

Phase One vs. Later

The Truth: What marketing actually has to exist before Series A and what you'd be paying for twice if you build it now.

Most early-stage companies spend their first real marketing dollars in the wrong order. The money goes to a rebrand and a redesign, while the thing actually blocking the pipeline is that no two people on the team describe the product the same way. Getting the order wrong rarely kills a company. It comes about six months and a visible piece of the round.

This list on the left is cheap and compounds. The list on the right is expensive and only pays off once you have traction to point it at.

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.

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

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Fund this now.

Pre-seed and seed

A positioning spine

One sentence on who it is for and what changes for them. Every asset you build derives from it. Skip it and you will write everything twice (or more).

A names ICP, not persona doc

A list of compounds you could call this month. If it reads like a demographic profile, it is not specific enough to sell against.

One proof asset that closes

The case study or teardown the founder already uses in live calls. It exists in their head. Get it out so someone else can use it.

A site that passes four seconds

A visitor should know who it is for and what it replaces before they scroll. That is the entire job of the site at this stage.

Founder-led content

Distribution you already own and nobody can take away. At twelve employees, no one is following the company account.

A repeatable sales narrative

So the second and third seller can run the pitch without the founder in the room. This is the real Series A prerequisite.

This can wait.

Series A and after

A full rebrand

Wait until you know what it needs to say. Rebranding ahead of positioning means buying the same thing twice, the second one is not cheaper.

Category creation

It costs more than your seed round and only works from a position of traction. Win the category that exists first.

Paid media at scale

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A demand gen hire

Hire into a motion that already repeats. Hiring before one exists means paying someone to discover your positioning for you.

A full design system

You will rebuild it when the product changes, and at this stage the product changes. Ship a tight component set and move.