

FOUNDER INVOLVEMENT BOUNDARIES

This is the flip side of the escalation rules: instead of listing what escapes you, this document names the short list of things that should still route to you — and the standing rule that releases everything else. It also holds the personal disciplines that keep you from quietly rewiring the fires back through yourself, because the biggest threat to this installation is not your team. It's your reflexes.

THE SHORT LIST

The things that still come to me, because they genuinely should. Keep it short — five to seven items. Every item you add makes the standing rule weaker.

- Any client relationship at genuine risk of ending: cancel, refund-in-full, or lawyer language.
- Money past the top thresholds: spending, discounts, or refunds above the published lines.
- Anything legal, regulatory, or reputational: contracts, disputes, press, public complaints.
- Hiring, firing, compensation, and role changes.
- New offers, pricing changes, and anything that changes what the company promises.
- FILL: our addition, if truly needed
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THE STANDING RULE

One sentence, said at the rollout, printed in the memo, repeated at reviews:

TEMPLATE

If it's not on my list, it goes to the owner.

This sentence is the formal death certificate for "when in doubt, ask the founder." Doubt now has a new address.

THE OFFICE-HOURS PATTERN

There's a category that isn't urgent and isn't really escalation: things the team legitimately wants your read on. Strategy questions, judgment sanity-checks, ideas. Give them a container instead of letting them arrive as all-week interruptions.

MY WEEKLY OFFICE-HOURS BLOCK (DAY AND TIME, ONE HOUR):

How it works: the team keeps a running list during the week and brings it to the block. Anything urgent still uses the escalation map. Expect half the list to resolve itself before the block arrives — questions with a four-day wait attached have a way of finding their own answers, and every self-resolved question is a rep of the independence you're building.

WHERE THE RUNNING LIST LIVES:

THE REDIRECT SCRIPT

When something off-list reaches you anyway — and it will, especially in week one — the response is a warm redirect, every time, even when you know the answer. Especially when you know the answer.

TEMPLATE

"Good catch — and this one's [owner]'s. She owns [process] now, so take it straight to her; you don't need me in the loop. If you bring it to me first, I'm just going to slow you down."

THE NO-TAKE-BACKS PLEDGE

Sign this where an owner can see you do it. It reads like theater and works like structure: when the day-twelve wobble hits and your hands start moving, a promise made to a specific person on a specific date has a grip that a principle in a book does not.

TEMPLATE

When the work wobbles, I will assume the handoff was incomplete — not the human. I will name the missing layer, fix the package, and hand the work back to its owner. I will not rescue, shadow, hedge, or quietly resume. If I believe an assignment truly isn't working, I will say so out loud at a review and we will change it deliberately — I will not just take it back.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

WITNESSED BY: _____

KNOW YOUR OWN TAKE-BACK MOVES

Taking work back rarely looks like taking work back. Four disguises to watch for in yourself:

- The rescue: jumping in to fix the wobble because the client is waiting and you're fastest.
- The shadow: leaving the owner the title while you quietly re-review everything before it ships.
- The hedge: "loop me in on this one, just this once" — said four times in two weeks.
- The drift: answering the DMs that should have been redirects, one harmless answer at a time.

THE DISGUISE I'M MOST LIKELY TO WEAR, HONESTLY: _____

THE EXCEPTIONS LOG

Every time something off-list reaches you and you engage anyway, log it. No shame — just data. Review monthly: the same category three times means either the escalation map has a hole (add the signal) or you have a habit (now you can see it).

DATE	WHAT REACHED ME	WHY I STEPPED IN	MAP GAP OR HABIT?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

WHERE THE RECLAIMED HOURS GO

Decide in advance what your attention is for once the interruptions stop, and calendar it before rollout week. An idle founder hovers; a redirected founder builds.

THE FOUNDER-LEVEL WORK MY RECLAIMED HOURS ARE COMMITTED TO THIS QUARTER:

THE FIRST CALENDAR BLOCK, ALREADY SCHEDULED (DATE AND TIME):

DOCUMENT STATUS

FIELD	ENTRY
Short list confirmed on	_____
Pledge signed on	_____
Exceptions log last reviewed	_____

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