Product Pieces.

The Founder Canvas.

Everyone canvases the idea. This one canvases the founder.

VENTURE	FOUNDERS	DATE	VERSION
Ledgerly (worked example · fictional)	**Maya (CEO) · Sam (CTO)**	**August 2026**	**v0.9**

The mission (1)

Why you, why this, why now?

Eight years running compliance at a mid-tier accountancy. I have filed the exact reports this tool automates, and I know which partners lose a week to them every quarter. New FCA reporting rules land in April, so every firm has to change how they work anyway. We are the change they pick.

THE PEOPLE

Founders & equity (2)

Who's building this, and who owns what?

Maya 60% (CEO: domain, sales, product calls). Sam 40% (CTO: stack and build calls; part-time until the raise). Four-year vesting, one-year cliff, signed. Money decisions joint. Known gap: B2B marketing.

Skin in the game (3)

What are you actually risking?

Maya: 14 months personal runway; full-time from September; partner on board until next summer, then an honest review. Sam: three evenings plus weekends until the raise closes. Walk-away line: no paying customer by month nine.

The bench (10)

Who fills the gaps you can't?

Advisor: exited founder of an accountancy-SaaS, 0.5% over two years, monthly call. First hire after the raise: implementation lead. Rented: fractional product lead two days a week, agency build. Accountant and legals in place.

THE MACHINE

The company (4)

Would you survive due diligence?

UK Ltd, incorporated February. Founder IP assigned. Dev agency contract transfers IP on payment of each invoice. SeedLegals founder agreements and cap table. SEIS/EIS advance assurance going in this month.

Money in (5)

Where does the fuel come from?

£40k founder cash in to date. Raising £300k pre-seed from angels plus SEIS funds, targeting January; buys 18 months and an implementation hire. Plan B: Maya's consulting covers 60% of burn and pushes the raise back six months.

Money out (6)

When do you hit zero?

Burn £9k a month: agency £6k, tools £500, founder stipends £2.5k. Zero date: next August. Worth it: the build, one implementation hire post-raise, a proper accountant. Waiting: office, brand refresh, conferences.

THE PATH

The wedge (7)

What's the smallest thing you'll build?

Not the full platform. One report type, generated from a CSV upload, delivered as a PDF. No-code front end; the agency builds only the generation engine. Six weeks, to test one thing: will firms trust an automated filing?

Proof (8)

What does the evidence say so far?

22 interviews; 14 described the pain unprompted; 3 letters of intent. Riskiest assumption standing: firms will pay £250 a month. Next test: pre-sell a £99 founding rate to ten firms. Validated means five actually pay.

First customers (9)

Who are the first ten, by name?

Four partners from Maya's old firm, three from the ICAEW community, three warm intros from our accountant. They gather at ICAEW events and on AccountingWEB. Motion: founder-led direct sales. Anti-customer: sole traders and Big Four.

Milestones (11)

What must be true in 90 days? In 12 months?

90 days: wedge live with five firms (Sam); ten founding customers at £99 (Maya); SEIS advance assurance (Maya). Fundable milestone: £2.5k MRR plus three written case studies. Twelve months: £10k MRR, pre-seed closed, first hire made.

Kill criteria (12)

What would tell you to stop?

Stop or pivot if: fewer than five paying firms by end of March; or first-quarter churn over 20%; or the FCA delays the rule change beyond 2028. Review: first Monday monthly, with our advisor in the room.