

\$100M SCALING ROADMAP

► STAGE 3: STABILIZE ◀



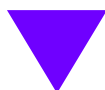
A PERSONALIZED GUIDE FROM



ACQUISITION.COM

YOU ARE HERE

STAGE 3: STABILIZE



2: ADVERTISE			3: STABILIZE			4: PRIORITIZE		
HEADCOUNT	1		HEADCOUNT	1 to 4				
YOUR ROLE	DOER		YOUR ROLE	TRAINER				
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	Freelancers		LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	First full-time hires				
# OF COMPANIES HERE	30,000,000 (100% of companies)		# OF COMPANIES HERE	7,140,000 (24% of companies)				
CONSTRAINT			CONSTRAINT			TO GRADUATE		
PRODUCT	Paying customers have higher expectations, product is available & not good enough.	Pay it	PRODUCT	No time to fix everything that's wrong.		TO GRADUATE	Fix the thing they complain about most.	
MARKETING	Lead flow is inconsistent (STOP-START)	Live	MARKETING	Leads aren't buying fast enough (colder)		TO GRADUATE	Add long term nurture (emails &/or content)	
SALES	Sales conversions are inconsistent	Not done	SALES	Wasting time with bad leads.		TO GRADUATE	Decide on basic qualifications.	
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Paid customers have higher standards & complain more	Learn to use free tools	CUSTOMER SERVICE	You don't have enough time to talk to good leads.		TO GRADUATE	Outsource setting & calendaring.	
INFORMATION TECH (IT)	You have no money to afford tech.	Convert	CUSTOMER SERVICE	New customers feel lost.		TO GRADUATE	Learn to onboard customers properly.	
RECRUITING	Too much work for part timers.	Convert	INFORMATION TECH (IT)	You have a bunch of different tools that you don't use.		TO GRADUATE	Figure out the useful ones. Extend free trial thru credits/discounts. Cut the rest. Basic sales pipeline.	
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	You have FTEs but structured like contractors.	Convert	RECRUITING	Not getting quality applicants.		TO GRADUATE	Learn how to write a job description & review resumes.	
FINANCE	You don't keep track of money or have a way to pay taxes	Convert	HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	You're not withholding employee taxes and fees.		TO GRADUATE	Get a payroll provider so all taxes and fees by state are handled.	
Bottom line	New customers are inconsistent.		FINANCE	People getting paid informally.		TO GRADUATE	Setup: Payroll processing, basic bookkeeping, managing invoices and payments.	
			Bottom line	There's too much for one person to do.		TO GRADUATE	Get help.	

0. IMPROVISE

1. MONETIZE

2. ADVERTISE

3. STABILIZE

4. PRIORITIZE

5. PRODUCTIZE

6. OPTIMIZE

7. CATEGORIZE

8. SPECIALIZE

9. CAPITALIZE

STAGE 3: STABILIZE

HEADCOUNT	1 to 4	
YOUR ROLE	TRAINER	
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	First full-time hires	
# OF COMPANIES HERE	7,140,000 (24% of companies)	
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FINANCE	People getting paid informally.	Setup: Payroll processing, basic bookkeeping, managing invoices and payments.
Bottom line	There's too much for one person to do.	Get help.

WATCH THIS FIRST



THIS VIDEO EXPLAINS THE ENTIRE \$100M SCALING ROADMAP. **THIS INCLUDES:**



The methodology



The differences between stages



Repeat themes to be aware of



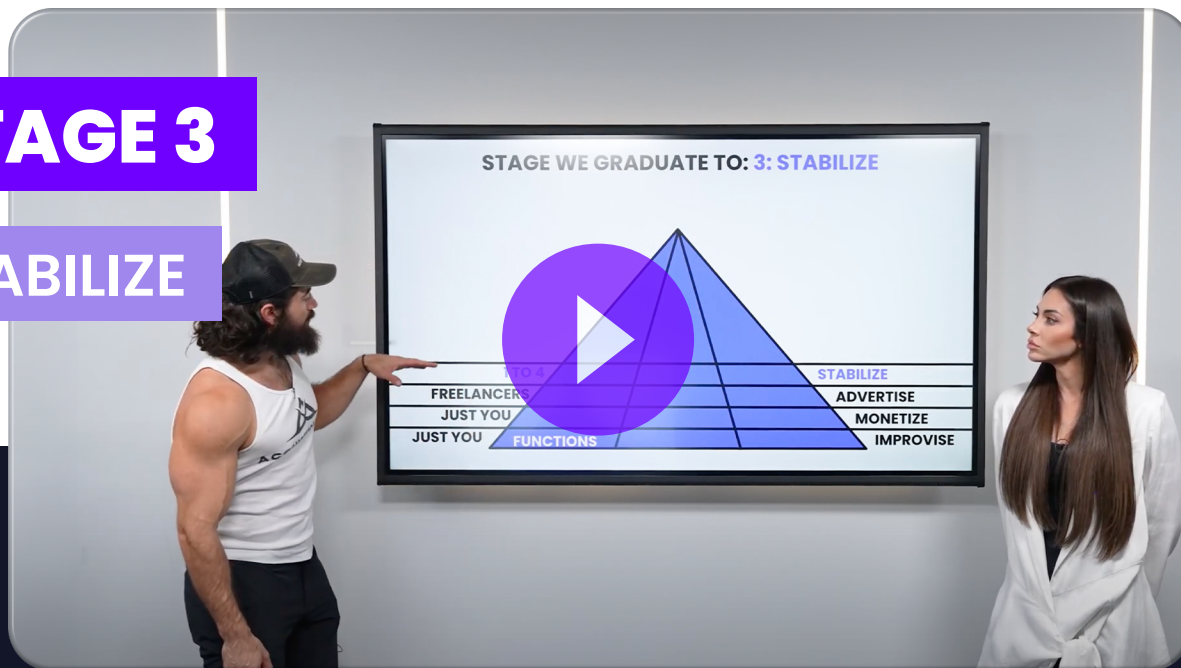
How to get the most out of your business

GOT IT? LET'S START SCALING ►►►

YOUR STAGE

STAGE 3

STABILIZE



THIS VIDEO PROVIDES AN
IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE CONSTRAINTS
& SOLUTIONS AT **STAGE 3**



YOUR ROLE

TRAINER



HEADCOUNT

1 to 4



BOTTOM LINE

There's too much for
one person to do



GRADUATE BY

Get help

WHEN YOU HIT “STAGE 3: STABILIZE”

You’ve made it! You have your first 1-4 full-time employees. About 24% of businesses (around 7 million companies) reach this level. This is when you go from doing everything yourself to having real employees. Your role changes from “doer” to “trainer” because now you have to teach others how to help run the business.

THE BIG CHALLENGE: TOO MUCH WORK, NOT ENOUGH TIME

The main problem at Stage 3 is simple – there’s way too much work for one person to handle. That’s why it’s called the “Stabilize” stage. Everything feels a bit chaotic and you need to make things more stable. Let’s look at what’s happening in each part of the business:

Products and Customers

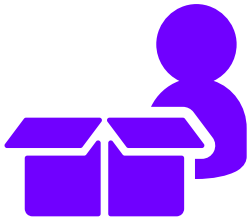
Sales and Service

Tech and Tools

People and HR

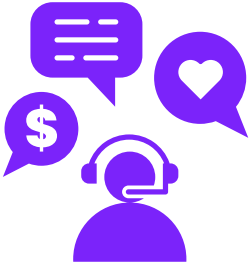
Money Matters





Products & Customers

- Your biggest headache is that you can't fix everything customers complain about
- You have to pick the ONE thing that bothers customers the most and fix just that
- Your leads (potential customers) aren't buying as quickly because they don't know you as well
- You need to start sending emails and creating content to build trust over time



Sales and Service

- You're wasting time talking to people who aren't serious about buying
- You need to make a list of what makes someone a "good" potential customer
- New customers often feel lost when they start using your product/service
- You need to create a proper way to welcome and guide new customers



Tech and Tools

- You probably bought too many different software tools thinking you'd use them all
- Now you need to figure out which ones you actually need and cancel the rest
- You should try to extend free trials or get discounts on the tools you keep
- You need a basic system to track your sales pipeline



People and HR

- It's hard to find good people to hire
- You need to learn how to write good job descriptions and review resumes properly
- You're probably not handling employee taxes correctly
- You need to get a payroll service to handle taxes and fees properly

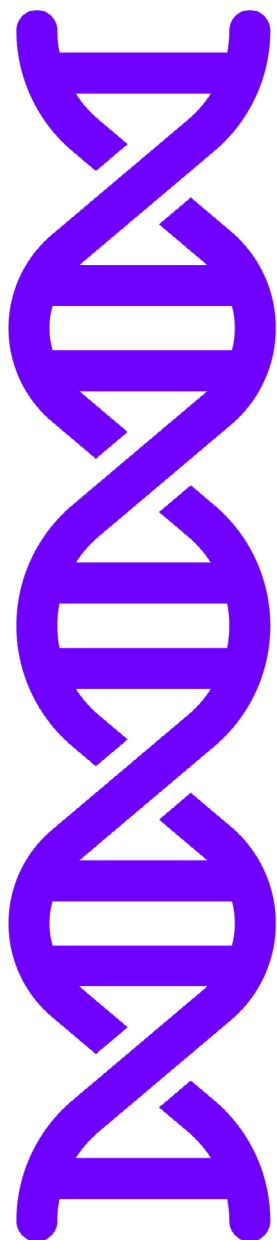


Customer Service

- People are getting paid informally (which isn't good)
- You need to set up proper payroll processing
- You need basic bookkeeping to track money coming in and going out
- You need to manage invoices and payments properly

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE AT STAGE 3

Your job is to move from doing everything yourself to having a small team that can help run the business. Here's what you need to do to graduate from Stage 3:



Fix Your Biggest Problem First

- Don't try to fix everything at once
- Find the #1 thing customers complain about
- Fix that one thing really well
- Then move on to the next biggest problem



Get Your Money In Order

- Set up proper payroll for employees
- Start using basic accounting software
- Make sure you're tracking all money coming in and going out
- Have a system for managing bills and getting paid



Help Your Team Help You

- Write down how you do important tasks
- Train your team members properly
- Give them the tools they need to do their jobs
- Check their work to make sure it's done right



Make Your Customers Happy

- Create a proper way to welcome new customers
- Make sure they know how to use your product/service
- Help them get results quickly
- Keep in touch with them regularly

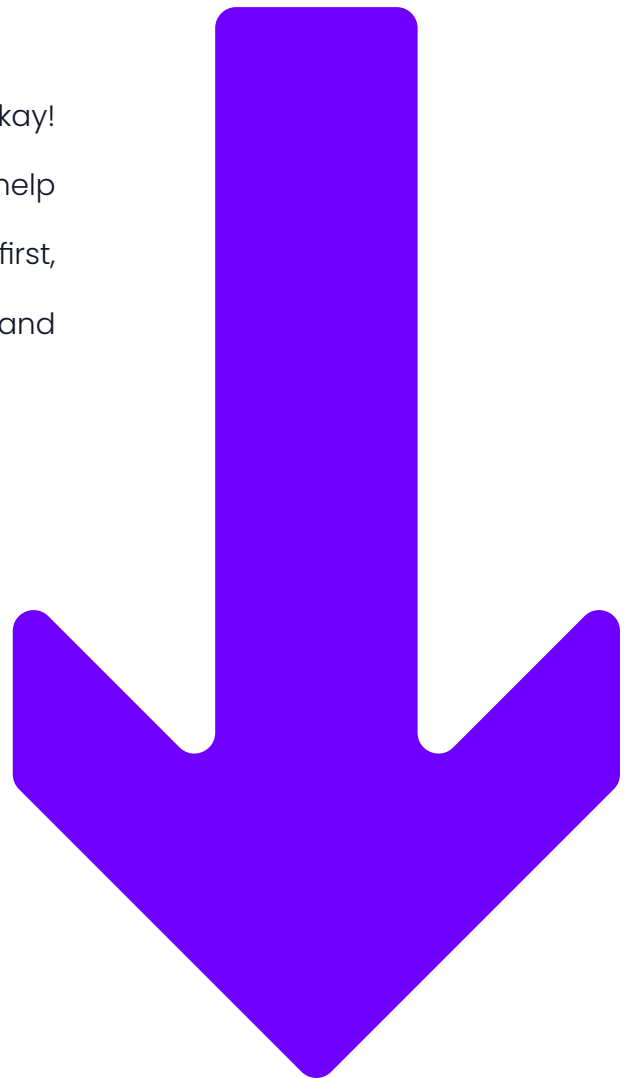
THE BOTTOM LINE

STAGE 3 IS ALL ABOUT GOING FROM CHAOS TO STABILITY.

You can't do everything yourself anymore, and that's okay! Your job is to build a small team and teach them how to help run the business. Focus on fixing the biggest problems first, setting up proper systems for money and employees, and making sure customers get good results.

If you can get through this stage, you'll have a real business with real employees, not just a one-person show. It's hard work, but about 7 million other businesses have done it.

YOU CAN TOO!



REMEMBER

Don't try to fix everything at once. Pick the biggest problem, fix it well, then move on to the next one. That's how you stabilize a growing business.

DO YOU WANT TO SCALE TO THE NEXT STEP?



Over 24% of businesses get stuck here. There's too much for one person to do and the only way to reach the next level is to get help. If you want our advice on how to find a team for your business, check out one of our Scaling Workshops. You can grab a seat below.



Check Dates

THIS IS THE STAGE YOU JUST GRADUATED FROM...



STAGE 2: ADVERTISE

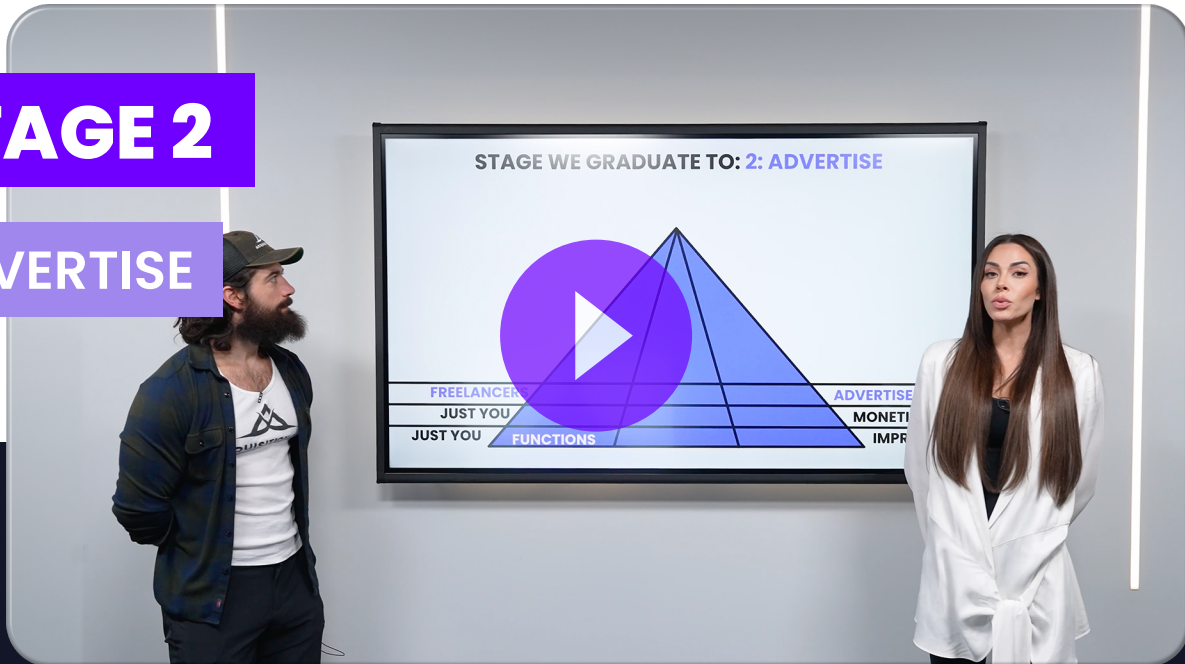
STAGE 2: ADVERTISE

HEADCOUNT	1	
YOUR ROLE	DOER	
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	Freelancers	
# OF COMPANIES HERE	30,000,000 (100% of companies)	
	CONSTRAINT	TO GRADUATE
PRODUCT	Paying customers have higher expectations, product is <u>unreliable</u> & not good enough.	Fix it good enough for now in an unscalable way.
MARKETING	Lead flow is inconsistent (STOP:START)	Live by the Rule of 100. Prioritize advertising daily.
SALES	Sales conversions are inconsistent	Nail down a script for setting and closing – CLOSER & ACA.
CUSTOMER SERVICE	Paid customers have higher standards & complain more.	Learn to deal with disappointed customers (Angry boat). Get testimonials from happy customers. (Epiphany script)
INFORMATION TECH (IT)	You have no money to afford tech.	Use free tech (google suite) and get free trials/credits for starter softwares. Website/hosting. Starter CRM/POS.
RECRUITING	Too much work for part timers.	Convert part timers to FTers, make public posts, or run ads on job boards to get full timers.
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	You have FTEs but structured like contractors.	Setup W-2 and 1099s.
FINANCE	You don't keep track of money or have a way to pay taxes.	Spin up quickbooks equivalent. Save for taxes. Check your bank account daily.
Bottom line	New customers are inconsistent.	Let more people know about your stuff.

YOUR STAGE

STAGE 2

ADVERTISE



THIS VIDEO PROVIDES AN
IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE CONSTRAINTS
& SOLUTIONS AT **STAGE 2**



YOUR ROLE

DOER



HEADCOUNT

1



BOTTOM LINE

New customers
are inconsistent



GRADUATE BY

Let more people know
about your stuff

WHEN YOU HIT “STAGE 2: ADVERTISE”

Welcome to Stage 2: The “Advertise” stage! You’ve made your first sales, and now it’s time to tell more people about your business. Think of this like moving from having a food stand that only your friends know about to actually advertising to get new customers who’ve never heard of you.

THE BIG PICTURE:

In this stage, you’re what we call a “doer” – someone who’s actively running their business and starting to use freelancers for help. You’re still the main person, but now you’re beginning to get part-time help. They give you some time back and help you with tasks you don’t have the skills (or desire) to do. All businesses that survive reach this stage, so you’re in good company.

Your Main Challenge: Product

Marketing Challenges

Sales Challenges

Customer Service

Technology Needs

Getting Help

Managing People

Money Management

Daily Life at Stage 2

Common Feelings at This Stage





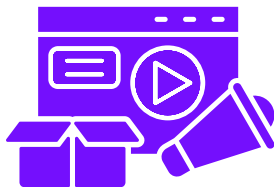
Your Main Challenge: Product

Your paying customers are much pickier than your free ones were! They have higher expectations, and your product might not be reliable enough yet. Maybe your food service is sometimes great but sometimes inconsistent, or your computer repair work takes different amounts of time for similar problems.

The key here is to fix things in an “unscalable way.” This means doing whatever it takes to make customers happy, even if it’s not efficient. You might need to:

- Work longer hours to get things perfect
- Double-check everything
- Provide extra service at no charge
- Fix problems immediately when they come up

Think: driving to the convenience store to drop off ice cream to a customer’s house at 2AM. The point is to be valuable, not scalable yet.

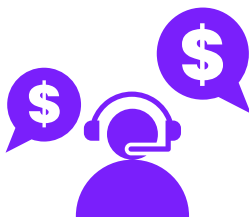


Marketing Challenges

Your biggest problem now is that your customer flow is inconsistent – sometimes you’re too busy, sometimes too quiet. It’s like having a restaurant that’s packed on weekends but empty on weekdays.

You need to:

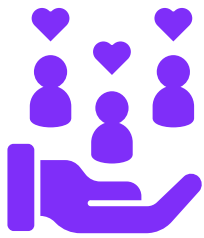
- Follow the “Rule of 100” (spend 100 minutes daily on marketing)
- Make marketing a daily priority, not just when you’re slow. (Get ahead)
- Keep track of what brings in customers (actions & results).
- Test different ways of reaching people. Stick with the one that works best for you. Don’t try and diversify in the beginning. Double down on what works.



Sales Challenges

Sales are up and down, and you need to fix that. It’s time to:

- Create a consistent sales script
- Learn the “CLOSER” method for converting leads
- Practice your pitch until it’s natural
- Track what works and what doesn’t



Customer Service

Paying customers complain more and have higher standards. You need to:

- Learn to handle upset customers (using the “Angry Boat” method)
- Get testimonials from happy customers using the “Epiphany Script”
- Turn complaints into improvements
- Make every customer feel special



Technology Needs

Money is tight, but you need basic tools. Focus on:

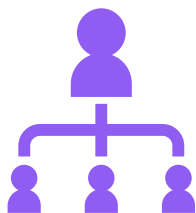
- Using free trials and credits
- Getting basic website/hosting
- Setting up a simple CRM (customer management system)
- Using free Google tools



Getting Help

Your part-timers aren't enough anymore. You need to:

- Start converting part-timers to full-time employees
- Post job ads
- Look for people who want steady work
- Be clear about expectations



Managing People

Now that you have help, you need to:

- Set up proper employment paperwork (W2s and 1099s)
- Create basic training
- Establish work schedules
- Make responsibilities clear



Money Management

Things are getting more complex with money. You need to:

- Set up QuickBooks or similar accounting software
- Save money for taxes
- Check your bank account daily
- Keep track of all expenses
- Start planning for bigger expenses



Your Daily Life at Stage 2

Your typical day might include:

- Serving existing customers
- Marketing for new customers
- Managing part-time help
- Handling money
- Fixing problems
- Improving your product/service
- Talking to potential customers



Common Feelings at This Stage

- Overwhelmed by all the moving parts
- Excited about growth
- Worried about consistency
- Proud of becoming a “real” business
- Stressed about managing others
- Concerned about money flow

SIGNS YOU'RE DOING IT WELL

Customers are coming back

New customers are finding you

Your help is reliable

Money is steady (even if not huge)

Systems are starting to work

Problems get fixed quickly

WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Inconsistent quality

Customer complaints increasing

Money problems

Helper turnover

Feeling constantly behind

Too many emergencies

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS:



GRADUATING FROM STAGE 2

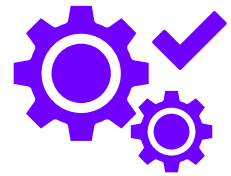
YOU'RE READY FOR STAGE 3 WHEN:



QUALITY IS
CONSISTENT



NEW CUSTOMERS
COME REGULARLY



SYSTEMS ARE
WORKING



MONEY IS
ORGANIZED



HELP IS
RELIABLE



MARKETING
IS STEADY

REMEMBER

This stage is about creating stability and systems. You're moving from "figuring it out" to "doing it right." It might feel slower than you want, but building these foundations is crucial.

THE BIG PICTURE GOAL:

Your main goal in Stage 2 is to get more people to know about your business in a consistent way. You're not just serving customers anymore - you're building a real business that can grow.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Stage 2 is where many businesses start to feel “real.” You’re not just selling something – you’re running a proper business. Take your time, build good habits, and focus on consistency. Every successful business went through this stage, so you’re on the right path!

This stage can feel like a juggling act, but it’s where you learn to be a true business owner. Stay focused on quality, keep marketing daily, and build systems that will support your growth. The more solid your foundation here, the easier your next stages will be.

THIS IS WHAT'S COMING NEXT...



STAGE 4: PRIORITIZE

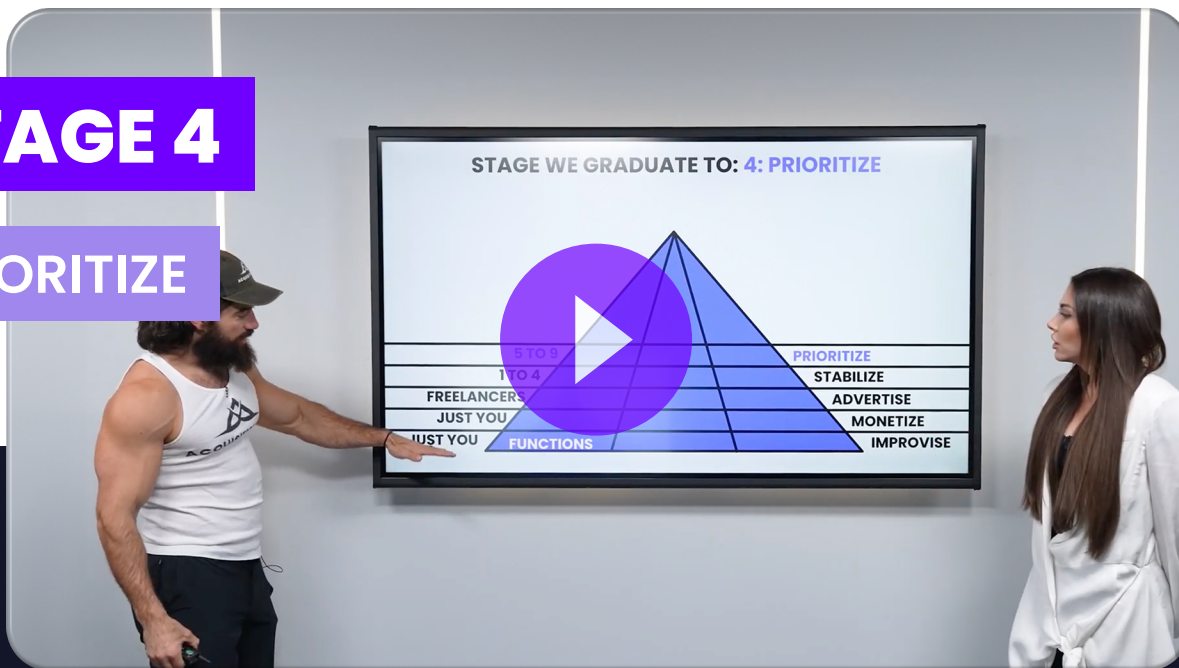
STAGE 4: PRIORITIZE

HEADCOUNT	5 to 9	
YOUR ROLE	Manager	
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE	1 Layer: First Team	
# OF COMPANIES HERE	3,000,000	
	CONSTRAINT	TO GRADUATE
PRODUCT	You said yes to anyone who would pay. Feedback from so many different customers creates too many product directions.	Specialize product (v2) & price to serve niched down avatar.
MARKETING	Too many unqualified leads	Make better free stuff & more creative to boost volume. Add qualification/friction so the extra volume self-selects.
SALES	Speed to contact drops. You have no metrics around sales.	Track basic KPIs manually on spreadsheet (contact rate, sched, show, offer, close, cash collected).
CUSTOMER SERVICE	No metrics for customer success.	Install tracking & KPIs. Record and centralize notes for each customer in a CRM.
INFORMATION TECH (IT)	New team isn't using everything.	Get everyone on platforms. Protect passwords. Get project management tool & comms (work chat tool).
RECRUITING	Wasting time with bad candidates.	Learn how to conduct a proper interview and check references.
HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)	Employees don't know how to behave (PTO, sick days, dress code, code of conduct).	Employee handbook & policies.
FINANCE	Cash flow is lumpy due to random "one-time" expenses. You find out that businesses cost money to run.	Get profit and loss statements and cash flow statements setup. Get basic business insurance.
Bottom line	Trying to be everything to everyone.	Niche down to serve only people like your best customers.

YOUR STAGE

STAGE 4

PRIORITIZE



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IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE CONSTRAINTS
& SOLUTIONS AT **STAGE 4**



YOUR ROLE

MANAGER



HEADCOUNT

5 to 9



BOTTOM LINE

Trying to be
everything to
everyone



GRADUATE BY

Niche down to
serve only people
like your best
customers

WHEN YOU HIT “STAGE 4: PRIORITIZE”

Welcome to having 5-9 employees! About 3 million businesses reach this level. This is when you change from being a “trainer” to becoming a real “manager.” You’ll have your first real team, with one layer of organization between you and the front-line workers. The big difference? You can’t do everything anymore – you have to choose what matters most.

THE BIG CHALLENGE: TRYING TO PLEASE EVERYONE

The main problem at Stage 4 is that you’ve been saying “yes” to any customer who would pay you. Now that’s causing problems because different customers want different things. That’s why it’s called the “Prioritize” stage – you need to figure out who your best customers are and focus on them.

Let’s break down what’s happening:

Products and Customers

Marketing and Sales

Customer Service

Tech and Tools

People and HR

Money Matters





Products & Customers

- You've said yes to anyone who would pay, and now your product is pulled in too many directions
- You need to choose a specific type of customer to focus on
- You need to update your product to serve just those ideal customers
- You might need to raise your prices to match your specialized service



Marketing & Sales

- You're getting too many unqualified leads (people who aren't right for your business)
- You need to create better free content to attract the right people
- Your sales team isn't following up with leads quickly enough
- You need to start tracking basic sales numbers like how many calls you make and how many people buy



Customer Service

- You have no way to measure if customers are happy
- You need to start tracking customer satisfaction
- Customer information is scattered everywhere
- You need a proper system (CRM) to keep track of customer notes and interactions



Tech and Tools

- Your new team isn't using all the tools properly
- You need to get everyone on the same platforms
- You need to protect passwords and data
- You need project management and team chat tools



People and HR

- You're wasting time interviewing people who aren't right for the job
- You need to learn how to interview properly and check references
- Employees don't know basic rules about time off, dress code, etc.
- You need to create an employee handbook with basic policies

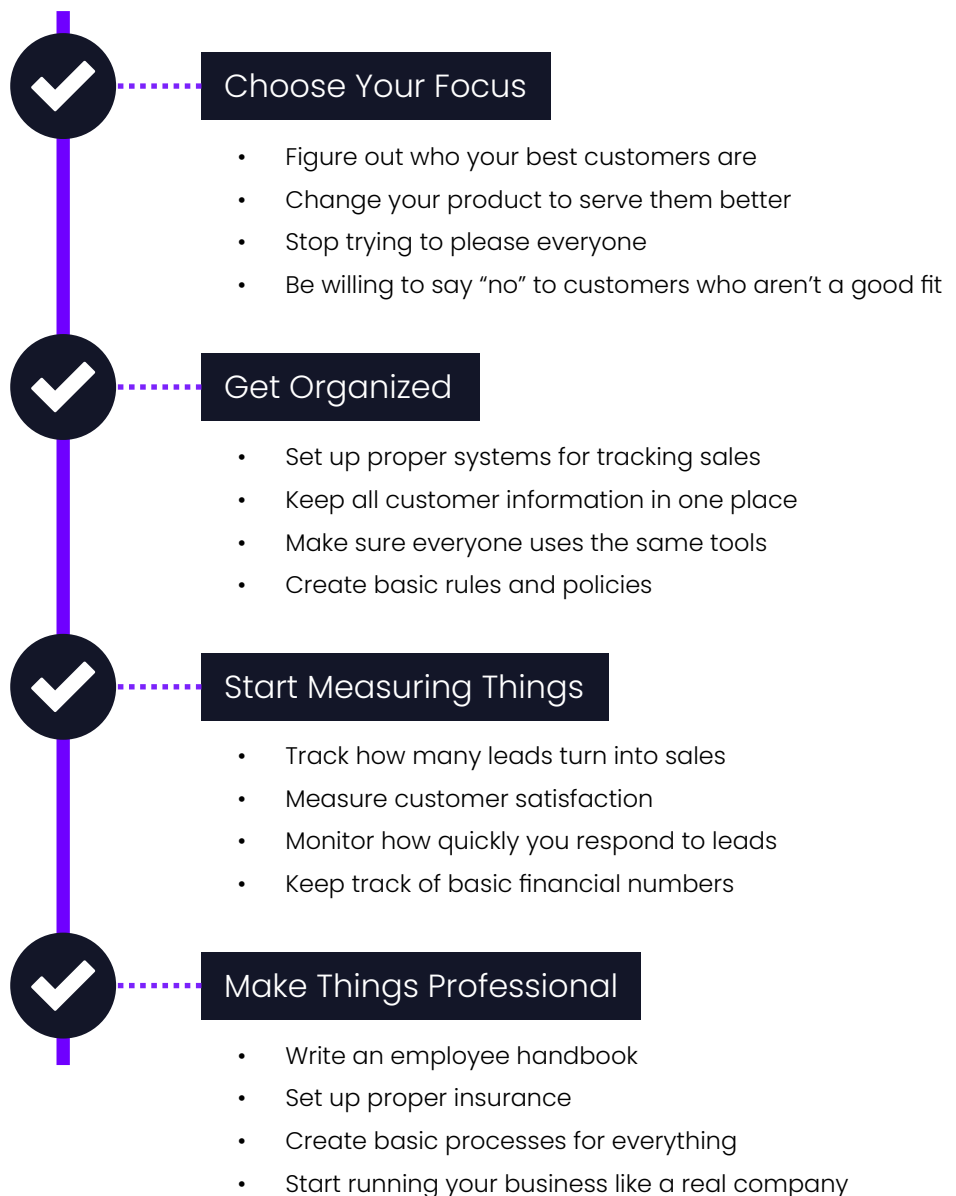
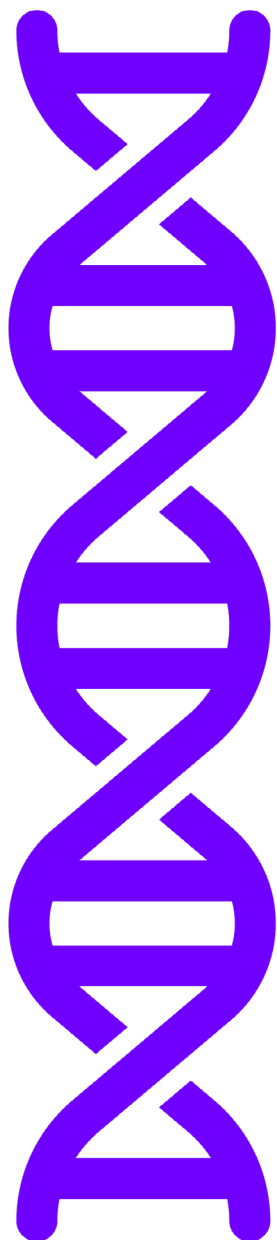


Money Matters

- You keep getting surprised by "one-time" expenses
- You're learning that running a business costs more than you thought
- You need proper profit and loss statements
- You need basic business insurance

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE AT STAGE 4

Your job is to make the business more focused and professional. Here's what you need to do to graduate from Stage 4:

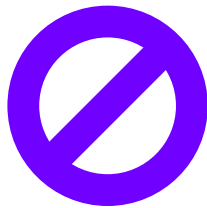


THE BOTTOM LINE

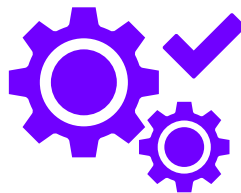
STAGE 4 IS ALL ABOUT FOCUS AND PRIORITIES. YOU CAN'T SERVE EVERYONE, AND YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING. YOU NEED TO CHOOSE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT AND FOCUS ON THAT. THIS MEANS:



**PICKING
YOUR IDEAL
CUSTOMERS**



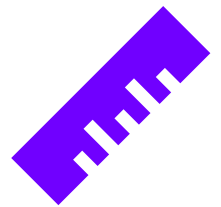
**SAYING
NO TO
OTHERS**



**SETTING
UP BASIC
SYSTEMS**



**CREATING
CLEAR
RULES**



**MEASURING
WHAT
MATTERS**

This is when your business starts feeling like a real company instead of just a group of people working together. It's when you stop trying to please everyone and start focusing on being really good at serving specific types of customers.

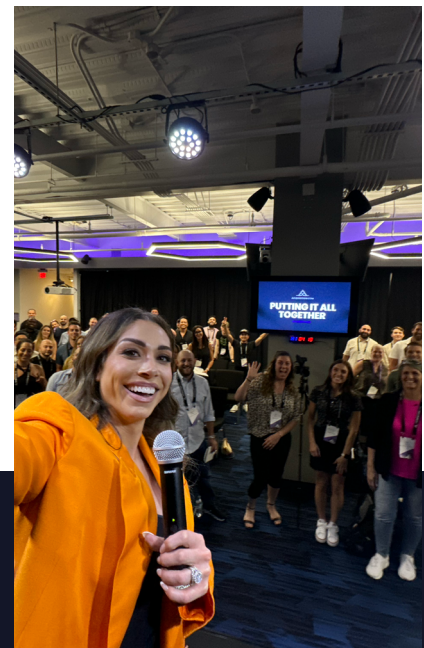
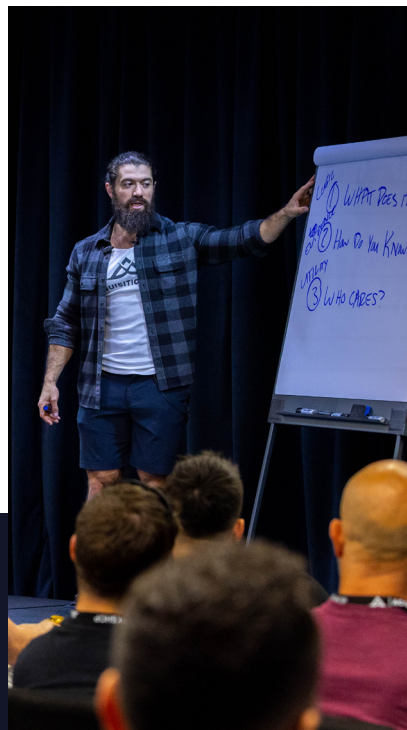
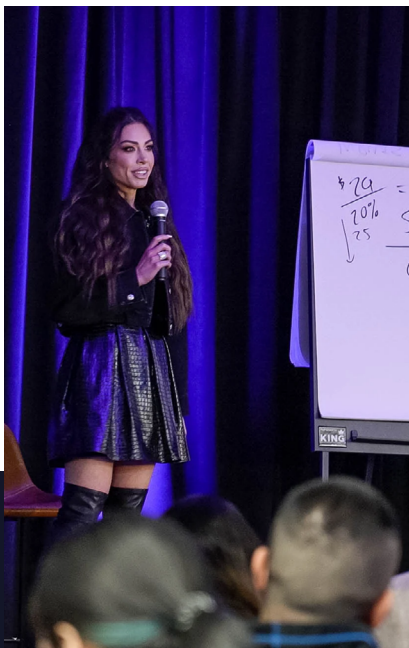
REMEMBER

The key to Stage 4 is learning to say "no." No to customers who aren't right for you. No to projects that don't fit. No to doing everything yourself. That's how you build a focused, successful business that can grow even bigger.

It's a hard transition because saying "no" means turning down money in the short term. But it's necessary if you

want to build something bigger in the long term. About 3 million businesses have made this transition successfully. If you stay focused on serving your best customers really well, you will too.

DO YOU WANT TO SCALE TO THE NEXT STEP?



Over 24% of businesses get stuck here. There's too much for one person to do and the only way to reach the next level is to get help. If you want our advice on how to find a team for your business, check out one of our Scaling Workshops. You can grab a seat below.

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