

PHASE ONE

Lead Yourself First

The garage years: it is mostly just you

FOCUS

Personal responsibility, time management, calendar discipline, selling the dream before it exists, making your first hires count.

KEY MOVES

- Fill your calendar every single day. No white space.
- Build a compelling story and value proposition before you have proof.
- Make your first hires missionaries, not employees. Give them titles that match the vision.
- Define behavioral norms from day one. Culture starts now.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE HERE IF

You are the business. Nothing happens without you. There is no real team. You are working from your kitchen table, doing payroll on your honeymoon, and building a ship while sailing it.

PHASE TWO

Build Your First Team

From hustle to early traction

FOCUS

Hiring for eagerness over readiness, establishing norms, training as leadership, delegation, and staying close to the work while letting go of control.

KEY MOVES

- Hire slow, fire fast. Character and eagerness over credentials.
- Look for people who show promise (early, late, extra calls) and tap them on the shoulder.
- Let early hires make real decisions. They are partners in the vision.
- Prioritize culture over credentials. Sell the vision daily.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE HERE IF

You have people, but you are still the bottleneck in every decision. Your team has potential but depends on you for direction, energy, and answers. Growth feels possible but fragile.

PHASE THREE

Systems and Superstars

Replacing heroes with rhythm

FOCUS

Scorecards and KPIs, Five Levels of Leadership, structured one-on-ones, promotions tied to behavior and results, and a culture that runs on systems instead of heroes.

KEY MOVES

- Remove discretion from operations. Build repeatable systems.
- Build leadership paths so people see where they are going.
- Use scorecards so everyone knows the score. No guessing.
- Run structured one-on-ones. Promote based on behaviors and results, not tenure.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE HERE IF

You have good people, but the business still depends on a few heroes. There is no scoreboard. When someone leaves, growth stalls. You are stuck between a business that works and a business that scales.

PHASE FOUR

Platform and Exit Optional

Others build what you created

FOCUS

Licensing and IP, scalable culture, rebuilding the vision from 1.0 to 2.0, and making exit a choice rather than a necessity.

KEY MOVES

- Develop leaders who develop leaders.
- Create equity value beyond personal production.
- Build systems that let others grow the business you started.
- Make your involvement optional, not required.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE HERE IF

Others are running and growing the business. Your exit is optional because the platform works without you. You have moved from founder to platform builder.