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GROWTH PARTNERS

Build for What Comes Next

10 Early Commercial Decisions That Shape Sustainable, Repeatable & Defensible Growth



A FOUNDER'S GUIDE

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Early decisions can have long-term consequences.

Early-stage founders make hundreds of decisions while simultaneously building the product, finding customers, raising capital and creating a company.

Not every decision caries the same downstream weight.

The customers you pursue, the pilots you design, the way you price, the evidence you build and the exceptions you make can begin shaping the business long before you reach scale.

Some create momentum. Others create complexity that may not become visible until you're trying to win larger customers, demonstrate repeatability, raise the next round or accelerate growth.

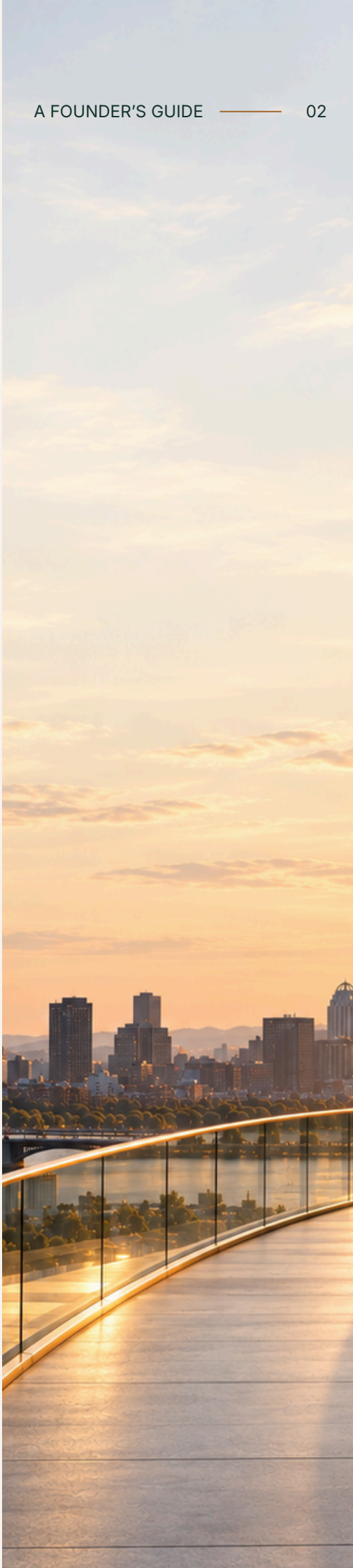
You don't need to build a scaled company before you're ready. But it helps to understand what scale may eventually require.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Build for What Comes Next looks at 10 early commercial decisions that can have outsized consequences later and the lessons we can take from healthcare technology companies that have already traveled further down the road.

The goal isn't to prescribe one right answer. It's to help you ask better questions while you still have the flexibility to act on the answers.

> *What should be true now to make growth easier later?*



THE 10 DECISIONS

Build today with tomorrow in mind.

Ten early commercial decisions that can shape sustainable, repeatable and defensible growth.

01 **Market + ICP**
Who are we really building for?

02 **Positioning + Narrative**
Can the market understand why we're different?

03 **Pilot Strategy**
What does this pilot need to prove?

04 **Pilot → Paid Customer**
How does success become revenue?

05 **Enterprise Buying + Strategic Closing**
What has to be true for the customers to say yes?

06 **Pricing + Packaging for Expansion**
Where can the customer relationship go next?

07 **Onboarding + Adoption**
Who are we really building for?

08 **Retention + Expansion**
Who are we really building for?

09 **Repeatability**
Who are we really building for?

10 **Pricing + Packaging for Expansion**
Where can the customer relationship go next?

A STONGER PATH FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

FOCUS → PROVE → WIN → ADOPT → EXPAND → REPEAT → DEFEND

Ten decisions. One objective: build a stronger foundation for what comes next.

Choose a market you want to win repeatedly.



Ten early commercial decisions that can shape sustainable, repeatable and defensible growth.

THE DECISION

Early customers influence far more than revenue. They begin shaping your product, positioning, evidence, implementation model and sales motion.

The first customer willing to say yes isn't necessarily the customer you want to build you company around.

WHAT TO WATCH

Early revenue can pull a company in multiple directions. Different customer types can bring different requirements, workflows, integrations, and buying motions.

Revenue can grow while repeatability becomes harder to find.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Look beyond the immediate opportunity. Consider whether winning this teaches you something useful about winning the next one-and the one after that.

The goal isn't simply to find a *customer*. It's to begin learning ***which customers you can win repeatedly.***

ASK YOURSELF

- Is this a customer we would intentionally pursue again?
- Are there enough similar customers with the same problem
- Is the problem important enough that they will consistently pay to solve it?
- Can we reach, sell to and serve these customers efficiently?
- Does serving this customer strengthen the business we're building - or pull us away from it?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

If we win this customer, do we want more just like them?

Make the innovation easy to understand- and hard to miss.



Your technology may be genuinely different. But differentiation only matters if the market understands why it matters.

THE DECISION

Early-stage companies often lead with what they've built—the technology, features, model or methodology.

Strong positioning connects that innovation to a problem the customer already understands and an outcome they already value.

WHAT TO WATCH

The more innovative the product, the harder it can be to explain.

Too much technical detail buries the value; too little makes differentiated technology sound like everything else.

Translate the technology without losing what makes it different.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Your story eventually has to travel without you. Customers, champions, sales teams, partners and investors will all need to understand—and repeat—why you're different.

The strongest narratives become easier to repeat as the company grows, not harder.

ASK YOURSELF

02

- Can someone understand what we do in less than a minute?
- Have we connected the technology to a customer problem and measurable value?
- Are we explaining the innovation—or burying people in how it works?
- Could our champion explain our value when we're not in the room?
- Is it clear what makes us meaningfully different?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

Can our champion explain what makes us different—and why it matters—when we're not in the room?

Design the pilot for the decision that comes next.



A successful pilot isn't the goal. The goal is to create the proof required to move the customer forward.

THE DECISION

A pilot should begin with a clear understanding of what it needs to prove.

Define the clinical, operational, financial or adoption outcomes that matter before the pilot begins.

WHAT TO WATCH

Pilots can easily become activity without progress.

Positive feedback and promising results don't necessarily lead to a buying decision.

"The pilot went well" isn't the same as commercial proof.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Work backward from the decision you want the customer to make next.

What evidence will decision-makers need to move forward?

Build the pilot to produce proof that can travel through the organization.

ASK YOURSELF

- What specifically does this pilot need to prove?
- Who will ultimately evaluate the results?
- Have we agreed on success measures before starting?
- Are we measuring outcomes the buyer actually values?
- If we achieve those outcomes, what happens next?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What exactly does this pilot need to prove for the next decision to happen?

Turn successful pilots into commercial commitments.



Proof only creates value when there is a clear path from successful results to a buying decision.

THE DECISION

Define the path to a paid relationship before the pilot begins.

Know what success triggers, who makes the decision and where the budget will come from.

WHAT TO WATCH

A successful pilot can still stall.

Strong results, enthusiastic users and an internal champion don't automatically create budget, urgency or a contract.

Don't wait until the pilot ends to discuss what happens next.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Design the commercial path alongside the pilot:

Proof → Business Case → Buying Decision → Paid Contract → Expansion

The goal is to make the next step a natural consequence of success.

ASK YOURSELF

- What happens if the pilot succeeds?
- Who owns the buying decision?
- Is there an identified budget and path to procurement?
- What evidence will support the business case?
- Have we agreed on the next step before the pilot ends?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

Before we begin the pilot, can we describe exactly how success becomes a paid contract?

Understand what it really takes to get to yes.



Enterprise customers don't simply buy a product. They navigate risk, priorities, budgets, stakeholders and the status quo.

THE DECISION

Understand how your customer actually buys.

Map the decision-makers, influencers, budget, procurement process and internal hurdles that stand between interest and a signed contract.

WHAT TO WATCH

Strong interest can look like sales progress when it isn't.

A champion may love the solution while procurement, IT, finance or leadership still has reasons to delay—or stay with an incumbent.

Enthusiasm isn't the same as commitment.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Winning enterprise customers requires more than proving value.

Understand what could stop the decision, where objections may emerge and what your champion needs to build support internally.

Help make the decision easier to defend.

ASK YOURSELF

- Who actually makes the final decision?
- Who can slow or stop the purchase?
- What is the customer risking by choosing us?
- What are we competing against—including doing nothing?
- What does our champion need to get the decision across the line?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What has to be true for this organization to say yes—and accept the risk of changing the status quo?

Build room to grow inside the customer.



The strongest revenue models don't depend on winning a new customer for every new dollar of growth.

THE DECISION

Think beyond the initial sale.

Design pricing and packaging so customers have logical ways to expand as their usage, needs and relationship with you grow.

WHAT TO WATCH

Early pricing is often designed simply to get the deal done.

But one-off discounts, custom packages and limited expansion paths can create a model that's increasingly difficult to scale.

Today's pricing decisions shape tomorrow's growth options.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Consider where the relationship can go after the first contract.

More users, locations, capabilities, products or use cases can create natural paths to upsell and cross-sell.

Build expansion into the model from the beginning.

ASK YOURSELF

- What are customers actually paying us for?
- Does our pricing scale with the value we create?
- Where can this relationship grow after the initial sale?
- Are we creating logical paths to upsell and cross-sell?
- Will this model become easier—or harder—to scale?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

If we land this customer today, how can the relationship grow over the next three years?

07 | ONBOARDING + ADOPTION

Turn the sale into successful usage.

Winning the customer is only the beginning. Long-term value depends on what happens after the contract is signed.



THE DECISION

Design the transition from sale to successful adoption.

Make it clear how customers will implement, activate and begin experiencing meaningful value as quickly as possible.

WHAT TO WATCH

Momentum can disappear after the sale.

Slow implementation, unclear ownership or weak adoption can undermine value before the relationship has a chance to take hold.

A signed contract doesn't guarantee a successful customer.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Early adoption creates the foundation for retention and expansion.

The faster customers experience value—and the more deeply the solution becomes part of their workflow—the stronger the relationship becomes.

Design onboarding with retention in mind.

ASK YOURSELF

- What does successful onboarding look like?
- How quickly can the customer experience meaningful value?
- Who owns adoption on both sides?
- Where could implementation or usage stall?
- What behaviors signal that the solution is taking hold?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What must happen in the first 90 days for this customer to become one we retain and grow?

08 | RETENTION + EXPANSION

Build revenue that compounds.

Sustainable growth comes not only from winning customers, but from keeping them and growing the relationship over time.



THE DECISION

Understand what makes customers stay—and what gives them a reason to expand.

Build around the value, usage and outcomes that strengthen the relationship over time.

WHAT TO WATCH

Churn can hide beneath strong new sales.

If customers aren't realizing value, adding more customers simply creates a larger retention problem later.

Acquisition creates revenue. Retention makes it durable.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

The strongest customer relationships become more valuable over time.

Deeper adoption, demonstrated outcomes and additional use cases can create natural opportunities for expansion.

Growth should compound within the customer base.

ASK YOURSELF

- Why do our best customers stay?
- What are the earliest signals of churn?
- Are customers realizing measurable value?
- Where are the natural opportunities to expand?
- Does the relationship become stronger over time?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What makes our product increasingly difficult for a successful customer to leave?

Learn how to win the same kind of revenue again.



Growth becomes scalable when each customer teaches you how to win and serve the next one more effectively.

THE DECISION

Look for the patterns behind your wins.

Understand which customers, problems, messages, sales motions and delivery models can be repeated without reinventing the business each time.

WHAT TO WATCH

Revenue can grow while repeatability gets worse.

Custom features, unique pricing, special implementations and one-off terms may win individual deals while adding complexity.

Not all revenue makes the business more scalable.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Repeatability turns traction into a growth model.

As patterns become clearer, sales become more predictable, delivery becomes more efficient and the organization can invest with greater confidence.

Learn what works—then make it easier to do again.

ASK YOURSELF

- What do our best customers have in common?
- Why are we consistently winning?
- Can we repeat the same sales motion?
- How much customization does each new customer require?
- Is the next dollar making the model more repeatable—or more complicated?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

Are we generating revenue or learning how to generate the same kind of revenue again?

Build the proof for what comes next.



The evidence investors and strategic partners will eventually evaluate is being created through the business you're building today.

THE DECISION

Build commercial proof and competitive advantage as you grow.

Traction, outcomes, retention, expansion and differentiation should become stronger—and easier to demonstrate—over time.

WHAT TO WATCH

Capital readiness isn't something to start when fundraising begins.

Weak evidence, unclear economics or limited differentiation can become much harder to address once the next milestone is approaching.

Don't wait for diligence to build the proof.

LOOKING DOWNSTREAM

Each stage raises the bar.

Early traction must eventually become repeatable revenue, strong customer economics and evidence that the business can endure as the market evolves.

Build a company that becomes increasingly easy to diligence.

ASK YOURSELF

- What will the next investor or strategic partner need to believe?
- What evidence are we building today?
- Are retention and expansion strengthening our story?
- What becomes more valuable as we grow?
- What gets harder for competitors to replicate?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What will we eventually need to prove and are we building that proof into the business now?

Growth is a system.

The decisions connect. Each one influences what becomes possible next.



The market shapes the story. The story helps create opportunity. Pilots create proof. Proof supports the buying decision. Pricing creates room to expand. Adoption creates value. Value drives retention. Retention and expansion create repeatability. And repeatability strengthens the commercial proof and defensibility of the business.

THE DOWNSTREAM VIEW

Scale doesn't fix the commercial model. *It amplifies it.*

Build the foundation before you need it.

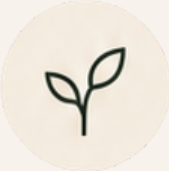
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Before you make the next commercial decision...

You won't have every answer. The goal is to ask the questions that help you understand what today's decisions could mean tomorrow.



- [ ] **Does this help us learn what works?**
  Will this give us useful evidence to inform what comes next?



- [ ] **Does this move us forward towards sustainable, repeatable revenue?**
  Will this give us useful evidence to inform what comes next?



- [ ] **Does this strengthen the evidence we're building?**
  Will this give us useful evidence to inform what comes next?



- [ ] **Does this make the business more repeatable or more complicated.**
  Will this give us useful evidence to inform what comes next?



- [ ] **What could this decision mean 12-24 months from now?**
  How might it influence our options, opportunities, or challenges?

THE BOSTONIA QUESTION

What should be true now to *make growth easier later?*

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Build for what comes next.

Julie Spence is the Founder of Bostonia Growth Partners and has spent more than three decades operating across healthcare technology from implementation and enterprise sales through commercialization, go-to-market, growth and scale.

Bostonia works with healthcare technology leaders at critical moments of growth and scale, when ambitious priorities create new complexity and require experienced commercial perspective and senior capacity to move them forward.

That experience also creates a valuable perspective earlier in the journey. Julie works with select early-stage founders and accelerator programs, bringing lessons from commercialization and scale upstream to help leaders make better commercial decisions before they become harder and more expensive to change.

"Better commercial decisions create a stronger tomorrow."

AMBITIOUS GROWTH

Turn bigger opportunities into measurable results.

COMMERCIAL COMPLEXITY

More growth. More complexity. More interconnected decisions.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

High-priority initiatives require senior focus and experienced execution.

GROWTH + SCALE

Build the commercial foundation for sustainable, repeatable growth.

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COMMERCIAL PERSPECTIVE
FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

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