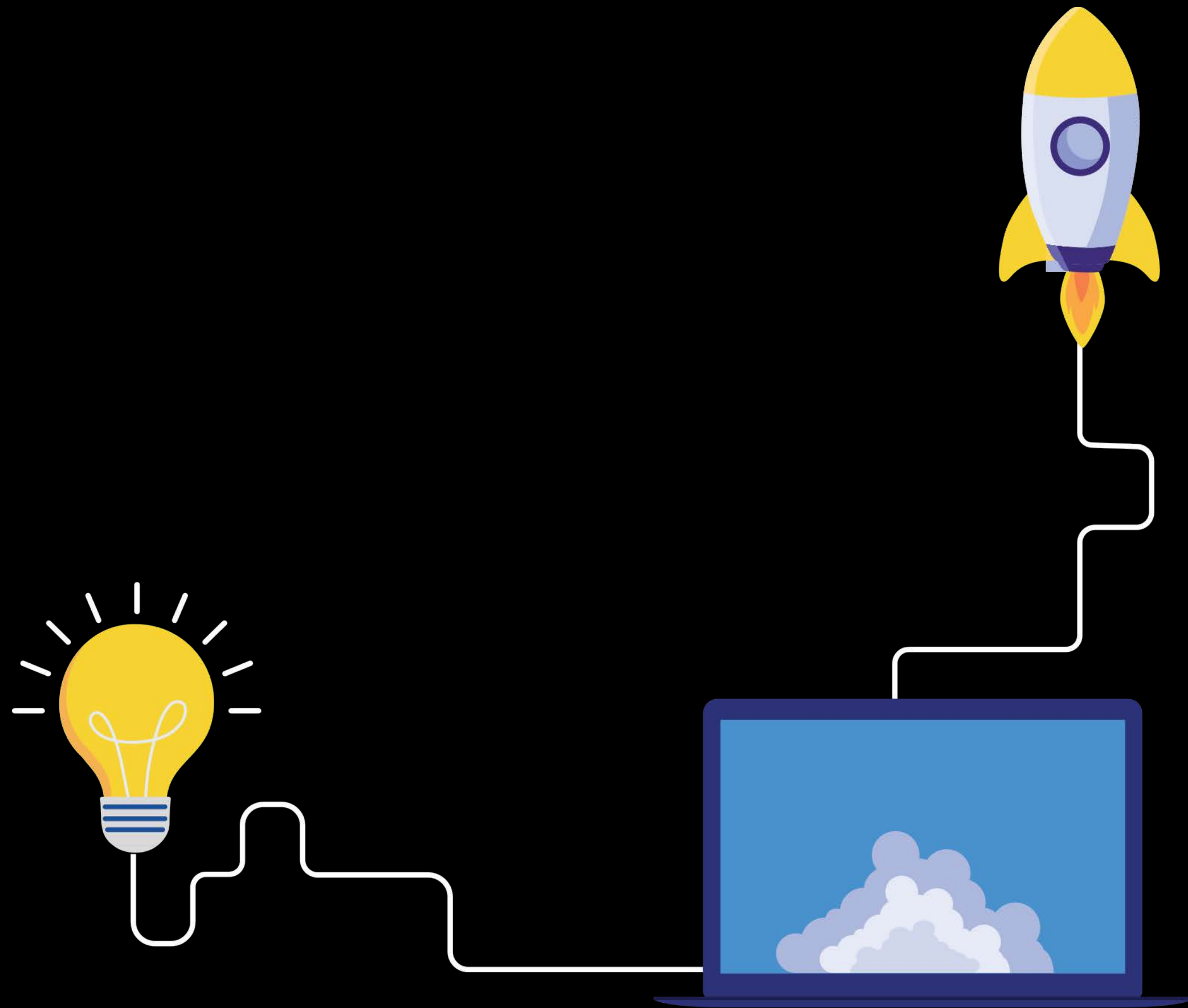


The Launch Path.

Eight steps to a successful startup.



- 1) Listen to the waves.
- 2) Innovate, Iterate, Validate.
- 3) Get Uncomfortable.
- 4) Draw the landscape.
- 5) Frame a funnel.
- 6) Engineer an economic model.
- 7) Create a capital strategy.
- 8) Be a master storyteller.

TEC.startup-workshop.com

TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY

Launch Path Workshop

Three days to take an idea to a Launch Path Canvas ready to be validated with real customers.

DATES

August 4-6, 2026

VENUE

Remote, via video.

PARTICIPANTS

34 people

[View participants and canvases](#)

Day 1 Ideas, innovation, and landscape

Day 2 Funnel, economics, and capital

Day 3 Storytelling and presentations

Ideas, innovation, and landscape

Explore where startup ideas come from, practice problem-framing techniques, and map the competitive landscape.

09:00

Course Introduction

Lecture

Launch Path Step 2: Listen to the Waves — Where do innovative startup ideas come from?

09:50

Group activity: Pet Peeves and Five Whys

Group Activity

10:40

Break

Break

11:00

Launch Path Step 2: Innovate and Iterate

Lecture

What is PMF and how do we get there?

11:50

Group activity: Crazy Eights

Group Activity

Materials

The core reading for the workshop, by Bret Waters. Download the version you prefer.

THE LAUNCH PATH

GETTING FROM A STARTUP IDEA
TO A LAUNCH-READY VENTURE



The Launch Path. Eight steps to a successful startup.



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I will also post all my slides here for you.

Participants

Search for your name and open your page to access your Launch Path Canvas.

34 of 34

NP

Nathaly Pinzón Rubio

Launch Path Canvas

PS

Pablo Salazar

Launch Path Canvas

BM

Bilal Mirza

Launch Path Canvas

MD

Maria de los Dolores González Saucedo

Launch Path Canvas

DI

Diana Ibeth Cruz Mar

Launch Path Canvas

MA

Moisés Aguirre Mar

Launch Path Canvas

LR

Linda Ruiz

EO

Eduardo Ochoa

EW

Edgar Williams Garcia

THE LAUNCH PATH CANVAS 2.0

 Copy link

 Leave

Your Startup Venture

NAME OF STARTUP VENTURE

e.g. Northwind Robotics

PREPARED BY

Your name

ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION

What does your venture do, in one line?

THE WHY? The core reason your venture exists

 **Problem**

?

One clear sentence that articulates the problem your startup solves.

 **Solution**

?

How does your venture solve the problem you have articulated? Keep this short and concise.

 **Why it Matters**

?

Why is this a problem worth solving?

COMPETITION How you stack up in the market

 **Landscape**

?

 **Positioning**

?

 **Unfair Advantage**

?

TEC.startup-workshop.com

Be willing to get uncomfortable.

Cold calls. Interviewing strangers. Being provably wrong in public.
Why the founders who seek this out are the ones who survive validation.



VALIDATION LIVES OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

1

The Cold Call

You don't know this person and they owe you nothing. Making the call anyway is how you find out if a stranger will pay for what you're building.

2

The Stranger Interview

Talking to people outside your network removes the politeness bias your friends and family can't help but give you.

3

Being Wrong, Publicly

Every assumption you defend instead of test is a bet you're placing with someone else's money — and your own time.

THE ASSUMPTION TAX

Every assumption costs the same to test early. Left alone, it compounds.

TEST EARLY

15 minutes

A phone call, a hallway conversation, a DM to a stranger. The cost of finding out you're wrong is one uncomfortable ask.

TEST LATE

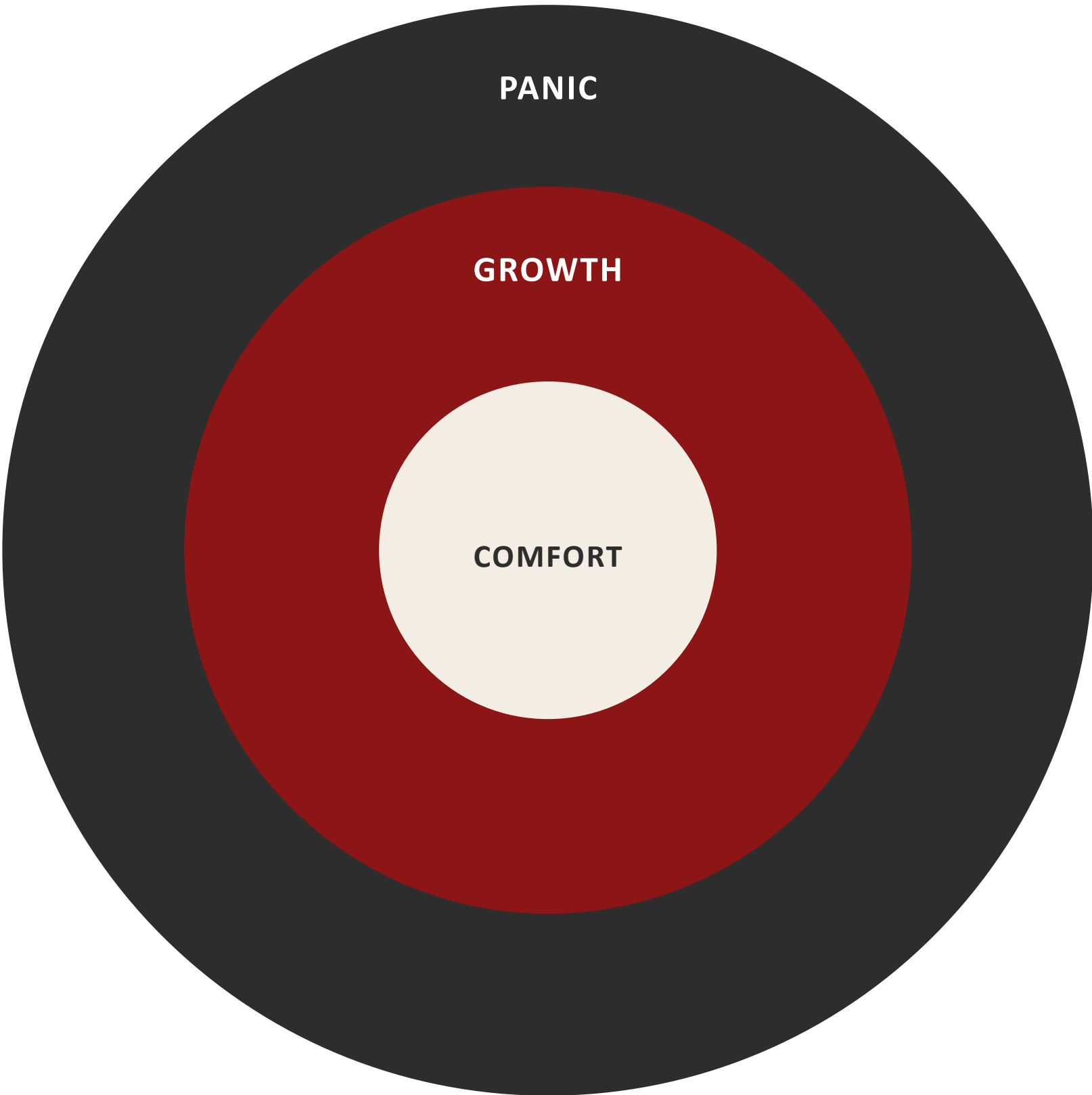
Months, and a team

The same wrong assumption, discovered after you've built, hired, and raised on top of it. The discomfort didn't disappear — it grew interest.

MOST FOUNDERS RETREAT AT THE FIRST SIGN OF FRICTION

Value gets created in the growth zone — past comfort, short of panic. Founders who won't leave comfort never learn anything the market didn't already tell their friends.

- Comfort zone — nothing new is learned
- Growth zone — cold calls, interviews, wrong guesses
- Panic zone — decisions made from fear, not signal



Be willing to get uncomfortable.

Call the stranger before you build the feature.

Ask the question that could disprove your idea.

Let being wrong now be cheap — it's expensive later.



What is an Entrepreneurial Mindset?



**I'm lucky to know a lot of very
successful entrepreneurs and
venture capitalists in Silicon Valley.**

**When we meet for lunch, it's always
Sancho's Taqueria.**



Kent Hawryluk

President & CEO
MBX Biosciences, Inc.

“It never occurs to me that I might fail at starting a company, which is kind of crazy given the low probability of success of biotech companies. Perhaps obvious, but you cannot have any fear. It doesn't mean you are oblivious to what can go wrong, but you have confidence that you will find a solution”.



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Bob Webster
Venture Capitalist

**“An entrepreneurial mindset
is one which takes risks
others won’t take to achieve a
vision others don’t share”**



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Danielle D'Agostaro
Venture Capitalist

“The entrepreneurial mindset is one consisting of grit and perseverance, while being realistic enough to know when to adapt and change course”.



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Venture Capitalist

“The entrepreneurial mindset is one consisting of **grit and perseverance, while being realistic enough to know when to adapt and change course”.**



Tim Connors
Venture Capitalist

“People with outsized smarts, goodness, and grit who can’t imagine not spending their life solving the problems about which they care most deeply”.



Tim Connors
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“People with outsized smarts, goodness, and grit who **can’t imagine not spending their life solving the problems about which they care most deeply”.**



David Weekly
Serial Entrepreneur

“An understanding that the world is both changeable and imperfect coupled with the resolve to improve it”.



David Weekly
Serial Entrepreneur

“An understanding that the world is both changeable and imperfect coupled with **the resolve to improve it”.**



Olivia Moore

Venture Capitalist

“Entrepreneurial mindset is the excitement around building something new, and perseverance to navigate the many obstacles that come up in that process.”



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“Entrepreneurial mindset is the excitement around building something new, and **perseverance to navigate the many obstacles that come up in that process.”**



Chris Clark

CEO, Locale

Just raised \$14M in VC

**“Entrepreneurial mindset is
all about efficient hypothesis
testing and grit”.**



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Thane Kreiner, PhD
Investor, Board Member

**“I believe there is an
entrepreneurial mindset or
spirit: creating shared value”.**



Thane Kreiner, PhD
Investor, Board Member

**“I believe there is an
entrepreneurial mindset or
spirit: **creating shared value**”.**



The mind is a dangerous thing.



**Entrepreneurial success is
largely about mindset.**



**Things about the human mind
that will trip you up:**



Confirmation bias.

**Our natural tendency to notice all the things
around us that confirm our beliefs.**



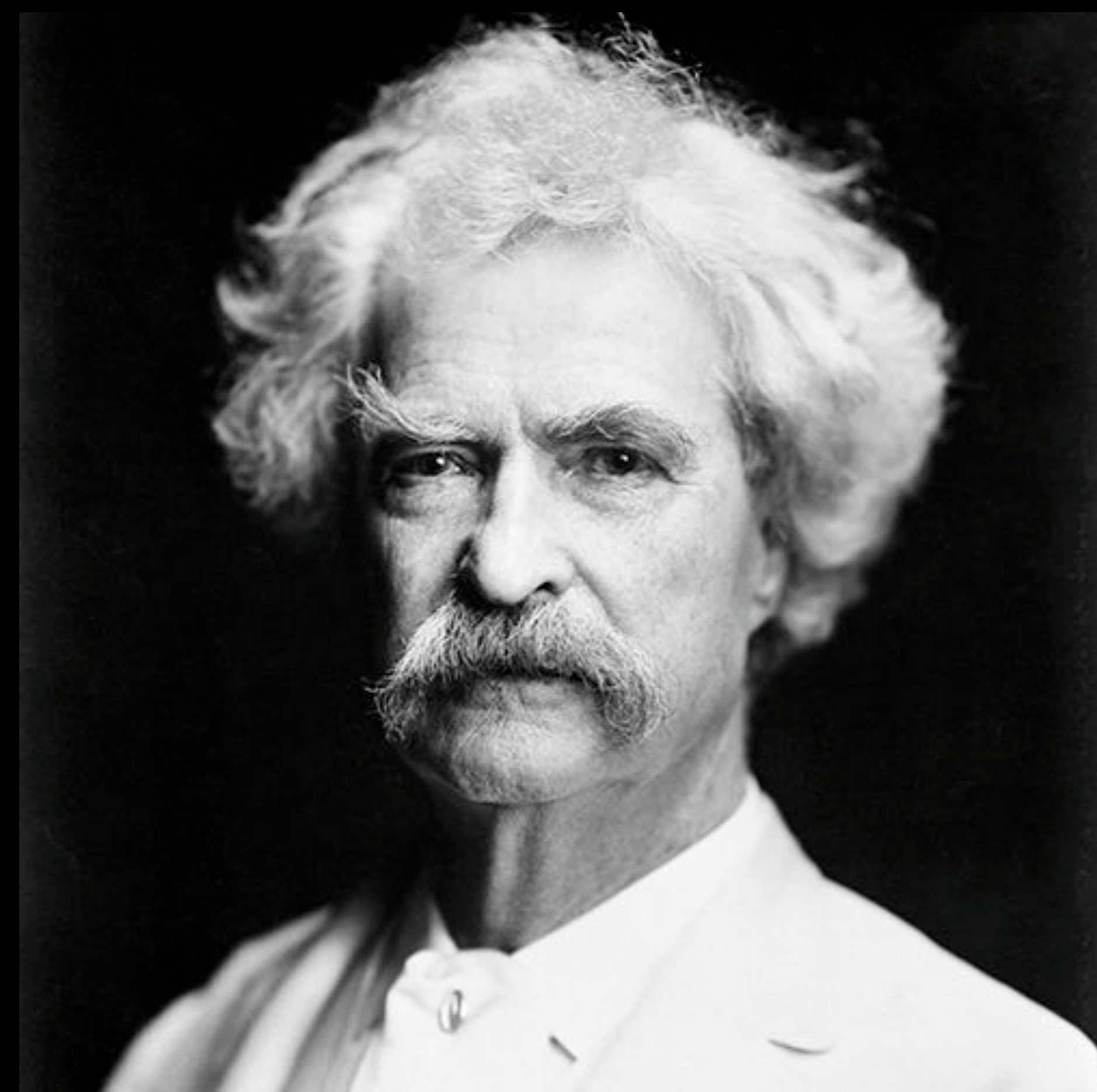
Echo Chamber Effect.

**As humans, we tend to surround ourselves with people
who share our beliefs and think like we do.**



***“It ain’t what you don’t know
that gets you into trouble. It’s
what you know for sure that
just ain’t so”.***

- Mark Twain



Humans have a tendency to believe that what we think is fact, when it’s just opinion. When we act based on a belief and it turns out to not only be opinion but wrong, this is when things can often go spectacularly wrong.

Summary

A startup is an experiment. Use the scientific method.

Always be thinking to yourself, “What is the smallest possible experiment I could do right now that would give me the greatest possible learning?”

Summary

A startup is an experiment. Use the scientific method to test your assumptions.

Customer Development, Lean startup, MVP, Design Thinking, Design Sprints are all variations on the same theme: small experiments are what lead to Product-Market Fit.

<4>

bretw@stanford.edu

**Every startup operates within a landscape
of competitors and alternatives.**



Word

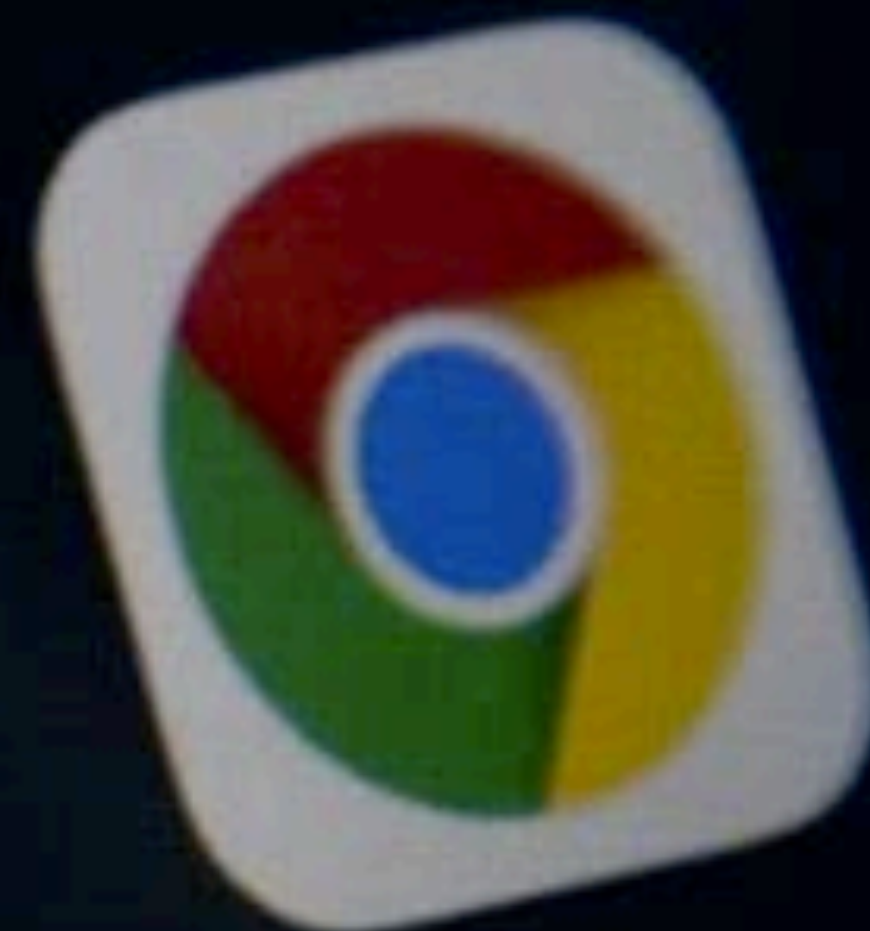
Microsoft Excel

Ai

Illustrator 2020



zoom.us



Google Chrome

In 2007, WebEx had a 67% market share of the global video conference business.





By 2011, it was a very crowded sector. Absolutely nobody thought the world needed yet another video call platform. Nobody except Eric Yuan.



FaceTime

They launched with pricing for the Zoom product was \$9.99 per host per month, with a Freemium model that allowed users free calls up to forty minutes.

Eric Yuan knew that the big players — WebEx, Bluejeans, Avaya— were battling hard to own the enterprise space so he decided the right beachhead for Zoom might be education.



So they offered Zoom to the education sector for just \$1/month and got almost immediate traction.

Soon universities and students were using Zoom as their primary video call platform.

The company entered into agreements with a range of higher-education institutions all over the world.

Today Zoom is used by 90% of the universities in the US.

Establishing universities as a beachhead market turned out to be incredibly effective. Every year graduating students went out, got jobs with corporations, and introduced their new bosses to the Zoom experience.



Sarah Guo ⚡ Greylock @saranormous · May 24

Remember life pre @zoom_us ?
That sucked. Video sucked

9 12 200



Abtin Setyani @s_abtin · May 24

Hahaha sorry to disappoint you but it still sucks 😂

1 1 18



Eric S. Yuan ✓

@ericsyuan

Follow

Replying to @s_abtin @saranormous @zoom_us

Hi Abtin, I am the CEO of Zoom. Our NPS score is 72 and we have tons of very happy users. If you can share me in detail, then I can write the code to fix the issue this long weekend. Cheers and have a great weekend.

6:55 PM - 24 May 2019

331 Retweets 2,608 Likes



106 331 2.6K

ENTERPRISE

Zoom rocketed 72% on first day of trading

PUBLISHED THU, APR 18 2019 11:25 AM EDT | UPDATED THU, APR 18 2019 4:53 PM EDT



Jordan Novet
@JORDANNOVET

SHARE



KEY POINTS

- Zoom raised \$356.8 million in its IPO, with existing stakeholders selling additional shares.
- On Wednesday, the company priced shares at \$36, above the top of its most recent range.
- The stock traded as high as \$66 on Thursday.



Mad Money

UP NEXT | Last Call



TRENDING NOW



**All startups operate within
a landscape of competitors
and alternatives.**

**All startups operate within
a landscape of competitors
and alternatives.**



**The Juicero product launched in 2017, selling for \$699.
“The only wi-fi connected juicer on the market today”**

There were a lot of alternative ways of making juice.

**All startups operate within
a landscape of competitors
and alternatives.**

**Tonight I want to convince you that two
conflicting things are both true:**

**The competitive
landscape matters.**

**Don't worry about
competition.**

WHY STARTUPS FAIL

A NEW
ROADMAP FOR
ENTREPRENEURIAL
SUCCESS ✕

TOM EISENMANN

- **Bad Bedfellows.** Startup success is thought to rest largely on the founder's talents and instincts. But the wrong team, investors, or partners can sink a venture just as quickly.
- **False Starts.** In following the oft-cited advice to “fail fast” and to “launch before you're ready,” founders risk wasting time and capital on the wrong solutions.
- **False Promises.** Success with early adopters can be misleading and give founders unwarranted confidence to expand.
- **Speed Traps.** Despite the pressure to “get big fast,” hypergrowth can spell disaster for even the most promising ventures.
- **Help Wanted.** Rapidly scaling startups need lots of capital and talent, but they can make mistakes that leave them suddenly in short supply of both.
- **Cascading Miracles.** Silicon Valley exhorts entrepreneurs to dream big. But the bigger the vision, the more things that can go wrong.

Competition is not on the list!



Paul Graham ✓

@paulg



In 99% of startups, failing to execute is a much bigger danger than being copied. So it's a mistake to risk the former in order to avoid the latter.

4:14 AM · Feb 7, 2021



2.8K



495



Copy link to Tweet

“If you’re competitor-focused, you are always reacting to what someone else is doing. Being customer-focused allows you to be more pioneering.”

-Jeff Bezos

Startups rarely fail because of competition. They fail because their product doesn't meet market needs, they fail from bad financial management, they fail because the unit economics are upside down.

Most of them fail because the team doesn't execute. They don't usually fail because of competition.

Very common slide in a pitch deck:

Competition			
	Our App	Brand X	Brand Y
User Friendly	✓	✗	✗
Encryption	✓	✗	✓
Keywords	✓	✓	✗
AI-Powered	✓	✓	✗
Cloud Bookmarks	✓	✗	✗
Social	✓	✗	✓
API's	✓	✗	✓

Worthless. Tells us nothing about positioning.

Rolex



Frog watch



Tells time



Affordable



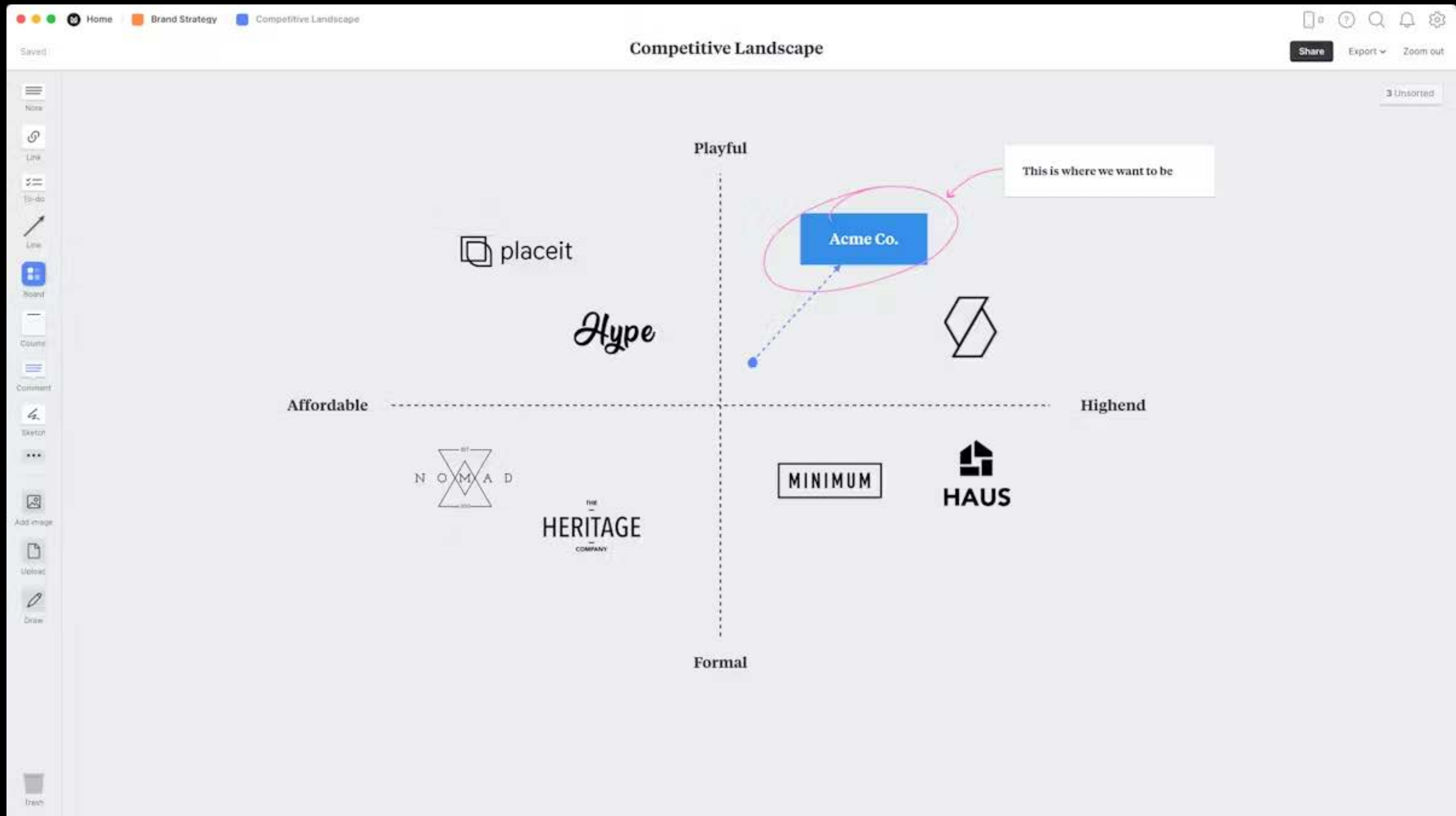
Frog



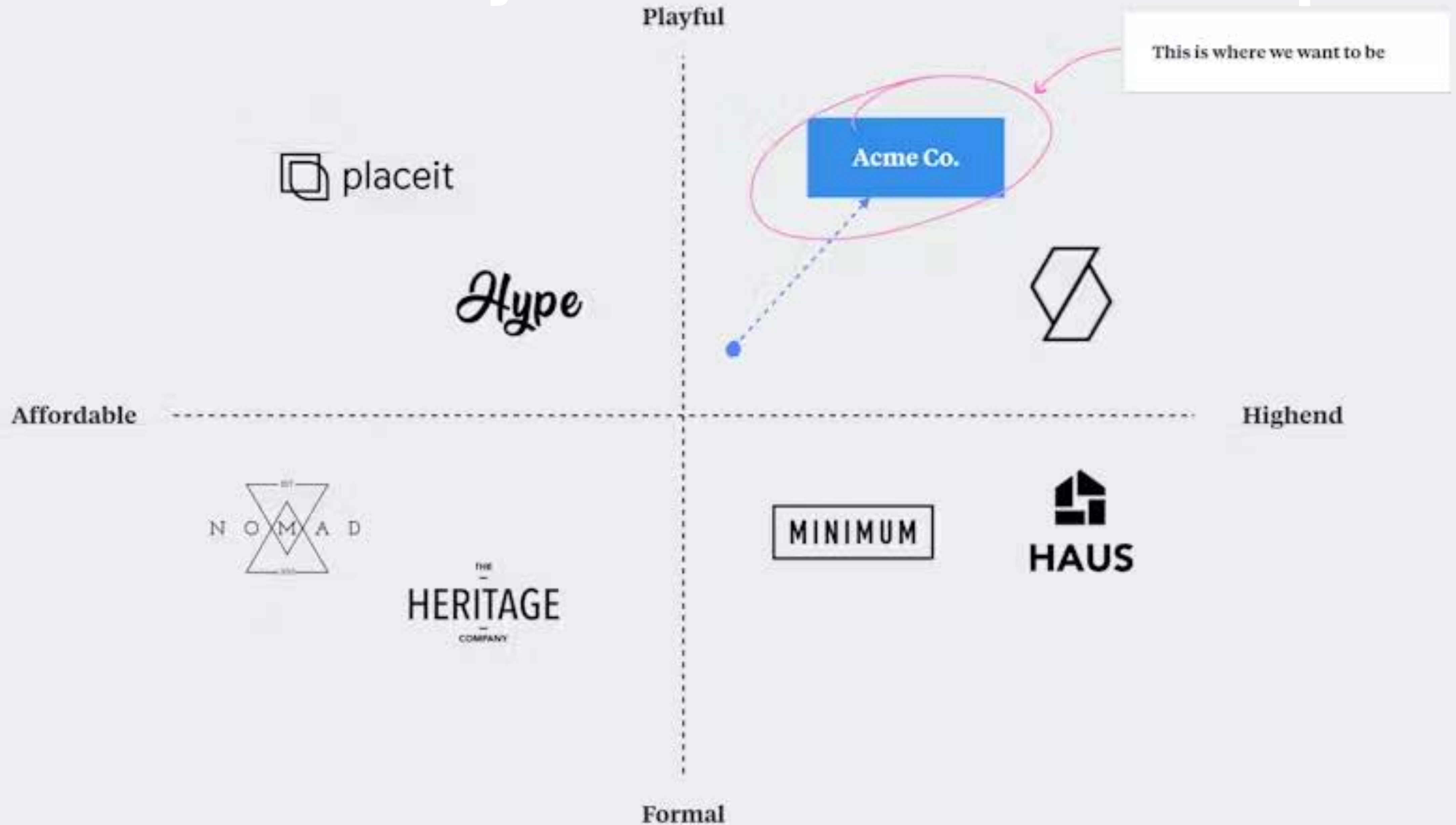
The original Airbnb pitch deck:



But then find a way to visualize the landscape.

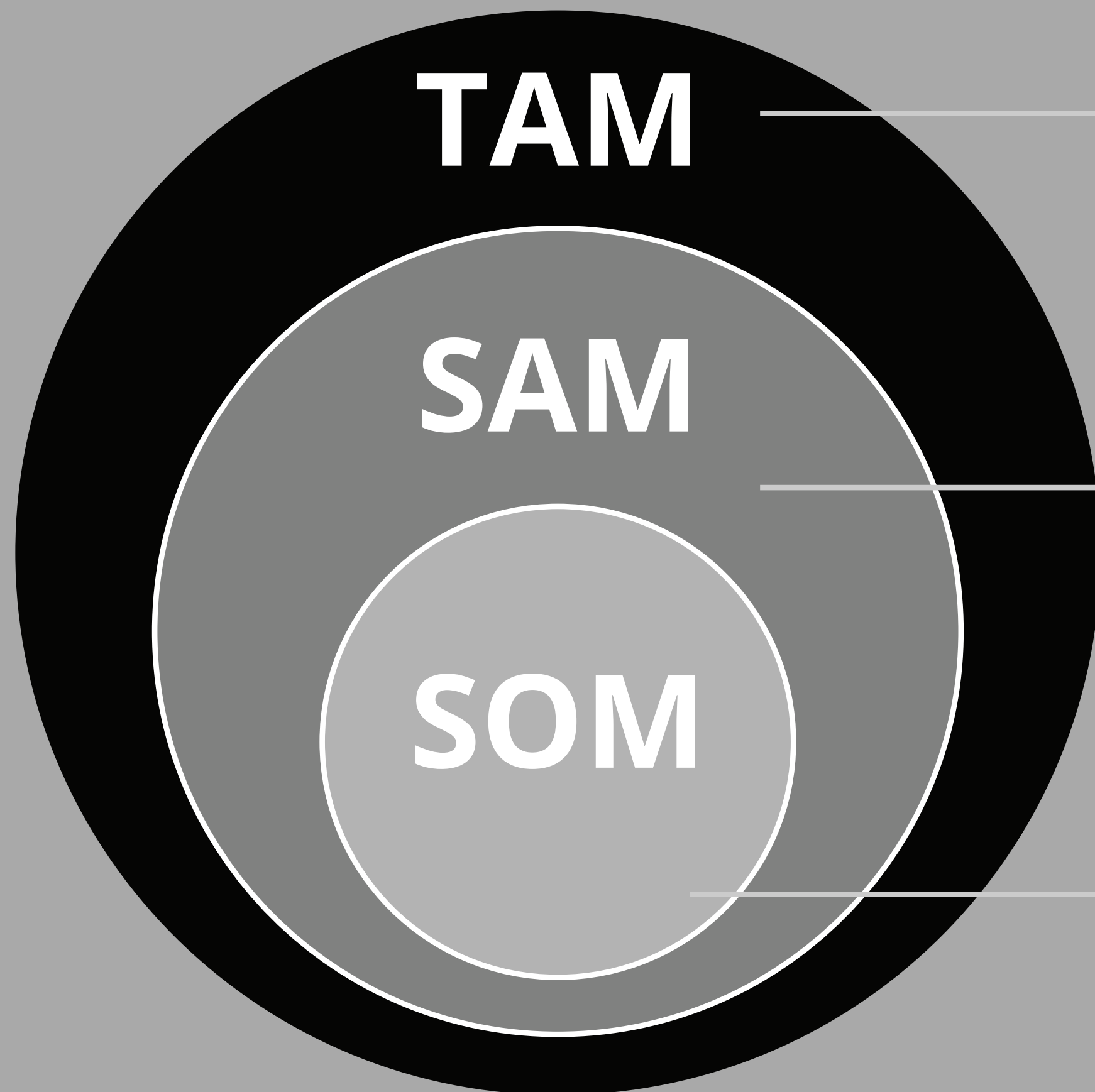


But then find a way to visualize the landscape.



And now a brief word about TAM, SAM, SOM.

Market Size: TAM, SAM, SOM



Total Addressable Market

This is the total existing market demand for your product or service. It's relatively meaningless because your applesauce startup is never going to get one hundred percent of the worldwide applesauce market.

Serviceable Available Market

This is the amount of the TAM you could potentially reach, given your geography and business model. Maybe our applesauce startup is targeting just the direct-to-consumer applesauce market in the United States. That's our SAM.

Serviceable Obtainable Market

Unless you're a monopoly, you're never going to get one hundred percent of the SAM. Given the benefits your applesauce offers customers, what percentage of the total available customers could potentially become yours, and how much would they buy?

Market Size: TAM, SAM, SOM

Nobody is going to believe your market size numbers. Founders always have a slide that says “It’s a \$14 trillion market!”, and investors always roll their eyes.

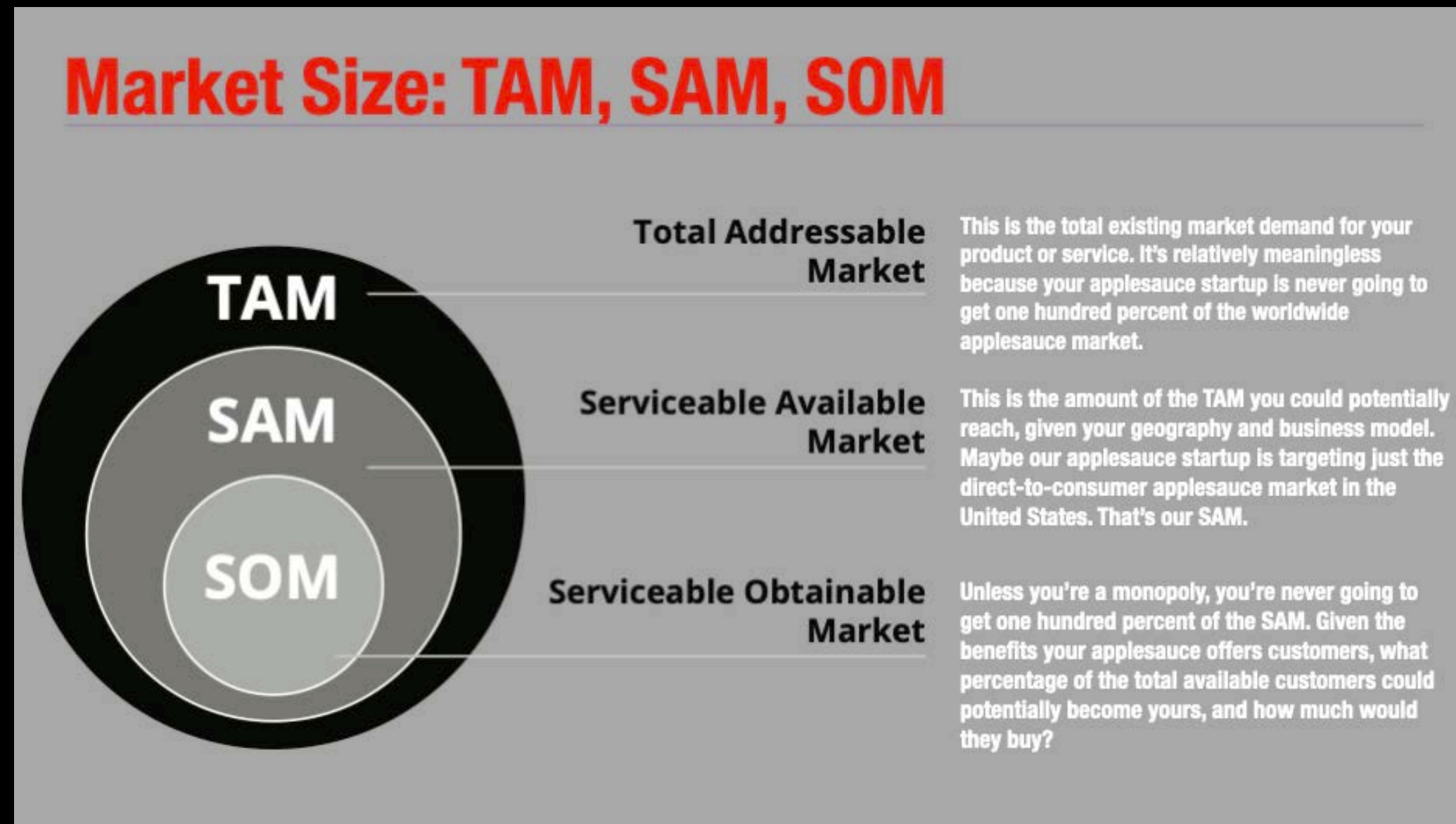
Startups seldom fail because the market wasn’t big enough. Also, a huge market is absolutely no guarantee of success. So for an early-stage pitch, market size isn’t really a relevant factor.

Market Size: TAM, SAM, SOM



Later stage this begins to change. If you have 100,000 customers and you are trying to raise a \$100M Series C to get to 5 million customers, then market size is a relevant piece of information.

Market Size: TAM, SAM, SOM



So do your research on market size, and put a slide in your pitch deck if you want.

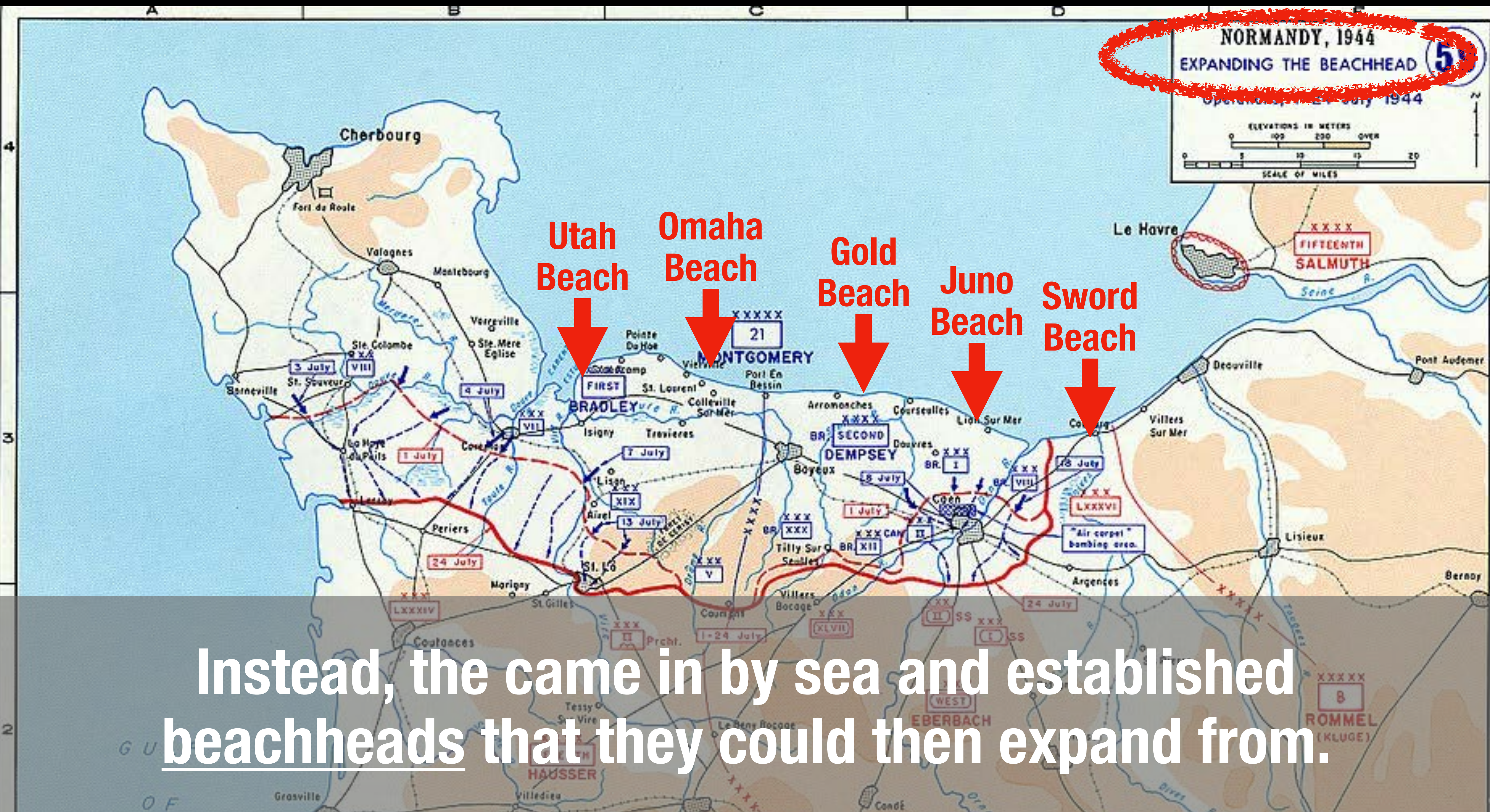
But don't think it's on the Top Ten list of things that drive startup success or failure. It's not.

What does a competitive “Moat” mean?

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-towered medieval castle. The castle is constructed from light-colored stone and features several prominent towers with conical roofs. It is surrounded by a deep, dark blue moat that reflects the structure. The castle is situated in a lush green landscape with rolling hills and scattered trees. A dirt path leads towards the castle from the top of the frame. The word "Moat" is overlaid in white text on the left side of the image.

Moat

What is a “beachhead” market?



What matters is how customers see the landscape. When they are looking for something that solves the problem you solve, how do they perceive the various solutions?

So when we conduct Customer Development interviews, we want to ask open-ended questions like “When you’re choosing how to feed a big group of friends and family for an event, what options do you think about?”