G. Patel

PLAYBOOK · FIRST 90 DAYS

The Ground-Up Launch Playbook

How to build a company from zero: what to settle before day one, what to build in the first 90 days, and the rhythms that keep it running.



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Why this playbook exists

I opened my first business as a senior at NC State. Six months in, a Friday night brought two tables.

So I studied the market. I was surrounded by three universities and was not serving their students. We rebranded as Pi Bar, built themed nights and promotions for college crowds, and lines wrapped around the block.

Then I bought a sushi restaurant for more than it was worth. No attorney. No accountant. I grew it from $1.5 million to over $3 million in annual revenue in just over a year, but I paid for skipping the basics.

I have made the expensive mistakes. This playbook is the order I would build in today.

Before day one	Days 1 to 30	Days 31 to 60	Days 61 to 90
Purpose, market and model.	Foundation.	Systems.	Momentum.

Before day one · Purpose, market and model

- [ ] I can name the customer and the problem I solve in one sentence.
- [ ] I have studied the market with data, not only with instinct.
- [ ] My business model fits on one page: how we make money, what it costs and why customers come back.
- [ ] I know my unit economics: what one sale, table, client or unit earns after direct costs.
- [ ] I have an attorney and an accountant. I skipped them once. Do not.
- [ ] I have enough capital to run for my worst-case timeline, not my best case.
- [ ] I have written down why I am doing this. I will need it on the hard days.

BUILD WITH PURPOSE

Customers do not only want products. They want experiences. Every concept needs a clear vision before it needs a logo.

Days 1 to 30 · Foundation

- [ ] Entity formed, bank account open, bookkeeping set up from the first dollar.
- [ ] Mission and three to five core values written and shared.
- [ ] An org chart by function, even if one person fills every seat today.
- [ ] The three processes that touch customers most are written down.
- [ ] A weekly scorecard with five numbers that predict how the business is doing.

Days 31 to 60 · Systems

- [ ] A repeatable hiring and onboarding process, with written role outcomes.
- [ ] Playbooks for the customer experience, from first contact to follow-up.
- [ ] A weekly leadership meeting on a fixed day, time and agenda.
- [ ] A 13-week cash forecast, updated every week.
- [ ] A simple way to hear from customers every week.

Notes

Days 61 to 90 · Momentum

- [ ] Review the scorecard. Keep what works. Fix or cut what does not.
- [ ] Pivot where the data says to. Pi Bar was a pivot.
- [ ] Hand off at least one seat you have been filling yourself.
- [ ] Set three to five priorities for the next quarter, each with one owner.
- [ ] Celebrate wins on purpose, with the team and with customers.
- [ ] Give back to the community that supports you.

> *"Scaling was not just about opening more doors. It was about creating a culture."*
>
> F*CK ROCK BOTTOM, CHAPTER 8

The structure · Seats before people

Draw the functions first. Then put names in the seats. One person can hold several seats early on. What matters is that every seat has one owner.

FUNCTION	OWNER	KEY OUTCOME	WEEKLY NUMBER
Leadership and vision			
Operations and delivery			
Sales and marketing			
Finance and cash			
People and culture			

The rhythms · How the company keeps time

RHYTHM	LENGTH	PURPOSE
Daily huddle	10 minutes	Today's priorities, stuck points, one win.
Weekly leadership meeting	60 to 90 minutes	Scorecard, priorities, solve the top issues.
Monthly numbers review	60 minutes	Margins, cash and trends against plan.
Quarterly planning	Half day	Set the next three to five priorities and owners.
Annual vision	One day	Where we are going and what we will say no to.

Notes

A weekly meeting agenda that works

Same day. Same time. Same agenda. The rhythm is the system.

01 **Good news (5 min)**
One personal and one business win each.

02 **Scorecard (5 min)**
On track or off track. No discussion yet.

03 **Priorities (5 min)**
Each owner: on track or off track.

04 **Headlines (5 min)**
Customer and team news worth knowing.

05 **Solve issues (most of the time)**
Name it, discuss it, decide, assign the to-do.

06 **Wrap up (5 min)**
Confirm to-dos and rate the meeting from 1 to 10.

This week's top issues

Five lessons from building an empire

01 **Build with purpose**
Every concept needs a clear vision.

02 **Invest in people**
Your team is your greatest asset. Empower them and they drive the vision forward.

03 **Pivot, always**
Staying rigid is a recipe for failure.

04 **Know your market**
Data shows you what instinct misses.

05 **Create community**
Relationships with customers, employees and neighbors build a foundation that lasts.

My priorities for the next 90 days

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Keep building.

I write about building companies, putting systems under them and recalibrating when life breaks. You are on the list, so new playbooks come to you first.

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