



# START RIGHT LIST: Boiling the Ocean

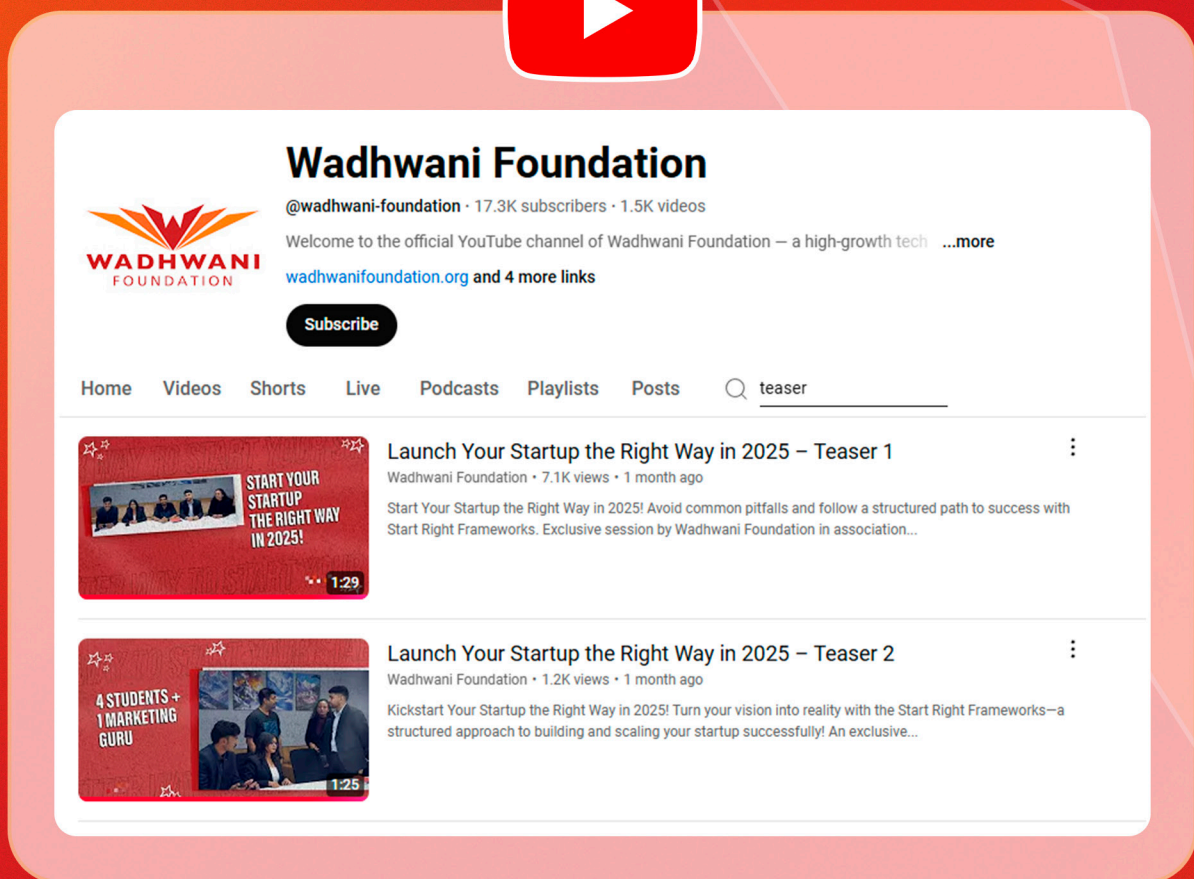
Key Insight for Founders  
Version 1.0 – Curated by  
Wadhvani Foundation



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# Start Right Initiative

## Introduction

This list is designed to help **entrepreneurs** by curating and carefully selecting the best publicly available content. Instead of creating new material, let's compile the existing valuable resources. With so many great resources, start better. Don't commit the known mistakes; commit the new ones.

If you have any suggestions for the list, [please suggest them here.](#)



# About Wadhvani Foundation

**Wadhvani Foundation** is a high-growth, not-for-profit tech organization dedicated to social good. Over two decades since its inception in 2001, the foundation with worldwide presence has focused on a simple, powerful mission: accelerating job growth and enabling millions to earn a family-sustaining wage and lead a dignified life.

The Foundation is positively impacting the lives of millions of individuals across multiple countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America through its four core initiatives:

- 1) Entrepreneurship
- 2) Skilling
- 3) Innovation & Research
- 4) Government Digital Transformation





# Why This List?

Many startup founders fall into the trap of trying to do everything at once — build every feature, serve every customer, and chase every opportunity. This mistake, often called “**Boiling the Ocean**”, drains resources, overwhelms teams, and derails product focus.

This curated list helps you recognize the signs, understand the risks, and adopt focused frameworks to build your startup the smart way.



# Why Co-Create this List ?

Execution mistakes like “Boiling the Ocean” are one of the most common reasons startups fail. This curated guide outlines clear definitions, real-world examples, and proven prioritization strategies. It ensures you stay lean, focused, and effective in solving one valuable problem at a time.



# Boiling the Ocean

## The Mistake That Kills Startups

### What It Means:

Trying to tackle too much at once — solving every customer problem, building every feature, and entering every market.

### Result:

Burnout, delays, bloated products, and a failure to deliver value.

## Why It's Dangerous for Startups

Symptom	Impact
Vague goals like “Let’s build an all-in-one platform”	No one knows what the MVP is
Long to-do lists with no prioritization	Teams spread too thin
Trying to serve all customer types	Messaging and product don't resonate with anyone
Building complex tech infrastructure upfront	Product delivery gets delayed and overcomplicated



## What To Do Instead: “Boil a Cup First”

Action	Ask Yourself
Quibi	What is the small-valuable thing we can solve right now?
Pilot It	Can we validate this with 10 target customers?
Prioritize 20%	What 20% of actions will give us 80% of the learning/traction?



# Pro Tips for Founders

- Create a NOT-to-do list for every sprint.
- Use frameworks like RICE or ICE to rank initiatives and features.
- Create a NOT-to-do list for every sprint.

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## Key Thought

You don't win by solving everything — you win by solving one thing better than anyone else.



# Visual Content to Aid Understanding

## Startup Prioritization Matrix

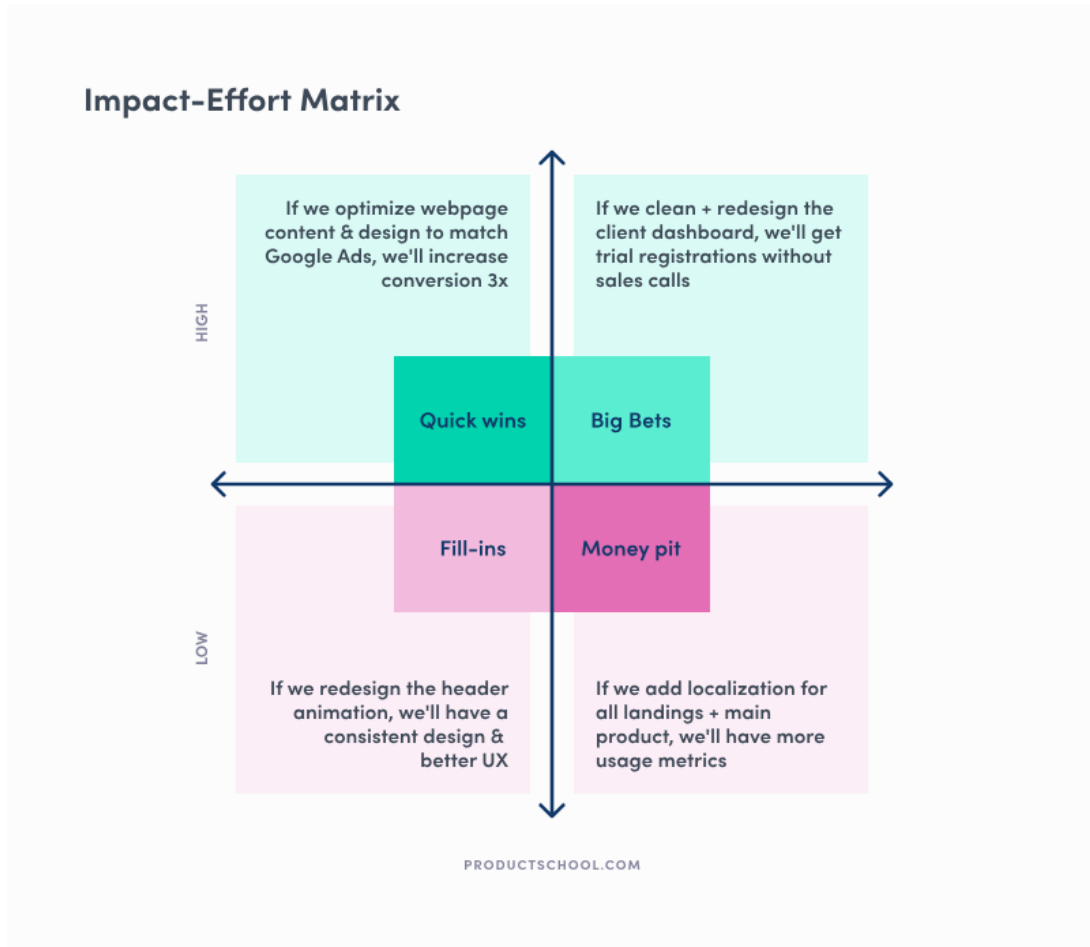
- Urgent vs. Important tasks



Source



- Feature Impact vs. Effort Grid



Source



## NOT-to-do List Example

- A live document that captures ideas/requests you deliberately choose not to pursue immediately.

**My Not-To-Do List**

STUFF THAT DISTRACTS ME AND WASTES MY TIME	STUFF THAT STRESSES ME OUT AND GIVES ME ANXIETY
STUFF THAT DRAINS MY ENERGY	STUFF I FEEL OBLIGATED TO DO
STUFF THAT DOESN'T ACTUALLY NEED TO BE DONE	STUFF I CAN'T CONTROL OR ISN'T MY RESPONSIBILITY

**My Top 5 Not-To-Dos**

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# YouTube & Podcast Resources

Andreessen Horowitz: [Startup Building: Major Shifts in Tech & Culture](#)

## Articles & Expert Reads

First Round Review: [When Less Is More: Product Focus Lessons](#)

Y Combinator Library: [How to Prioritize Features](#)





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