



MSME SUCCESS HQ

THE MNC PLAYBOOK

**How to Turn a Founder-Led Business
into a Scale-Ready Business**

*The decision-making discipline behind scalable
companies — adapted for the Indian founder.*

GUNIKA ARORA SACHDEVA

FOUNDER, MSME SUCCESS HQ

20+ YEARS ACROSS DELL, NTT DATA, BRITISH TELECOM & AIRTEL INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT — 896TH IN THE WORLD

WHAT EVERY FOUNDER REALLY WANTS

You've watched a small shop turn into a name every Indian knows.

You didn't build your business just to make a living. You built it because you saw something others didn't — an opportunity, a product, a way of serving customers, a business that could become something bigger.

And when you look at businesses like Haldiram's, Zerodha, or DMart, what stands out isn't simply their revenue. It's what happened to the business as it grew: the founder's vision didn't get diluted. The business became capable of carrying that vision further — across more customers, more people, more locations, and more opportunities.

That's the kind of scale most founders actually want. Not a business that becomes less dependent on the founder. A business that becomes more capable because of what the founder built.

And yet, somewhere between building the business and growing it, something changes. More customers bring more decisions. More people bring more complexity. More opportunities bring more things competing for attention — and growth itself starts demanding more from the founder.

That's where most founders start looking for the obvious answers: more money, more people, more technology, more sales.

But what if the next level of scale doesn't begin with adding more? What if it begins with deciding better?



THE QUESTION FOUNDERS RARELY ASK THEMSELVES

You can see who is growing. But can you see why?

You see businesses around you growing. Some raise capital. Some bring in experienced leaders. Some invest heavily in technology. Some expand aggressively. Some enter new markets. And then there are businesses that have access to many of the same things — yet struggle to turn growth into something durable.

So when you look at a business growing faster than yours, the answer can seem obvious: *they got funding, they hired better people, they invested earlier, they expanded faster*. Maybe. But what you can see is the investment. You cannot see all the decisions underneath it.

What they chose to pursue. What they chose not to pursue. What they stopped. What they delayed. What they measured. What they were willing to say no to.

And sometimes, the difference only becomes visible when things go wrong.

CASE • BIRA 91

From the outside, it looked like the story every ambitious founder wants: a strong consumer brand, over \$200 million raised from investors including Peak XV Partners, Sofina, and Kirin Holdings, aggressive expansion into more than 10 countries, and a path toward an IPO.

But the business ran into severe financial and operational stress. By 2026, production had been suspended, liabilities had crossed ₹1,400 crore, and founder Ankur Jain had given up control — stepping down and surrendering his 17.8% stake as part of an investor-led restructuring.

The interesting question isn't "why didn't Bira have enough money?" It had raised substantial capital. The more useful question is: what decisions underneath the growth story made the business able — or unable — to carry the scale it was pursuing?

Sources: Inc42 (Bira 91 collapse, 2026) • Storyboard18 & Inc42 (Ankur Jain steps down, 2026)

THE PARADOX, CONTINUED

BYJU'S had everything money could buy. It still couldn't buy this.

It had extraordinary funding, a huge valuation, and access to some of the world's most prominent investors. Yet the business entered insolvency proceedings amid financial, legal, and operational problems — proceedings still active in 2026, with the NCLT pausing the bidding process in July while founders Byju Raveendran and Riju Ravindran contest an ₹11,433 crore lender claim.

Again, the lesson isn't “funding doesn't work.” Funding clearly can work. **The lesson is: the visible resource is not necessarily the invisible reason for the result.**

And this is where it's worth turning the lens on your own business. When you say “if I had the funding, I could grow” or “if I had the right leadership team, we'd scale” or “if we had better technology, more capacity, or a new market, we'd be much further ahead” — you may be right. But you may also be looking at the thing that's easiest to see, not the thing actually driving the outcome.

Capital can fund a decision. People can execute a decision. Technology can enable a decision. Expansion can amplify a decision. None of them can tell you whether it's the right decision for your business, at this point in its journey.

That's the paradox. We can see what businesses invest in. We rarely see the decision-making discipline underneath those investments. Without that lens, it's easy to spend more, hire more, and grow faster — without knowing whether you're actually building the business you intended to build.

Bira 91. BYJU'S. Ola Electric. GoMechanic. Names you've read about in the news, not case studies in a report. You can see who is growing. You can see who is struggling. But beyond capital and people — can you see what's actually making the difference?

Sources: Inc42 (Bira 91, 2026) • Business Standard (BYJU'S NCLT proceedings, July 2026)

A DIFFERENT WAY TO SEE YOUR BUSINESS

Your business is a collection of bets.

Think about an investment. When you put money into land, gold, or another asset, you're making a bet on future value. You know it's a bet. You know it needs to be watched. And you know the outcome matters.

Now look at your business. Isn't that your biggest bet?

You've invested your money. Your time. Your people. Your reputation. Years of your life.

Yet most founders don't look at the business as a collection of bets that needs to be actively managed. They look at each decision separately: a new product, a new hire, a new customer segment, a new location, a technology investment, an expansion opportunity. But each of these is a bet on the future.

And the founder's job isn't simply to keep making more bets. It is to manage the bets: which ones deserve more investment, which ones need more time, which ones should be held back, which ones should be stopped, and which ones have the potential to change the scale of the business.

That is the shift.



HOW BIG IS YOUR NUMBER?

You didn't build this to keep it stable.

You have a number in your head. A scale you want to reach. A business you want to build. Maybe it's 10X. Maybe 50X. Maybe 100X. Maybe it's becoming a ₹100 crore company, entering new markets, or building something that can eventually go public.

Whatever your number is — the question is: how deliberately are you managing the business to get there?

Because scale doesn't happen simply because you want a bigger business. It happens when the bets inside the business are managed deliberately enough to create that scale.

This is what it means to manage your business as a portfolio of bets. Not an investment portfolio. A business portfolio — where every major decision competes for the same finite resources and has to earn its place in the journey toward your goal.

And that discipline has a name.

Business Portfolio Management

The discipline of managing your business as a collection of bets — deciding where to invest, pursue, hold, pause, or stop, so your limited resources create the greatest possible business value.

THE GAP BETWEEN AMBITION AND EVIDENCE

Are you moving? Or are you making progress?

This isn't a checklist you can pass by giving the right answer. Six questions, built to pull up real evidence from your own business — not the management answer you already know sounds correct.

01 • START WITH THE AMBITION

What is the scale you actually want to build?

Not just next year's revenue. Think bigger — 10X, 50X, 100X, ₹100 Cr, a national business, an IPO, or whatever “big” means to you.

YOUR NUMBER OR OUTCOME

02 • NOW BRING IN THE PLAN

What was the biggest move you planned to make to get significantly closer to that goal?

DESCRIBE IT

03 • BRING IN REALITY

What happened to that plan?

- A. It delivered broadly what we expected.
- B. It changed significantly as we moved forward.
- C. We are still working on it — it got delayed, or something else took priority.

THE GAP, CONTINUED

Has the destination moved — without you noticing?

04 • THE MOVING-TARGET QUESTION

Look back at the last major growth move you planned. How much of what you're doing today is still connected to the original reason you made that move?

- A. Most of it — the original objective still drives our decisions.
- B. Some of it — circumstances changed and we adapted along the way.
- C. Very little — the business has moved in several different directions since then.

05 • WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS ACTUALLY COMPOUNDING?

Over the last 3–5 years, which best describes your business?

- A. **Stable** — turnover and margins have broadly stayed within the same range.
- B. **Growing** — turnover is increasing, but margins have remained broadly the same.
- C. **Scaling** — turnover is growing and margins are improving.
- D. **Compounding** — revenue, profitability, and business value are all strengthening together.

WHAT DOES THAT TELL YOU ABOUT THE BETS YOU'VE BEEN MAKING?

06 • THE HARD REALITY CHECK

Compare the business you have today with the business you said you wanted to build 2–3 years ago. What do you see?

- A. We are materially closer to it.
- B. We have grown, but the destination has moved too.
- C. We are working harder and have more going on — but we're not sure we're significantly closer.

WHERE YOUR ANSWERS ACTUALLY PLACE YOU

Growth is not the same as progress.

You can add revenue, people, customers, and opportunities — and still find yourself chasing a goal that keeps moving further away. Your six answers actually test two separate things.

Directional progress (Questions 1–4 and 6): is the ambition clear, was there a deliberate move, did reality match the plan, has the destination held steady, and are today's decisions actually taking you closer?

Economic strength (Questions 5 and 6): is revenue growing, are margins holding or expanding, and is the underlying business — not just its turnover — becoming more valuable?



Your answers to Questions 1–4 and 6 place you on the vertical axis. Your answers to Questions 5 and 6 place you on the horizontal one. Together, they place you in one of the four boxes above.

Growth tells you the business is moving. Progress tells you it's moving toward something. Profitable growth tells you the economics are strengthening. Value creation tells you the business itself is becoming more valuable. The question is: which one describes your business today?

You don't need more activity. You need to know whether the bets you're making are actually moving the business toward the scale you want. That's the gap worth diagnosing.

GUNIKA ARORA SACHDEVA

I didn't learn this from a business textbook.

I learned it by sitting inside the rooms where large businesses decide what gets funded, what gets prioritised, what gets questioned — and what gets stopped. For more than two decades, I worked across global organisations including Dell, British Telecom, NTT DATA, Airtel International, and Franklin Templeton.

I saw what happens when a business has hundreds of opportunities competing for the same money, people, and leadership attention. And I saw the discipline required to answer a deceptively simple question:

We decided to do this. Did it actually deliver what we believed it would?

That is the thinking behind Business Portfolio Management — a discipline used inside large, complex organisations for decades to decide where to place effort and money, and to keep checking whether those bets are still earning their place.

I was the 896th person globally to earn professional certification in Portfolio Management (PfMP) — fewer than 1,000 professionals hold it worldwide.

But there was a problem.

WHY MSME SUCCESS HQ EXISTS

These practices were built for businesses much larger than yours.

An Indian founder doesn't need another layer of corporate bureaucracy.

You don't need a 50-page governance process. You don't need a room full of executives to decide what happens next.

But you do need to know which bets deserve your money, your people, your time, and your attention. And you need a way to know whether those bets are actually taking the business where you want it to go.

That is why I created MSME Success HQ.

I took the thinking I had practised inside large organisations and began adapting it for the Indian founder — not by making your business operate like an MNC, but by bringing that same decision discipline down to the scale of the business you have actually built.

Because I believe something very strongly: every big business started small.

“What do we do next — and is it the right bet?”

That is the fundamental decision every founder faces — from the smallest shop to the largest conglomerate. The businesses you admire today made enough right calls, over and over again, to grow beyond cities, markets, and eventually continents. Your business deserves the same opportunity. Its current size does not define the scale it can reach.

Right now, here is where India's registered businesses actually stand:

99.7% of all registered MSMEs in India are Micro enterprises — 7.57 crore businesses (7,56,93,501)

0.64% are Small enterprises — 4.89 lakh businesses (4,88,779)

0.05% are Medium enterprises — 36,830 businesses

Source: Ministry of MSME, Government of India — Udyam Registration dashboard (data as of February 2026). Total registered MSMEs: 7,59,19,110.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

This is the tip of the iceberg. You haven't seen the rest yet.

Because every business — regardless of its size — is a collection of bets.

Some will work. Some won't. Some will need more time. Some will need to change. Some will need to stop.

The difference between a business that creates exceptional value and one that struggles to scale is rarely that one has no wrong bets. It is that the right bets outnumber the wrong ones — and the business knows how to manage the difference.

But here's where it gets interesting.

No two businesses are the same. Even two businesses in the same industry can be completely different.

Different founders. Different people. Different culture. Different capabilities. Different ambitions. Different bets already on the table.

So there cannot be a one-size-fits-all answer to what your business needs to scale.

THE REAL QUESTION

What would an MNC CEO see in your business that you don't?

What would they see? What would they question? What would they protect? What would they challenge? What would they invest in? And what decision framework would actually fit your business?

That is what the Scale Ready CEO Diagnosis is designed to explore — a 4-stage personalized assessment built around your business, not generic business advice.

And we're starting small. To see whether this way of looking at your business is right for you, the first 100 founders can access Stage 1 for ₹999.

Stage 1 of 4 — Scale Ready CEO Diagnosis

OPEN TO THE FIRST 100 FOUNDERS

₹999 · inclusive of GST

See where your business stands — through a scale lens built for your business, not someone else's.

[Start Stage 1 at msmesuccesshq.com](https://msmesuccesshq.com) →

- 01** If Stage 1 shows you it's worth going further, the Complete Journey (₹11,999, inclusive of GST) unlocks all four stages of the diagnosis.
- 02** Already run the diagnosis and want help acting on it? The Business Portfolio Council (group) and Private Advisory (1:1) open occasionally, by waitlist and by application.
- 03** Not ready for any of that yet? Revisit the self-assessment starting on page 7 in three months. The honest answer to those six questions rarely stays the same for long.



*The business you started with a vision
has travelled a long way.
How far it has come tells you what
you've built.
How far it can go depends on the
decisions you make next.*

So before you add more people, more
capital, or more opportunities — pause
and ask:

**Is the business ready for the
scale I want to create?**

“I’ll see you inside.”

— GUNIKA ARORA SACHDEVA