
Series A Startup – When Growth Overtakes the Organization

1. Problem

A B2B SaaS startup in the industrial environment with:

- 45 employees
- Successful Series A financing
- Strong growth in order intake (+70% YoY)
- International pilot customers

On paper: a clear growth success.

Operationally, however, increasing tensions became apparent:

- Delivery dates have been repeatedly postponed
- Implementation projects delayed
- Support was permanently overloaded
- Conflicts between sales and product management
- No clear prioritization of the roadmap
- Fast hiring without a clear role architecture
- Founders strongly tied up in day-to-day operations

The company was not in financial distress – but in structural overload.

The central question was:

How do we continue to scale without quality, culture and controllability collapsing?

2. Part of the model used

Prepared for Scale – Startup Edition **was used** with a focus on:

- Entrepreneurial clarity
- Product Strategy
- Organization & Governance
- Economical management

The goal was to build a scalable structure – without losing entrepreneurial speed.

3. Method used

Phase 1: 3-day scaling assessment

Workshop with founding team and executives.

The following were analyzed:

- Decision-making processes and escalation paths
- Distribution of roles and responsibilities
- Product roadmap and prioritization logic
- Sales commitments vs. delivery capability
- Capacity planning & project management
- KPI and reporting structure

Key findings

1. Unclear governance

- No clear separation between strategic and operational decisions
- Founders as a bottleneck in many approvals

2. Lack of capacity logic

- Sales-generated deals without a binding delivery check
- No systematic resource planning

3. Roadmap conflicts

- Customer-specific requirements dominated
- Core product development suffered

4. Overburdened organization

- New employees without clear onboarding
- Leadership span sometimes too large
- High operational friction losses

The growth was real – but the structure was not scalable.

Phase 2: 120-day structure building

Jointly defined measures:

Governance & Roles

- Clear Responsibility Matrix (RACI)

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- Introduction of a weekly leadership board
 - Separation of product strategy and customer projects
 - Delegation of operational decisions

Product & Sales Alignment

- Introduction of a structured prioritization model
- Definition of "Non-Negotiables" in the Product Core
- Binding delivery check before sales are completed
- Building a structured customer success model

Control & Transparency

- Introduction of a KPI dashboard (MRR, churn, delivery margin, capacity)
- Monatliche Forecast-Routine
- Transparent roadmap communication

Phase 3: Accompanied implementation & reviews

- Bi-weekly sparring sessions with the founders
- Review der Leadership-Meetings
- Fine adjustment of the roller structure
- Preparation of the next round of financing from a governance perspective

The operational implementation remained entirely with the startup – scalionblue acted as a structural and sparring partner.

4. Result after 9 months

Measurable results:

- On-time delivery improved from 62% to 88%
- Project margins stabilized
- Churn rate reduced
- Founders' working hours significantly reduced in day-to-day operations
- Clear roadmap with stable prioritization

Additional:

- Significantly fewer internal conflicts
- Greater transparency towards investors

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- Structured management level established
 - Scalable organization for further growth
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Results

The startup did not grow more slowly – but more controlled.

Rapid growth with frictional loss became structured growth with a system.

Scale did not mean bureaucracy, but clarity.

A traditional automotive SME with:

- 350 employees
- 85 million € turnover
- Focus on mechanical development and production of transmission components
- Long-standing OEM and Tier 1 customers

For decades, the company was successful in the field of mechanical drive components.

But with increasing electrification of the powertrain, the market changed fundamentally:

- Declining new projects in the classic gearbox sector
- Decreasing development budgets for existing customers
- Increasing focus on e-mobility, power electronics and new drive concepts
- Uncertainty among employees regarding future prospects

The company was still economically stable – but structurally positioned in an expiring market.

The central question was:

How do we transform our technical DNA into a sustainable market position?

2. Part of the model used

Prepared for Scale – Transformation & Repositioning **was used** with a focus on:

- Entrepreneurial clarity
- Product Strategy
- Customer Strategy
- Organization & Competence Architecture
- Economic management of the transformation

The goal was not abrupt disruption, but a managed, economically viable realignment.

3. Method used

Phase 1: Transformation Assessment (6 weeks)

Joint workshops with:

- Management
- Technical experts from development and production
- Sales
- HR

Contents:

1. Portfolio analysis

- Evaluation of existing products according to future viability
- Identification of cash cow products for transformation financing
- Analysis of technological transferability

2. Skills analysis

- Technological core competencies (e.g. precision mechanics, simulation, materials competence)
- Transferability to e-mobility applications (e.g. housings, cooling structures, structural components, integration solutions)

3. Customer potential analysis

- Identification of existing OEM and Tier 1 customers with e-mobility projects
- Analysis of possible "follow-up projects" on the basis of existing relationships

Employee & Skill Analysis

- Existing qualifications
- Continuing education needs
- Necessary new hires (e.g. electrical engineering, software-related skills)

Phase 2: Transformations-Roadmap (24 Monate)

Based on the analysis, a structured action plan was defined:

Strategic thrusts

1. Development of an e-mobility product line with clear technological positioning
2. Leverage existing customer relationships for new development projects
3. Parallel stabilization of the traditional business to finance the transformation

Organizational & Competence Measures

- Targeted training programmes for 40% of development staff
- Hiring key people in the field of electrical engineering and system integration
- Establishment of an interdisciplinary "New Technology" team
- Adaptation of the sales argumentation to system competence instead of individual part production

Economical management

- Separate transformation budget
- Clear milestones
- Monatliches Steering-Board
- Transparent project profitability

Phase 3: Accompanied implementation (18 months)

scalionblue accompanied:

- Management workshops for prioritization
- Structural development in the development area
- Sparring on key projects
- Communication of the transformation into the organization
- Coordination with banks and shareholders

The operational implementation was carried out by the company – with clear governance and regular reviews.

4. Result after 3 years

Measurable results:

- 28% of revenue from new e-mobility-related products
- Acquisition of 3 development projects in the field of electrified drive systems
- Stabilization of total sales despite decline in the classic segment
- Qualification rate of development employees > 60%
- New, clearly communicated market positioning

Additional:

- Significantly increased future-proofing

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- Higher motivation in the organization
 - Positive perception among existing customers as transformation partners
 - Confidence in banks and shareholders strengthened
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Results

The transformation was not a radical break – but a strategically controlled evolution.

The company did not change its identity, but transferred its mechanical excellence to a new technological reality.

A transmission specialist has become a relevant partner in the electrified drive world.