

What investors want

Mar Hershenson

Mar's bio at a glance



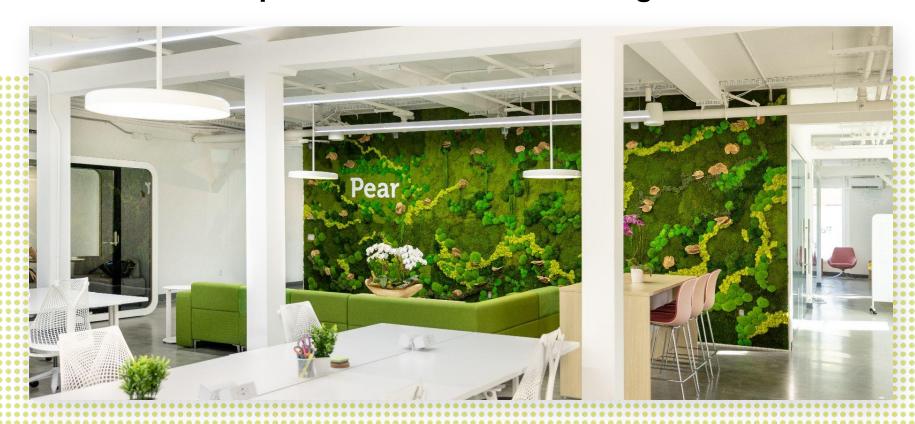








At Pear, we are laser focused on pre-seed and seed investing.



We invest in pre-seed and seed.

In just 9 years, we've invested in 150+ companies and have already had...

Unicorns

3
Public Companies











We invest early in startups now valued at \$50B+

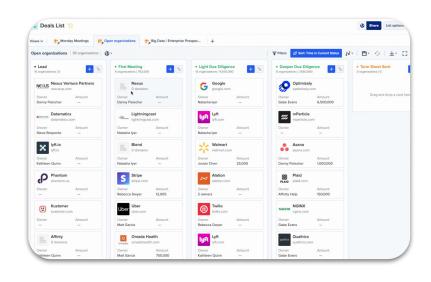
Fintech B₂B Healthcare Biotech Climate Consumer Web3 gusto (A) GUARDANT aurora SZNS **DOORDASH C**Cardless Vanta BIONGE 11: formfunction **ixlayer** NOVA CREDIT **Local Kitchens** nobell paella.dev Federato Paysail RECORA



We invest <u>really</u> early

8 affinity





2

\$0

~300

\$120M+

>500k

Employees

Raised

Employees

Raised

Deals per Month







2

\$0

400+

\$500M+

100K

Employees

Raised

Employees

Raised

PV Designs per Week







3

\$0

Employees

Raised

2,300+

\$3.2B

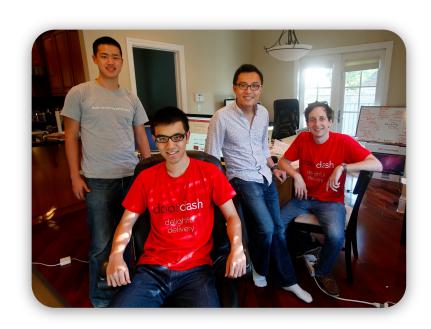
\$500M

Employees

Valuation

Revenue

DOORDASH



6

\$100k

6k

\$23B

>2M

Employees

Raised

Employees

Market Cap

Dashers

And if you're interested in getting involved...

COMPETITION

PEAR X

What

\$25-100K uncapped to launch your startup 🚀

What

Up to \$2M in pre-seed funding

Who

Open to students and recent grads

Application Deadline

February 26th, 11:59pm PT

Who

Open to all companies

Application Deadline rolling

pear.vc/competition

pear.vc/pearx



What is a company?

Any formal business entity for profit



Three main types of companies

1 Lifestyle

Typically provides a service not a product. Not focused on growth.

2

Bootstrapped

Finance company with no external investor.

3

Venture Backed

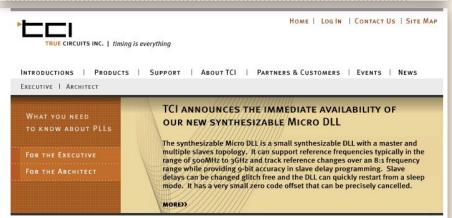
High growth company financed with external capital (eg, venture).

Truecircuits - Lifestyle



John Maneatis, President

John Maneatis is TCI's co-founder, President, and Chief Technologist. He holds a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from U.C. Berkeley, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University. John brings 34 years of experience to TCI in analog and digital circuit design and is world renowned for his work in the area of Phase-Locked Loop design. Prior to co-founding the company, he was a lead circuit designer at Silicon Graphics in their advanced microprocessor design group.



True Circuits

1998

Founded by John Maneatis, PhD grad Designs PLLs and DLLs IP

Today

~5 employees

Total VC money: 0

Annual Revenue: \$5-25M

Cariden - Bootstrapped





DESIGN > NETWORKS

Cisco To Acquire Cariden For \$141 Million

Cisco (CSCO) announced its intent to acquire privately held Cariden Technologies for \$141 million. Sunnyvale-based Cariden is a supplier of network planning, design and traffic management solutions for telecom service providers.

Cariden

2001

Founded by Arash afrakthek Network planning and optimization software for Telcos

2012

~70 employees Total VC money: 0 Acquired by Cisco \$141M

Atheros - Venture Backed





Atheros

1998

Founded by Prof. Teresa Meng Semiconductor chipsets for wireless communications

2004

~170 employees

Total VC money: \$98M

IPO: \$636M

2011

Acquired by Qualcomm: \$3.1B

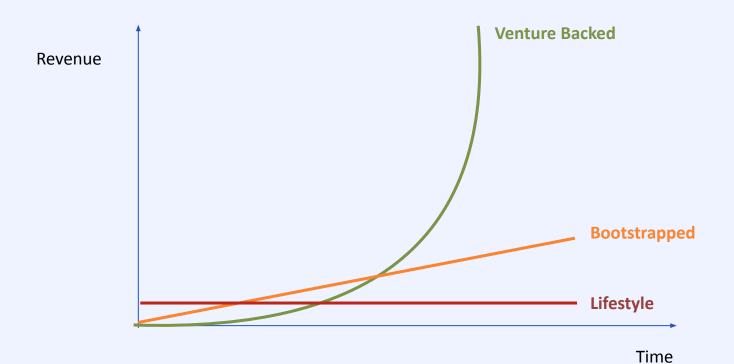


What is the founder reward?

	Exit Value	Founder Equity	Founder Reward
True Circuits	N/A	5 Employees (estimate 100% owned by founders)	\$5-20M/year for 20+ years

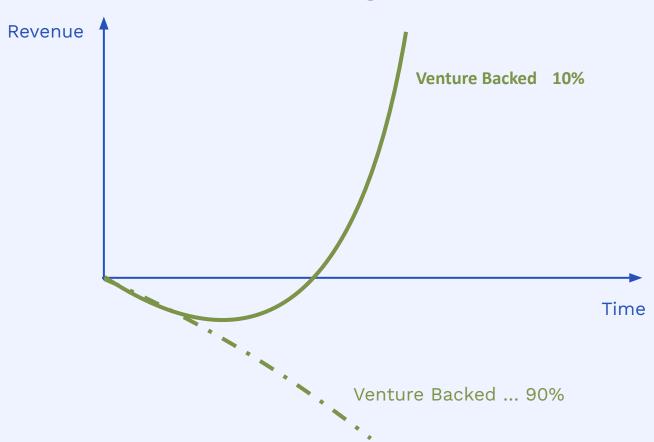


Revenue over time





Zooming in





What are my chances?

What are my chances to play in the NBA?





0.03% High School Seniors play for the NBA (3 out of 10,000)



New Companies that make it to series A (2012)



2x harder

than for a Hockey High School Senior Player to play in the NHL (0.4%)



New Companies that become a unicorn (2012)



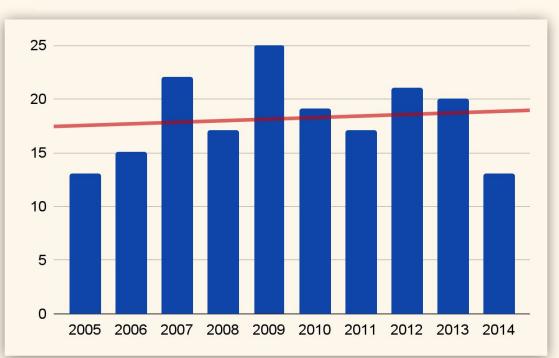
10x harder

than for a Basketball High School Senior to play in the NBA (0.03%)

Source: Crunchbase, Bureau Labor of Statistics New Establishments

Every year ~20 unicorns are born

Unicorns (private+exit) by founding year





Howdoes VC work?

Trade money for ownership (shares)

At every funding stage



Risk goes down



Valuation goes up



Why is Venture Capital efficient?

- Venture capital is "gated capital"
- VCs give founders 1-2 year's worth of capital, just enough to get to the next gate
- If, during that time, founders don't add value and/or reduce risk, VCs will not fund the next round and founders will be forced to:
 - Cut costs to break even
 - Sell; or
 - Close the business

Venture Capital



Stage	Year	Rais	ed		Pre-Money Value
		Million \$			
First Revenue	2013				
Pre-Seed	2013	\$	0.12	2	\$ 2
Seed	2013	\$	2.4		\$8
Α	2014	\$	17	_	\$ 54
В	2015	\$	40)	\$ 560
B C D	2016	\$	127	7	\$ 590
D	2018	\$	53	5	\$ 865
E	2018	\$	250	0	\$ 4,000
F	2019	\$	40	0	\$ 6,700
G	2019	\$	700	О	\$ 12,000
Н	2020	\$	40	0	\$ 15,600
IPO	2020	\$3	,370)	\$ 29,000
Total		\$5	,842	2	
Public	Feb 2021				\$ 64,475
Source: Pitchbook					

Not Venture Capital



Stage	Year	Raised	
		\$Million	
Seed	2018	\$ 1,000	
Series A	2020	\$ 750	
First Revenue	2020		
Out of Business	2020		
Total		\$ 1,750	

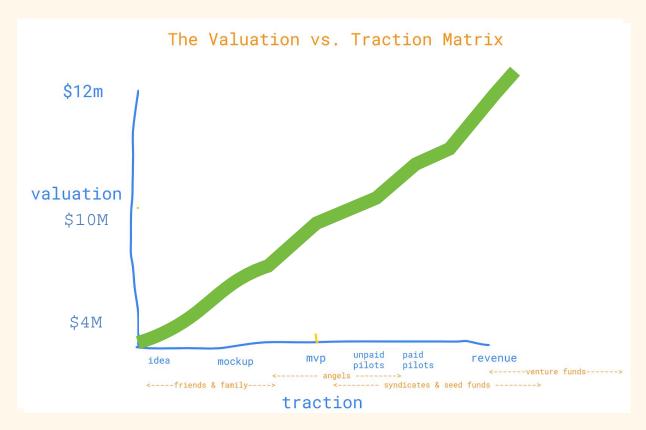


What should be my valuation?



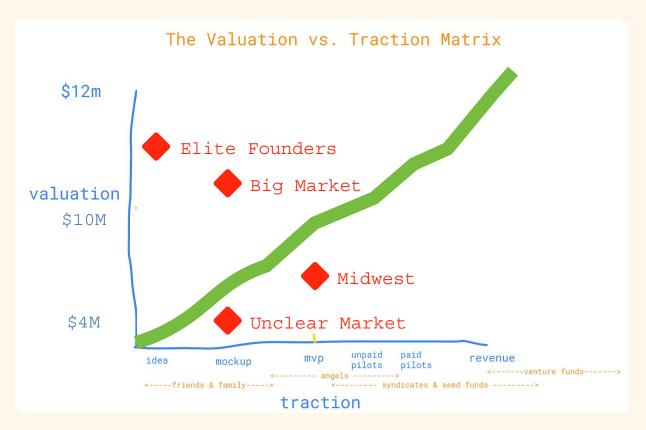
It depends...





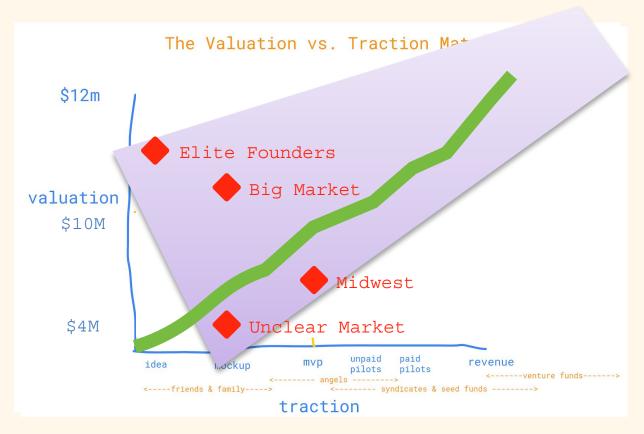
Source : Jason Calacanis Blog. The Valuation vs Traction Matrix

WHAT IT MEANS FOR VALUATIONS



Source : Jason Calacanis Blog. The Valuation vs Traction Matrix

EVENTUALLY ACTUAL METRICS SET VALUATION



Source : Jason Calacanis Blog. The Valuation vs Traction Matrix



MEDIAN VALUATION PER STAGE

Stage	Amount Raised (\$M)	Pre Money Valuation ¹ (\$M)	Use of Funds
Pre-Seed	\$0.6 ²	\$6 ²	Build Product
Seed	\$2	\$9.5	Prove Product-Market Fit
Series A	\$8	\$46	Prove Revenue Model
Series B	\$30	\$160	Prove Net Renewal Model
Series C and Later	\$46	\$496	Grow to \$100 Million in Gross Profit
Sale or IPO	\$100 +	\$1,000 +	Expand Product Line, Go Global, Acquisitions

^[1] Wilson Sonsini: The Entrepreneurs Report: Private Company Financing Trends, Q1-3 2021 [2] Pitchbook

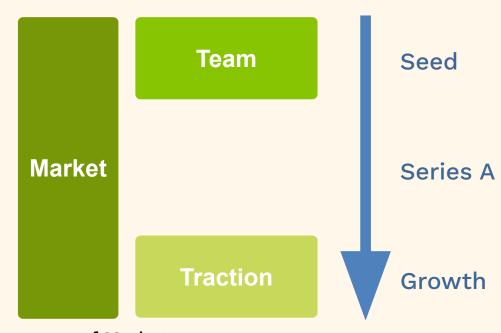


SERIES A VALUATION RANGES

Vertical	Number of companies	Round Size (\$M)	Post Money Valuation (\$M)	Dilution
B2B SaaS	36	\$4-15M	\$15-75M	13-38%
Usage Based B2B	11	\$5-10M	\$20-80M	13-27%
Marketplace	6	\$5-12M	\$15-60M	20-32%
Hardtech/ Moonshot	28	\$24-40M	\$8-43M	15-54%
Consumer (transactional)	16	\$5-10M	\$15-107M	9-33%
Consumer (Subscription)	4	\$5-10M	\$30-43M	17-28%

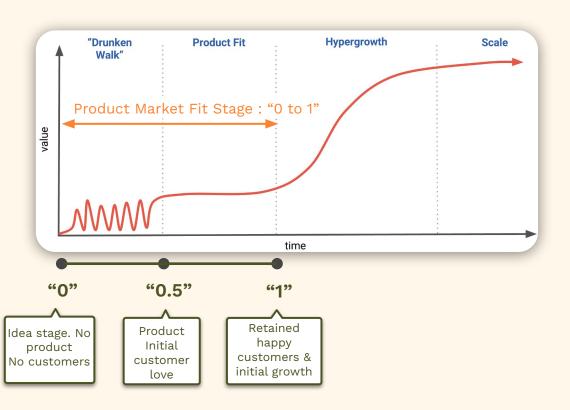
Source: Series A Guide Benchmarks from Y Combinator.https://www.ycombinator.com/resources/benchmarks

WHAT DRIVES VALUATIONS



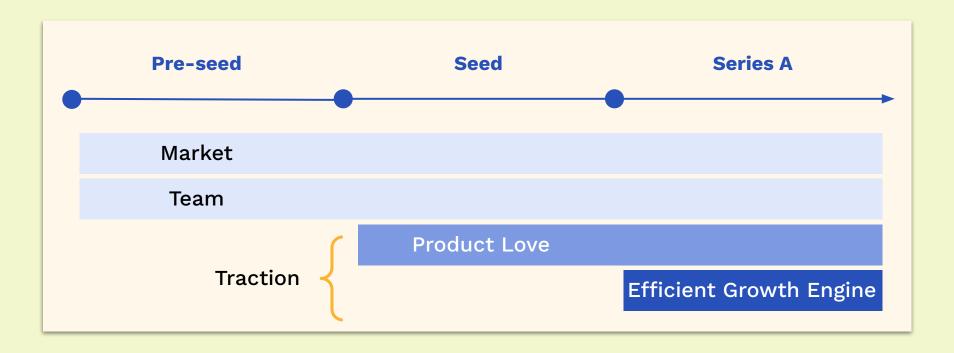
Importance of Market tied to VC dynamics (1B+ funds need large markets)

The start-up journey





Derisk Progressively





Team

What makes a good team?

Describing a good founder is like describing a good wine





There is NO exact formula and no founder is alike



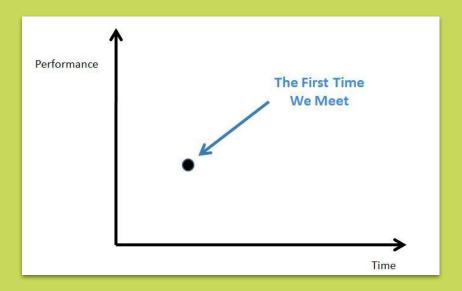
Salvator Munti Leonardo da Vinci \$470M

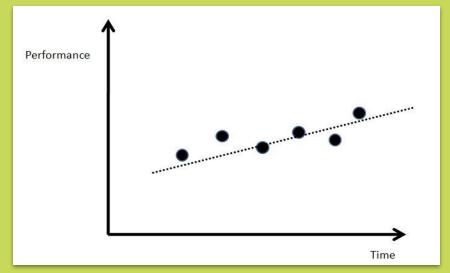


Interchange de Kooning \$324M

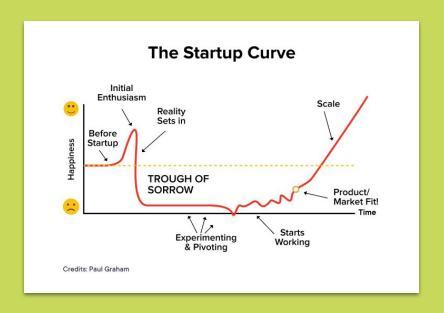


Lines not dots





SOME QUALITIES



What to look for

- Clarity of thought
- ✓ Extreme focus
- ✓ Great communication
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Speed
- Relentlessness
- ✓ Founder-Customer Fit

Remember lines not dots



Market

Big companies need big markets



Market always win

When a great team meets a lousy market, market wins.

When a lousy team meets a great market, market wins.

When a great team meets a great market, something special happens.

- Andy Rachleff



How do you size a market?



Top Down Market Sizing

\$ Market size for broad industry



% Target share of that market



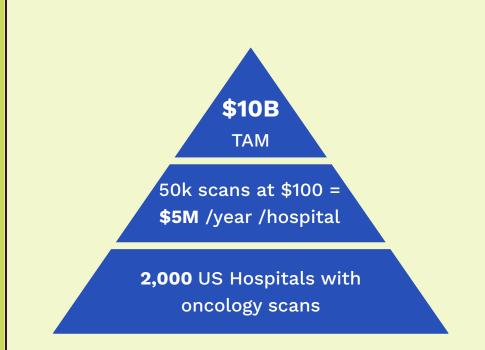


Bottom Up Market Sizing

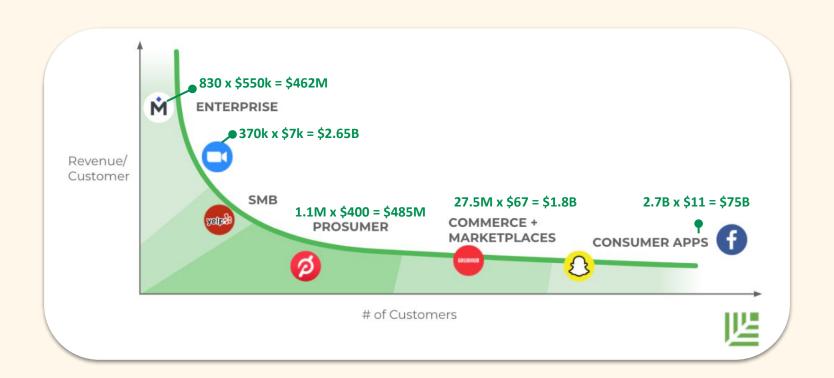
of Total Customers



\$ Avg Revenue per Customer per Year



Market Size = (# of Customers) × (Revenue/Customer)





If not big enough, show expansion plan

	Customer Segment X 100K seats	Customer Segment Y 300K seats
Product A	\$1B	\$3B
Product B	\$2B	\$6B

Stage 1 - initial target \$1B

Stage 2

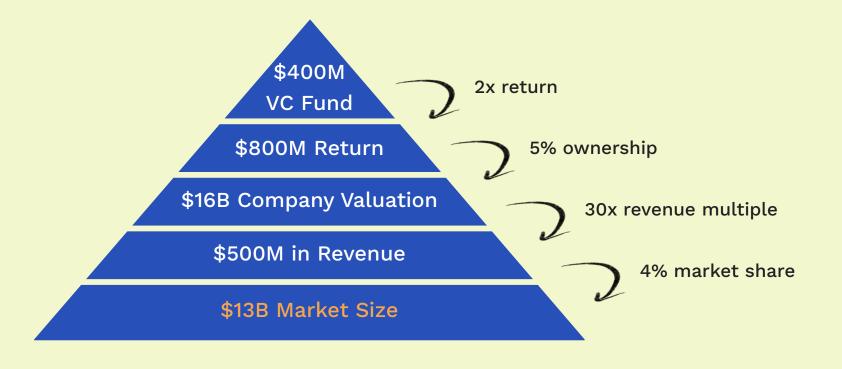
Stage 3 - total market \$12B



How big is big enough?



You cannot return the fund in a small market





What is considered "big enough"

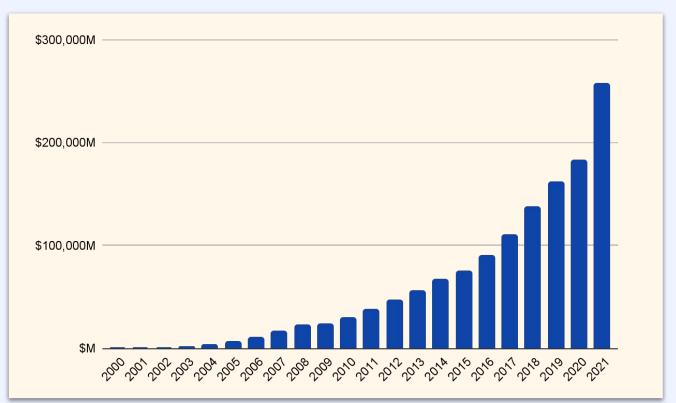




Marquee companies get to \$100M in revenue within 5 years

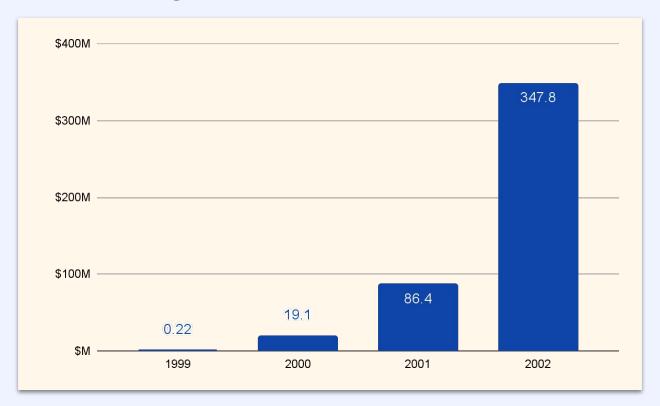


Google Revenue 1999-2021



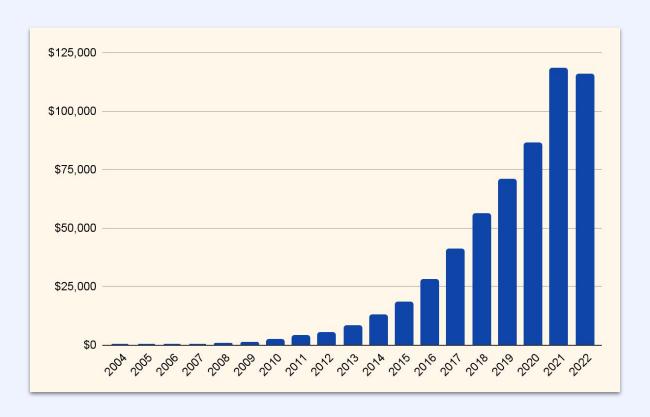


Google Revenue 1998-2002 (\$M)



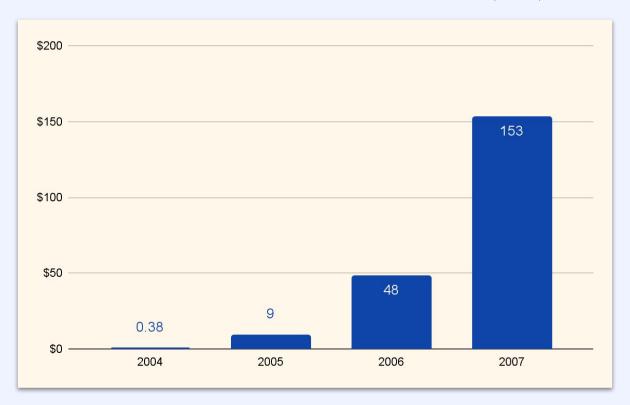


Facebook Revenue 2004-2022 (\$M)

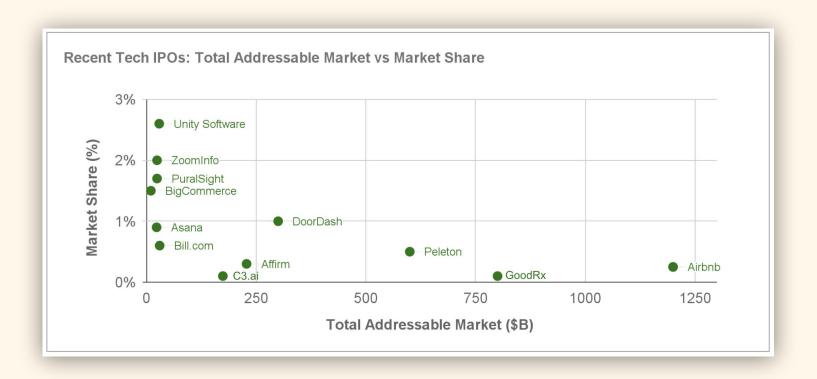




Facebook Revenue 2004-2007 (\$M)



Companies go public with a small market share





At every stage clarity increases

Market Size = (# of Customers) × (Revenue/Customer)

Estimate

Use proxies, competing products, value based pricing, survey data...)

Predict

Based on initial customers, what is the potential for expansion

Do the math

Based on existing customer data what can you expect from others

Seed

Series A

Growth



Traction

Proof of execution



Traction

Pre-seed

Idea Validation

Initial validation for market demand

Seed

Product Love

A few customers that love your product

Series A

Efficient Growth

A repeatable and scalable growth engine to acquire new customers



Traction needed to raise pre-seed

Typical pre-seed rounds



Friends, Family & Fools
Angels

~\$1.5M

Pre-seed Fund Angels Friends, Family & Fools

No product

No customers

Just you

Become a master storyteller



... and spend some time in designing a beautiful deck (table stakes)

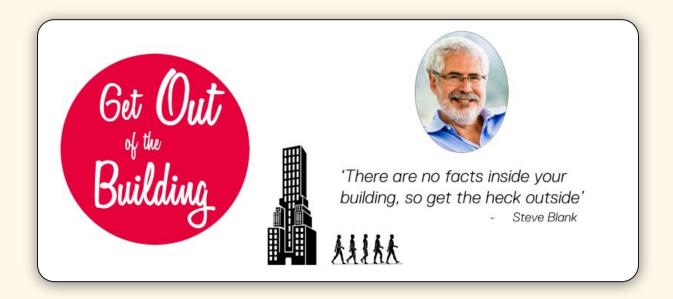
Generating FOMO helps

This company is *inevitable*.

There is so <u>major tech disruption</u> going on (eg, cloud computing) that will mean software will need to be re-invented.

I have been working in this industry for 10 years and I have this very <u>specific insight</u> no one else does.

You need to show some validation



You have proof *people want* this product
Lean Launchpad methodology



Validation with prototype

OZZY (LLP17): Geo-targeted advertising on ride-share vehicles

OZZY (LLP17)

Goal: Test if drivers are willing to run ads on their cars for \$10/day

EXPERIMENT

How: Reach out to Uber drivers and offer \$10/day in exchange for having a banner in their car

SUCCESS

If: 7/22 drivers are willing to run ads on their cars for \$10/day



Drivers were really excited!

Please reply!



this is Berk from Ozzy, the startup top of their cars. We're currently testing advertiser and driver adoption. We were wondering if you can put a banner on the side of your car. Would you be interested in doing this if we pay you \$10/day? So no installation costs just banner on the side printed from FedEx Yes I'm is interested and how many days in a week? Or how many days in a month?



Final MVP





Validation with prototype

BOZZY (LLP20): Intelligent household concierge service for working moms

BOZZY (LLP20)

Goal: Test if working moms will want a household concierge to remind them of and execute on important tasks

EXPERIMENT

How: Each team member was on "text-mode" with a mom, appearing as an AI concierge but manually reminding them of and executing various tasks

SUCCESS

If: 50% of moms would find the product compelling

MVP as Wizard of Ozz

remember your tasks...

Remind me to text Sam about meeting Tuesday, 9:00 AM

It's Tuesday! Have you texted Sam yet?

Not yet, will you remind me tomorrow?

Will do!:)

Bozzy, remind me to file my taxes by April 15

You got it! I'll remind you when you're free

...and execute on them

Remind me to buy nespresso pods

I'm on it! Do you want a reminder at the store or should I order them for you on Amazon?



Nespresso Capsules VertuoLine, Best Seller Variety Pack, Medium and Dark Roast Coffee, 30 Count Coffee Pods, Brews 7.8 oz

\$33.00 **/prime**2 used and new from

I need a gift for a 7 year old boy by 3/31

I'm sending over some options! Do you need a card? Validated our hypothesis at the Watermark Women's Conference

Google maeeu **Technologies** varian Johnson Johnson MIANTIC Medallia rvicenow **vm**ware

27 moms interviewed, 5 signups

100% said this service would be useful

Founder hugged by a mom



Validation with landing pages

KOA (LLP 20): Intimate, online community connecting new and experienced moms

KOA (LLP20)

Goal: Test three different B2C ideas.

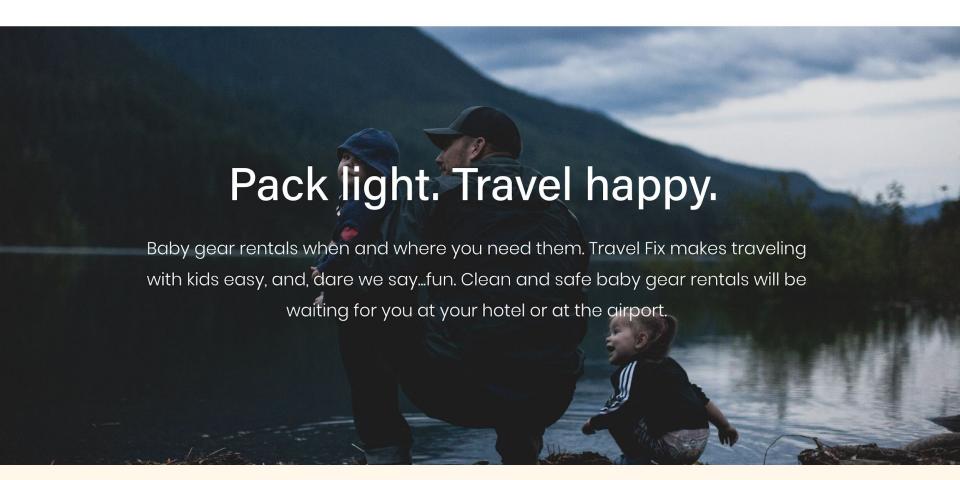
EXPERIMENT

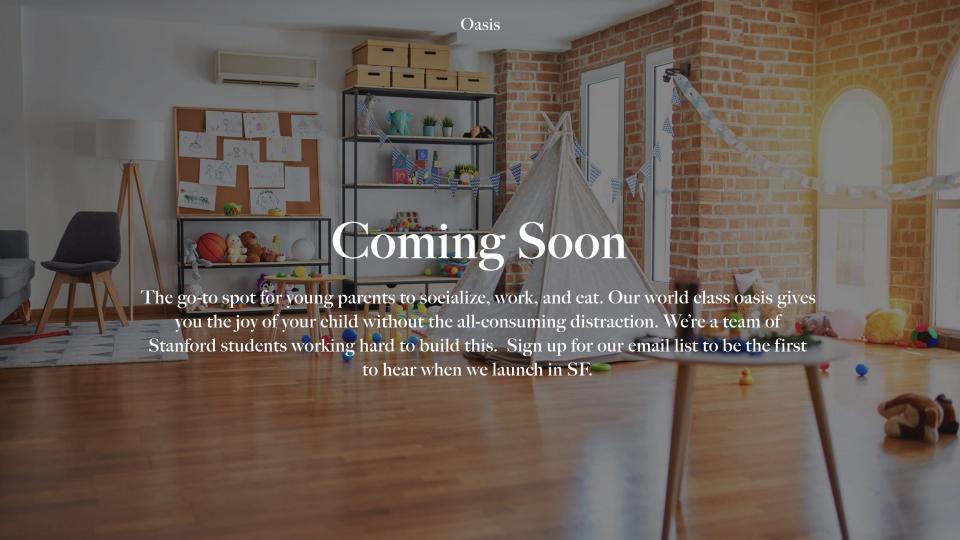
How: Create three landing pages, run Facebook ads. Measure CTR and customer actions.

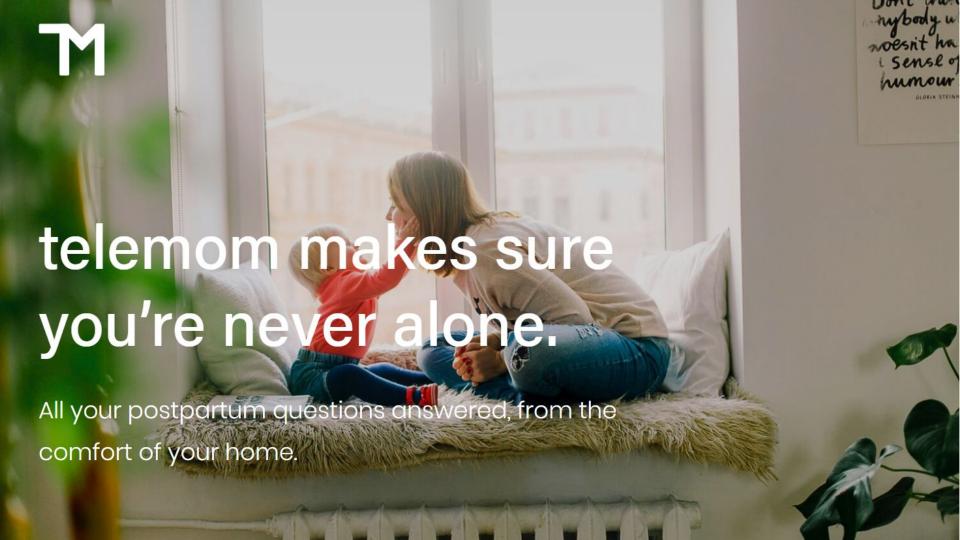
SUCCESS

If: Can determine which landing page shows better CTR and customer actions

Travel Fix







Results of landing pages

	Ppl Reached	Link Clicks (CTR)	Emails Received (CTR)
Koa	2,816	21 (0.75%)	0 (0.00%)
Oasis	1,992	52 (2.61%)	10 (19.23%)
Travel Fix	1,601	7 (0.44%)	0 (0.00%)
Fond	10,980	292 (2.66%)	16 (5.48%)



Traction needed to raise seed

Typical seed rounds





Love not scale

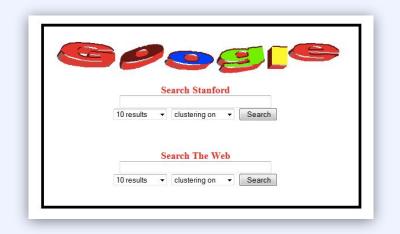
To reach a millions of users start with a product that a few people love not one that many people like.

Build a product that a few people love*

(*so much they tell others about it)



Google - Love at first sight

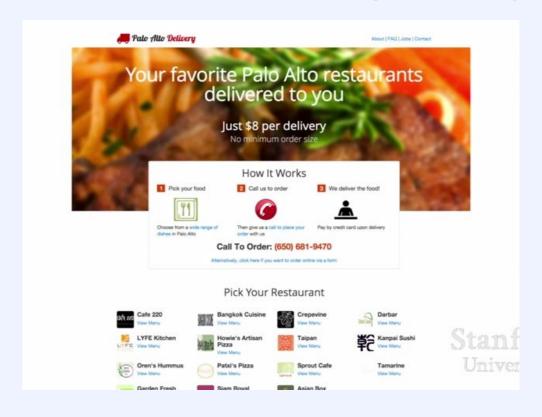




Google: 1997-98



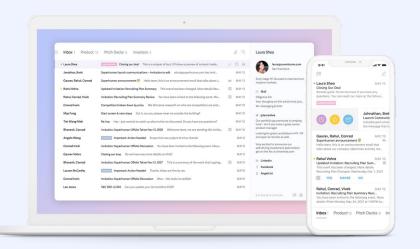
Doordash MVP - Can't get enough





Superhuman - love declarations

SUPERHUMAN



"Superhuman has moved me — both physically and emotionally."

"This tool saved my marriage — I shall sacrifice my first-born-child for the cause."

"I lived in a world void of happiness.

Since I met Superhuman, I can now hear color."



Qualitative signs of product market fit

- I don't have to change product or add features to get a new user/consumer
- Customers are recommending my product to others
- Customers & users are finding me



Consumer subscription Seed success

"love"

1,000 users

60% 90d retention

growing organically

"like"

10,000 users

20% 90d retention

paid acquisition



B2B company Seed success

"love"

1 POC converted

into contract

2 in pipeline

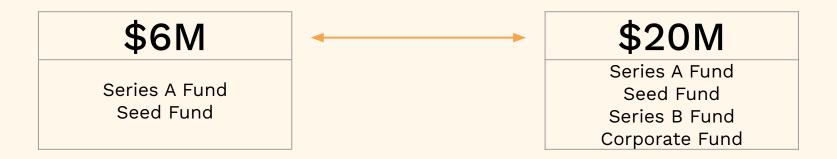
"like"

10 POCs



Traction needed to raise A

Typical Series A rounds





Series A metrics myths



\$500k-1M MRR 20% m-o-m growth



SaaS

\$100k-200k MRR 100% y-o-y growth



Consumer

50k DAUs 25% m-o-m growth



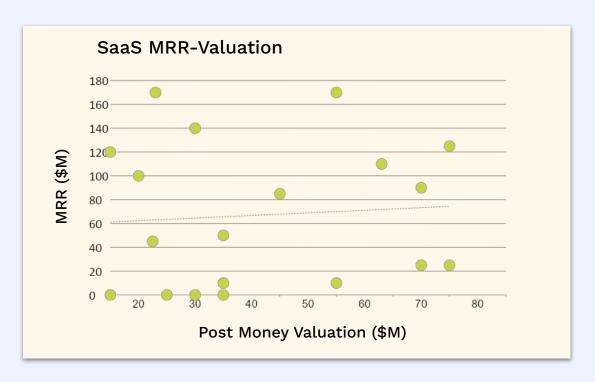
Marketplace

\$500k-1M GMV 25% m-o-m growth





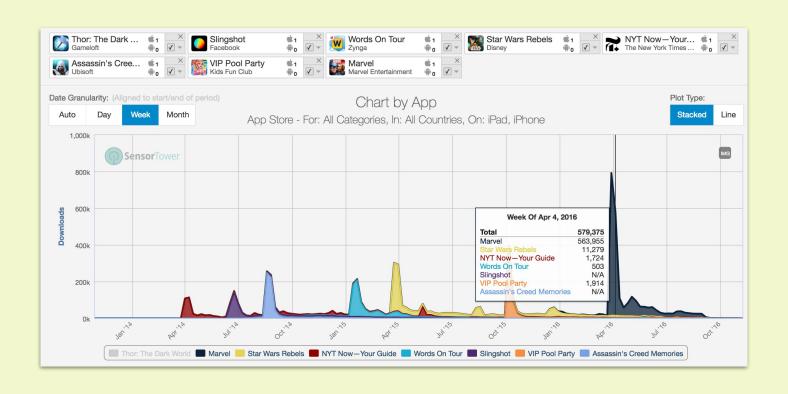
Revenue is not enough



Source: Thomas Tungunz, Redpoint

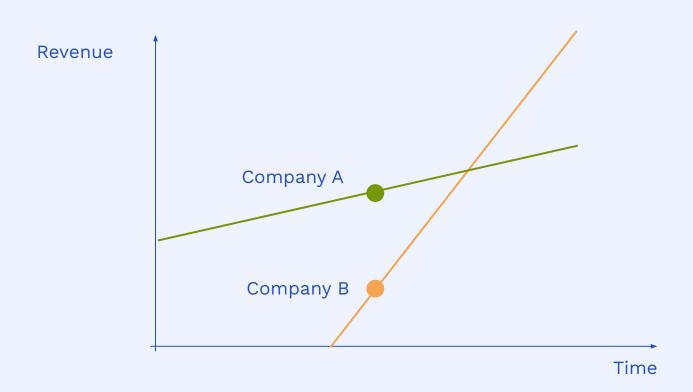


Fast growth alone is not enough





Not revenue value but slope





So what is enough?



(1) You need customers that stick around

- ✓ Customers are retained
- ✓ Customers expand usage

(2) and you need an efficient repeatable, growth loop

- ✓ Paid: Facebook ads, TV, affiliates
- ✓ Sales: Inbound sales, outbound sales, channel partnerships
- ✓ Viral: Word of mouth, contact, referrals
- ✓ Content: UGC, CGC, SEO, social

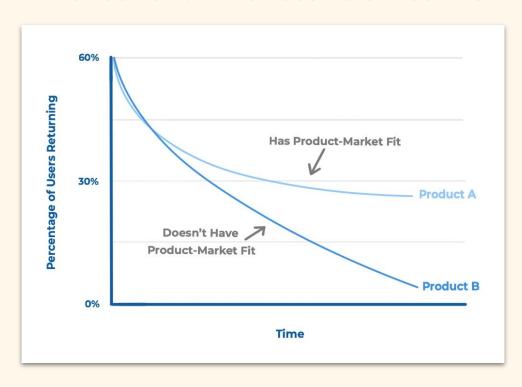


Customers that stick around

How to quantify it?



Measure 1: Flat retention curve





Measure 2: Superhuman survey

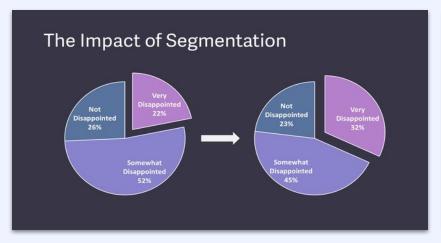
Survey users: "How would you feel if you could no longer use [ProductName]?"

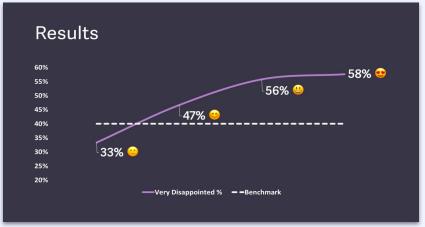
- a) Very disappointed
- b) Somewhat disappointed
- c) Not disappointed
- d) N/A I no longer use [ProductName]

Goal: 40%+ answer "Very Disappointed"



Segment to find the signal







Growth Quality "Quick Ratio"

Measure 3: Adding more revenue than losing

Quick Ratio = Added MRR

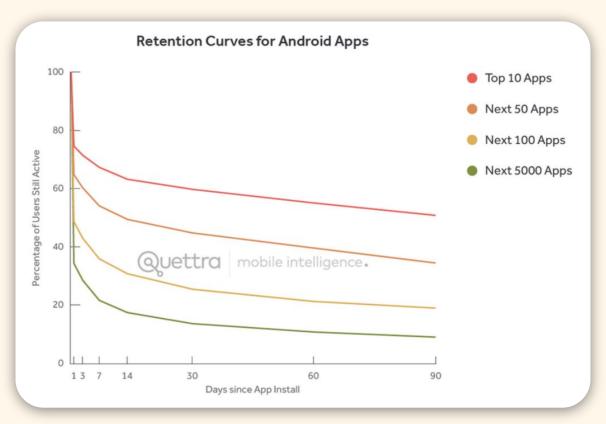
Lost MRR



Source: Diligence at Social Capital Part 1. Medium.



Good customer retention is key



Cohort analysis - the ultimate dashboard

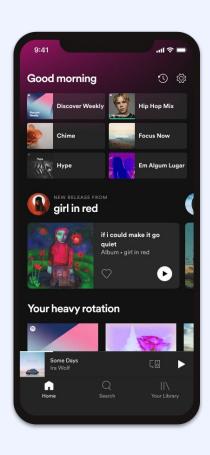
110	Jan	100%	33%	21%	16%	14%	13%	12%	12%	10%	12%
186	Feb	100%	31%	21%	14%	13%	12%	11%	11%	9%	
184	Mar	100%	29%	18%	16%	14%	12%	10%	9%		
225	Apr	100%	35%	29%	22%	20%	17%	15%			
231	May	100%	42%	37%	34%	24%	21%				
209	June	100%	44%	37%	33%	25%					
240	Jul	100%	42%	38%	31%						
271	Aug	100%	45%	40%							
248	Sep	100%	51%								
243	Oct	100%									
2,147	Total	100%	39%	30%	24%	18%	15%	12%	11%	10%	12%



Efficient Growth Engine

Will it grow fast with little spend?





CAC

Spend \$10k in Facebook ads Acquire 500 users

$$\Rightarrow$$
 CAC = \$10k/500= \$20

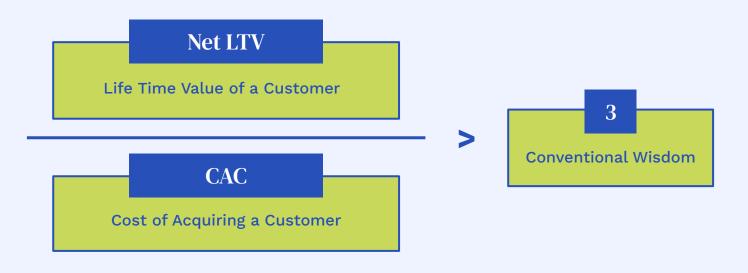
LTV

\$10/month/user 50% margin 10 months lifetime

$$\Rightarrow$$
 net LTV = \$10x 50%x10 = \$50



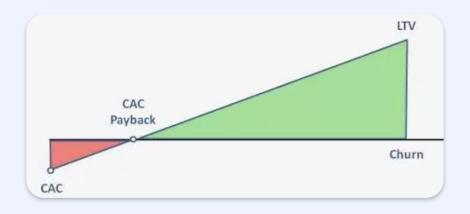
The Conventional Wisdom



https://www.forentrepreneurs.com/saas-metrics-2/



Efficient Growth Visualized

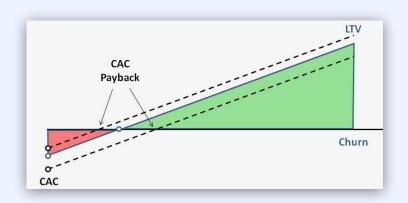


Can you grow fast with little capital?

- ✓ Green area much larger than red area
- ✓ Green area going on forever low churn
- ✓ Shorter payback times

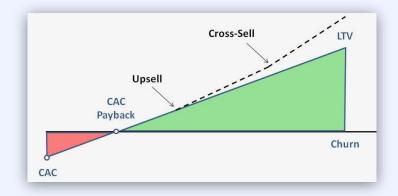


Other metrics that matter



CAC Payback

- ✓ Time to recuperate acquisition cost
- ✓ In Venture, CAC Payback < 12 months</p>
- ✓ Less is better ⇒ More cash to grow



Churn, Upsell, Cross-sell

- ✓ Best-in-class companies have negative churn
- ✓ Revenue from upsells/cross-sell > churn
- Very efficient way to grow



Tests for reaching Series A

Scalable Acquisition

If they hire one Account Exec...

Close \$400k ARR new biz in 1-year

Attain \$30k new users
(... or maybe zero ad-spend needed)



Metrics that matter most at Series A

Customer Retention

Retention

New, Churned, Resurrect User Quick Ratio

Engagement

Product Quality Activities per User

Efficient Growth Engine

Unit Economics

LTV CAC COGS

Growth Quality

Organic / Inorganic growth
Recurring Revenue
Burn Rate



Reaching Series A - Consumer

	Metric	Good	Better	Best
Find customers to marry	% of customers who stick from Q1 to Q2	70-80%	80-90%	90%+
Profit from those	Year 1 TVP \$	\$25-75	\$75-150	\$150+
customers	Terminal value	\$25-50	\$50-100	\$100+
	Resting growth	0%	0-5% pm	5% pm
Insist on easy	LTV:CAC ratio	2-3x	3-5x	5x+
growth	# potential customers	5-10M	10-50M	50M+



Reaching Series A - B2B SaaS

	Metric	Good	Better	Best
Grow Fast	CARR %Growth	50-100%	100-200%	200%+
Retain Users	Churn Monthly	1-3%	<1%	Net negative
Cross Efficiently	CAC Payback Months	24	12-24	<12
Grow Efficiently	Cash-flow Efficiency	<1	1	>1



High growth is a must-have



Triple Triple Double Double Double

Years 1 - 3:

Year 4: Triple:

Year 5: Triple:

Year 6: Double:

Year 7: Double:

Year 8: Double:

\$0 - 2M

\$2 - 6M

\$6 – 18M

\$18 - 36M

\$36 - 72M

\$72 - 144M

Source: Neeraj Agrawal, Battery Ventures

Annual gross profit goal is over \$100 M in 6-8 years

\$100M revenue x 10x multiple = \$1B valuation





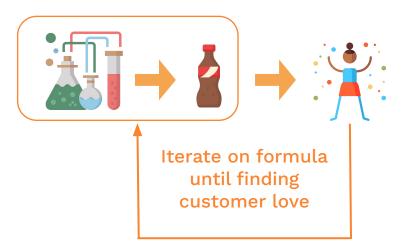
Coupa → valuation:\$6B, revenue: \$725M (~8x) UiPath → valuation \$9B, revenue: \$262M (~34x)

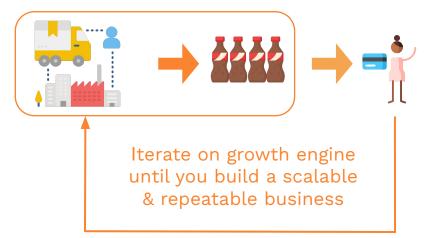


Summary



"Nail it then scale it"





Focus on finding true customer love

<u>Not</u> on growth

Focus on the revenue engine
Not the absolute revenue



Team & Market & Traction

Survey of VCs: What are the most important metrics when evaluating a startup's potential scale? (n=30)

Avg Ranked Importance	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	
Seed VCs	\$ TAM / SAM	\$ Revenue in 5 years	% Revenue Growth			
Series A VCs	% Revenue Growth	\$ TAM / SAM	\$ Revenue in 5 years	Valuation Multiple		
Growth VCs	% Revenue Growth	\$ Revenue in 5 years	\$ TAM / SAM	Valuation Multiple	% Profit	