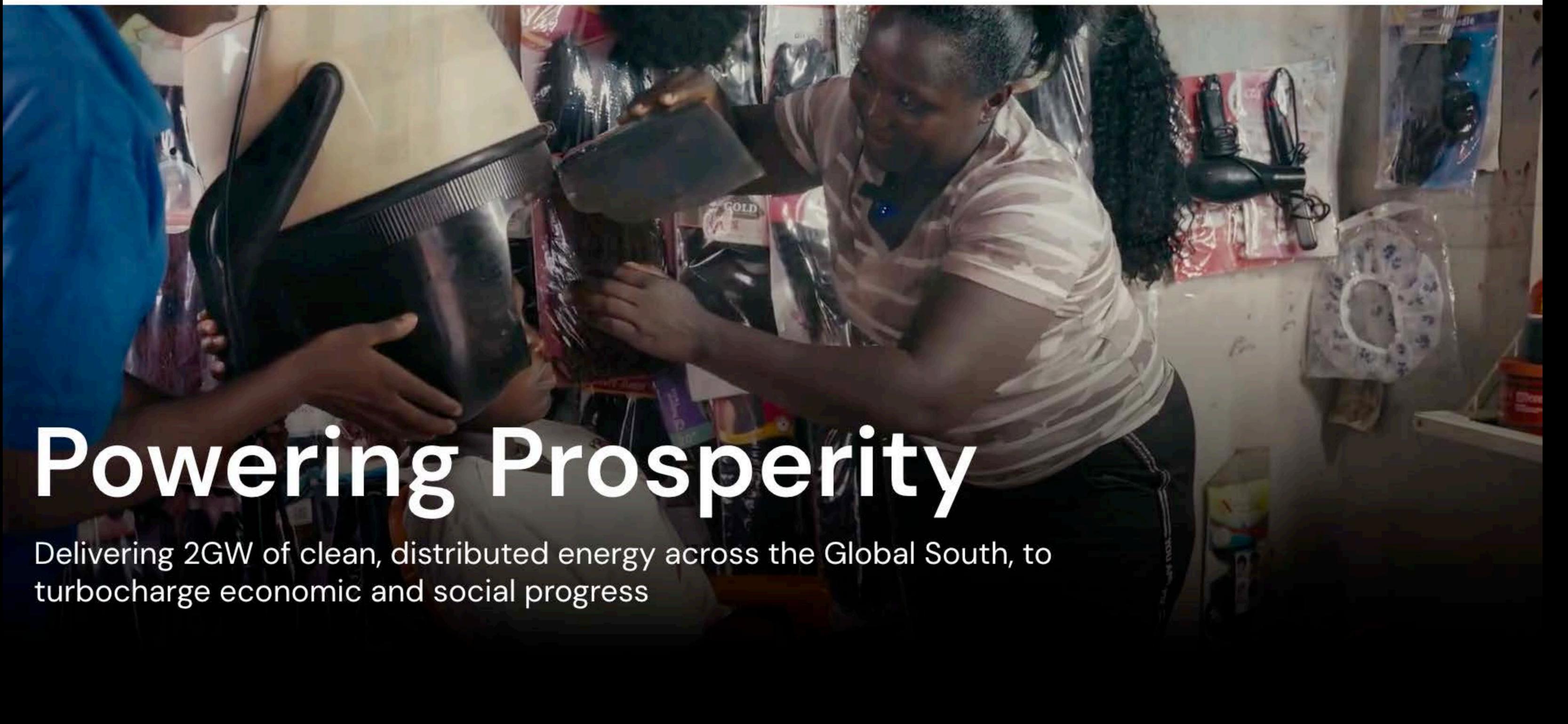
**They refused venture capital, and scaled the company in a smart and prudent fashion.**



**Manoj Sinha**  
CEO and Founder  
Husk Power Systems

**Over 1.2 billion people in the world do not have access to electricity. These families suffer health issues associated with breathing smoke from household fires and kerosene, and kids who can't read at night fall behind at school.**

**According to the UN, access to electricity correlates closely to life expectancy, literacy, and per capita GDP.**

A woman in a white t-shirt is styling a customer's hair in a hair salon. She is using a hairbrush and a hair dryer. The salon is filled with various hair care products and tools.

# Powering Prosperity

Delivering 2GW of clean, distributed energy across the Global South, to turbocharge economic and social progress



**Manoj Sinha**  
CEO and Founder  
Husk Power Systems

**I met Manoj when he went through the accelerator program at Miller Center for Global Impact.**

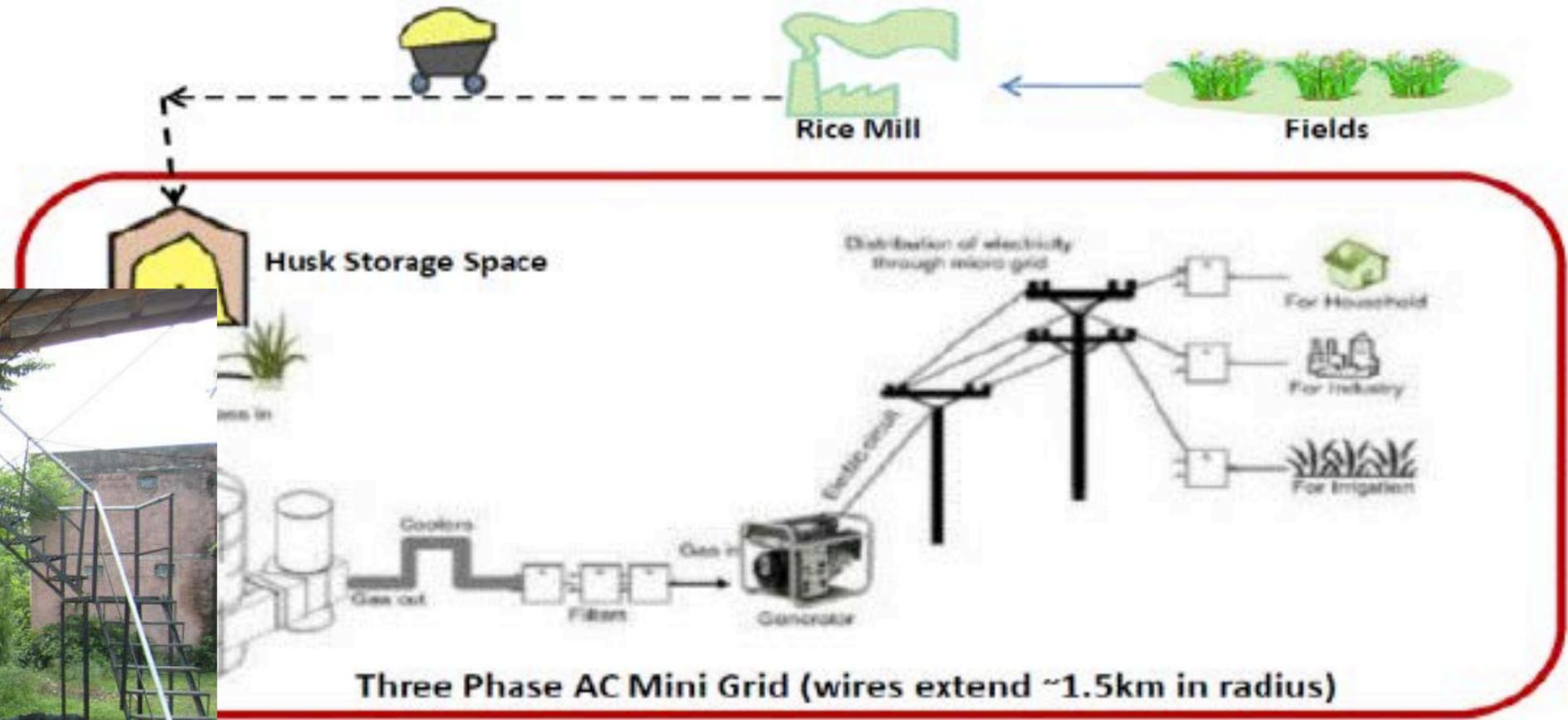
**(I am a volunteer CEO coach there).**



**Manoj Sinha**  
CEO and Founder  
Husk Power Systems



### Exhibit 5 Biomass Powered AC Mini-Grids





**In the next few years Husk Power Systems built 80 mini-grid biomass systems in rural India. Suddenly kids had light at night to read and study by, and families were living healthier lives.**

**But the economics weren't great.**

**In India, 30% of electricity produced is lost to theft. People tap into the lines and steal power.**

**Also, most of the villages had a cash economy, so Husk Power had to employ bill collection agents and many bills just went unpaid.**

**The Biomass systems worked well, but could only produce electricity for 6 hours/day. In the mobile phone era people wanted more than that.**

**Also, as the cost of photovoltaic technology came down, the cost of biomass was less attractive.**



**Manoj Sinha**  
CEO and Founder  
Husk Power Systems

**They were out of money. The co-founder quit.**

**Manoj knew they needed to either shut down or do a complete pivot.**

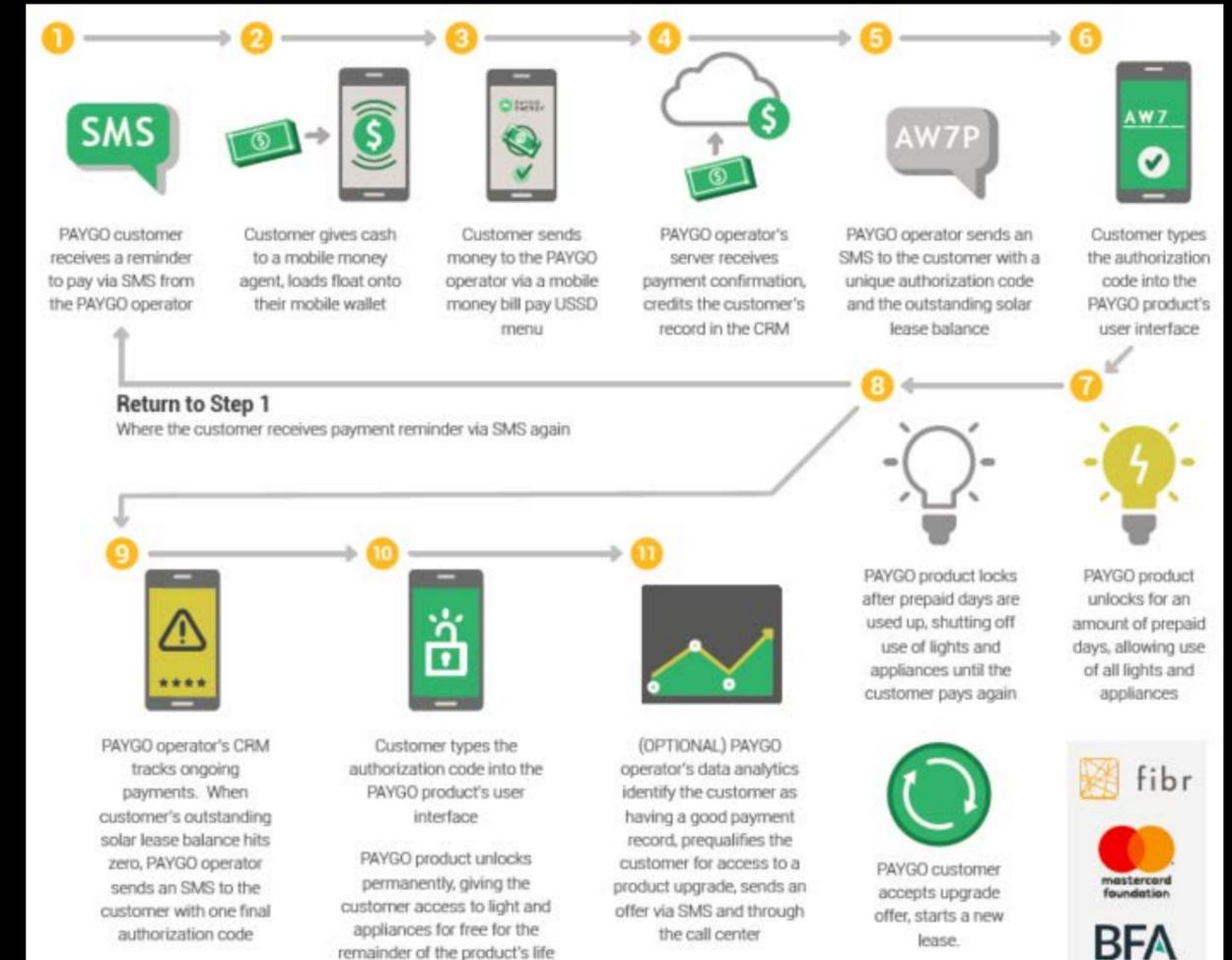
**He told his wife he had to fly to India and spend six months on the ground in the villages.**

**He came home and developed a completely new way of solving the original problem of rural mini-grids.**

# The new Husk Power System product:



**Solar-powered mini-grids with biomass backup, providing electricity 24x7.**



**A pay-as-you-go system where people control the electricity to their home via a mobile app. If you don't pay, it's turned off.**



**Manoj Sinha**  
CEO and Founder  
Husk Power Systems

**Now this was a scalable model with positive unit economics.**

**He made the hard decision to shut down 75 of the 80 biomass installations they operated.**

**New installations in rural villages in India proved it out, and expanded into West Africa which increased the TAM.**

**Armed with proof of the economics, scalability, and a large TAM, he went out and pitched traditional venture capital investors.**

# Husk Power Secures \$100+ Million in Equity and Debt to Supercharge Growth of Community Solar Minigrids in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

October 24, 2023 7:00 am

- Series D equity investors, who collectively deploy more than \$10 billion annually, include STOA Infra & Energy, US International Development Finance Corporation, and Proparco;
- Two-thirds of the capital will go to Sub-Saharan Africa, marking a major step towards Husk's goal of mobilizing \$500 million to reach 2,500 minigrids on the continent under its Africa Sunshot initiative;
- The new capital will fund 1,400 new minigrids, nearly 300,000 new connections (a third of them MSMEs) and avoid 350,000 tonnes of CO2 from displacement of diesel generation, while adding 2,500 new direct jobs.

**FORT COLLINS**, 24 Oct 2023 – Husk Power Systems (“Husk”) announced today that it has closed \$43 million in Series D funding, the largest-ever equity raise in the minigrid industry. The funding cements Husk's position as the leader in electrifying communities in rural Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia with an AI-enabled platform of renewable energy services. The equity funding includes new investors STOA Infra & Energy, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Proparco, as well as existing investors Shell Ventures, Swedfund and FMO.

In addition, Husk has leveraged the Series D equity to secure an additional \$60 million in debt from several finance institutions, including the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the International Finance Corporation. (IFC).

Since raising [\\$25 million in equity funding in 2018](#), Husk has grown its fleet 20-fold to more than [200 solar hybrid minigrids](#) across two continents, impacted 500,000 people, served more than 10,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), avoided 25,000 tonnes of CO2, achieved a CAGR of 60% despite two years of Covid, and maintained exceptional customer loyalty with a retention rate of more than 90%. It also became the first minigrid company to become [EBITDA positive in Q4 2022](#), and has built a team of more than 500 employees.

Over the next 5 years, the new funding will be used to grow Husk's fleet 8-times by adding more than 1,400 new minigrids with a projected 300,000 new connections (one-third of them MSMEs), while avoiding 350,000 tonnes of CO2. Husk will also continue to build a world-class team and add 2,500 more employees, while expanding into new markets in Africa and Asia. The [Africa Sunshot initiative](#), which Husk announced at the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023, will mobilize at least \$500 million for Husk to scale to 2,500 minigrids in 6 countries within 5 years. Two-thirds of the newly announced financing will go toward Sub-Saharan Africa, marking an important first step to achieving the Africa Sunshot goals.

Commented **Manoj Sinha, Husk Co-Founder and CEO**: “We have successfully created and scaled a rural energy platform that is life-changing for our communities from day one. We're excited to put this new equity and debt to work to supercharge Husk's growth and unlock the full economic and social potential for a generation of rural Africans and Asians, especially women and

The company aims to enter the Democratic Republic of Congo in the second half of 2025. Credit: Jose Luis Stephens/Shutterstock. · Power Technology · Jose Luis Stephens/Shutterstock.

GlobalData



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UPGRADE TO PREMIUM

Quote Lookup



U.S. markets closed

US Europe Asia Rates

S&P Futures

6,050.00



-13.00 (-0.21%)

Dow Futures

44,687.00



-10.00 (-0.02%)

Nasdaq Fut...

21,603.75



-66.50 (-0.31%)

Russell 200...

2,305.30



+6.50 (+0.28%)

Crude Oil

72.88



+0.18 (+0.25%)

Gold

2,877.30



+1.50 (+0.05%)

MY PORTFOLIOS

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JOSEPH B. LASSITER III

SID MISRA

# Husk Power

*Rural electrification was and still is more of a necessity than an option.*

– Gyanesh Pandey, Cofounder of Husk Power Systems<sup>1</sup>

On a hot and humid day in August 2013, Manoj Sinha was walking toward Alma de Cuba on Walnut Street in downtown Philadelphia to meet his wife, Varsha, for dinner. He had just gotten off the phone with Gyanesh Pandey, his cofounder and CEO of Husk Power Systems (HPS, or Husk), who had informed him of his decision to move on, believing that it was time for someone else to push the venture forward. Pandey had been at the helm of the company, managing operations on the ground in Patna, in the state of Bihar in northern India. Sinha had been working at McGraw-Hill Financial in New York City during the day and working for Husk by night, primarily raising money and managing relations with Husk’s investors. Sinha knew that this news could have important consequences for the lives that he and his wife had built in the U.S.

Husk Power operated in rural villages in India, Nepal, Uganda, and Tanzania. From 2007 through 2013, Husk built a network for gathering biomass waste (primarily rice husk from rice mills), 80 biomass waste-fueled gasification plants, associated gas-powered AC electrical generator sets, and independent AC mini-grid electricity distribution networks that provided electricity to 250,000 villagers and shop owners spread across 350 villages.<sup>a</sup> The company had also piloted solar DC microgrids and installed about 1,500 connections. (See **Exhibit 1** for photos of Husk’s customers.) However, progress had fallen far short of the founders’ original 2007 vision of reaching over 1,000 villages by 2014. Sinha had to decide whether his involvement on the ground in India could provide the company with the strategic direction, people, systems, and renewed emotional energy needed to



## **Some takeaways:**

**You marry the problem, not the solution. Manoj stayed true to the problem to be solved, but was willing to design a completely different solution.**

**He didn't try to over-scale until the economics and the technology were ready.**

**Investors only really care about one thing: positive unit economics. If you can prove that, they'll pump as much money into it as possible.**

# This week's assignments:

In the **#barriers\_to\_scale** channel, tell us what you think – for your particular venture – what will be difficult to scale, and how can you plan for this?

In the **#challenge\_and\_support** channel, post a current challenge you are facing, and offer support to your classmates by suggesting a solution to some challenge they are facing.

In the **#social** channel, post a picture of your pet! If you don't have a pet, post a picture of a pet you would like to have.

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