



WHITE PAPER | GTM STRATEGY

Avoiding the Hiring Trap

A Framework for Founders to Get

and Maintain Market Traction

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Executive Summary

Most founders hire too early, from the wrong pool, on the wrong terms, and pay the price for years. The standard hiring playbook — write a job description, post it to a board, interview strangers, hire the best of a mediocre pool — was built for an era when there was no alternative. There is now.

This paper presents a framework for solo founders, CEOs, and CROs deciding whether and when to hire in 2026. The framework is grounded in five principles:

1. Hire from your network, not from strangers. Job-board candidates take ten times longer to qualify because you start with zero shared history.
2. Hire only when you have a billable reason. Specific revenue, currently in pipeline or already closed, that requires the hire to capture or deliver.
3. Never hire to “hope” someone can do the job. If you have not seen them do the work, keep looking.
4. Hire with 18-24 months of runway, or do not hire. Laying off quality people destroys the network you need for future hires.
5. Delay the hire as long as possible by amplifying yourself. AI agents have made the founder-led phase viable for longer than ever before.

The paper introduces a four-stage maturity model — Founder-Led, Founder-Amplified, Founder-Leveraged, Founder-Removed — that helps founders place themselves accurately and plan deliberately. It demonstrates the framework in action through the author’s current company, Rapax, where AI augmentation has enabled a single-founder GTM operation that would otherwise require a four-person team.

The thesis:

Don’t hire to grow. Hire to scale. Growth is what AI-augmented founders can produce alone. Scale is what humans are still required for. The discipline to know the difference is what separates founders who build sustainable companies from founders who burn out trying.

1. The Hardest Mistakes I Ever Made Were in Hiring

I remember founding my first company.

I worked nights. I worked weekends. I worked holidays. My family learned the rhythm of my laptop closing at 1am. I told myself this was temporary — that once I hired the right people, I'd get my life back.

That was a lie I told myself for years.

The hiring I did successfully caused problems I'm still paying for a decade later. The hiring I did unsuccessfully cost me money, momentum, and at least one relationship I valued. And the hiring I avoided — when I should have pulled the trigger — cost me opportunities I'll never recover.

If you're a founder reading this, you already know what I'm describing. You've had the conversation in your head a hundred times: "I need to hire someone for sales. I need to hire someone for marketing. I can't keep doing all of this myself."

You're probably reading this on a Sunday. Or at 11pm on a Tuesday. Or during what should have been your kid's soccer game.

Let me tell you the four hiring patterns that almost ended my last company before AI agents existed to give me a different option.

Pattern 1: Equity-paid employees.

Cash is scarce in the early stages. Equity feels free. So you hire your first sales person with \$120K salary and "meaningful equity." You tell yourself this aligns incentives. You tell yourself they'll work like a founder because they have founder-level upside.

They won't.

Equity-paid employees calculate their effective hourly rate based on the cash, not the equity. The equity is lottery money in their mental accounting. When work gets hard, they leave. When they leave, they take your equity with them, and now you have a dead cap table that makes future fundraising harder.

I've made this mistake. Twice.

Pattern 2: Mr. Right Now instead of Mr. Right.

You spend three months looking for the perfect VP Sales. You interview twenty candidates. None are perfect. You're tired. You're falling behind on pipeline. Your board is asking questions.

So you hire the best of the twenty. You tell yourself, "We can make it work. I'll coach them up."

Eighteen months later, you're paying severance to someone who never figured out your product, never closed a deal that you didn't help close, and is now telling their next employer that your company was "directionless."

You weren't directionless. You were undisciplined about hiring under pressure. Those aren't the same thing, but the result is identical: wasted money, wasted time, and an empty seat that's somehow more demoralizing than the empty seat you started with.

Pattern 3: Recruiting as a 25% job.

When you're founder-led on sales and trying to find product-market fit, every hour matters. The math is unforgiving: you need to be on customer calls, refining the product, understanding the market.

So when you decide to hire, you don't budget for recruiting properly. You think you'll squeeze it in. You'll post a job, do interviews in lunch breaks, decide on a Sunday night.

What actually happens: recruiting eats 25% of your time for three to six months. The customer calls suffer. The product work stalls. You hire someone — maybe good, maybe not — but during the months you spent recruiting, you also lost momentum on the part of the business that needed your attention most.

Recruiting is a job. When founders try to do it part-time, the company pays the price twice: once in the hire and once in the things that didn't get done while you were hiring.

Pattern 4: Hiring because you "think" this is the fit.

Founders have intuition. It's one of the things that makes us founders. But intuition is unreliable for hiring decisions, because we're optimizing on personality, energy, vision alignment — qualities that are real but don't necessarily predict job performance.

I've hired people I loved who couldn't sell. I've hired people I clicked with who couldn't manage their own calendar, let alone a team. I've hired people I "knew were the one" who turned out to be the one for a different company entirely.

The version of you that's certain about a hire is almost always wrong. The version of you that's hesitant is almost always more accurate. But you hire the certain ones anyway, because doubt feels like a leadership failure.

It isn't. Doubt is data.

Here's the thing nobody told me when I was building my first company, and what almost nobody is talking about now even though it's the most important shift in early-stage GTM in twenty years:

You don't have to hire as early as you think.

The traditional milestones — “first sales hire at \$1M ARR,” “first marketing hire at \$2M ARR,” “VP of Sales at \$5M ARR” — were built for an era when there were no alternatives. The founder did the work or someone else did the work. There was no third option.

There is now.

In the past three weeks, I generated a meaningful pipeline for my current company. I am the only person doing GTM. No sales hire. No marketing hire. No ops hire. My LinkedIn impressions are up 683% over the prior 90 days. I have five inbound requests from people outside my professional network — something that almost never happens for founders. My CRM is accurate for the first time in my 25-year career, because I'm not maintaining it manually.

I'm not telling you this to brag. I'm telling you because I've spent two decades wishing this was possible, and now it is.

If you're considering a sales or marketing hire right now, this paper is for you. By the time you finish reading it, you'll have a clear framework for deciding three things:

1. Whether you should hire at all (and if so, when)
2. What kind of person you should hire (and what kind you absolutely shouldn't)
3. What you should do instead of hiring if the answer is “not yet”

I wrote this because I talk to founders every week who are about to make hiring mistakes I made and can't take back. The mistakes are expensive. The mistakes are unnecessary. And the mistakes are avoidable if you understand what's actually changed about GTM in the past two years.

This isn't a pitch for any specific tool, including the one I happen to build. It's a framework for thinking about hiring in a world where the alternatives to hiring have fundamentally changed.

Most founders I know tell me their biggest professional mistakes were in hiring.

I wrote this so yours don't have to be.

2. The Problem with How Founders Hire Today

2.1 The Standard Hiring Playbook Was Built for a Different Era

For thirty years, the hiring playbook for early-stage GTM has been remarkably stable. You hit a revenue milestone. You write a job description. You post it to a job board. You interview candidates from a pool of strangers. You pick the best of the pool. You ramp them for three to six months. You hope they work out.

This playbook came from a specific moment in business history. Before the internet, your network was small and local. You needed strangers to fill roles because you didn't know enough people who could do the work. Recruiters and job boards filled the gap.

The playbook persisted into the internet era because nobody questioned it. LinkedIn made it easier to find strangers, not better. The fundamental act — hiring people you don't know to do work you don't have time to do — stayed the same.

That playbook is now obsolete. Not because hiring is dead, but because two things changed:

First, your network became your most valuable asset. If you've been working in your industry for ten or more years, you know hundreds of people who could potentially do the job. Former customers. Former partners. Former competitors. Former colleagues. People who already understand your space, your customers, your jargon. People whose work you've seen.

Second, AI agents made it possible to delay the hire entirely. The work that used to require a salaried employee — outreach, content, CRM hygiene, meeting prep, follow-up — can now be done by software at a fraction of the cost. The decision is no longer “hire or don't hire.” It's “hire when you have a specific reason, not when you hit an arbitrary milestone.”

These two shifts together produce a hiring framework that almost nobody is using, even though it's dramatically better than the standard playbook.

2.2 If You Are Hiring from Job Boards, You Have Already Lost

Let me say this plainly, because most hiring content tip-toes around it:

In my twenty-five years of building and selling companies, I have found that job-board candidates take ten times longer to qualify than network candidates. The reason: you start with zero context.

I don't mean the people on those boards are bad. Some are good. I mean the act of hiring from those boards is, by itself, evidence that something in your business has gone wrong.

Here's why:

Job boards select for people who are actively looking for work. There are exactly three reasons a senior salesperson or marketer is actively looking:

4. They've been laid off. They may be excellent. They may also be the underperformer who got cut first. You won't know until they've already cost you six months.
5. They're miserable at their current job. People who are great at their job and respected by their team and on track for promotion are not on Indeed. The people on Indeed are unhappy. Unhappiness travels with them. It will arrive at your company within ninety days.
6. They've been job-hopping every 18-24 months for a decade. They are professional candidates. They are excellent at interviews, which is a different skill from being excellent at the job. By the time you realize the difference, you've paid them for a year.

The people you actually want — the senior closer at the Tier 1 customer who would be perfect as your VP Sales, the marketing director at your former employer who built the campaigns you admire, the partner manager at your competitor who knows your entire market — these people are not on job boards. They are at companies. They will move for the right opportunity from someone they trust. They will not respond to a generic LinkedIn job post from a founder they don't know.

When a founder turns to job boards, they're publicly declaring three things:

- "I don't have a network strong enough to find this hire."
- "I haven't been cultivating relationships with the people I'd actually want to hire."
- "I'm out of time and willing to hire whoever is available."

Each of those is a problem. Together they explain why job-board hires fail at twice the rate of network hires.

The narrow exception: If you have 40% gross margins and patient customers who tolerate ramp time, you might be able to absorb the cost of a bad hire while you find a better one. In twenty-five years of telecom GTM, I have never seen those conditions in an early-stage company. Margins are tight. Customers are impatient. Bad hires compound.

This is also why the first five to ten hires you make — your core team — should come from people you have had hundreds of hours of contact with. Not "I've met them at a conference" hours. Hundreds of hours of meaningful interaction: working on deals together, supporting the same customers, navigating partnerships, debating ideas. The interactions that show you who someone actually is.

If you haven't had hundreds of hours with someone, you don't know them well enough to hire them as part of your founding team. After your first ten hires — once your company has its own gravity and the cultural foundation is set — you can start hiring people with less prior context. But not before.

2.3 What Else Founders Get Wrong

The job-board problem is the most visible failure mode. But there are five others that founders fall into regularly.

They wait too long, then panic.

The founder pushes through nights and weekends, telling themselves they don't need to hire yet. Then a quarter goes badly, or a board meeting goes poorly, or a competitor does something threatening. Panic sets in. The founder decides they need to hire immediately. They post a job. They start interviewing strangers. They hire under pressure. Hiring under pressure is how founders end up with Mr. Right Now instead of Mr. Right.

They write job descriptions that nobody can fill.

The founder lists everything they wish the candidate could do: prospect, close, build pipeline, write content, manage the CRM, run events, build the sales process, hire other sellers. This isn't a job description. It's the founder's own job description. No single hire can do all of this, but the founder has been doing all of it, so it feels reasonable to ask one person to take it over.

They hire generalists when they should hire specialists.

Because the founder needs help with everything, they hire someone who claims to be good at everything. Generalists in sales are people who've moved jobs every 18 months for ten years. They've never built anything to scale. They know enough to interview well but not enough to deliver. Specialists — closers who only close, content writers who only write, sales engineers who only demo — exist and are highly available. But the founder doesn't hire them, because the founder's job description was for a generalist.

They negotiate against themselves on comp.

Cash is scarce. Equity feels free. The founder offers below-market cash with "meaningful equity." The candidate either rejects the offer (the good ones) or accepts it while mentally discounting the equity to zero (the bad ones). Either way, the founder loses. A dead cap table is more expensive than a competitive salary.

They confuse fit with performance.

The founder hires people they "click with" — people who share their vision, energy, and worldview. These are the wrong qualities to optimize for. Fit predicts whether you'll enjoy working with someone. It does not predict whether they can do the job. You can like someone who can't sell. You can dislike someone who can. The job is to find someone who can do the job. Liking them is a bonus.

2.4 The Hidden Cost of Bad Hires

When a founder hires badly, they pay three costs.

The financial cost.

A bad sales hire costs \$150,000 to \$250,000 in salary, benefits, ramp time, and severance. A bad marketing hire is similar. A bad executive hire (VP, CxO) can cost \$500,000 or more once you factor in equity dilution and recruitment fees. These are real numbers, and they show up on your P&L. Most founders underestimate them by 30-50%.

The opportunity cost.

Every month the founder spent recruiting was a month not spent on customers, product, or strategy. Every month the founder spent managing the bad hire was a month not spent selling, building, or thinking. The hire was supposed to free the founder's time. Instead it consumed it. For a founder generating significant personal pipeline, six months of recruiting and managing a bad hire is often larger than the direct financial cost.

The reputational cost.

This is the cost founders never talk about, but it's the most expensive. When you hire someone from your network and they don't work out, the entire network knows. When you lay someone off, the entire network knows. When word gets out that you're a difficult manager, an unclear communicator, or a poor judge of talent, the doors to future hires from your network close.

You don't get those doors open again. The senior salesperson at the Tier 1 customer who would have been your perfect VP Sales hire in three years? They've heard the stories. They will not return your call. A bad hire isn't a \$200K mistake. It's a \$200K mistake plus a permanent reduction in your ability to make future hires from the only pool that matters.

2.5 Where This Is Heading

The hiring problem is getting worse, not better, for three reasons.

Talent is more skeptical of startups than ever.

The 2022-2026 startup layoff cycle taught senior talent that early-stage companies are not safe places to work. Pre-Series A founders are now competing for talent against a memory of mass layoffs, deferred raises, and equity that went to zero.

Comp expectations have outpaced startup budgets.

Senior salespeople and marketers earned compensation packages in 2021-2022 that have anchored their expectations. They're looking for \$200K+ base salaries with significant on-target earnings. Early-stage companies can't compete on cash. Equity carries less weight than it did five years ago, because senior talent has watched too much equity go to zero.

AI is making generalist roles obsolete faster than founders realize.

The work that justified hiring a generalist — outreach volume, content production, CRM management, basic analysis — is being automated. The roles that will exist in three years are

specialist roles (closers, customer success leads, deal architects) that require expertise founders can't easily evaluate.

The standard hiring playbook produces worse results every year. Founders who continue to use it will fall further behind founders who adopt a different approach.

2.6 What Needs to Change

The fix is not to hire better candidates from the same pool using the same process. The fix is a different framework entirely.

Five principles together produce a hiring framework that is dramatically better than the standard playbook:

- Hire from your network. Avoid job boards. Job-board candidates take ten times longer to qualify because you start with zero shared history.
- Hire only when you have a billable reason. Don't hire because you "need a sales person." Hire because you have a paying customer that needs supporting, a specific deal that needs closing, or a specific deployment that needs delivering.
- Hire never to "hope" they do the job. If you can't confidently say "I have seen this person do this job," keep looking.
- Hire with 18-24 months of runway, or do not hire. The cost of laying off a good person you couldn't afford is your career, not just your quarter.
- Delay the hire as long as possible by amplifying yourself. AI agents have made the founder-led phase viable for longer than it has ever been.

The rest of this paper explains how to apply these principles.

3. The Solution: Leverage Before You Hire

3.1 The Founder Doesn't Need More Help. The Founder Needs Better Leverage.

The instinct when you're overwhelmed is to add people. More hands, less work for any one person, faster progress. This is wrong.

Adding people slows founders down. Each new person is another relationship to manage, another set of priorities to align, another performance question to assess. The founder's time gets consumed by management, not by the work that grew the company in the first place.

The right move isn't more help. It's better leverage.

Leverage means doing the same work with less effort. It means turning one hour into three. It means having your Monday morning planning session produce the entire month's strategy, not just the next deal. It means having content drafted, pipeline reviewed, and outreach prepared before you've had your second coffee.

This isn't a productivity hack. It's a structural change in how the founder spends their time. And it's the only way to make founder-led GTM sustainable past the first \$1M in revenue.

3.2 Work Smarter, Not Harder: The Founder's Operating System

The founders who survive the solo-led phase share a common pattern. They're not working more hours. They're working the same hours with dramatically better structure.

Segment your time deliberately.

Don't do everything every day. Don't reactively answer email at 6am, take customer calls all afternoon, write a blog post at 11pm, and wonder why you're exhausted. Segment your time by activity type, and protect those segments.

Here's the time allocation that works for a solo founder running GTM:

Activity	% of Week	Hours (40h base)
Outreach	25%	10 hours
Pipeline management	25%	10 hours
Product	25%	10 hours
Everything else (networking, recruiting, training, marketing, strategy)	25%	10 hours

This is the practical, defensible allocation. Quarter your time, quarter again, and you have a working week.

Notice what's not on the list as its own segment: content creation. That's because content creation is what happens during the first four hours of your month, when you produce the thought leadership asset that drives everything else. The remaining content work — derivatives, social posts, blog versions — is downstream of that one strategic decision. AI agents handle the production. You handle the thinking.

Notice also that product gets 25%. This is non-negotiable for solo founders. The 25% for product means time spent in what you sell your customer — improving it and expanding it to better fit your customer's needs. For a software founder, that's time in the code, in the architecture, in the next version. For a services founder, that's time refining your methodology, expanding your offering, sharpening your deliverables.

Whatever your product is, a quarter of your week belongs there. Sales people who don't know the product lose deals. Marketers who don't know the product produce content that doesn't convert. Founders who lose touch with their product lose touch with their business.

The fourth quarter — networking, recruiting, training, marketing, strategy, and the inevitable random fires — is the swing block. The 25% absorbs the variability so the other 75% stays predictable.

Plan the month in the first four hours.

Here's what my first Monday of every month looks like:

I sit down and plan a single thought leadership asset for the month — typically a white paper, sometimes a case study, sometimes a deep-dive blog post. The topic comes from the conversations I've had over the previous month with customers, partners, and colleagues. It's framed around how I can help my customer, not around what my product does.

That one asset becomes the brand centerpiece for the entire month.

From that asset, I derive everything else: a datasheet for sales, a pitch deck for prospects, a pricing calculator for budget conversations, multiple blog posts for inbound, social media posts for visibility, video content for engagement. Each derivative takes a fraction of the time the original took, because the thinking is already done.

By hour four of my work month, I have the complete sales and marketing strategy. I know what I'm saying. I know what I'm publishing. I know what I'm pitching.

If you are not this efficient with your monthly planning, you will fail at solo-led GTM. Not because you're not working hard enough, but because you're spending your time on activities that don't compound.

Spend 25% of your time networking.

Twenty-five percent. Roughly ten hours a week. Talking to industry leaders, customers, partners, competitors, and colleagues about what's actually happening in your market.

This isn't optional and it isn't a nice-to-have. It's the most important activity you do, because it determines whether your strategy is in touch with reality.

Here's the brutal truth: you cannot sell a deal to a customer in 2026 if you're walking and talking 2024. Markets shift fast. Buyer priorities change quarterly. The vocabulary your prospects use to describe their problems is different than it was a year ago. If you're not in constant conversation with the people who buy from you and the people who sell to them, your messaging will become stale, and you won't know it until your conversion rates collapse.

Networking is also where you find your future hires. Every conversation you have with a partner is a future hire interview. Every conversation with a competitor's employee is a future opportunity. Every conversation with a former customer is a referral source.

Focus on pipeline daily.

Your pipeline is where the deals are. Review it daily. Not weekly, not "when you have time," daily.

The reason daily review matters: deals don't fail at the bottom of the funnel. They fail at the middle, when nobody is paying attention. A deal that's been in "evaluation" for six weeks is a dead deal nobody has had the courage to call yet. A daily review catches these. A weekly review misses them.

I happen to use KForce to do this — Sage compiles a morning brief that surfaces deal changes, recommends next actions, and flags deals that have stalled. But the principle is more important than the tool. If you're not reviewing pipeline daily through some mechanism, you're losing deals you don't know you're losing.

Drive outreach with intent.

The other side of pipeline is outreach: filling the top of the funnel with the right prospects.

Don't do volume outreach. Don't blast 500 generic LinkedIn messages and hope ten respond. That's the activity of someone who doesn't know who their customer is.

Do targeted outreach. Identify the specific accounts that you believe could use your product. Research who the decision makers are at those accounts. Find the second-degree connections that could introduce you. Send personalized messages that reference something specific to their company, their role, their recent activity.

The goal is to live in your customer's world. The more you understand what they care about, what they read, who they listen to, what frustrates them, the easier it becomes to sell to them. Selling becomes a conversation, not a pitch.

3.3 The Four Stages of Founder-Led GTM

Every successful company moves through stages as it scales. Understanding the stages — and where you are in them — is critical to making good hiring decisions.

Stage	Name	Mode	Description
1	Founder-Led	Manual	Founder does everything; works 60-80 hour weeks; pipeline unreliable
2	Founder-Amplified	AI-Augmented	AI agents handle execution; founder does judgment; 40-50 hour weeks at higher output
3	Founder-Leveraged	Specialist Hires	First specialist hires from network; targeted, billable, trusted
4	Founder-Removed	Team-Led	VP-level leadership runs GTM; founder focuses on strategy and vision

Stage 1: Founder-Led (Manual)

The founder does everything themselves, without significant automation. Outreach is manual. Content is manual. CRM is updated by hand, when there's time. This is the default state. Most founders survive this stage for the first \$200K-500K in revenue. Beyond 6-18 months at this stage, founders burn out, miss opportunities, or hire prematurely.

Stage 2: Founder-Amplified (AI-Augmented)

The founder is still the only GTM resource, but software now handles the work that doesn't require human judgment. AI agents draft outreach, maintain the CRM, generate content, prepare meeting briefs, and surface pipeline signals. The founder reviews, approves, and executes the human-judgment work: actual conversations, deal architecture, strategic decisions.

This is the stage that used to be impossible and is now the most valuable place to be. Almost no founders are operating here today because the tools have only existed for about two years. A founder in Stage 2 operates at 3-4x their Stage 1 capacity, works 40-50 hours instead of 70-80, and produces growth proportional to strategy rather than energy.

For companies targeting \$5-10M ARR, Stage 2 can be the steady state, never moving to Stage 3. For companies targeting larger outcomes, Stage 2 buys time: time to find product-market fit, generate traction data, and build the network from which future hires will come.

Stage 3: Founder-Leveraged (Specialist Hires from Network)

Stage 3 is when you bring in additional human capacity. But “hire” is not the only mechanism — and it shouldn’t be the first one.

The mechanisms in order of preference:

1. Contract work from your network. Before you make a salaried hire, find someone in your network who can do the specific work on a contract basis. Training delivery, customer deployment, implementation services. You pay only for the work delivered. Contract work is also a trial period for what could become a future hire.
2. Reseller and referral arrangements for sales. Don’t hire a sales person until you’ve exhausted reseller and referral options. Resellers are companies that already sell complementary products to your target buyers. Referral partners refer business in exchange for a finder’s fee. A well-run program can sustain growth from \$1M to \$5M ARR without hiring a single sales person. You can always convert a referral source to a full-time hire.
3. Specialist hires when you have a specific revenue-generating role. Only after contract work has proven the function and reseller/referral partnerships have been exhausted should you make a salaried hire. The hire should be a specialist, not a generalist; tied to specific revenue that exists now; from your network whose work you have seen; compensated competitively in cash; and backed by 18-24 months of runway.

Stage 4: Founder-Removed (Team-Led)

The founder steps back from day-to-day GTM execution. A VP of Sales, a Head of Marketing, or a Chief Revenue Officer runs the function. This stage requires meaningful scale — typically \$5M+ ARR with a clear path to \$20M+ — to justify the cost of the leadership layer.

3.4 Why Stage 2 Is the New Default

For decades, founders moved from Stage 1 directly to Stage 3 (or Stage 4 if they had funding). Stage 2 didn’t exist as a viable option, because the tools to amplify a single founder didn’t exist.

This has changed.

AI agents now handle:

- Outreach drafting at scale, with the same personalization quality as a human SDR but at one-tenth the cost and time.
- Content production, drafting blog posts, social media, email sequences in the founder’s voice, at the cadence the algorithm rewards.
- CRM maintenance, capturing every interaction, every contact, every signal, with accuracy a human can’t match because humans don’t have time.
- Pipeline analysis, surfacing changes, signals, and recommended actions every morning.

- Meeting preparation, compiling context on every account and attendee before every call.
- Knowledge management, making the founder's accumulated expertise available as a resource for every interaction.

When all of these are running, the founder does the work that AI cannot do: the conversations, the deal architecture, the strategic thinking, the network cultivation. The work that requires human judgment.

The founder who recognizes this and uses it can stay in Stage 2 long enough to reach \$3-5M ARR before making the first hire, generate the traction data that makes Stage 3 hires successful, build the network from which Stage 3 hires will be sourced, and validate product-market fit before betting capital on people.

The founder who doesn't recognize this — who follows the old playbook and hires at \$1M ARR because that's "when you're supposed to" — will spend the next two years managing hires instead of growing the company, and will arrive at \$3-5M ARR with the same team a Stage 2 founder will have arrived at \$3-5M ARR without hiring at all.

The difference: the Stage 2 founder has 2-3 million dollars of unspent payroll, a higher-quality CRM, and a team of one that runs faster than the Stage 3 founder's team of four.

3.5 What Kinetic Tricks Does

KForce, the platform built by Kinetic Tricks, is what makes Stage 2 a real option for founders.

Two AI agents — Sage for sales and Aria for marketing — handle the work that used to require hiring. Sage drafts personalized outreach at scale, maintains CRM accuracy, generates morning briefs, prepares meeting context, and surfaces pipeline signals. Aria handles content strategy, drafts social posts and blog content, manages publishing cadence, and runs marketing campaigns.

The agents work with the tools founders already use: their email, their calendar, their CRM, their LinkedIn. The setup takes hours, not weeks. The founder reviews drafts and approves work; the agents handle the volume.

What KForce is not: it's not a replacement for the founder's judgment. The agents draft; the founder decides. The agents propose; the founder approves. The work that requires a human stays with the human. Everything else gets automated.

This is what makes the four-stage progression possible. Without something like KForce, founders are forced from Stage 1 to Stage 3 prematurely. With KForce, founders can operate in Stage 2 for as long as Stage 2 serves them — which, for most early-stage companies, is significantly longer than they expected.

3.6 The Solution in One Sentence

Don't hire to grow. Hire to scale.

Growth is what happens when you find product-market fit, prove unit economics, and accelerate. AI agents can drive growth from \$0 to \$3-5M in ARR without any hires. Founders who use that capacity well arrive at \$3-5M with capital intact, traction proven, and a network ready to provide their first specialist hires.

Scale is what happens after growth is proven, when you need to multiply the things that already work. That requires people. Specialist people. From your network. With the runway to keep them. At the moment they have a specific revenue-generating job to do.

Stage 2 is the bridge that buys you the time to be discerning about Stage 3. Without Stage 2, founders are forced to hire under pressure. With Stage 2, hiring becomes a deliberate decision instead of a desperate one.

3.7 The Exception: When You Have to Hire Anyway

There's a scenario where the framework above doesn't apply: when your CFO insists you hire, or when your investors require hiring as a condition of further capital or as a risk-mitigation measure.

This happens. Boards get nervous about key-person dependency. Investors push for hires to validate that the company is scaling and not just running on founder heroics. CFOs see a runway calculation that says "if the founder gets hit by a bus, the company dies in 30 days" and they're not wrong.

If you find yourself in this situation, the framework changes. You're no longer hiring because the work demands it; you're hiring to satisfy a stakeholder. The hire's primary purpose is risk reduction, not capacity expansion.

In this case, the prioritization order changes. Skills and experience remain important — you cannot hire someone who doesn't know your customers, your industry, or how to do the actual job. But the top criterion becomes trust and culture fit, not skills.

When you're hiring under operational pressure (the work needs to get done now), skills win. You need someone who can deliver on Day 30, not Day 90.

When you're hiring under stakeholder pressure (the board needs a hire, or you need succession risk reduced), trust wins. The hire needs to be someone you can hand the keys to.

This does not mean hiring people who don't know what they're doing. It means hiring competent people you trust deeply over more skilled people you don't.

Skills can be sharpened with time and coaching. Industry knowledge can be acquired through immersion. But you cannot retroactively build trust with someone you didn't know before you hired them. The trust either exists from prior shared experience, or it doesn't.

If you don't have anyone in your network who is both competent and deeply trusted, do not hire under pressure. Tell the board and the CFO that the right hire doesn't exist yet, and that hiring the wrong person will create more risk than it mitigates. Most boards will respect a founder who can defend that position with conviction.

4. The Framework in Practice

4.1 How This Looks in Real Time: The Rapax Story

I'm going to tell you exactly how I'm applying the framework at Rapax right now, because the most honest proof of any framework is watching someone live inside it.

Rapax is my current company. We sell AI-native network service assurance to network telecom operators. The product is real, the market is real, and the pipeline is real.

But Rapax is not a finished story. I'm not going to give you a tidy "we did X and now we're at \$20M ARR" narrative because that's not where we are. Rapax is mid-build. The awareness magnet is still compounding. The bullhorn is still ongoing. We have a meaningful pipeline of customers in various evaluation states — large enough to fund a real business, structured for the long sales cycles our market demands, and growing every week through the framework I'm describing in this paper.

This is what makes Rapax the right proof point: I'm showing you the framework working in real time, not after-the-fact.

4.2 Why Long Sales Cycles Force a Different Strategy

Telecom sales cycles are six to nine months minimum. Some are eighteen months. This is the reality of selling to risk-averse network operators with procurement processes designed in the 1990s.

When your sales cycle is that long, you cannot run "quarterly sales sprints." There is no quarterly. By the time a deal closes, you've been working it for three quarters. Your pipeline coverage has to be enormous because the conversion timeline is enormous.

This is why compounding sales strategy is the only viable approach for long-cycle businesses. You cannot survive on lumpy effort. You cannot survive on episodic content. You cannot survive on "I'll do outreach when I have time." Every week that

you're not adding to the top of the funnel is a week that, nine months from now, becomes a gap in your closed business.

Compounding requires consistency. Consistency requires automation. Automation requires AI agents. The math forces itself.

Here's what compounding looks like at Rapax right now:

- Pipeline coverage: deals at every stage from initial conversation through late-stage evaluation. The structure matters more than the number — a healthy distribution across stages means deals are progressing through the funnel at a reasonable pace.
- Pipeline maintenance: new deals enter the top of the funnel every week, generated by a combination of outbound (Sage) and inbound (Aria). Over the course of a quarter, the compounding effect is significant.
- Activity rhythm: Sage runs every day. Briefs every morning. CRM updated continuously. Aria runs on a fixed cadence — two posts a week, three campaigns active. The work doesn't stop when I have a customer meeting or a board call or a flight to a conference. The agents keep working.

This is the rhythm that long sales cycles require, and it's the rhythm that no solo founder could sustain manually. I tried for years before AI agents existed. The pattern was always the same: heroic effort for a few weeks, then a quiet period of recovery, then heroic effort again. The result was a lumpy pipeline that failed to compound.

4.3 The Two-Engine Pipeline

Pipeline at Rapax is fed by two engines that work in parallel.

The Bullhorn: Sage drives outbound.

Sage handles outreach at scale. The targeting decisions and the messaging strategy come from me. The execution — researching individual prospects, drafting personalized messages, scheduling follow-ups, logging responses — is the agent's job.

This is the bullhorn: deliberate, targeted, founder-directed, agent-executed. Every week, Sage produces a list of high-fit prospects in our target account list. I review the list, approve the messaging approach, and Sage drafts the outreach. I review the drafts and send the ones that meet the bar.

The result: a steady stream of new conversations every week from outbound. Some become qualified opportunities. Some don't yet, but add to the network for future cycles. The point is the consistency — the same volume every week, generated through the same disciplined process.

The Magnet: Aria builds awareness.

Aria handles content production and publishing cadence. Two LinkedIn posts per week (Tuesday and Thursday), one manual post from me on Monday or Friday, and the weekly Transformation Leaders Podcast episode. Plus monthly white papers and quarterly long-form deep dives.

This is the magnet: consistent, compounding, audience-directed, agent-produced. The strategy comes from me. The execution comes from Aria.

The result: a 683% increase in LinkedIn impressions over the prior 90 days. 100 new connections per week. Five inbound requests from outside my network in the first three weeks of the new content cadence — something that almost never happened in my career before this approach.

The magnet works on a longer timescale than the bullhorn. Outbound produces conversations within days. Inbound takes months to build, but once it's built, it produces conversations without proportional founder effort.

Right now at Rapax, the magnet is still building. The bullhorn is doing most of the work. As the magnet compounds over the next six to twelve months, the ratio will shift, and outbound effort can be redeployed to higher-value activity.

4.4 My Job Right Now: Build the Pipeline Until I Cannot Manage It Myself

This is the operational test for whether I should hire.

Right now, I can manage the pipeline. The morning brief from Sage tells me what changed yesterday. The pipeline review in my CRM tells me what's at risk. The follow-ups that need to happen go on my calendar. The strategic decisions stay with me.

This works because Sage and Aria are doing the work that used to require additional hires. Without them, this pipeline would be a four-person operation. With them, it's a one-person operation augmented by software.

But the operational test has a ceiling. At some point, pipeline grows beyond what one founder can shepherd, even with AI augmentation. The signals will be:

- Deals are slipping because I can't get to them fast enough
- Customer conversations are getting shorter because I'm rushing
- Opportunities are being missed because I'm not in the right rooms
- Strategic work is being deferred because tactical work is consuming the calendar

When those signals appear, the framework triggers a Stage 3 transition. And when that transition happens, I will not be hiring from job boards. I will be calling the people in my network whose work I've watched for years.

But I am not at that point. The framework requires me to push the founder-led phase to its true limit before hiring. Most founders hire too early because they're uncomfortable with the workload. The workload is the point. The workload tells me whether the company is real.

4.5 The Mechanisms I'm Using Right Now Instead of Hiring

Reseller partners: significant margin in exchange for sales execution.

I have signed reseller partners who actively sell Rapax into their existing customer relationships. The economics: they take a meaningful share of margin on closed deals — significant enough to make the arrangement worth their while, but dramatically less than the loaded cost of hiring an equivalent sales capability.

Why this works: my reseller partners already have relationships with my target buyers. They've been selling complementary products to these accounts for years. Their sales team is already paid for. Their customer success team is already in place. I'm renting an entire sales organization, with zero risk if a deal doesn't close.

Compare that to hiring a sales person: \$120-200K loaded cost, 6-9 months to ramp, 18-24 month tenure on average, no guarantee they can sell into the accounts the resellers already own. The reseller mechanism is dramatically better economics than hiring for a long-cycle business that hasn't reached scale.

Referral agents: commission for deal sourcing.

I have referral agents — many of them — actively looking for deals to send my way. The economics: they take a percentage commission on closed deals they source. No retainer, no draw, no fixed cost. They get paid when I get paid.

Why this works: my referral agents collectively have a network ten or twenty times larger than mine. They're seeing opportunities I'd never find on my own. The cost is zero until a deal closes. The cost is bounded once it does.

A warm introduction from someone the buyer trusts converts at 5-10x the rate of cold outreach. The referral agents shortcut the entire prospecting motion.

The composite picture.

Between resellers, referral agents, and my own founder-led activity (augmented by Sage and Aria), Rapax has the effective coverage of a sales organization that would cost a small fortune if I were doing it through hiring. The actual cost: the reseller margin and referral commissions, which only get paid when deals close. The variable-cost structure is what makes this viable for an early-stage company.

The pipeline isn't built by hiring. The pipeline is built by leveraging existing networks and existing infrastructure that other companies have already paid to build. My job is to make those external resources productive, not to recreate them inside my own company.

4.6 When Hiring Actually Makes Sense

The framework I'm applying is not "never hire." It's "hire when the math actually requires it."

For Rapax, the math will require hiring when:

1. Pipeline exceeds founder capacity to manage. When deals are slipping because I cannot personally engage with everyone, I need help shepherding them. The first hire will be a senior closer.
2. Deployment volume exceeds contract resource capacity. Once we have enough closed business that contracted deployment specialists can't handle the volume, I'll hire a full-time deployment lead. This person was probably a contractor first.
3. Reseller volume requires dedicated management. When the reseller partnerships are generating enough deal flow that they need full-time relationship management, a partner manager becomes justified.

In each case, the trigger is revenue, not milestone. I'm not hiring at \$1M ARR because that's "when you're supposed to." I'm hiring when there is specific revenue-generating work that cannot be handled by the existing mechanisms.

And in each case, the hire will come from my network. I already know who the senior closer is going to be. I already know who the deployment lead is going to be. I already know who the partner manager is going to be. I've worked with them, watched their work, trusted them with deals before. The decision to hire them isn't a hiring decision; it's a contract conversion.

This is what Stage 3 hiring looks like when it's done well. The hire isn't a leap of faith. It's the natural progression of a relationship that has already been working in a less-committed form.

4.7 The Numbers That Should Anchor Your Thinking

The framework gets concrete when you compare the cost of being wrong about hiring to the cost of using AI agents to delay or avoid the hire.

Cost of a bad hire (industry benchmarks):

- Bad SDR: \$80,000 – \$120,000 (salary + ramp + severance)
- Bad AE: \$150,000 – \$250,000
- Bad VP Sales: \$400,000 – \$800,000 (including equity dilution and recruitment fees)

Cost of AI-augmented founder operation:

- AI platform license: meaningfully less than one annual salary, often by an order of magnitude
- LLM API costs: scale with usage, typically a few hundred dollars per month for a single founder's workload
- Founder time: the same 40 hours per week you were already working, now allocated more deliberately

The asymmetry is the point.

A single bad sales hire costs more than two years of AI-augmented founder operation. A single bad VP hire costs more than five years. And these are just the cash costs — they don't include the reputational cost, the opportunity cost, or the team distraction cost that compounds across the months following the mistake.

For a founder who is still trying to find product-market fit, who is still building pipeline, who is still validating unit economics — making a hiring decision that costs the equivalent of years of runway is the single most expensive mistake available. And it's the mistake most founders make.

The alternative isn't free, but it's bounded. The AI-augmented founder operation has costs that scale predictably with usage. The output scales with the founder's strategic focus. The downside is limited to the cost of the platform and the founder's own time. The upside is the ability to operate at the capacity of a small team while preserving the optionality to hire later, from a position of strength rather than desperation.

5. What to Do About It

5.1 The Diagnostic: Where Are You Actually?

Before you can plan what to do, you have to honestly assess where you are. Most founders misjudge their stage, almost always overestimating themselves.

You are in Stage 1 (Founder-Led / Manual) if:

- You write your outreach messages yourself, one at a time, when you have time
- Your CRM is mostly accurate for deals you're actively working but degrades for everything older than 30 days
- You post on LinkedIn when something interesting happens, which is irregularly
- You haven't published a piece of content longer than a LinkedIn post in the past 60 days
- Your morning routine involves checking email and reacting to whatever showed up
- You frequently work past 8pm because "you'll catch up tonight"
- You've considered hiring a sales person multiple times this year

If three or more of these are true, you're in Stage 1. This is fine — every founder starts here — but it's not sustainable for more than 12-18 months without breaking either you or the business.

You are in transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2 if:

- You've started using AI tools for specific tasks (drafting emails, generating content)
- You've automated at least one workflow (calendar booking, lead routing, follow-up reminders)
- You can articulate your ideal customer profile in one sentence
- You have a written content strategy, even if you don't always execute it
- Your CRM has more accurate data than it did six months ago

You are in Stage 2 (Founder-Amplified) if:

- AI agents handle the work that doesn't require your judgment, autonomously, every day
- Your CRM is continuously accurate without you maintaining it
- Content publishes on a consistent cadence whether you have time or not
- You receive a daily briefing that tells you what changed in your pipeline and what to do today
- You spend your work hours on customer conversations, deal architecture, and strategic decisions
- You're working 40-50 hours and producing more than you used to working 70

Very few founders are here yet. If you're here, you're operating ahead of 95% of solo founders.

You are in transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3 if:

- Pipeline volume has grown to the point where you're missing conversations
- Specific deals require expertise you don't have time to develop yourself
- Customer success activities are taking time away from new business
- Multiple deals are at the same stage simultaneously and you cannot give them all the attention they need

This is when hiring starts to make sense — not before.

5.2 The 90-Day Plan If You're in Stage 1

Most founders reading this paper are in Stage 1, working too hard, considering hiring. Here's the 90-day plan to move into Stage 2 instead.

Days 1-30: Foundation

The first month is about clearing the deck for what comes next. Don't try to deploy new tools yet. Get the prerequisites in place.

Week 1: Audit your time honestly. Track every 30 minutes for one week. At the end of the week, categorize each block. Most founders are shocked by how little of their time goes to revenue-generating activities. This audit is the baseline for everything that follows.

Week 2: Document your ideal customer. Not your target market — your ideal customer. Industry, size, role, situation, pain points, vocabulary. If you can't write this in one page, you don't know your customer well enough yet to automate anything.

Week 3: Write your first thought leadership asset. Pick a topic from the conversations you've had with customers in the past month. Frame it as how you can help your customer, not what your product does. Spend the entire week on it.

Week 4: Identify the 50 people in your network who should be the seeds of your magnet. Former customers, partners, competitors you respect, colleagues from previous companies. Reach out to each one personally — not with a pitch, but with a question.

Days 31-60: Deployment

The second month is about putting the operating system in place. Deploy an AI-augmented platform — KForce or equivalent — that handles outreach, content, CRM, and pipeline management. Plan for the deployment to take two weeks.

Your bullhorn agent (Sage equivalent) starts producing outreach drafts. Review every draft. Send the ones that meet your bar. Reject the ones that don't, with feedback. The agent learns from your decisions.

Your magnet agent (Aria equivalent) starts producing content. Same review-and-approve workflow. Two posts per week minimum. The cadence matters more than the perfection of any individual post.

By the end of the second month, you should have outreach going out every week, content publishing on a consistent schedule, and your CRM updating itself.

Days 61-90: Consistency

The third month is about making the operating system stick. Run the 25/25/25/25 time allocation deliberately. Block your calendar. Defend the blocks.

Pay attention to leading indicators: connection rate on outreach, content engagement, inbound requests, CRM accuracy. These will move before pipeline or revenue moves. If the leading indicators are improving, the lagging indicators will follow within 90-180 days.

By the end of Day 90, you should be operating in Stage 2. Not perfectly, but recognizably. The work that used to require all your evenings now happens during business hours. The content you used to dread producing now publishes whether you have time or not.

5.3 The 90-Day Plan If You're Considering a Hire

If you're in late Stage 2 and the operational signals say it's time to hire, the next 90 days are about making sure you hire well.

Days 1-30: Honest Assessment

Before you start any hiring activity, answer three questions honestly.

1. Is this a billable hire? Is there specific revenue, currently in your pipeline or already closed, that requires this hire to capture or deliver? If you cannot point to specific revenue, you're hiring on hope. Don't.
2. Do you have 18-24 months of runway after the hire? Calculate it twice. Include their fully loaded cost. Include the possibility that the first 6 months produce zero incremental revenue.
3. Who in your network could do this job? Make the list before you write a job description. The list should have at least three names. If you don't have three names, you're not ready to hire.

Days 31-60: Network Outreach

Reach out to the names on your list directly. Not with a job posting. Not with a recruiting pitch. With a conversation.

“I’m thinking about expanding the team in this area. You’re someone whose work I respect. Would you be open to a conversation about what you’re looking for next, or what you might know about the market?”

By the end of the month, you should have had 5-10 substantive conversations with people in your network. From these conversations, you should have identified 1-3 people who are genuinely interested in the opportunity.

Days 61-90: Trial and Decision

If you’ve identified someone interesting, don’t go straight to a full-time offer. Find a way to work together first. A defined contract engagement is ideal. Three months on a specific project. Real work, real outcomes, real money. You see how they work. They see how you operate.

By the end of Day 90, you have either: a working relationship that’s clearly worth converting to full-time; honest data about why this isn’t working, which allows you to end the relationship cleanly; or continued conversation that needs more time, which means you weren’t really ready to hire yet. Any of these three outcomes is better than a bad full-time hire.

5.4 What You Will Get Wrong

The plans above sound straightforward on paper. They’re not, in practice. Here are the failure modes you should anticipate.

You will under-invest in the first 30 days.

The temptation will be to skip the foundation work and jump straight to “deploy the tool.” Don’t. The foundation work is what determines whether the rest of the plan succeeds.

You will distrust the agents in the first month.

The first time you see AI-generated outreach that you didn’t write, your instinct will be to rewrite it from scratch. Resist this. Edit the parts that are wrong, but understand that the agent is learning your voice. After 30 days of feedback, the drafts will require less editing. After 60 days, most will go out unchanged. If you rewrite every draft, the agent never learns and the system never compounds.

You will revert to old patterns under stress.

When something goes wrong, your instinct will be to drop the operating system and “work harder until this is fixed.” This is precisely the wrong reaction. The operating system is what creates the resilience to handle bad weeks. Abandon it during a bad week and the bad week extends into a bad quarter.

You will hire prematurely if you’re not careful.

Around day 60 of the operating system being in place, you’ll feel a strange anxiety. Things are going well. And you’ll start to think “this is too easy — I must be missing something — I should

hire someone to make sure I'm not missing anything." This is not a real signal. This is the discomfort of having more capacity than you're used to. Sit with it.

You will be tempted to skip the network search if hiring becomes urgent.

If a board meeting or investor conversation creates pressure to hire faster than your network search would allow, you will be tempted to post a job and start interviewing strangers. This is when bad hires happen. Push back on the timeline. Most pressure to hire faster is artificial.

5.5 Timing and Expectations

A few honest notes on timing.

- Stage 1 to Stage 2 transition: 60-90 days from decision to full operation.
- Magnet maturity: 6-12 months from launch to significant inbound contribution. The first 3 months produce mostly outbound results. Months 3-6 produce compounding effects on engagement. Months 6-12 produce inbound conversations from people you've never met.
- First hire from Stage 2: typically 12-24 months from when you start Stage 2 operation. The longer you can defer the hire, the more pipeline coverage you build, the more network you cultivate, and the better the hire when it happens.
- Full Stage 3 operation: 6-12 months after the first hire.

These are realistic timelines. Founders looking for faster results will be disappointed. Founders comparing this to the speed of hiring (3-6 months from job posting to ramped hire) will realize that the framework isn't slower — it's the same speed, with dramatically better outcomes.

5.6 The Decision You Are Actually Making

When a founder asks me "should I hire?" they're usually not asking what they think they're asking. They're asking "do I have permission to be tired?"

The honest answer is yes. You're allowed to be tired. The question is whether hiring is the right response to that tiredness.

In 90% of cases, the right response to founder tiredness is not hiring. It's better leverage. The work you're tired of doing is probably the work AI can do for you. The hours you're working at 11pm are probably the hours you spend on tasks that don't require your judgment. The cycle of heroic effort followed by recovery followed by heroic effort is the cycle that breaks founders — and it's the cycle that AI augmentation actually breaks.

In the remaining 10% of cases, you do need to hire. The signals are specific: pipeline beyond your capacity, deals requiring expertise you don't have, customer success consuming too much time. When those signals appear, you hire. From your network. With trust. With runway. With a billable reason.

The framework in this paper isn't anti-hiring. It's pro-discipline. Hire deliberately, when the math justifies it, from people you know deeply. Not desperately, on a timeline, from strangers.

That discipline — applied with the operating system, applied with the maturity model, applied with the patience to let pipeline compound — is what separates founders who build sustainable companies from founders who burn out trying.

You can build something significant without burning down your health, your family, or your reputation in the process. You just have to be willing to operate differently than the founder generation before you operated. The tools exist now. The framework exists now. What's missing is the discipline to apply them.

That discipline is the only thing standing between where you are now and where you want to be.

6. Summary

So What

The standard hiring playbook for early-stage GTM is obsolete. It was built for an era when founders had no alternative to hiring. That era ended in 2024 with the emergence of practical AI agents.

Founders who continue to use the old playbook will:

- Hire too early, before unit economics are proven
- Hire from strangers, multiplying qualification time by ten
- Hire on hope rather than evidence, producing predictable failures
- Hire without runway, damaging their reputation when layoffs become necessary
- Watch competitors who use the new framework reach the same revenue with millions less in payroll

Founders who adopt the new framework will:

- Stay in the founder-led phase longer, generating pipeline at the capacity of a small team
- Build a network of people they could hire if needed, before they need to
- Make hiring decisions deliberately, when revenue and operational evidence require them
- Hire from people they know deeply, dramatically reducing hire-failure rates
- Arrive at scale with capital intact, traction proven, and optionality preserved

What to do

If this framework resonates with where you are right now, the next step is straightforward.

Run the diagnostic in Section 5.1 honestly. Place yourself in a stage. Resist the temptation to claim you're more advanced than you are.

If you're in Stage 1, start the 90-day plan. The hardest part is the first 30 days, because the work is foundation work that doesn't feel like progress. Push through. The deployment in days 31-60 only succeeds if days 1-30 are done well.

If you're considering a hire, work through the questions in Section 5.3 before you post anything, before you interview anyone, before you even write a job description. Most founders find that they're not ready to hire — and the discipline to defer the hire is what makes the eventual hire successful.

And if you want help implementing the operating system, the agents, or the framework as a whole, that's what we build at Kinetic Tricks.

Book a conversation: kinetic-tricks.ai/demo

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About Kinetic Tricks

Kinetic Tricks builds KForce, an AI-native go-to-market platform for solo founders, CEOs, and CROs. Two intelligent agents — Sage for sales and Aria for marketing — handle the work that used to require hiring. Founders deploy KForce in hours, not weeks. The agents work with the tools founders already use: email, calendar, CRM, LinkedIn.

KForce makes Stage 2 of the founder maturity model possible. It is the operating system for founders who want to build sustainable companies without hiring prematurely or burning out trying.

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Hire to scale.

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