

BOOTSTRAP
— YOUR BUSINESS —

FOUNDERS JOURNEY · STAGE 9 OF 9

Organization Guide

Make it clear who does what as the business grows beyond you.

Responsibility first. Title second.

Organization is where growing responsibilities become easier to coordinate. The goal isn't to copy a big company's org chart. It's making clear who owns important work, who can decide what, where handoffs happen, and where the business still leans too hard on you.

WHAT MATTERS NOW	YOUR FIRST STEP	WHAT COMES NEXT
Responsibilities, owners, who decides what, handoffs, capacity, and work that still depends too much on you.	Pick one area where unclear ownership keeps causing the same problems.	This is the last stage. From here, the work is ongoing improvement, not another stage.

WHAT YOU'LL HAVE BY THE END

- A clear picture of the main responsibilities the business has to carry.
- Clear owners for the decisions and handoffs that matter most now.
- A simple way to coordinate work without every question going through you.
- A sense of what might justify AI help, a contractor, a hire, or a new routine, and what can wait.

01 Organize around real work

Start with the responsibilities your business already has, not the job titles you think a company should have.

Organization should reflect work that already exists: customers to serve, money to manage, delivery to coordinate, decisions to make, and systems to keep running. A role is useful only when it makes that real work clearer, faster, or more dependable.

SIGNS MORE ORGANIZATION MAY HELP

You're the bottleneck	Too many routine decisions, approvals, or questions wait on you.
Ownership gaps	Important work gets delayed or missed because nobody clearly owns it.
Coordination costs	Handoffs, priorities, or information keep causing confusion or redoing work.
Not enough hours	The work is understood, but one person can't carry it well anymore.

> **The core idea**
> Structure should make real responsibility clearer. It should cut confusion without adding layers the business doesn't need.

02 Make ownership and handoffs clear

Give important work a clear owner, clear decision limits, and dependable handoffs.

The answer may be as simple as naming one owner, deciding what they can approve on their own, setting a short weekly check-in, or splitting two jobs that keep competing for the same person's attention. Add structure only when it fixes real confusion or real overload.

QUESTIONS THAT HELP

- What important responsibilities exist today, whether or not anyone has a title?
- Which ones need one clearly accountable owner?
- Which decisions can that owner make alone, and which need you?
- Where do handoffs or communication most often break down?
- Is this really a people problem, or would a clearer process or priority fix it first?

FIVE PARTS OF CLEAR OWNERSHIP

1. The responsibility	The important work or result that must always have an owner.
2. The owner	One person clearly accountable for moving it forward.
3. Their authority	Which decisions the owner can make, and which still need someone else.
4. The handoffs	Where the work depends on another person, process, or decision.
5. Review	Using real results, missed handoffs, and overload to adjust over time.

> **Try AI before you hire**
> Before adding a person, ask whether an AI tool, a written process, or a part-time contractor could carry the work. Hire when the work truly needs a person, one role at a time.

03 Choose your first step

Pick one area where unclear responsibility keeps slowing the business down.

Don't redesign the whole company at once. Choose one recurring problem, make ownership and decision limits clearer, use it in real work, and see if it cuts confusion before adding more.

GOOD FIRST STEPS CAN BE

- Listing one area of important work with unclear or shared ownership.
- Naming one owner and describing what a good result looks like.
- Writing down which routine decisions that owner can make without waiting for you.
- Fixing one handoff where information or timing keeps getting lost.
- Trying a short weekly check-in, and keeping it only if it improves real decisions.

SIGNS YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS

- Important responsibilities have owners instead of falling back to you.
- People know which decisions they can make on their own.
- Handoffs are clear without constant checking.
- You can tell a real need for help from a busy week.
- You have more time for the decisions only you can make.

SIGNS TO SLOW DOWN

- You're creating departments before there's enough work.
- You're hiring when a process fix or contractor would do.
- People have impressive titles but unclear responsibility.
- Meetings and reports don't improve any decision.

DO IT FOR LESS

Start free. Pay only at the wall.

Growing doesn't have to mean a big payroll. Add help in the cheapest form that does the job.

- Let AI tools take on drafting, research, summaries, and first passes before you hire for them.
- Write clear steps for the work (from Systemization) so less of it depends on you.
- Use a part-time contractor or freelancer for one specific job before committing to an employee.
- Coordinate in a free shared document, a free task board, and a short weekly check-in.

Hire when the work regularly needs more hours or judgment than AI, written steps, and contractors can give. Then add one role at a time, not a whole team.

DO IT WITH AI

Let AI do the heavy lifting

Copy these into any free AI tool, like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini. Fill in the brackets first.

Decide what AI or a contractor can take

These are the jobs in my business and who does each one today: [your list]*. Show me which ones AI or a part-time contractor could take on first, and which ones need a person I hire, with the reason for each.*

Write a clear role

Write a one-page description for someone owning [the responsibility]*: the result they're responsible for, the decisions they can make on their own, the ones that need me, and their key handoffs.*

Find my bottlenecks

Here's what I spent my time on last week: [your list]*. Tell me which items only I can do, which could be handed off, and which decisions I could let someone else make.*

Check the answer: AI can sort and draft, but decisions about people are yours. Talk with anyone affected before you change their role.

NOT YET

What can wait

- Departments or leadership layers before there's enough work.
- Full-time hires when a process fix, AI tool, or contractor would solve it.
- Impressive titles without clear responsibility.
- Recurring meetings or reports that don't improve a decision.
- Keeping every decision with you after someone else clearly owns the work.
- Copying another company's org chart instead of designing around your own work.

WHERE THE JOURNEY STANDS

Ongoing improvement

Organization is the last stage of the Founders Journey. That doesn't mean the business is finished. From here the work is ongoing: strengthening your evidence, systems, people, and decisions as the business changes. You make progress when the business can run without leaning on you for everything.

> *Let structure follow reality. Add more only when the business earns the need.*