

FIRE PLAYBOOK TEMPLATE

This is the blank master playbook. Use it two ways: to customize any of the nine Founder Fire Codes playbooks to your business, or to build a playbook from scratch for a fire the nine don't cover. Fill every section. A playbook with empty sections is a playbook that routes back to you the first time it gets tested. Work through it with the fire's owner in the room if you can — their answers are usually better than your guesses about their answers.

FIRE IDENTITY

FIRE NAME (GIVE IT A NAME YOUR TEAM WILL ACTUALLY USE):

DEPENDENCY TYPE (WHICH OF THE NINE: DIRECTION AND DECISION, REVENUE, KNOWLEDGE, EXECUTION AND DELIVERY, QUALITY AND RISK, COORDINATION, RELATIONSHIP AND BRAND, CULTURE, SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE):

HOW IT SOUNDS (THE SENTENCE YOU CATCH YOURSELF SAYING ABOUT THIS FIRE, IN YOUR OWN WORDS):

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Example: "Nothing ships until I've looked at it, because I'm the only one who catches the stuff that matters."

WHAT THIS FIRE COSTS US (HOURS PER WEEK, REVENUE AT RISK, THE THING IT KEEPS YOU FROM DOING):

THE SCENE

Describe the fire as it actually happens in your business. Not the category — the specific Tuesday. Who brings it to you, in what channel, at what moment, and what happens to your day when it lands. Write it in enough detail that a new hire could read it and say "oh, I've seen that happen."

THE SCENE, IN 3 TO 5 SENTENCES:

THE TELLS

List the observable signs this fire is burning. Behaviors you can point at, not feelings. Aim for six.

- FILL: Tell 1
- FILL: Tell 2
- FILL: Tell 3
- FILL: Tell 4
- FILL: Tell 5
- FILL: Tell 6

WHAT'S ACTUALLY BURNING

Name the dependency underneath the symptom. What is currently stored in the founder — knowledge, judgment, standards, trust, access — that would have to exist somewhere else for this fire to go out? And what has already been tried that didn't work, and why?

WHAT THE FOUNDER IS PERSONALLY SUPPLYING: _____

THE FIX THAT ALREADY FAILED, AND WHY IT FAILED: _____

THE RESPONSE PLAN

The steps that put this fire out. Each step needs an action, a person, and a date. Four to six steps is the normal range. If you have ten, you're writing a project plan, not a response plan — cut it back to the moves that matter.

STEP	ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____

STEP	ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
5	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____

THE WORD-FOR-WORD SCRIPT THIS PLAN NEEDS (WHAT GETS SAID, BY WHOM, TO WHOM — WRITE THE ACTUAL SENTENCES): _____

THE PREVENTION PLAN

What structure replaces the founder so this fire can't restart? Prevention is always a structure, never a resolution to try harder. Think in terms of the handoff layers: the What, the When, the Why, the How, the Standard, the Judgment, and the Voice where client-facing work is involved.

THE STRUCTURE THAT REPLACES ME (THE DOCUMENT, THE RULE, THE CADENCE, THE OWNER):

WHICH HANDOFF LAYERS THIS TRANSFER NEEDS MOST, AND WHERE EACH WILL BE WRITTEN:

THE RECURRING RITUAL THAT KEEPS IT ALIVE (WHAT REVIEW, HOW OFTEN, OWNED BY WHOM):

OWNERSHIP

One name per line. "The team" is not a name.

OWNER (CLOSEST TO THE WORK, NOT MOST SENIOR): _____

BACKUP (CAN HOLD IT FOR A WEEK WITHOUT CALLING THE FOUNDER):

AUTHORITY GRANTED (WHAT THE OWNER DECIDES WITHOUT ASKING — BE SPECIFIC, USE NUMBERS):

START DATE: _____

BOUNDARIES AND ESCALATION

WHAT THE OWNER DECIDES ALONE: _____

WHAT THE OWNER DECIDES AND REPORTS AFTER: _____

WHAT STILL COMES TO THE FOUNDER, AND ON WHAT SIGNAL:

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Example signal: "Client uses the words cancel, refund, or lawyer – owner loops in the founder same day."

PROOF IT'S OUT

The observable evidence this fire is done. Check these at the 30-day mark, not the 3-day mark.

- ☐ FILL: Proof sign 1 (something that happened without the founder)
- ☐ FILL: Proof sign 2 (a count that dropped – name the number)
- ☐ FILL: Proof sign 3 (a full cycle of the process run clean, founder untouched)
- ☐ FILL: Proof sign 4 (the owner changed or improved something without asking)

RELIGHT WARNING (THE EARLY SIGN THIS FIRE IS COMING BACK, AND WHAT WE DO THAT WEEK):

PLAYBOOK STATUS

FIELD	ENTRY
Written by	_____
Date written	_____
Last reviewed	_____
Next review due	_____

Review each playbook quarterly. A playbook nobody has touched in six months is a snapshot, not a system.

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