



The Scale-Hacker Framework

Empowering EEN Advisors to Support Scale-Up Success

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CHOOSE EUROPE TO START AND SCALE

28TH
REGIME

SCALEUP
FUND

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BUSINESS
WALLET



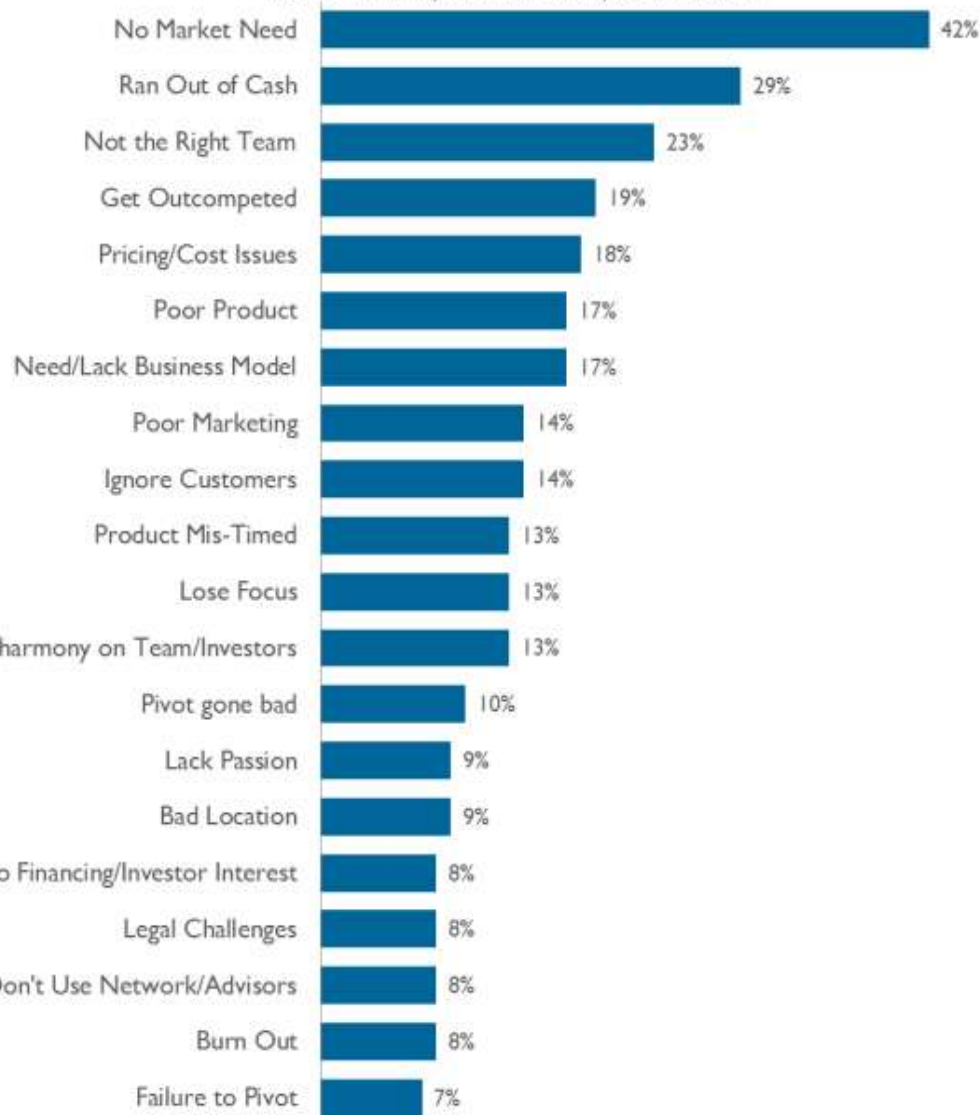
Extra-Mile upgrade to digital

Migliorare la **collaborazione proattiva** tra gli scale-ups advisors, lanciata durante l'ultima AC in Budapest, attraverso la creazione di una sezione su Connect che possa agevolare questa modalità di collaborazione.



Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail

Based on an Analysis of 101 Startup Post-Mortems

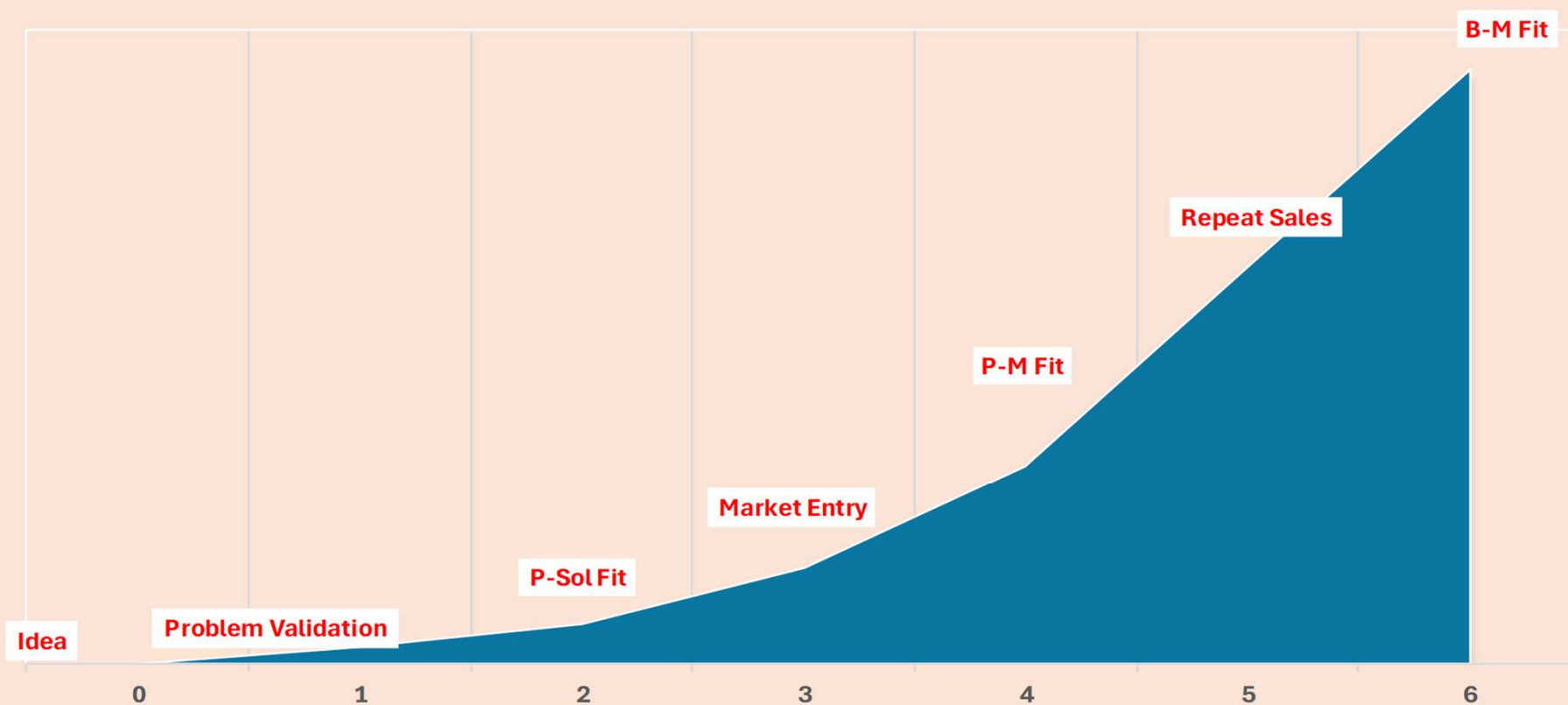


Le più frequenti cause del fallimento delle startup

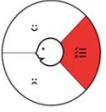
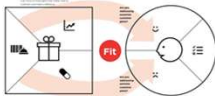



Dall'idea al business model

The Scaling Journey



Obiettivi chiave, azioni e metriche

Stage	Key Goals	Key Actions	Key Metrics
1. Problem Validation First	<p>Validate there's a real, urgent problem people are willing to invest time or money to solve.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct problem-focused interviews (no pitching) to uncover pains, behaviors, and desired outcomes. - Identify patterns and ideal early adopters. - Test basic willingness to pay or commit (pre-orders, waitlists, landing pages). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ 75+ interviews with at least 75% confirming the problem and readiness to act.
2. Problem-Solution Fit	<p>Prove your solution effectively tackles the top jobs, pains, and gains for early adopters.</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move from sketches to a minimal prototype or MVP. - Gather user feedback, track usage or engagement, and iterate quickly. - Validate willingness to pay with more tangible commitments (deposits, pre-sales). - Test feasibility and viability in the other 2 sides of your business model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ 50+ trial experiences with at least 60% confirming the solution solves their problem. ☑ 30% ready to commit via deposits, pre-orders, or signed letters of intent.
3. Market Entry	<p>Enter the market with a minimum viable product and get initial adoption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Polish MVP features, usability, and reliability based on early adopter feedback. - Define pricing, distribution, and marketing channels for scale. - Leverage testimonials and case studies to build credibility and drive adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Secure 5–10 paying customers and generate around \$100K in revenue over six months. ☑ Demonstrate real market traction beyond just a validated concept.
4. Product-Market Fit	<p>Drive strong demand & customer retention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand beyond early adopters with structured marketing. - Optimize pricing & sales channels. - Reduce churn & improve engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Consistent 30%+ sales growth per quarter over 3 quarters. ☑ 20%+ of new customers come from referrals.
5. Repeat Sales Engine	<p>Build a repeatable and scalable sales process that can consistently win customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optimize acquisition channels & customer retention. - Build a repeatable sales process. - Introduce upsells, cross-sells & referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Predictable CAC for 60%+ of new clients. ☑ Sustainable growth & repeat purchases.
6. Business Model Fit	<p>Achieve a sustainable business model with positive unit economics and path to profitability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align revenue streams & cost structure for scale. - Expand into new markets or segments. - Strengthen operational efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ EBITDA positive or clear path to profitability. ☑ LTV/CAC ≥ 3, conversion of qualified leads >10% over 6 months.

Scale-Hacker assessment

Please share **only the LINK** with your client so they can complete the questionnaire. After clicking, you'll have the option to **make a copy and personalize it**.

⚠ **Do NOT share the Excel file.** It's your internal tool —your secret weapon!
Once your client submits the answers, **use them to complete this Excel manually**.

1 Company Name

Health&Fit, S-L

2 Website

www.health&fit.com

3 City

Valencia

9 Name of the Solution/Product/Service you aim to scale: (eg. Pulse Pal: friendly heart monitor)

PulsePal

10 Describe it in short (e.g. an innovative cordless device to track patients health)

Cordless monitor

11 Who buys it (e.g. in the case of a heart monitor, hospitals)

Hospitals

12 Who uses it (e.g. .. nurses and patients)

Nurses

13 Main sector of application (e.g. Healthcare)

Healthcare

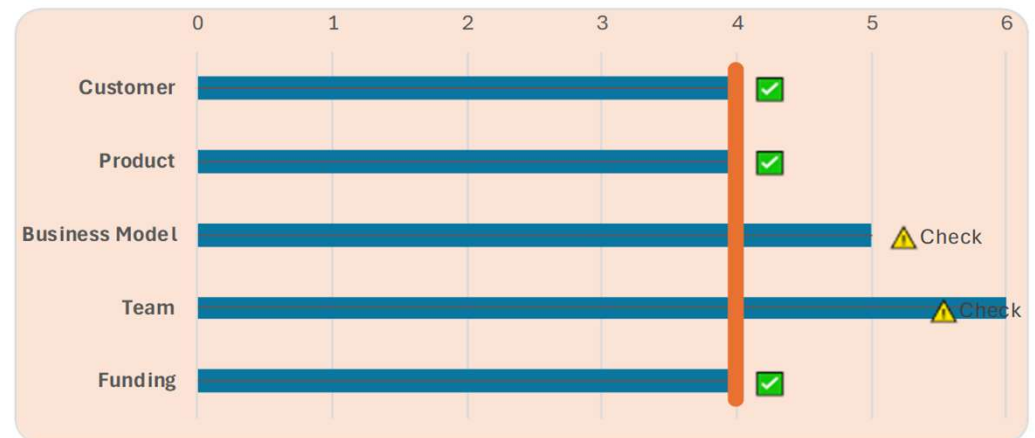
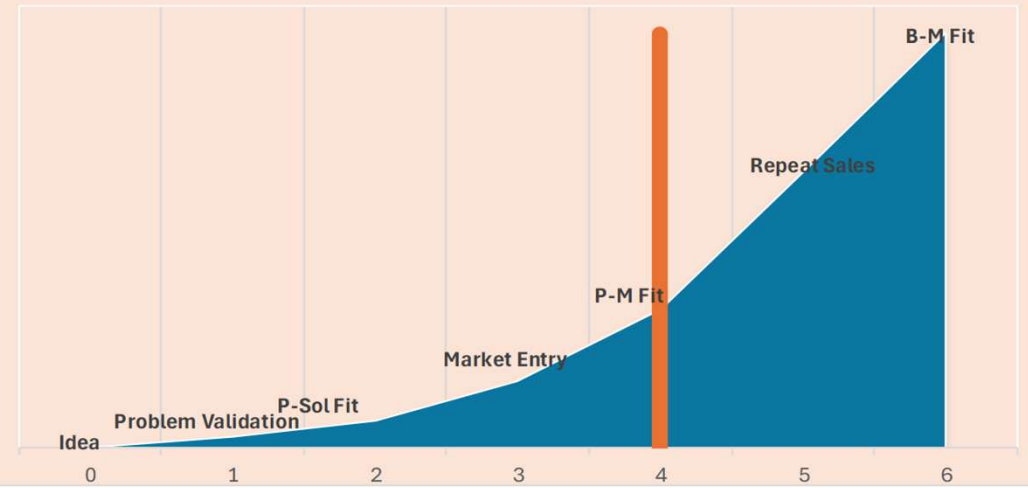
14 What is the problem it solves? (e.g. reduces time and workload to nurses, and burden to patients)

Reduces time and workload to nurses

Focus Finder



Stage of Development Assessment



Focus Finder scheme

The light blue column highlights the startup's current stage, ensuring focus on the right priorities for sustainable growth. The red areas act as early warning signals, indicating where efforts might be misaligned, potentially stalling progress. Addressing these gaps ensures the startup advances confidently, with a strong foundation for the next stage.

IDEA	Discovery and Validation Phase			Acceleration Phase			BUSINESS
	Objective: Understand customer needs and validate the problem/solution fit.			Objective: Establish product-market fit and move towards a scalable business model			
	Problem Validation	P-Sol Fit	Market Entry	P-M Fit	Repeat Sales	B-M Fit	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	The key milestone is reached when you have strong evidence that a real customer problem exists and that a market opportunity is viable.	The key milestone is reached when you have validated that our solution addresses the problem and customers are willing to pay for it.	The key milestone is reached when you have onboarded paying customers and achieved initial revenue.	The key milestone is reached when you have we have reached multiple paying customers, showing repeat demand.	The key milestone is reached when you have built a predictable and scalable revenue model, with growing customer retention.	The key milestone is reached when you have a fully scalable, profitable business model and are ready for the next growth phase.	
Customer	Concentrate on identifying and confirming the customer problem by conducting interviews and assessing the market opportunity.	Test your value proposition with early adopters to validate that it solves a real and urgent problem.	Stay close to customers: streamline onboarding, observe usage, gather direct input, and rapidly iterate on critical needs. Track metrics to drive continuous improvement.	Focus on expanding your customer base beyond early adopters while ensuring retention via pro-active support.	Expand to new customer segments to scale and diversify revenue streams.	Build a fully scalable acquisition strategy with strong retention metrics, preparing for sustainable growth.	
Product	Assess the desirability of your solution by testing mock-ups and/or low-fidelity prototypes incorporating customer feedback.	Develop and refine your minimum viable product/solution (MVP/S) using insights from potential customers.	Quickly refine your product using first paying customers’ feedback to deliver immediate value—this stage is critical for building trust and engagement	Enhance core product features to boost retention (e.g., premium upgrades) that also create upselling opportunities,	Incorporate new features to tap into adjacent market niches.	Continuously improve the product based on customer feedback to boost satisfaction and increased demand.	
Business Model	Explore different ways your business could work. Identify key partners, needed resources, and how to reach potential customers. You don’t need a perfect model—just testable ideas.	Test if people are really willing to pay. Try a simple pricing model and check if you can deliver the solution consistently with your current resources.	Use feedback from your first customers to adjust your model. Look at what they use, how they found you, and what keeps them paying. Tweak pricing, channels, and revenue streams.	Refine your model to support growth. Improve pricing, channels, and partnerships so you can scale smoothly without breaking what already works.	Start turning your business into a machine that runs smoothly. Build simple, repeatable processes for selling, retaining customers, and generating steady revenue.	Monitor and refine all areas of your business model to maintain profitability and operational efficiency to continue scaling smoothly	
Team	Keep it lean. Founders should lead discovery and user interviews directly.	Ensure the team includes the essential roles to build and iterate the MVP — typically product, design, and tech.	Make sure someone is handling early sales and user support to gather insights from real customers.	The team should evolve to include dedicated roles in marketing, sales, and product to support growth and retention.	Start building a team for operations, growth, and customer success. Create simple, repeatable processes so the business runs smoothly and can grow without chaos.	Build a leadership team. Structure roles to scale efficiently.	
Funding	Focus on bootstrapping, funding through grants, family contributions.	Engage early-stage investors, grants or similar support to develop a MVP and gain early traction	Engage early-stage investors, to boost traction	Try to secure an early stage VC round to expand our customer base and scale our teams	Try to secure your second round to scale operations.	Try to secure your second round to scale operations.	



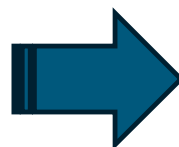
Stage assesment e azioni possibili

Your company has reached the following stage:

Stage-4: Early Signs of PMF

Description of your current stage

Your company is navigating Stage-4, showing early signs of product-market fit. Initial customers are not only purchasing but also actively engaging with the product and advocating for it, providing positive feedback and showing a willingness to recommend it to others. You need to increase customer engagement while continuing to fine-tune your product based on deeper insights gathered from early adopters. Although product-market fit is not yet fully achieved, there is real evidence of alignment between your product and your early adopters.



Actions to consolidate/move to the next Stage

Improve Retention and Referrals

1. Enhance marketing to attract new customers.
2. Implement retention strategies to keep customers engaged.
3. Encourage satisfied customers to refer others.
4. Use feedback from early users to refine the solution.
5. Focus on customer satisfaction to ensure repeat purchases.
6. Your efforts to fully achieve product-market fit should focus on improving retention and referrals.

Some extra advice

Strengthen your customer success initiatives by proactively reaching out to early adopters for feedback. Use their testimonials and referrals as key growth levers. Start building lightweight metrics dashboards to monitor retention, satisfaction, and referrals. Begin preparing your team for scaling.








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-  **You may only share the questionnaire link with clients and manually fill in the data you receive.**
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This tool is intended to support our joint mission within the EEN — please use it responsibly and acknowledge its author.

Thank you for your collaboration and professionalism.



CALL TO ACTION

Only 2 places left !

#EENCanHelp

Grazie!
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