

# SCALE

**The Founder Brand**

Scott Albro

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November 15, 2024

**We help our portfolio  
build and optimize  
hyper-growth GTM  
machines**

# What is the GTM Advisory?

## Advisory

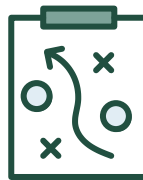
Been-to-market expertise



**Advising over 55% of the portfolio  
with bespoke GTM consulting**

## Content

Step-by-step guides



**Distilling decades of experience into  
80+ practical tools and frameworks**

## Events

The power of community



**Connecting EIRs, advisors, and  
portcos at 40+ events per year**

# The Founder Brand

Scott Albro

I help founders and startups create brands that drive revenue

November 15, 2024

# The power of the founder brand

Steve



Elon



Mark



# The power of the founder brand (true for B2B as well)

Tobi



Jensen



Marc



# What is a brand?

My definition of “brand”:

Our brand is the market’s perception of us

My definition of “brand management”:

Our job is to actively shape that perception in a way that drives revenue

At a startup,

the **founder brand** is the most powerful way to shape  
that perception



# Why founder brands work for startups

1

Strong founder brands make people want to buy, *significantly improving conversion rates and revenue growth*

2

Founder brands help you define the market, prevailing narratives, language... and counter-position against incumbent competitors

3

Founder brands work with no/limited marketing budgets

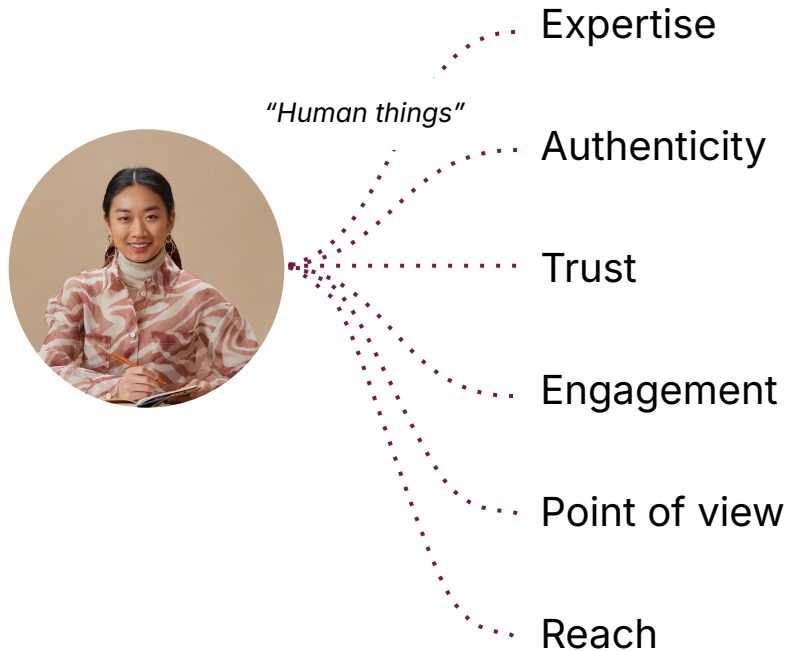
4

Good startups are movements and movements need human leaders

5

Today's media landscape values and empowers individuals

# Strong founder brands make people want to buy



## AWARENESS

We get more 1st meetings b/c the buyer is aware of and values our perspective

## CONSIDERATION

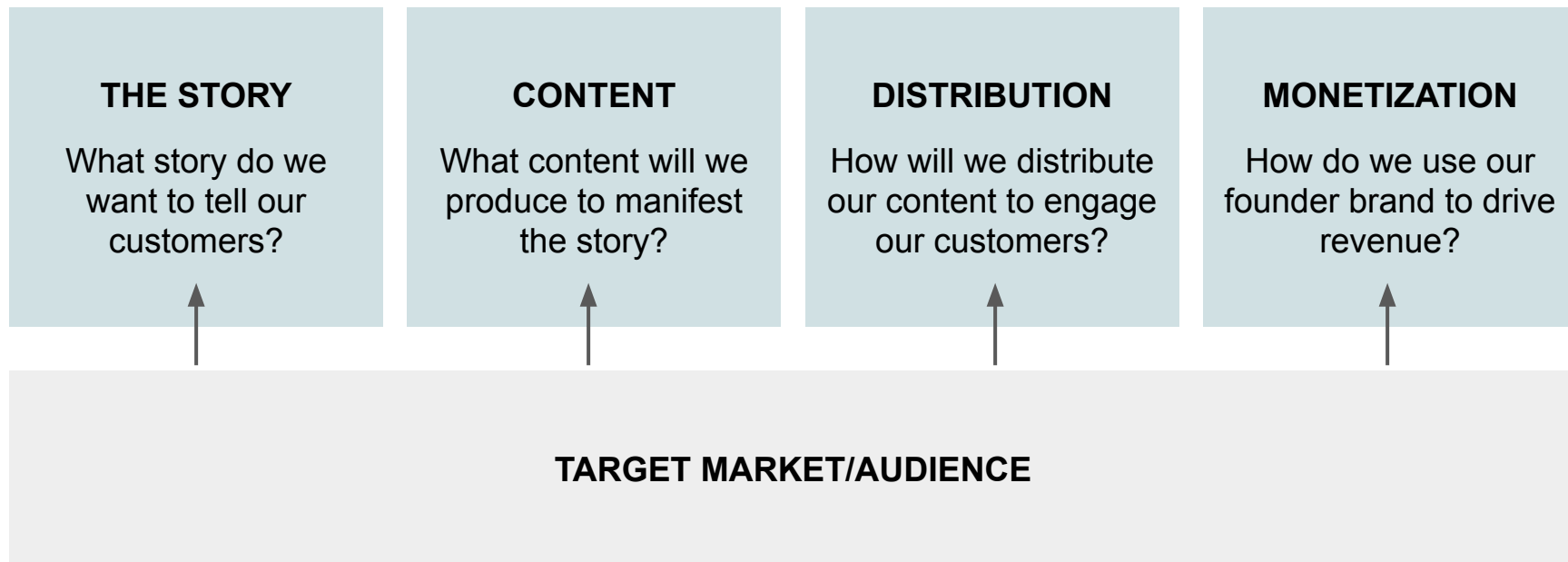
We get shortlisted more because the buyer knows we are experts

## PURCHASE

We win more deals because the buyer knows they can trust us

# How to build a strong founder brand

## The 4 pillars of a founder brand



# The story

# The story

Great stories do two things:

1. Attract customers
2. Redefine markets to our advantage

# Storytelling best practices - 3 story types

Every founder has a story to tell - at a startup, focus on the 3 story types...

Story type	What you provide	Example
Customer priority, pain ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Understand the problem</li><li>- Guidance on solving</li></ul>	Today, I met with 7 independent pizza shop owners in Brooklyn. Their top issue? Managing order flow during peak hours, usually from 6-9pm...
Transformational shift from old to new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Clear vision of the future</li><li>- How to navigate</li><li>- Winners and losers</li></ul>	Right now, most owners are upgrading their POS to better time pickups and deliveries. In the future, there's an opportunity for AI to predict orders before they even arrive...
Your personal journey or story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make it personal</li><li>- Hero's journey</li></ul>	After college, I opened a pizza shop. I managed everything with paper and pen. I didn't know the first thing about restaurants or technology, but I knew I wanted to make great pizza and support pizza makers...

# Storytelling best practices - how you tell the story matters

## Characteristics of good stories:

- True differentiation matters: unique PoV, alpha, secrets, a future only you can see
- Tell big stories - they become movements that the market can't ignore
- It's personal - customers want to hear from you, especially when you're:
  - Authentic and true to yourself e.g. honest, funny, whatever...
  - An expert (you know your story)
  - A personality (how you tell your story matters)
  - Committed (the best stories are told 1000s of times)

# Storytelling in practice: Marc Benioff, Salesforce





# Exercise # 1

What are some founder stories you've seen?

What founder personalities resonate with you?

# Finding your story (tool)

Answer a few simple questions to find your story:

Question	Story type 1 <b>Customer priorities</b>	Story type 2 <b>Major shift</b>	Story type 3 <b>Your personal story</b>
<i>What is my version of this?</i>	Role or industry specific customer priorities, pain	Technology trends changing the customers' business	Your personal story of building a company
<i>Am I an expert in area?</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>What's my unique point of view?</i>	Specific, actionable prescriptions (how)	Unique view into what the future looks like	An unvarnished look at building a company
<i>What's my personality type?</i>	Authentic self - can be whatever you want, as long as it is genuinely you		

# Content

# Content

Content manifests our story. When we produce content, we are trying to:

1. Say smart things related to our story AND
2. Say them frequently (at least 3x per week)

This is hard to do!


# Content best practices - how to make it easy

- Every market/community has a shared language - learn it by **participating** in it
- Source good ideas **from others**
  - Mine your experiences (e.g., recent customer conversations)
  - Study leading voices in your space
  - Follow recent news/events
  - Pull from other sources (e.g., the Twitter to LinkedIn transfer)
- Pick a medium that makes it **easy for you to create**: 1) write or 2) talk
  - Talk to text works for many, especially with AI tools
- Find your voice/style: your content should **sound like you how you talk**

# Content best practices - cheap tricks that work

- Hooks: you need to hook your audience (e.g., divulge a closely held secret or an important question where the answer is below the fold)
- Personal stories: “I just met with the CEO of a F500 retailer. Here’s his #1 priority...”
- Momentum: hitch yourself to something that’s already being discussed
- Numbers: real numbers, especially dollars, drive engagement
- Photos/videos: visual media drive engagement
- Keep it fresh: mix up short form, long form, text, video, lists, data, surveys...

# Content in practice: Dario Amodei, Anthropic



**Dario Amodei** ✓ · 3rd  
CEO and Co-Founder at Anthropic  
San Francisco, California, United States · [Contact](#)  
335 connections

[Message](#) [+ Follow](#) [More](#)

×

## Dario Amodei

Contents

Basic assumptions and framework

1. Biology and health
2. Neuroscience and mind
3. Economic development and poverty
4. Peace and governance
5. Work and meaning


Taking stock

## Machines of Loving Grace<sup>1</sup>

*How AI Could Transform the World for the Better*

October 2024


I think and talk a lot about the risks of powerful AI. The company I'm the CEO of, Anthropic, does a lot of research on how to reduce the risks. Because of this, people sometimes draw the conclusion that I'm a pessimist or "doomer" who thinks AI will be mostly bad or dangerous. I don't think that at all. In fact, one of my main reasons for focusing on AI is that they're the only thing standing between us and what I think is a fundamentally positive future. **I think that most people are underestimating just how radical the upside of AI could be, just how much good it could do. I think most people are underestimating how bad the risks could be.**

←  rjClaudeAI · 19 days ago  
lexfridman

### Call for questions to Dario Amodei, Anthropic CEO from Lex Fridman


**General: Philosophy, science and social issues**

My name is Lex Fridman. I'm doing a podcast with Dario Amodei, Anthropic CEO. If you have questions / topic suggestions to discuss (including super-technical topics) let me know!

↑ 564 ↓ 261  Share

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / TECH

### Anthropic's CEO thinks AI will lead to a utopia – he just needs a few billion dollars first



/ If you want to upload your mind to the cloud, that's an option too.

By **Kyle Robinson**, a senior AI reporter working with The Verge's policy and tech teams. She previously worked at Fortune Magazine and Business Insider.  
Oct 16, 2024, 10:21 AM EDT




   25 Comments (25 New)

Image: Geth Virginia / The Verge, Getty Images

## Exercise # 2

What type of content would you create first?



## Content planning (tool)

Access the content planning tool [here](#)

**Content Calendar (11-14-24)**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Title	Status	Pub Date	Owner	Description	Themes	Impressions	Reactions	Comments	Rep
1	Larry Page bankruptcy quote	Published	10/28	Ben	Mega-caps view losing AI battle as existential threat	AI	1761	33	29	
2	Easy to start/hard to exit	Published	10/30	Scott	Starting company easier than ever, but harder to exit now	Startups	1382	32	3	
3	Startup culture	Published	10/31	Ben	Culture offers autonomy and control	Startups	949	10	1	
4	When buyers don't want to talk to sales	Published	11/1	Scott	Data/comments on buyers not wanting to engage sales	Sales SaaS	1925	13	4	
5	Founder mode and sales	Published	11/4	Scott	Why founder mode doesn't work in sales	Sales SaaS	3158	23	8	
6	Outcome based pricing	Published	11/6	Scott	AI impact on outcome-based vs per seat pricing	Sales AI ...	2893	14	13	
7	Discovery best practices	Published	11/7	Scott	List of discovery best practices	Sales	8410	68	34	
8	Tired buyer engagement	Published	11/9	Scott	Sales and marketing engagement tactics so stale	Sales SaaS	24607	178	60	
9	Wasted discovery calls	Published	11/12	Ben	Conducting disco, but not using data collected	Sales AI	30172	257	118	
10	The right cofounder	Published	11/13	Ben	Finding the right co-founder is magic	Startups	28593	143	41	
11	Reinventing sales	Published	11/14	Scott	Is it possible to reinvent sales? Will AI make it possible?	Sales	11209	82	14	
12	AI agents in sales	Draft	11/15	Scott	Sales leaders managing 100s of AI agents	AI Sales				
13	Contact nurturing doesn't work	Draft	11/19	Ben	Traditional tactics no longer work	Sales				
14	Customer-centric startups	Draft	11/20	Ben	How to do more than just talk about customers	Sales Start ...				
15	AI hype cycle	Draft	11/21	Scott	Where are we in AI hype cycle?	AI				
16	AI SDR backlash	Idea	TBD	Scott	Backlash against AI SDRs is here and it's real	AI Sales				
17	Balance b/t GTM and product	Idea	TBD	Scott	How to walk tightrope as discussed on Monday call	Startups Se ...				
18	Interest rates and SaaS	Idea	TBD	Scott	What happens if higher interest rates are here to stay?	SaaS				
19	Founder intrinsic motivation	Idea	TBD	Scott	Why founders do what they do	Startups				
20	Energy/utilities as AI bottleneck	Idea	TBD	Scott	Recent news on AI utilities bottleneck	AI				
21	Human skills that AI won't replace	Idea	TBD	Scott	List of uniquely human skills that AI can't replace	AI				

# Distribution

# Distribution

Distribution (or publishing) puts our content in front of customers. Only two things really matter:

1. Engage users where they are
2. Publish frequently

# Distribution best practices

## Choose the **right distribution channel(s)**

- Meet your users where they are
- The type of content you create dictates where you publish


## Publish frequently: **3x per week *minimum***


- Build frequency on a single channel, one where you can easily self-publish
- Then move to “create once, publish many” across multiple channels


## Surround your content with proactive **community engagement**

- Content in isolation dies - *\*you\** drive engagement (connect, like, comment on other people's content)


# Distribution in practice: Sam Jacobs, Pavillion




**Sam Jacobs** ✓ · 1st  
CEO @ Pavilion | Co-Host of Topline Podcast | WSJ Best Selling Author of "Kind Folks Finish First"  
New York, New York, United States · [Contact info](#)  
100,411 followers · [500+ connections](#)  
 Mani Iyer, Chris Moody, and 1,452 other mutual connections  
[Message](#) [Visit my website](#) [More](#)




Pavillion



University of Virginia



2022  
September 2  
Dallas, TX · AT&T




**Sam Jacobs** · 1st  
CEO @ Pavilion | Co-Host of Topline Podcast | WSJ Best Selling ...  
[Visit my website](#)  
2mo · 🌐

Despite what you read on LinkedIn, Buyers still want to talk to salespeople. I'm a CEO. I'm a buyer. Most of the time I want to talk to a salesperson. ...more

👍👍👍 1,318

207 comments · 51 reposts




**Sam Jacobs** · 1st  
CEO @ Pavilion | Co-Host of Topline Podcast | WSJ Best Selling ...  
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Don't create more work for the CEO.

The CEO is not your parent. ...more

👍👍👍 Jay Nathan and 1,214 others

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CEO @ Pavilion | Co-Host of Topline Podcast | WSJ Best Selling ...  
[Visit my website](#)  
3mo · 🌐

RevOps should report to Finance.

Every department lead doesn't deserve their own data. ...more

👍👍👍 Kevin Mulrane and 1,480 others

300 comments · 26 reposts

# Exercise # 3

Where are your customers?

# Prioritizing distribution channels (tool)

*Scenario: we target sales and marketing leaders and publish text-based content*

Channel	Do our customers spend time there?	Is my content (format) supported?	Is it easy to self-publish there?
<i>LinkedIn</i>	Yes	Text, video	Easy
<i>Twitter</i>	No	Text	Easy
<i>Facebook</i>	No	Text, video	Easy
<i>YouTube</i>	No	Video	Easy
<i>Podcast</i>	Yes	Video	Medium
<i>Events</i>	Yes	Live	Hard
<i>Book</i>	Yes	Text	Hard

# Monetization



# Monetization

Monetization - convert prospects that engage with our content into meetings. To do this, we need:

1. Scalable follow up tactics
2. Effective messaging

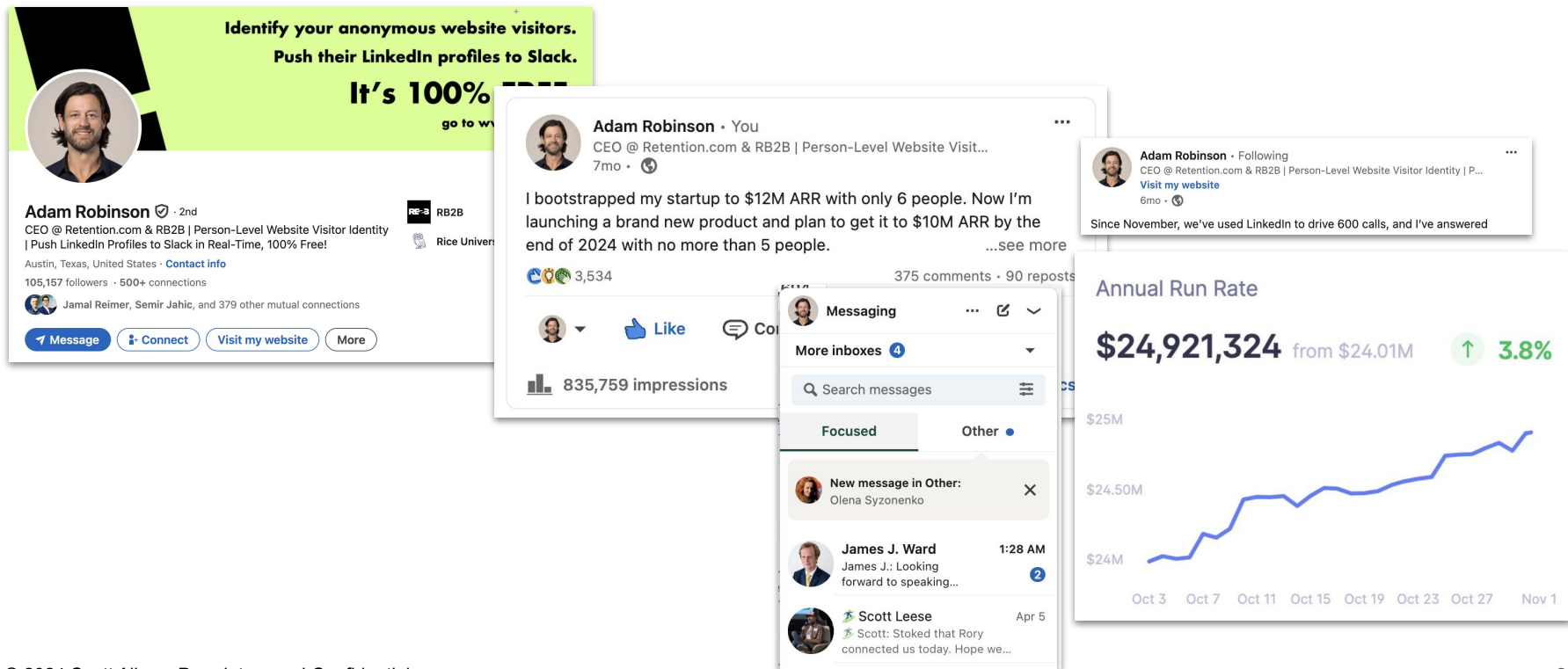
# Monetization best practices - follow-up tactics

- Follow up with prospects that engage with your content
- Focus on prospects that fit your ICP
- Match how you follow up with how they engaged:
  - Inbound inquiry (e.g. prospect sends you a LinkedIn message)
  - Like, comment, post (prospect engages with your content)
  - Page view (impression)
- Follow up via the medium they used to engage you (e.g., LinkedIn) *and* email
- Response times matter - don't wait
- Use an SDR/contractor to manage tactics behind the scenes

# Monetization best practices - effective messaging

- Prospects want to hear from the founder - 1st touch follow up should come from you, even if there's an SDR behind the scenes
  - Overwhelming volume? Great, gracefully introduce someone else after 1st touch
- Keep messages short and personal
- Ask for what you want - a meeting
- Founder messaging that converts:
  - "Would you be open to giving us feedback on what we're building?"
  - "I host an invite-only demo every week and would love to have you attend"

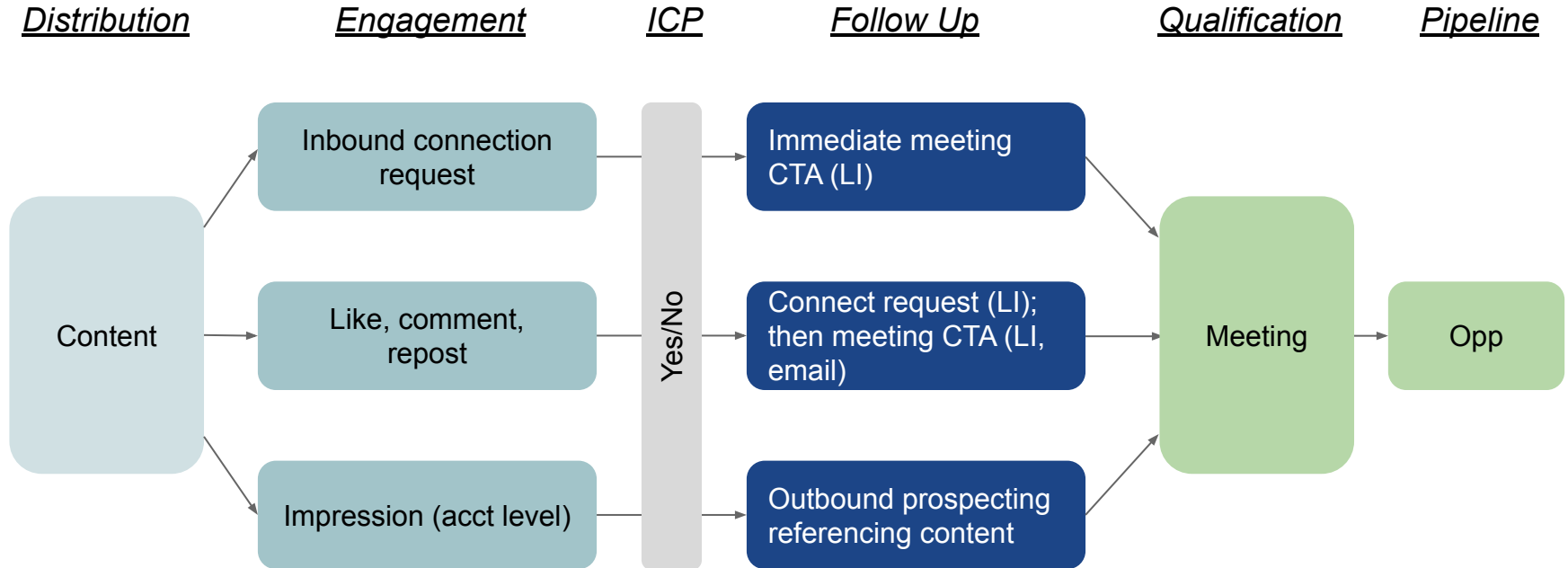
# Monetization in practice: Adam Robinson, RB2B



# Exercise # 4

How would you ask a prospect for a meeting?

# Revenue process (tool)



# Follow up cadences (tool)

User engagement	Touch pattern	Messaging	Strength
Inbound connection request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Immediate acceptance via LinkedIn message</li><li>2. Email follow up if no response</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reference content</li><li>- Feedback meeting CTA</li></ul>	Strong
Like, comment, repost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. LinkedIn connection request</li><li>2. LinkedIn message</li><li>3. Outbound email</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reference content</li><li>- Feedback meeting CTA</li></ul>	Strong
Impression (account-level)	Standard outbound prospecting pattern into account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reference content</li><li>- Gauge interest in connecting</li></ul>	Weak

# Takeaways and next steps



# Giant list of takeaways

## The story

Every founder has a story

3 startup story types

- Customer priority
- Transformation
- Personal journey

Storytelling

- Differentiated stories
- Big stories
- Authentic self
- Expertise
- Commit to the story

## Content

Learn market's language

Source ideas

- Other thought leaders
- Lived experiences
- Recent news
- Other sources (Twitter)

Talk or write

Sound like you talk

Lots of cheap tricks

- Hooks
- Visual media
- Personal...

## Distribution

Meet users where they are

Frequency matters - publish  
3x week minimum

- Start with 1 channel
- Nail that and expand

Isolated content is dead  
content

Proactive community  
engagement

- Identify and connect with community
- Like, comment, share...

## Monetization

Just follow up!

Focus on ICP fit

Engagement type drives  
follow up type

Social + email follow up

Response times matter

Use SDR/intern for tactics

1st touch from founder

Messaging

- Short/personal
- Ask for a meeting
- Founder "offers"

# Your well-being

- This should be fun - if it's not, reset
- Treat it as a community, rather than a one person publishing exercise
- Breaks are fine, but not for too long
- Haters - ignore, embrace, or fight - you decide
- Conflict - avoid it unless you relish it

# Next steps -- get started

1. Identify your 3 story types (hard)
2. For each story type develop key themes and unique PoV (hard)
3. Agree on your personality (easy)
4. Figure out where customers are (easy)
5. Develop 1-3 content ideas per story type (med)
6. Establish target publication dates (easy)

*Don't worry about monetization right now  
(but if you want to, target 3 meetings per week)*

[Here's a template to help you get started](#)

## Founder Brand Template

Created by: Scott Albro  
Last updated: November 15, 2024

[Get an editable copy of this template](#)

Component	Key Question	Story type 1 Customer Priority	Story type 2 Transformation	Story type 3 Personal Journey
The story	What do my customers care about?	Hitting revenue targets while transitioning to efficient growth model	The impact of AI and other technologies on GTM organizations	An inside look at building and scaling a startup, particularly on the GTM side
Themes	What themes will I emphasize?	- Deep understanding of problem - Tactical recommendations on how to solve...	- How to navigate this transformation - Winners and losers in future world	- Recap lived, personal experiences related to revenue and GTM
Differentiation	What's my unique point of view?	Proven GTM tactics, rather than high level thought leadership	Unique view into what GTM orgs and buyer engagement will look like in future	Personal, unvarnished look at what it's like to scale GTM at a startup
Personality	What's my personality type?	"The honest insider" - very candid look at what it's like to work in a GTM organization: opportunities, challenges, threats, priorities, good news/bad news...		
Distribution	Where are my customers?	LinkedIn, events		
Content	What are some specific ideas I want to write about?	1. Tighten up ICP 2. SaaS efficiency benchmarks 3. Low performing marketing	1. Low headcount/high quota sales org 2. RevOps managing agents 3. Uniquely human sales skills	1. New hire 2. Design partner program 3. Post launch momentum post
Format	What format will I use?	Long form text	Long form text	Short form text, some video
Publication	When will I publish?	12/3/24 - Tighten up ICP 12/4/24 - SaaS efficiency	12/5/24 - Low headcount	12/6/24 - New hire

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Email if you want to brainstorm: [scottalbro@gmail.com](mailto:scottalbro@gmail.com)

# Thanks

Questions, need help?

Email me: [scottalbro@gmail.com](mailto:scottalbro@gmail.com)

November 15, 2024