# Go-to-Market Strategy in 8 Steps



Founders Hive

# Step 1: Introduction & Goal



***Turn your business model into a concrete plan: which customers you win first and how you reach them.***

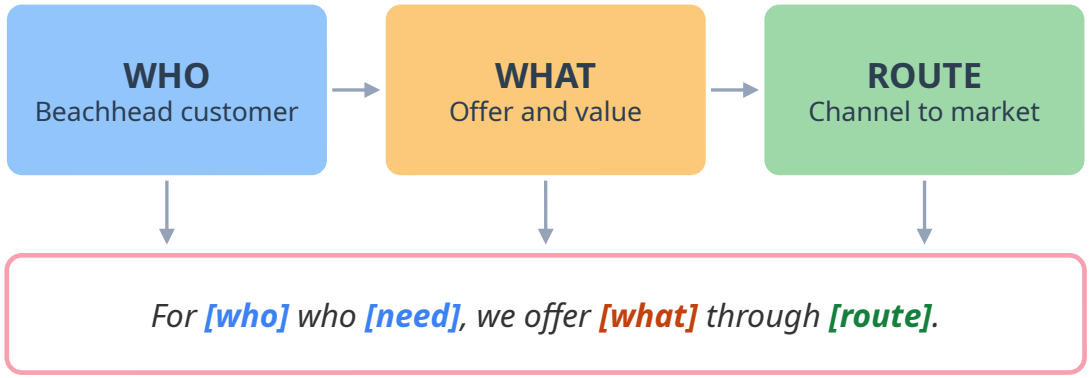
## Why plan your go-to-market now?

Your business model shows how you create and capture value. Your go-to-market (GTM) strategy decides where you start. Deep-tech startups often see many possible applications but have resources for only a few.

## Three Questions to Answer

**Who:** The first customer group you will win, your beachhead
**What:** The offer and the value this group will pay for
**Route:** The channel through which you reach and sell to them

**YOUR GTM IN ONE SENTENCE**




**Pro Tip**

Fit your GTM statement into one sentence: For [who], who [need], we offer [what] through [route]. Moore's positioning template in Crossing the Chasm follows this logic. Review it every six months, as April Dunford advises.

**Founder Insight**

*"We already knew who our potential customers were. Then we realized the only way to enter is to explain to all the owners, administrators and managers that this is a technology they can depend on. And the only way to do that is through the industry associations. There are three of them."*

**Mateusz Wojdylo, Stellos AG**

**GTM Statement**

| Who | What | Through Which Route |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

# Step 2: Define Your Beachhead



***Choose one narrow segment that you can win completely before you expand.***

## What Makes a Good Beachhead

- Customers feel the pain now and have a budget to solve it
- You can reach them quickly and serve them with your current product
- They talk to each other, so one reference opens the next door

## Plan the Next Segments

- Win the first segment, then move to an adjacent one
- Choose neighbors with the same problem or the same buyers

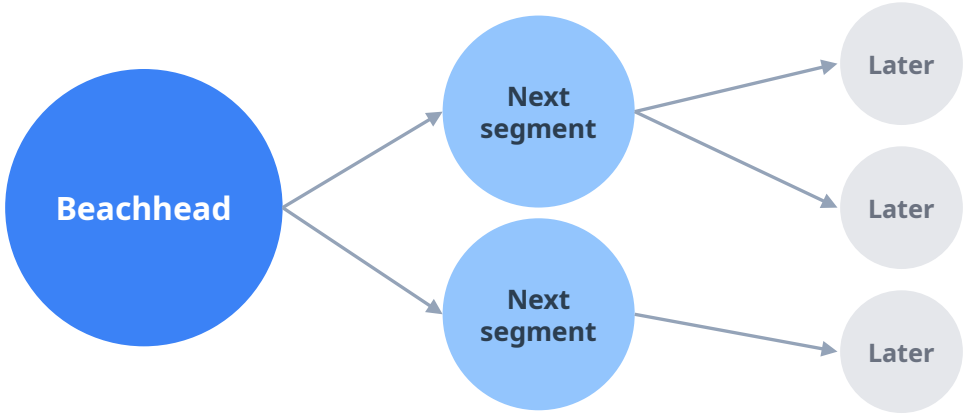
**Which single segment could you lead before anyone else does?**

### Founder Insight

*"For a lot of robotics founders, there is a vast amount of applications and opportunities you can run after. We can support police, hydropower, fish farming. For us it was therefore important to narrow it down. Now we want to look into energy assets offshore; that's where our focus lies. That's how you can concentrate your resources."*

**Jonas Wüst, Tethys Robotics**

**WIN ONE SEGMENT, THEN THE NEXT**




### Pro Tip

Pick a beachhead you can serve fast and at low cost. Tethys Robotics first tested with customers close to home, then chose Europe because it can reach every site there within about three hours by plane.

### Beachhead Scorecard (score 1 to 5)

| Segment | Pain Now | Easy to Reach | Word of Mouth |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
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# Step 3: Map the Buying Center



***Identify every person who shapes the purchase and what each of them needs to hear.***

## Roles in the Buying Center

**User:** Works with your product every day
**Influencer:** Shapes the requirements, often a technical expert
**Buyer:** Runs procurement and negotiates the terms
**Decider:** Approves the purchase and controls the budget
**Gatekeeper:** Controls access to information and people

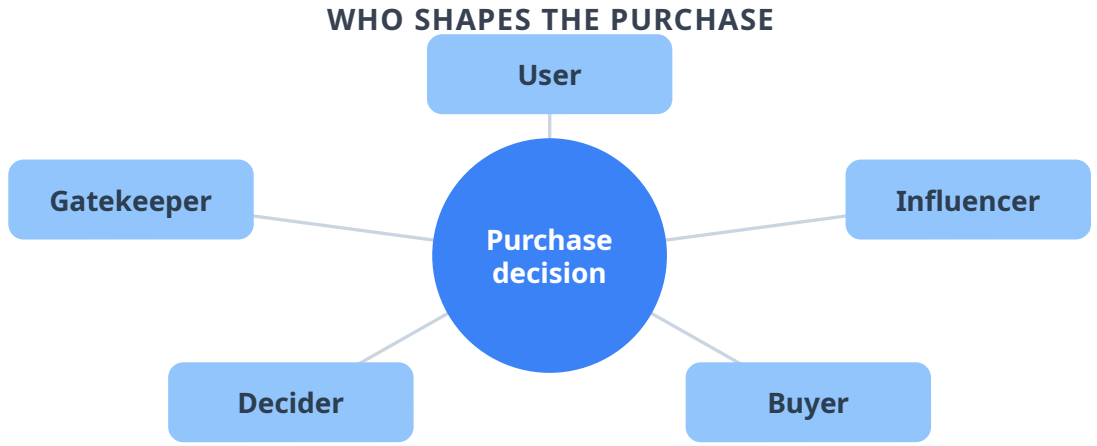
## How Organizations Buy

- Large organizations often buy through formal tenders
- One person can hold several roles; ask who else signs off

### Founder Insight

*"In the end, we build a buying center for each and every customer. We know exactly who the decision makers and the influencers are, and we put all of that into a CRM. For each target group we use different ways of communication: LinkedIn, fairs and other ways to reach the right people."*

**Regula and Matthias Spühler, heyPatient**




### Pro Tip

Expect more roles than you think. Stellos AG identified nine different decision makers in a single parking purchase. List every role before your first meeting and ask each contact who else signs off.

### Buying Center Map

| Role | Name | Concern | Influence |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# Step 4: Separate User and Payer



***Find out who uses your product and who pays for it, then build a value argument for each.***

## Why It Matters

- In B2B, the user often has no budget for new tools
- The payer decides on business impact and return on investment
- In regulated markets, ask who pays and who reimburses

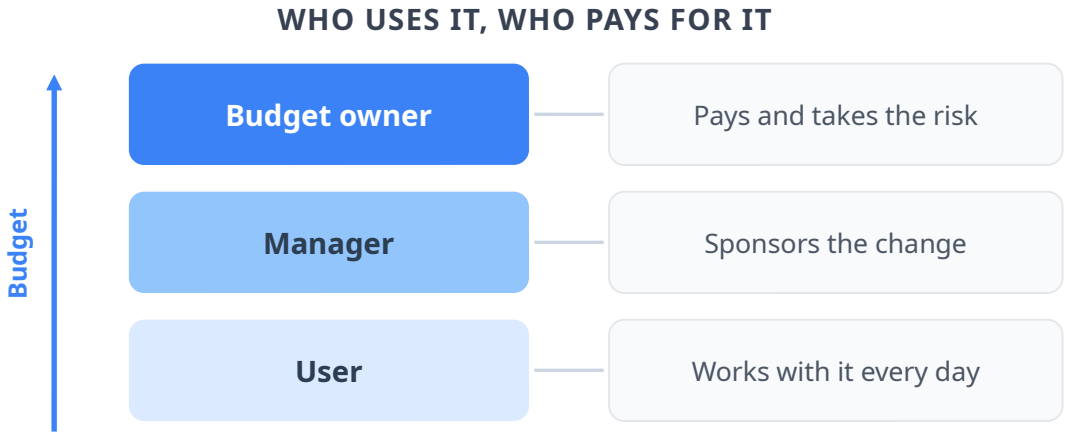
## Build Value at Every Level

**User:** Saves time and makes daily work easier
**Manager:** Improves team results and reduces errors
**Budget owner:** Gets a measurable return at lower risk

### Founder Insight

*"We always felt that our user is the one who's going to buy our solution. He's an asset manager, an operations manager. It seems they don't have a budget for such things, even though this tool can really help them a lot. We realized this quite late. It's a top-down sale for us."*

**Govinda Upadhyay, SmartHelio**




### Pro Tip

Meet users and budget owners separately. SmartHelio's founder visited technicians, their managers and the C-level to learn what value each level sees. Before a pilot, agree on the KPIs that trigger a rollout.

### User/Payer Value Grid

| Role | Person | Main Pain | Value for Them |
|---|---|---|---|
| User | | | |
| Manager | | | |
| Budget Owner | | | |

# Step 5: Choose Your Channels



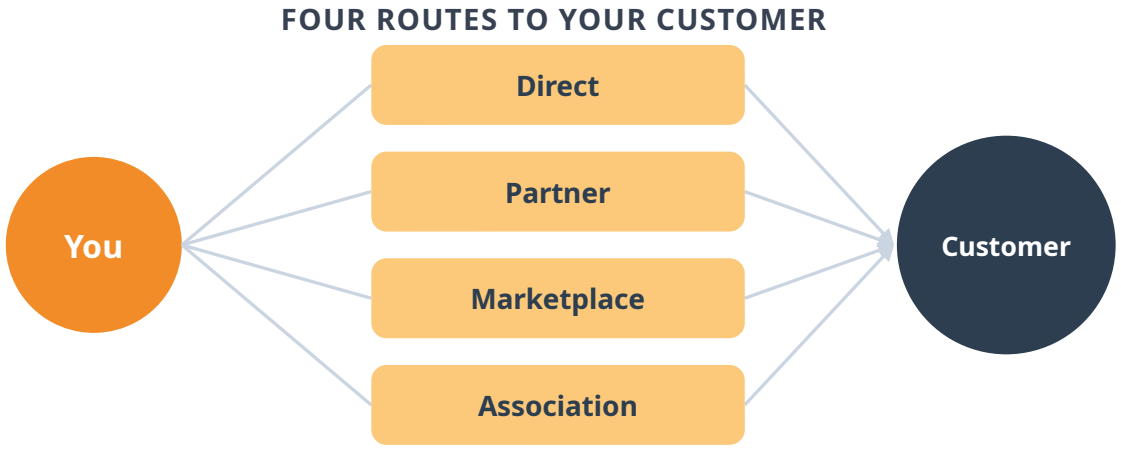
***Decide through which route you reach and sell to your beachhead customers.***

### Four Common B2B Routes

**Direct:** Your own team sells; most control, slowest to scale
**Partner:** Consultancies, integrators or distributors sell with you
**Marketplace:** Customers buy on a platform they already use
**Association:** Industry bodies give access to many decision makers

### How to Choose

- Follow how your customers already buy similar solutions
- Compare the time to the first deal, not only the cost




**Pro Tip**

Before you commit to a channel, talk to 10 to 20 potential partners about who they work with and what they want to offer. LatticeFlow AI found that this shows clearly which partners can bring your product to market.

**Channel Matrix**

| Channel | Customer Fit | Effort | First Step |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct | | | |
| Partner | | | |
| Marketplace | | | |
| Association | | | |

**Founder Insight**

*"If you want to work with a bank directly and you are a small 40-people vendor, good luck getting this done in two months. But working with a channel such as a Big Four firm, Accenture or a local advisory firm that already has engagements with these banks, that's a very different story."*

**Petar Tsankov, LatticeFlow AI**

# Step 6: Leverage Platforms and Partners



***Use the reach and procurement access of larger players to grow faster.***

## Where Partners Help

**Platforms:** Marketplaces let customers buy without separate procurement
**Integrators:** Software you connect to gives you a ready customer base
**Distributors:** Local partners bring market knowledge and contacts

## Before You Sign

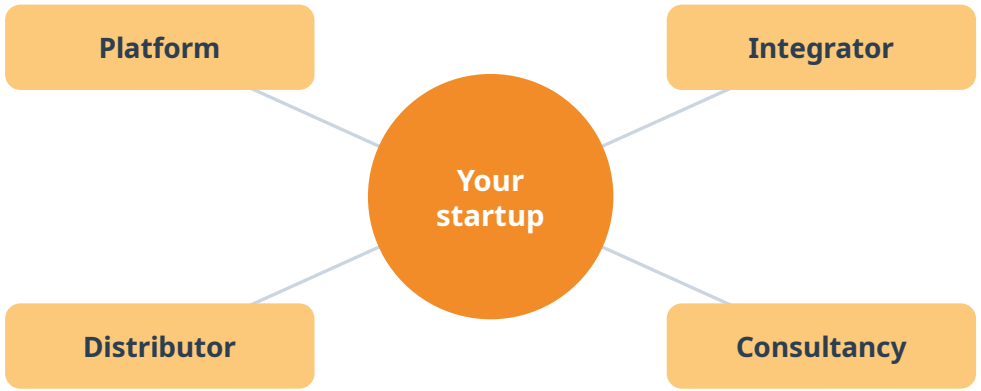
- Understand why the partner wants to work with you
- Check hidden risks and whether the partner covers more than one country

### Founder Insight

*"The Microsoft Marketplace is a huge tool for us, because with it we are purchasable on a global scale. We don't have to go through separate procurement. A customer in England can just purchase our solution; they pay Microsoft directly, and we get paid from them. That is a huge enabler."*

**Regula and Matthias Spühler, heyPatient**

YOUR PARTNER ECOSYSTEM




### Pro Tip

Never depend on a single partner. macu4 works with different partners in different countries, preferably large ones, so it can switch quickly if one partnership fails.

### Partner Planner

| Partner | What They Bring | What They Need | Risk |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# Step 7: Time Your Market



***Check whether a market is ready to buy now, and adjust where you push.***

## Signs a Market Is Ready

- Customers have a budget and a team assigned to the problem
- Their systems and processes can absorb your solution
- Regulation or a trend makes the problem urgent now

## If a Market Is Not Ready

- Do not force it; you cannot control market timing
- Move to a market that is ready and return later




**Pro Tip**

Write down readiness criteria and check every prospect. LatticeFlow AI asks about a governance team, governance rules, deployed use cases and past assessments. This lets it place a new prospect within about 30 seconds.

**Founder Insight**

*"We still have some markets where they doubt that 3D-printed products can have good mechanical performance. We observed that already three years ago in Germany, and we know that markets are changing. … The thinking is rigid, and you cannot force them to change. You need to wait for them."*

**Myriam Lingg, macu4**

### Market Timing Check

| Market | Readiness Signals | Score (1 to 5) | Now or Later |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# Step 8: Plan Your First Proof Points



***Turn your first customers into measurable evidence that convinces the next ones.***

## What Counts as Proof

**Pilot result:** An outcome measured against goals set in advance
**Case study:** The result told in the customer's own words
**Reference:** A customer who takes calls from your prospects

## Put Your Proof to Work

- Share results at events, in webinars and on your website
- Ask satisfied customers to introduce you to their peers

**FROM PILOT TO REFERENCE**




### Pro Tip

Never run a pilot for free. Tethys Robotics asks customers to at least cover its costs, and it agrees on the pilot scope and the conditions for a letter of intent before the pilot starts.

### Reference Plan

| Customer | Metric to Prove | Format | Target Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

### Founder Insight

*"We could convince some clients to do a real use case with us, so that we could really measure the impact. Once we created these use cases with real customers, we could use them to create awareness and to show the value of the product and what we are doing."*

**Dr. Poorya Amini, Risklick**

# Next Steps



### Complete Your GTM Plan

Fill in all eight worksheets for your beachhead. Combine them into a one-page plan your team can act on.



### Test & Refine

Treat every channel and partner as a hypothesis. Review your plan every quarter and adapt it to what the market tells you.



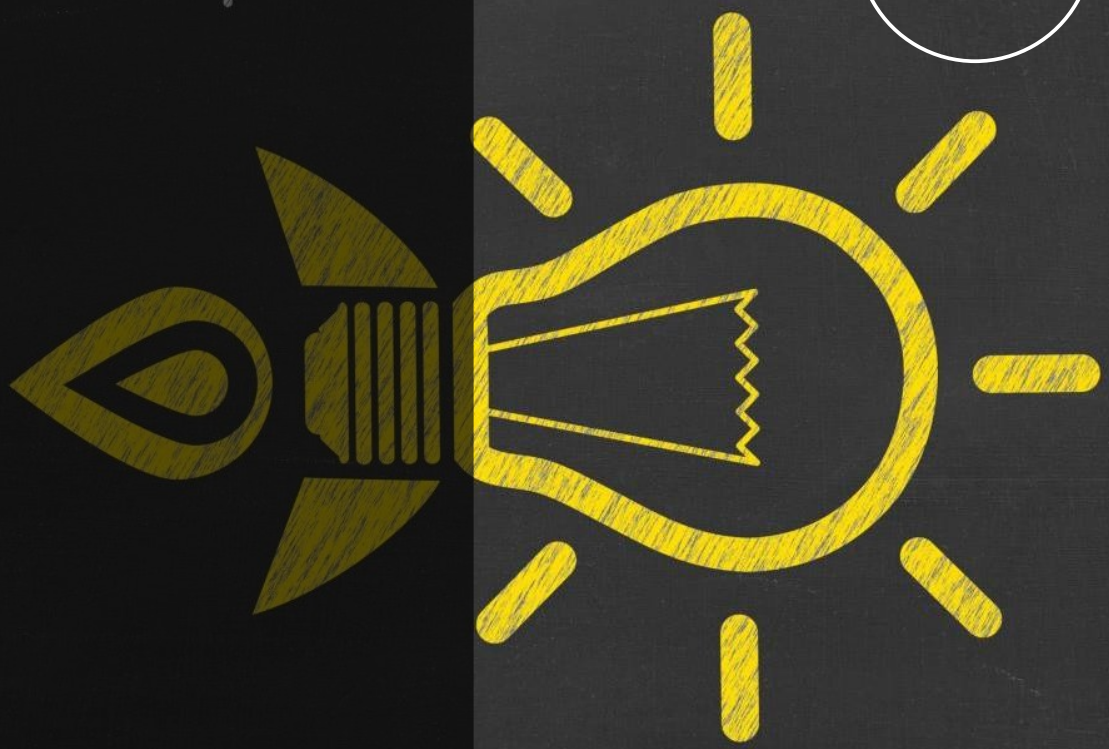
### Seek Feedback

Share your plan with coaches, early customers and potential partners. Ask them how they buy and who decides.

## Additional Resources

Business Model Design  Market & Customer Definition  Sales Funnel & Lead Qualification
Growth Hacking & Experiments  Innosuisse Training

# Let's Bring Your Idea to Life



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