

Founder Growth Series

Brief No. 1

The Founder Brand Advantage

Why the best founder stories become commercial advantages

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Every Founder Has A Story

The Myth

Big brands win because they have bigger budgets, broader distribution & more resources.

Sometimes.

But big can also make companies slower, safer & further removed from the consumer.

Being smaller isn't always a disadvantage. Sometimes it's the advantage.

The Founder Advantage

Founder-led brands can move with speed & intentionality that larger brands spend millions trying to recreate.

Founder-led brands know the 'why' (consumer problem) intimately.

They can innovate with conviction, tell an authentic story & make choices that aren't dictated by old systems or yesterday's playbook.

They can (and should) take risks.

And being the underdog matters. Challenger brands give consumers, retailers & employees something to root for.

The danger isn't growth. It's when scale creates pressure to behave like the big guys.

Don't.

The goal isn't to become a smaller version of the category leader.

Hold fast to what made the brand matter in the first place.

Then Turn the Story Into Commercial Momentum

A compelling origin story is valuable.

Turning that story into commercial action is powerful.

I'd start by asking five questions:

1. **Why does the brand exist?**
 - What consumer need or challenge does it solve?
2. **Where does that differentiation create permission to win?**
 - Not everywhere and not all at once. Which consumers, occasions, retailers & markets create the most value?
3. **How does the founder story show up?**
 - Innovation, assortment priorities, pricing, shopper activation & go-to-market.
4. **What should we refuse to copy?**
 - Remember you are differentiating, not following other brands.
5. **What are the brand non-negotiables?**
 - Identify it early, protect it deliberately & build around it.

Every founder has a story.

Use it to your advantage. Turn that story into commercial momentum without losing what made it worth telling.

Perspective Earned

- Twenty years leading commercial growth across challenger and iconic brands, from emerging disruptors to category leaders
- Experience spanning the full commercial landscape & building organizations that scale with growth (not after it): sales, category leadership, shopper marketing, commercialization, revenue growth, organizational design and P&L leadership
- A reputation for asking difficult questions that challenge assumptions, strengthen perspective and move organizations beyond the status quo
- A career spent telling compelling brand stories and translating consumer relevance into breakthrough performance, retailer confidence, exceptional execution & sustainable growth

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Commercial Strategy • Go-to-Market • Revenue Growth • Organizational Design • Executive Advisory