

Fund what compounds.

Phase One vs. Later: what marketing actually has to exist before Series A, and what your portfolio companies will pay for twice if they build it now.

Most early-stage companies spend their first real marketing dollars in the wrong order. They rebrand while no two people on the team describe the product the same way. Getting the order wrong rarely kills a company. It costs about six months and a visible piece of the round.

THE TEST, WHEN IT IS CLOSE

Fund it now if it changes whether you close the next five customers. Defer it if it only pays off once you already have fifty.



Before Series A, fund what compounds.

Written for founders.
Built to forward.

Fund this now.	Pre-seed and seed	This can wait.	Series A and after
A positioning spine One sentence on who it is for and what changes for them. Every asset derives from it. Skip it and you write everything twice.		A full rebrand Rebranding ahead of positioning means buying the same thing twice, and the second one is not cheaper.	
A named ICP, not a persona doc A list of companies you could call this month. If it reads like a demographic profile, it is not specific enough to sell against.		Category creation It costs more than your seed round and only works from traction. Win the category that exists first.	
One proof asset that closes The case study the founder already uses on live calls. Get it out of their head so someone else can use it.		A PR retainer Press amplifies proof. Without a customer story, you are paying someone to pitch a position you will rewrite.	
A site that passes four seconds A visitor knows who it is for and what it replaces before they scroll. That is the site’s entire job at this stage.		A full design system You will rebuild it when the product changes, and at this stage the product changes. Ship a tight component set.	
Founder-led content Distribution you already own. At twelve employees, no one is following the company account.		Paid media at scale Paid amplifies a message that already converts. Before that, it is an expensive way to learn it does not.	
A repeatable sales narrative So the second and third seller can run the pitch without the founder. This is the real Series A prerequisite.		A demand gen hire Hire into a motion that already repeats, not someone to discover your positioning for you.	



*If you disagree with where a line sits,
that is usually the conversation worth
having. Send it over.*

Samantha Baker, Founder & CEO

samanthabaker@heatstrategic.com

www.heatstrategic.com

FOR INVESTORS AND PLATFORM TEAMS

Send a founder our way when...

- 1 The round just closed and the first big line item is a rebrand.
- 2 No two people on the team describe the product the same way.
- 3 The founder is still the only one who can run the pitch.
- 4 Series A is two or three quarters out and the GTM story still lives in the founder's head.

How Heat works with your portfolio

Heat Strategic Marketing is a fractional, embedded marketing partner for early-stage teams. We work directly with CEOs and sales leaders on positioning, product launches, GTM motions, and the rebrand once it is actually due. Founder Samantha Baker has served as head of marketing at three companies and as a marketing executive at multiple venture-backed startups.