

FOUNDER MYTHS & CHALLENGES — 1 of 6

CHOICES FOUNDERS CAN MAKE TO ENABLE FUTURE GROWTH

Acresis is a company of Founders, for Founders. We have earned our way through many important life and work lessons, truths that stand out as “things I wish I had known before I started.” Below are some of the most important Founder myths and challenges that we have had to work through in our own businesses and in partnership with our Founder clients. Many may seem obvious, but we also know that when everyone is in the trenches, even when you are leading the charge, it is easy to lose sight of what can really make a difference in the success or failure of your business.

“I’m too busy with the day - to - day, and cannot focus on the future, let alone tomorrow...”

It’s counter-intuitive, but nonetheless true, that only by being deliberate can you accelerate your goals. Having a strategic business cadence with time set aside to plan is essential. The first step is to determine your real objectives, so you can then drive clarity and accountability.

At Acresis, we work with our Founder clients to begin with the end in mind. This takes the form of helping clients answer two questions: “what is my target number/enterprise valuation?” and “what is my maximum timeline to achieve it?” Answers to these two questions become the guiding stars for the business going forward.

“Debt is never good for my business.”

Too often, we see companies acting conservatively against their own best interest. One Founder had clocked more than 40 consecutive profitable quarters, but had grown only 10% annually (less than competitors). Raising funds in equity markets takes precious time and energy, and taking on debt can actually make more sense.

In our work with dozens of Founder-owned businesses, we’ve helped clients gain access to hundreds of millions of dollars in equity and debt. And, there are many creative ways to source debt other than standard asset-based lending. Debt means you don’t give up ownership early on, and can actually prepare you for a more favorable equity raise in the future.



“That’s just overhead...”

There are multiple functions and competencies in which Founders typically under-invest, such as Finance, Sales, Marketing, Human Resources, and IT. Founders sometimes confuse “overhead” with key pillars of success and sustainable growth.

Acresis helps Founders see the possibilities and measure returns on internal functions, often recommending fractional external resources (instead of making permanent hires) who have a proven track record of industry success. This is a very efficient method to affordably access world-class talent.

Founders also often struggle with issues related to corporate hygiene - all those factors and attributes that help ensure liquidity events are maximized and run at pace. There are absolutely minimum acceptable standards related to brand, communication, account management and other key customer touch points for your business. We have developed proven processes and standards as well as key partnerships to give clients the right enterprise hygiene.

“Doing it right means doing it myself.”

Founders are typically both natural leaders and perfectionists. At the same time, sometimes we suffer from a belief that the Founder must be the sole driver of success. Some fear that if someone else gains > 50% control of the company (as with investors), they run the risk of losing control to others who “don’t know the business.” We help our Founder clients work through the harsh reality that ‘heroes don’t scale’ and that any business is best served by hiring the very best talent.

“I need to look and act bigger than I am to get up market...”

Businesses trying to scale up can really benefit from ‘blowfish brand’ thinking... “how can I be small in size and yet be recognized as center-stage of an industry?” Acresis has extensive skills in and experience with this practice, and has helped Founders develop and execute programs with industry analysts, professional forums, the press, investment analysts, and others. Similarly, we have helped Founders to develop their channel strategy and partner programs by leveraging Acresis’ extensive industry relationships. We offer a proven means to fast forward a client’s brand and market access.

To learn more, visit us at www.acresis.com

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