

DEMANDMAVEN

Growth Operations:
How to create a growth plan
that works



@asiaorangio

demandmaven.io



- Shane and Shawn spoke at BOS in 2019
- Marketing and overall growth wasn't quite working and they were on the slow SaaS ramp of death...
- ...Until of course they decided to approach their growth challenges *differently*

Before:

- Lost on messaging and copy
- Chosen channels weren't effective
- Marketing execution wasn't the greatest
- Model was limiting
- Product was all over the place

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- Chosen channels weren't effective
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After:

- Adjusted copy to fit customer desires
- Tested new channels
- Overhauled content & marketing strategy
- Changed model to Freemium
- Launched new product

And they went from \$5M to \$20M+

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But what about the “in-between”?

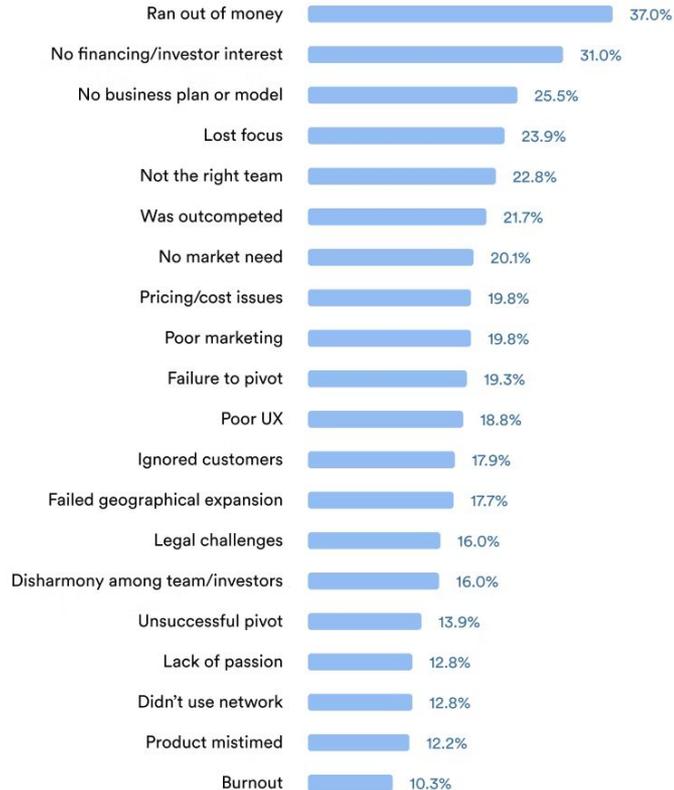
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20M+
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Why Startups Fail

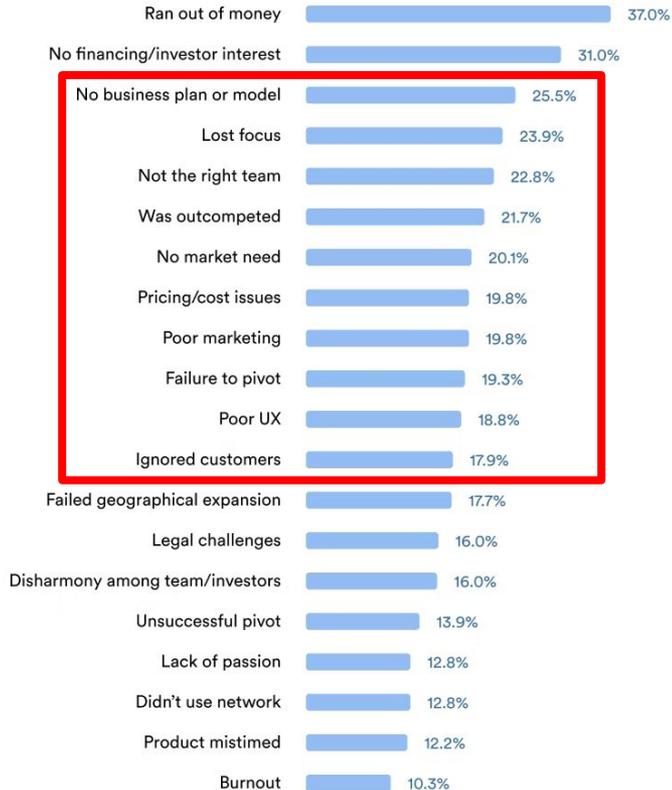
The most common reasons for startup failure, from 2000 to 2020



We've all seen the list about why startups fail...

Why Startups Fail

The most common reasons for startup failure, from 2000 to 2020



1. No business plan or model
2. Lost focus
3. Not the right team
4. Was outcompeted
5. No market needed
6. Pricing/cost issues
7. Poor marketing
8. Failure to pivot
9. Poor UX
10. Ignored customers

These are all growth operations
problems.

Growth Operations

“the alignment and orchestration of **people**, **processes**, **systems**, and **data** that enable your overall business to generate revenue”

source: revenuetrail.com

A man with a beard and a short haircut is wearing a bright red, quilted puffer jacket. He is looking down and to the left, with his right hand pressed against his ear. The background is a solid, bright yellow. The overall mood is one of mystery or suspense.

There's actually more
to the story...

The overarching cycle:

strategy

The overarching cycle:

strategy

execution

The overarching cycle:

strategy

execution

performance

strategy

execution

performance

people

processes

tools

data

strategy

execution

performance

people

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data



On defining **strategy**

The goal: make good decisions faster and
uncover clear paths to *winning*

*“Strategy is about **making specific choices to win in the marketplace...**to do some things and not others and building a business around those choices.”*

Roger Martin, Author of *Playing to Win*



strategy \neq a plan

strategy \neq a plan
strategy \neq a vision

strategy \neq a plan
strategy \neq a vision
strategy \neq optimization

strategy \neq a plan
strategy \neq a vision
strategy \neq optimization
strategy \neq best practices

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strategy = decisions.

strategy = decisions.

But it's much easier said than done...

strategy

execution

performance

people

processes

tools

data



Georgiana Laudi (aka Gia)

@ggiiaa

Did it hurt? When you paid for a marketing manager expecting a CMO?

7:31 PM · Aug 31, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

47 Retweets

16 Quote Tweets

613 Likes



David 'DJ' Oragui @djoragui · Sep 1, 2021



Replying to @ggiiaa

It hurt even more when we paid for a CMO and got a sales person instead 😂



Amanda Natividad @amandanat · Aug 31, 2021



Replying to @ggiiaa

It also hurt when I paid for a CMO/VP and instead got a marketing manager. 😂





Charity OS: For charities who need ... @ch... · Sep 1, 2021 ...

Replying to @ggiaa

Feel the pain



There's people challenges with defining growth strategy...

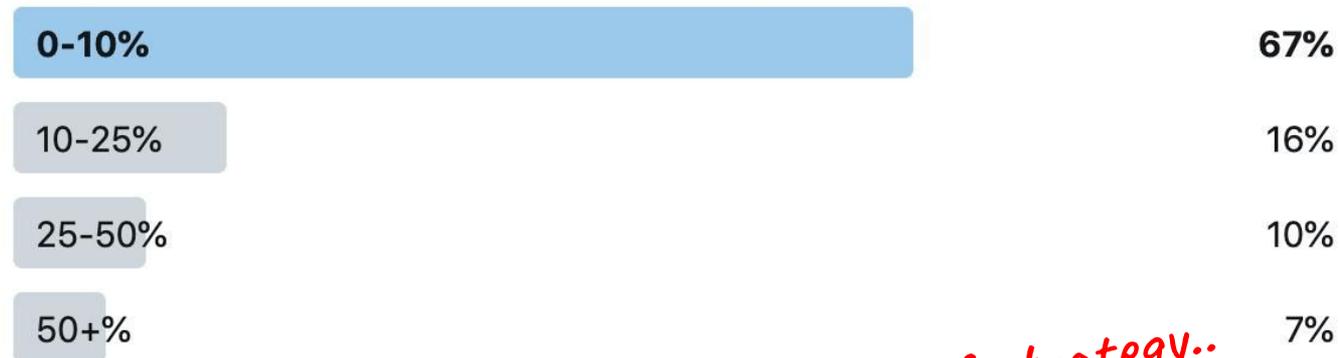


Alex Osterwalder  

@AlexOsterwalder



How much time does your CEO personally spend on innovation every week?



132 votes · Final results

...and with the process of strategy..



Alex Osterwalder  

@AlexOsterwalder



How much time does your CEO personally spend on innovation every week?

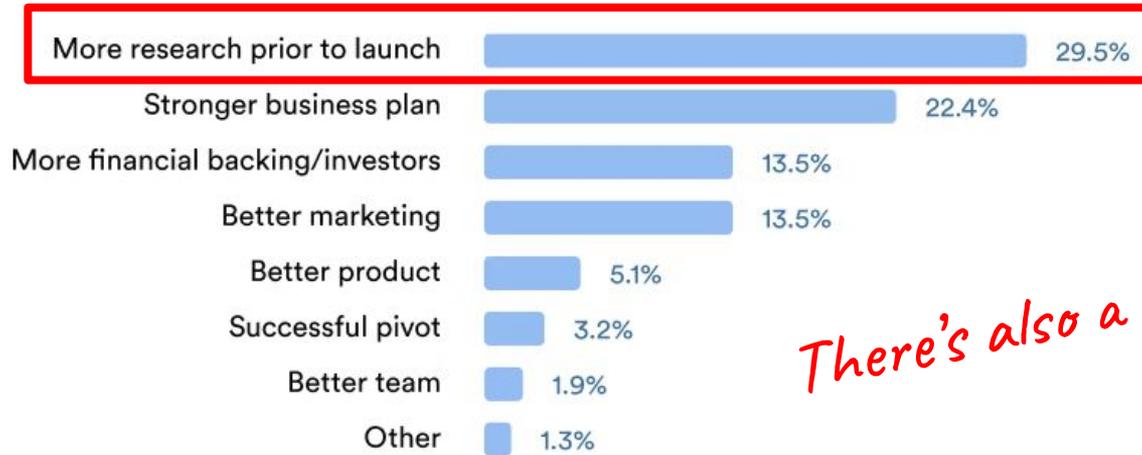


132 votes · Final results

According to Alex, CEOs need to spend 20-40% of their time on innovation.

Founder's Recommendations

for Preventing Startup Failure



There's also a data gap...

Source: Wilbur Labs survey of 156 startup founders, December 2020

wilburlabs

GROWTH STRATEGY

Questions to ask ourselves regarding our
internal strategic cycle:

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Do **you and your team** have the strategic capabilities?

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What is your **process** for making decisions?

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What **data** do you need to make better decisions?

A path for execution

The goal: first, do... and eventually do more *fast*
— preferably with less

execution = set of actions

execution = set of actions
set of actions = plan

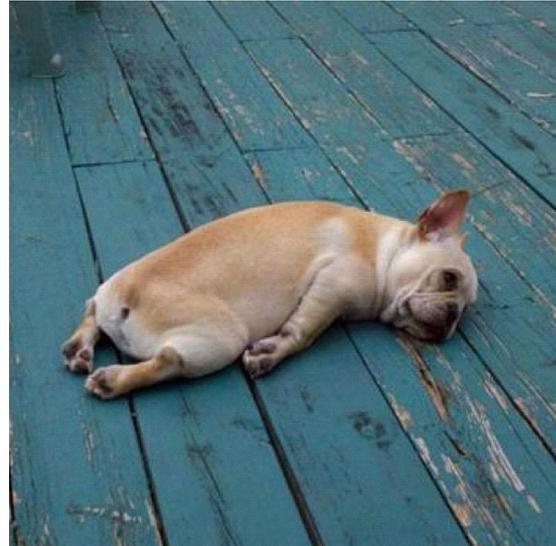
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DO ALL THE THINGS!



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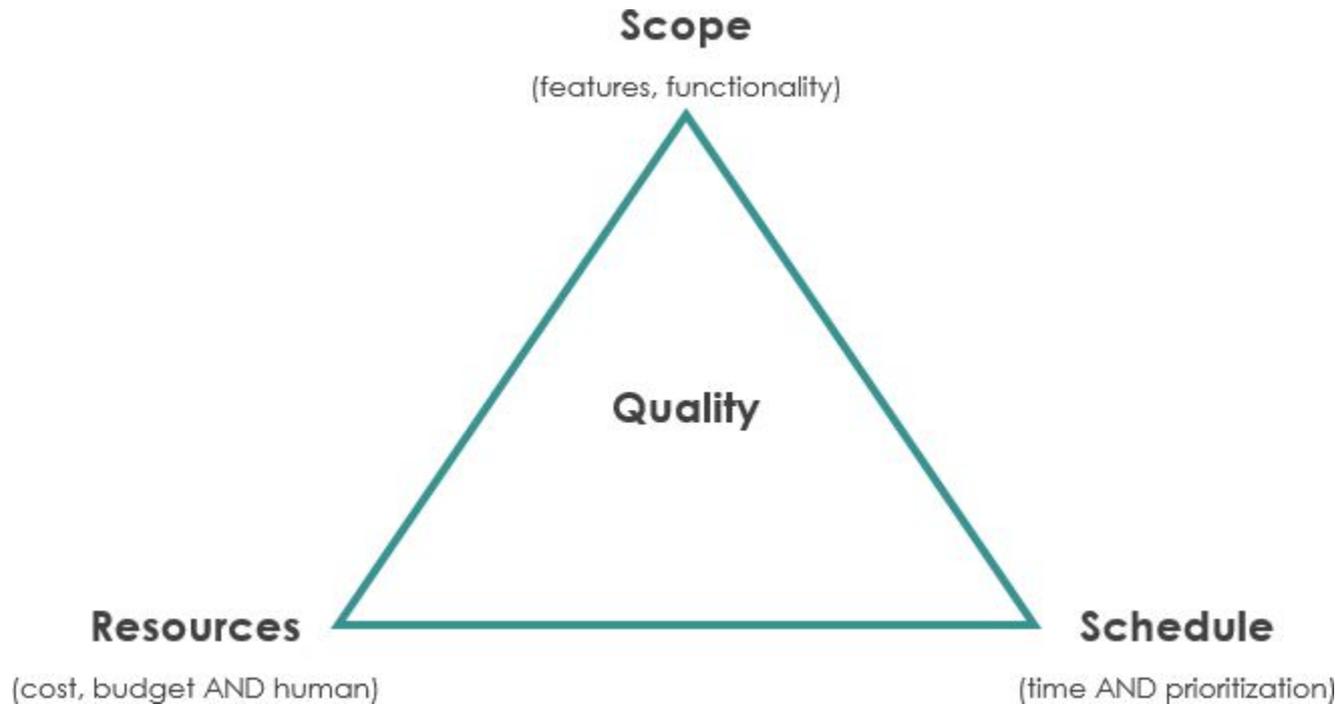
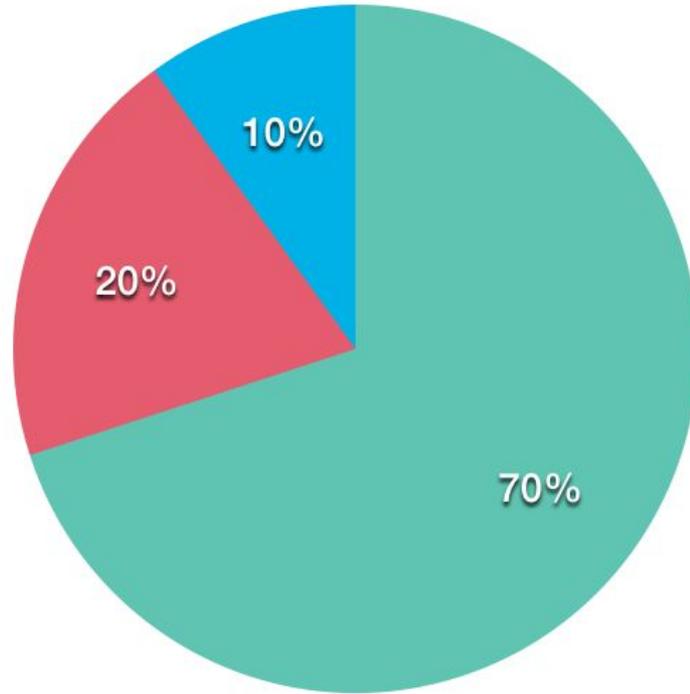


image source: visual-paradigm.com



And yet, not all execution is
created equal

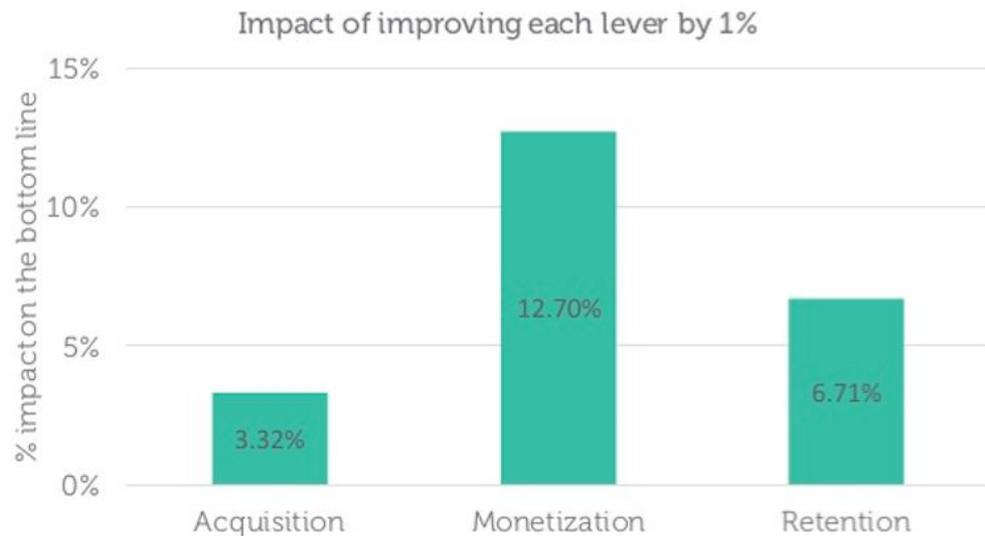
Blog Posts About Growth



- Acquisition
- Retention
- Monetization

There's clearly an obsession with Acquisition execution...

image source: profitwell.com



N = Data from 512 companies

... but Acquisition efforts aren't the most efficient way of growing

image source: profitwell.com

strategy

execution

performance

strategy

execution

performance

strategy

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EXECUTION

Questions to ask ourselves regarding how we execute for growth:

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What **frameworks or methodologies** can guide execution? What **tools** will everyone need?

EXECUTION

Questions to ask ourselves regarding how we execute for growth:



Do I and my team have the **skills to execute**? Anyone we need to hire?



What is our **process** for getting things done? How will each team GSD?



What **frameworks or methodologies** can guide execution? What **tools** will everyone need?



What data do we need to **get started**? What data will we collect?

The art of performance

The goal: retrospect and reflect to inform the
next iteration



I can tell you with no ego, this is my finest sword.



Performance

How we know something brought us closer to our goals, (or didn't).

Performance

How we know something brought us closer to our goals, (or didn't).

It informs:

- Strategy and choices we may make
- Execution and how we execute differently

performance \neq binary

performance \neq binary
(it's iterative)



analysis



analysis



reflection

Most teams are obsessed with this (even if they're bad at it)



analysis



Fewer teams do this as part of their performance processes..



reflection

*The North Star Metric is **the single metric that best captures the core value that your product delivers to customers.** Optimizing your efforts to grow this metric is key to driving sustainable growth across your full customer base.*

Sean Ellis, author of “Hacking Growth”



“I remember sitting in a bar, on December 26th over a beer, with another CEO giving me advice.

“Just pick a number and grow it 8% a week,” he said.

“Really? But then how do I actually grow the number?” I asked.

“You’ll figure it out.” 🍻

Julien Smith, CEO of Breather



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Breather’s North Star KPI: # of booked hours

@asiaorangio



PERFORMANCE

Questions to ask ourselves regarding how we will reflect and inform growth:



Who owns reporting on performance? Per team?
Who decides the KPIs?



When will we report, review, and reflect on performance? How often?



What tools and/or methodologies will everyone need to effectively report?



What KPIs will we use?
What data do we need to understand performance?

Download the Growth Operations Canvas:

<https://bit.ly/growth-ops-canvas>

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1								
2			DEMANDMAVEN					
3			The Growth Operations Canvas				Creator:	
4							Date:	
5			Strategy		Execution		Performance	
6								
7	People		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the strategic roles that you have today?• Who is responsible for defining strategy — specifically related to growth?• Is it clear to each of those roles that they are responsible for strategy?• Who will you need to hire to define strategy?• What providers will you need to bring on to cover any strategic gaps?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What departments are responsible for growth?• Who in each department executes against growth initiatives internally?• Is it clear to each of those roles that they are responsible for executing against growth?• Do we have the skills we need to execute?• What skills will we need to execute against growth?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is responsible for reporting on company-wide performance?• Who in each department is responsible for reporting on performance?• Who determines what performance will look like?• Who owns KPIs most directly aligned to growth?	
8								
9	Process		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What strategic processes will we use to help us decide how we'll grow?• What systems need to be put in place to ensure we win?• How often will we convene to discuss strategy?• What processes will each department head use to determine their own growth?• How will we make decisions?• How often will we re-visit our strategy?• How do we plan on reviewing our strategy?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's our process for execution?• Does each department have a process for executing against growth?• How often will each department convene to discuss execution?• Are there specific execution methodologies (like scrum, agile, etc.) that we'll need to execute?• How will we execute? How will tasks get done?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How often will the company report on performance?• How often will each department or team member report on performance?• What's the process for reporting on performance?	
10								
11	Tools		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What strategic frameworks will we use to help us decide where to go next?• Where will our overall business strategy be hosted?• Where will each department head host their strategies?• Are there strategic tools or frameworks that our vendors or service providers using that we should be aware of?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What tools or software are we currently using to execute?• Are there tools or software that we need to add to our stack to execute?• Are there specific tools or software that each department will need?• Are there any frameworks, canvases, models, etc. that could support our execution?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are we currently using to report on performance?• What tools or software does each department leverage to report on performance?• What dashboards, frameworks, models, canvases, etc. will we leverage to report on performance?• Are there any templates we can use to report on performance?	
12								
13	Data		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What data do we need to influence our strategy?• What data do we still need to collect to influence our strategy?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What data are we currently collecting now? Quantitative and qualitative?• What data are we collecting from execution?• What information or data do we need to execute?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What will we report on to understand performance?• What data do we need to know that we've performed?• What are the KPIs and metrics that determine performance?	
..								

Pro tips for completing the Growth Operations Canvas:



- 1 CEOs/Founders take a stab at it first; see what gaps emerge
- 2 Send it to team members most responsible for strategy
- 3 Reconvene as a team to discuss gaps and “oh shit” moments

Thank You!



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56%

faster growth for teams that focus
on one product (\$1M - \$10M)

66%

faster growth for teams that focus on
multiple product (\$10M - \$100M)