

|                      | Typical Founder Questions  | Challenges  | What Successful Founders Do  |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Individual Level     | Who do I want to be as a leader?   | Founders have limited experience in leading (larger) teams. At the same time, they worry to lose the feel-good culture when experiencing strong growth and professionalizing processes.   | Recruit individuals who have complementary competencies from the founding team. Hire slow but fire fast – truly consider a candidate's cultural fit. Maintain a strong emphasis on culture results in improved work methods and a more robust workforce. |
|                      | How long can I keep this up?   | Founders often doubt their own abilities/knowledge/decisions/stamina; they find the transition from ‘founder’ to ‘leader’ particularly difficult.   | Become aware of the lack of appropriate support in training and coaching instead of blaming and hiding.  |
|                      | There is fire everywhere! Will it ever stop?                               | Founders are constantly busy putting out fires, but at the same time they know that they still have a long journey ahead of them.   | Acknowledge the marathon and establish healthy work patterns.  |
|                      | Why have I stopped enjoying my work? Where has all the fun gone?           | Operational constraints dominate the day-to-day work instead of the explorative work they were used to in the beginning of the entrepreneurial journey.   | Gather a good understanding on individual preferences and needs and act upon that.   |
| Team Level           | My co-founder(s) and I used to be partners in crime. When did that change? | Constant pressure and the intensity of working together are a source of conflict that also co-founders are not immune to.   | Acknowledge the founder relationship being part of a successful growth story, and actively work on/invest in it.   |
|                      | We have hired so many people – what is my contribution?                    | As the startup scales, it becomes even more important that responsibilities are well defined. Often, founders are responsible for too many topics but may also have trouble letting go.   | Optimize and manage bandwidth by assembling a strong leadership team, strategically dedicating time to key priorities, and establishing support mechanisms.  |
|                      | Who do I need on my team for the future?                                   | With strong growth, capabilities may reach a certain limit.   | Regularly evaluate the team's skills and performance to identify those ready for increased responsibility, those who can grow with the organization, and those who should remain in their current roles.   |
| Organizational Level | Why do we have so many meetings?   | Everyone has done everything for a long time. But informal coordination processes have reached their limits, leading to inefficient meetings.   | Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and targets.  |
|                      | Why does it feel like we can't attract great talent anymore?               | Organizational structures, hiring needs, and onboarding have not been set up properly as the need to hire increases across the organization, expectations of new hires have not been clearly defined, career paths are unclear. | Establish structured onboarding processes. Provide a compelling employee offering that focuses on talent development, featuring clear career advancement and skills enhancement opportunities. This will help reduce attrition.                          |
|                      | Why is everything taking so long?  | Founders perceive long decision times in comparison to the agile past.  | Be clear and be transparent on who truly needs to be involved in the decision-making process and, more importantly, who needn't as the organization grows.   |