the Bootstrapped BRAND

EXERCISES COMPLETE WORKBOOK

By Suhail Yadgari

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INTRODUCTION EXERCISE

The Expensive Mistake

This is the first exercise in the book and one of the most important. You will return to it at the end. Do not skip it. Be honest. The value of this exercise is directly proportional to how specific and truthful your answer is.

Describe the single most expensive marketing mistake you have made so far, in time, money, or both. What did you try?

Why did you try it? What were you hoping it would do?

What did you actually get from it?

Looking back, what was the real problem you were trying to solve? Was the tactic you chose actually designed to solve that problem?

What would you do differently now? (Answer this again after you finish the book. The two answers will be interesting to compare.)

CHAPTER 1 EXERCISE

The Myth Audit

For each myth covered in this chapter, be honest about how it has shown up in your own marketing. The goal is not self-criticism. It is clarity. You cannot replace something you have not first named.

Myth 1: Where have you tried to apply frameworks or strategies designed for larger companies or different contexts? What did you try and what happened?

Myth 2: Where have you chased awareness metrics that turned out to be disconnected from actual business outcomes? What were you measuring and what did it actually produce?

Myth 3: Have you been posting or creating content without a clear signal behind it? What were you posting and what was it supposed to do?

Myth 4: Have you delayed fixing a marketing problem because you assumed it required budget you did not have? What was the problem and what have you done about it so far?

Myth 5: Have you handed off marketing to someone external before you fully understood it yourself? What was the outcome?

Myth 6: How many channels are you currently trying to maintain? Which one is actually producing results and which ones are diluting your effort?

Now write your own working definition of marketing, in one or two sentences, based on what you have cleared away in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The Personal Brand Audit

Before the chapter exercise, here is a structured audit for assessing where your personal brand stands today across each of the dimensions covered in this chapter. Be honest. The value of the audit is proportional to the accuracy of your answers.

Visibility of genuine perspective

Are you sharing what you actually think, including the positions that feel slightly risky to hold publicly, or a safe, edited version?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Problem specificity

How specifically and honestly do you describe the problem you are solving? Would someone with that problem immediately recognize themselves in your description?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Story coverage

Across your existing content, do you have examples of all four story types: origin, failure, belief, and vision? Which ones are missing?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Platform focus

Are you genuinely present on one platform or thinly present on several? Is the platform you are most active on the right one for your specific audience?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Platform focus

Are you genuinely present on one platform or thinly present on several? Is the platform you are most active on the right one for your specific audience?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Building in public

Are you sharing your process, including the uncertain and unresolved parts, or only sharing things once you know how they turned out?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

Bridge completeness

Is the connection between your personal brand and your company brand clear and explicit, or do they feel like two separate things?

Rating (1-5):

Notes:

CHAPTER 2 EXERCISE

The Four Story Types

Write the first draft of each story type for your personal brand. Keep each one to a paragraph or two. Do not edit for polish, grammar, or presentation. The goal is to get the true version out of your head and onto the page. You will refine these later. Right now accuracy matters more than quality.

The Origin Story: What is the specific moment or experience that made the problem you are solving undeniable to you? What did you try before you decided to build your own solution and why was it not enough?

The Failure Story: What is a specific mistake or wrong assumption you have made in building this that you are willing to be honest about? What did you try, why did you think it would work, and what actually happened?

The Belief Story: What do you believe about your industry or space that most people in it do not believe, or would not say out loud? Why do you hold this belief and what have you seen that supports it?

The Vision Story: What does the world look like for the people you are trying to help if what you are building actually works? Not what your product does, but what becomes possible for them.

Now look at your audit scores from this chapter. Which dimension of your personal brand is your biggest gap right now? What is one specific thing you will do this week to address it?

CHAPTER 3 EXERCISE

The Brand OS Audit

Rate each layer of your Brand OS on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means this layer does not yet exist in any meaningful form and 5 means this layer is solid, working, and producing results. Then write honestly about what is working and what is missing in each layer. Your lowest-scoring layer is your starting point in Part II. Do not skip this

Layer 1: Signal. Could ten of your best customers describe what you stand for in one consistent sentence? Rate 1-5 and explain.

Layer 2: Story. Is your communication consistent across every touchpoint? Does your content feel like it is all coming from the same place with the same direction? Rate 1-5 and explain.

Layer 3: System. Do you have a repeatable machine that moves people from aware to loyal without requiring manual intervention at every step? Rate 1-5 and explain.

Layer 4: Scale. When you have deployed paid resources or expanded distribution, have they amplified a working system or been deployed before the system was ready? Rate 1-5 and explain.

Layer 5: Soil. Do you have a community that advocates for what you are building, independent of your direct involvement? Rate 1-5 and explain.

Your lowest-scoring layer is your first priority in Part II. Write it here and describe in two sentences what a score of 4 or 5 in that layer would look like for your specific venture.

If you are running multiple ventures, repeat this audit briefly for each one and note where the portfolio-wide gaps are versus the venture-specific ones.

PART
02

THE SYSTEM

CHAPTER 4 EXERCISE

Build Your Position

This exercise has four parts. Complete them in order. Each one builds on the previous. By the time you finish, you will have a tested positioning foundation ready for the story- building work in Chapter 5.

Part 1: The Niche Ladder. Write the broadest category you belong to at the top. Then narrow down four rungs by asking: who specifically has the most acute version of this problem, and what specifically makes the way I solve it different? Write each rung and stop when you reach a position that is specific, ownable, and real.

Part 2: The Positioning Statement. Using the format from this chapter, write your positioning statement. Apply both tests: could a competitor say the same thing, and would your ideal customer immediately recognize themselves? Revise until both answers are clearly no and yes respectively.

Part 3: The Five Frames. Write one sentence for each of the five message frames from this chapter, all expressing your positioning from a different angle. These are the messages you will test.

Part 4: The Experiment Plan. Write where and how you will test the five frames this week. Which platform? What format? How will you measure resonance vs. just reach? Set a date to review results.

After you have run the experiment, come back and write which frame generated the most resonance and what that tells you about where your positioning is landing.

CHAPTER 5 EXERCISE

Build Your Content Triangle

This exercise has three parts. Complete them in order. The output is a working content map that you can begin executing immediately after Chapter 6 gives you the distribution layer to pair it with.

Part 1: Your Ten Pillar Ideas. List the ten questions your target customer is most persistently asking that sit within your positioning territory. These are your pillar candidates. Apply the two filters from this chapter and identify the five you will build first, ranked by priority.

Part 2: Your Derivative Map. Take your top three pillar ideas and list five derivative pieces you will produce from each one. Specify the format for each derivative piece and the platform it will be distributed on.

Part 3: Your Content Calendar Skeleton. Map your top five pillar pieces across the next twelve months, one per month for the first five months. Add the derivative production schedule for the first pillar piece. Block the time in your actual calendar before you move on to Chapter 6.

Your capture system: describe the specific low-friction mechanism you will use to capture content-worthy moments as they happen during your regular work week.

Apply the compounding test to the last three pieces of content you published. Did they pass all four questions? What would you change about them now?

CHAPTER 6 EXERCISE

Your Distribution Stack

This exercise has four parts. Complete them before moving to Chapter 7. The output is a distribution map and a concrete thirty-day action plan for each tier you are building or strengthening.

Part 1: The Distribution Audit. Trace your last twenty customers, leads, or subscribers back to their first point of contact with your brand. List the channels that produced them. Which channel is your top performer? Which is most underdeveloped?

Part 2: Your Owned Stack. What is your current email list size and monthly growth rate? What is the specific lead magnet or value offer you are using to convert visitors to subscribers? Write your plan for strengthening the owned stack in the next thirty days.

Part 3: Your Earned Stack. List the five most specific long-tail queries your target customer searches for that sit within your positioning. These are your SEO targets. List the two communities where your target customer is most concentrated. Write your thirty-day community contribution plan.

Part 4: Your Borrowed Stack. List your top five partnership targets from the mapping exercise. For each one, write what you bring to the table and draft the first line of your outreach message. Set a date to send the first pitch.

Your distribution readiness score: on a scale of 1 to 5, rate your current strength in each of the four tiers. Where is the biggest gap and what is the single highest- leverage action you can take this week to address it?

CHAPTER 7 EXERCISE

Map and Build Your Conversion Engine

This exercise has five parts. Complete them before moving to Part III. The output is a complete funnel map, a proof library plan, an objection map for your primary landing page, and a Loyalty Loop design.

Part 1: Funnel Map. Draw out every touchpoint in your current customer journey from first encounter to purchase. Note the drop-off rate at each stage if you have the data. If you do not have the data, estimate which stage has the highest drop-off based on what you observe. Label the stage where the biggest gap exists.

Part 2: Proof Audit. Which rung of the proof ladder do you currently occupy? List every piece of proof you have available right now. Then identify what you need to collect in the next thirty days to move one rung up the ladder. Write your plan for collecting it.

Part 3: Objection Map. List the five most common reasons a qualified prospect might not buy your product right now. For each objection, identify where on your current site or in your current funnel it is addressed. If it is not addressed, note where you will add the address.

Part 4: Friction Audit. Walk through your complete conversion path as if you were a first-time visitor. List every point where you had to pause, think about what to do next, or felt uncertain. Each one of those points is a friction problem. Rank them by impact and write your fix for the top two.

Part 5: Loyalty Loop Design. Identify the specific success moment in your product that has the highest advocacy potential. Write the sharing prompt you will send at that moment. Design the referral path that makes sharing easy. Describe how you will recognize advocates once they refer someone.

PART
03

THE PLAYBOOKS

CHAPTER 8 EXERCISE

Your Launch Plan

This exercise builds a complete launch plan for your next launch, whether that is a new product, a new feature, a new service, or a re-launch of something that did not land the first time. Work through each part in order.

What are you launching and when? Define the product or offering and set a specific launch date. Work backward thirty days from that date to establish your pre-launch start date.

Write your launch narrative in full, covering all five components: the problem with what exists, why you built this, what it does differently, who it is for, and what changes. This is your working document. It does not need to be polished. It needs to be true.

Identify your three to five launch allies. Name them specifically. For each one, write what you will ask them to do and what you bring to the relationship that makes the request fair.

Map your thirty-day pre-launch sequence using the four-phase framework from this chapter. List the three most important actions for each week.

Define your one launch success metric. Not impressions. Not signups in the abstract. The specific number that tells you the launch reached the right people and they took the right action.

Write your seventy-two-hour post-launch plan. What will you do in the first three days after the announcement? Who will you reach out to personally? What content will you publish?

CHAPTER 9 EXERCISE

Build Your Community Foundation

This exercise takes you from community concept to founding member invitation. Complete each part before moving to Chapter 10. The community you design here will become one of the most valuable long-term assets in the Veyaarh portfolio.

Define your community concept in three sentences. Who is it for? What shared problem, values, or identity brings them together? What does membership enable that members cannot get anywhere else?

List the ten to twenty specific people you will personally invite to be founding members. Name them. For each one, write one sentence about why you are inviting them specifically and what you believe they will contribute to the founding culture.

Choose your platform and explain why it is right for this specific community given the nature of the relationships you want to create and the communication preferences of your founding members.

Design your initial programming calendar. List three recurring elements you will run in the first ninety days. For each one, describe the format, the frequency, and what value it delivers to members.

Write the founding member invitation. Make it specific, personal, and honest about what you are asking them to commit to. Do not make it a marketing email. Make it a genuine invitation to help build something.

Write your community norms document using the first person plural framing from this chapter. Cover what the community values, what behavior is encouraged, and what will not be tolerated and why.

CHAPTER 10 EXERCISE

Build Your Partnership Strategy

This exercise produces a prioritized partnership landscape, a pitch for your highest- priority partner, and a measurement framework for the collaborations you run. Complete each part before moving to Chapter 11.

Audience overlap map: describe your target customer in detail, then list every newsletter, podcast, tool, community, and creator they regularly engage with. These are your raw partnership candidates.

Complementary problem map: list every adjacent problem your target customer has that your product does not solve. For each problem, list the category of product or person that solves it. These are your natural partnership categories.

Prioritized partner list: using your audience overlap map and complementary problem map, list your top ten partnership candidates. For each one, note their tier on the Partnership Pyramid, your current relationship with them, and what you bring to the table.

Write the pitch for your highest-priority partner in full. Use the four-section structure from this chapter: specific observation, specific proposal, value to their audience, specific next step. Keep it under three hundred words.

Define your partnership measurement framework. What will you track for each collaboration type? How will you evaluate whether a one-off collaboration should become an ongoing relationship?

Set a date to send the first five partnership pitches from your prioritized list. Write them this week and send them on that date.

CHAPTER 11 EXERCISE

Your Personal Brand Plan

This exercise produces a complete personal brand plan covering archetype, platforms, pillars, credibility stack, and a five-year milestone map. It is one of the most important exercises in the book because it is the strategic foundation that makes everything in your personal brand deliberate rather than reactive.

Identify your primary and secondary founder archetypes. For each one, write two sentences explaining why it is accurate and how it will shape your content and platform decisions.

Choose your primary platform and explain the decision using the three criteria from Chapter 2: where your audience is, which format matches your natural communication style, and what the organic reach potential is. Then choose your secondary platform and explain how it complements rather than duplicates the primary.

Define your three to five content pillars. For each one, apply the three filters: specificity of your knowledge, relevance to your target audience, and sustainability of your interest. Apply the two-hour depth test. Label one as primary and the rest as secondary.

Map your current credibility stack. List what exists at each layer: body of content, community recognition, media and publication, speaking and events, formal recognition. Then identify the single highest-leverage action you can take in the next ninety days to build the next layer.

Write your five-year authority vision. Where do you want your personal brand to be in five years? What are you known for? Who is seeking your opinion? What doors has the brand opened? Be specific and ambitious.

Using the milestone framework from this chapter, identify which milestone you are currently at and write the three most important actions that will move you to the next one.

PART
04

THE TOOLS

CHAPTER 12 EXERCISE

Audit and Build Your Lean Stack

This exercise has three parts. The output is a clear picture of what you currently have, what needs to change, and what the optimal stack looks like for your current stage and your specific ventures.

Current stack audit: list every tool you are currently paying for or using regularly in your marketing operation. For each one, note the monthly cost, the primary job it does, and your honest assessment of whether it is producing value that justifies its presence. Apply the five selection principles to each one.

Gap identification: list the specific marketing functions from this chapter that your current stack does not handle well. For each gap, write whether the right solution is a tool, a process improvement, or a hire, and explain your reasoning.

Optimal stack design: using the seven-function framework from this chapter, list the specific tool you will use for each function in your stack going forward. Note whether it requires any cost change from your current setup. List the integrations you need to build between tools to create a connected system rather than a collection of disconnected tools.

The thirty-day stack action plan: what specifically will you do in the next thirty days to move from your current stack to your optimal one? List each action, who is responsible, and when it will be done.

CHAPTER 13 EXERCISE

Design Your AI Marketing Workflow

This exercise produces a complete AI workflow including your voice document, your brief library foundation, and your weekly AI workflow design. Complete each part carefully. The voice document in particular is one of the most valuable documents you will produce from this book.

Write your voice document. Cover the four elements from this chapter: your characteristic vocabulary, your sentence rhythm, your perspective stance, and your editorial standards. Be specific enough that AI reading this document would produce noticeably different output than if it had not. Aim for one to two pages.

Identify the three AI use cases from this chapter that will add the most value to your current marketing operation. For each one, write why it is high-leverage for you specifically and what your current manual process looks like that the AI assistance would improve.

Customize the three prompts from this chapter that are most relevant to your use cases. Fill in every context, constraint, and criteria slot with your specific information so the prompts are ready to use without modification.

Design your weekly AI workflow. What will you do with AI at the start of each week, mid-week, and at the end of the week? How will it fit into your existing schedule alongside the one-hour content week from Chapter 5?

Apply the originality gate to the last three pieces of content you published. For each one, identify the original idea that came from your genuine thinking. If you cannot identify one, write what the original idea should have been and how you would build it into the piece if you were publishing it today.

The Bootstrapped Brand

Most founders waste months—or years—trying to follow marketing advice that was never meant for them.

Advice written for companies with teams, budgets, and departments. Advice that looks good on paper but collapses in the reality of building something from nothing.

The Bootstrapped Brand is different.

Written from inside the messy reality of building multiple ventures without external funding, this book gives founders a clear system for turning **ideas into trust, trust into attention, and attention into customers.**

You'll learn how to use your story, your perspective, and your proximity to the problem as your greatest marketing advantage—and how to build a brand that grows even when resources are limited.

If you're building without a safety net, this book will show you how to build the system that makes growth possible.

