



The founder had hit the ceiling of their own capacity

BUSINESS	Harvest & Co. — specialty food manufacturer
SIZE	Founder-led · 40 staff across two production sites
ENTRY POINT	Established and complex; the founder still the operational centre, growth stalling against it
ENGAGEMENT	Ops Leadership (Fractional COO) — premium retainer, three-month minimum
BASIS	Embedded and accountable for operational outcomes — limited places

Harvest & Co. was established, profitable and complex — two production sites, forty staff, a growing book of retail customers. It also had a ceiling: the founder. Scheduling, quality calls, supplier problems and client escalations all still ran through one person. He couldn't be the operational centre and the person setting direction at the same time, so growth kept stalling against his own hours. More systems and more monitoring wouldn't fix that. The business needed someone to take the operational seat.

Ops Leadership is exactly that hand-over. A fractional COO is embedded to own operations outright — accountable for outcomes, not offering advice from the outside — so the founder is freed to lead.

HOLDING THE SEAT

What the COO owns

- **Operational ownership.** Accountability for the outcomes, not just the recommendations — the business running smoothly, the team delivering, the systems serving strategy. The buck for operations stopped moving to the founder.
- **A leadership rhythm.** Regular strategic sessions with the founder on direction and the big calls, alongside running the day-to-day operating cadence — planning, reviews and the meetings that keep two sites moving.
- **Real authority to lead.** Embedded deeply enough to make and drive operational decisions and sit in the conversations that matter — leading from inside the business, not advising from beside it.

And the business held

The test of this tier isn't a higher score — it's whether the business runs without the founder in it. During the engagement the founder opened a new retail supply line and spent the quarter on customers and direction, not operations. The sites ran, delivery held, and we re-scored the System Maturity Scorecard deliberately with the founder out of the seat.

MEASURE	BEFORE	WITH OPS LEADERSHIP
Founder's time on day-to-day operations	~70%	~10%
Operational decisions routed to the founder	Nearly all	Exceptions only
System maturity, re-scored with the founder out of the seat	3.6	4.4

THE OUTCOME

Room to Lead

- Operations have an owner accountable for outcomes — the founder is no longer the point everything routes through.
- The business runs reliably and the team delivers, whether or not the founder is in the room.
- The founder leads — setting direction, building the relationships that matter, opening the next line of growth — instead of holding the business together.

This is Room to Lead in full: not the founder stepping back a little, but handing over the seat.

"I opened the retail line while someone else ran the floor. For the first time the business didn't need me in it to work — I could actually lead it."

— FOUNDER, HARVEST & CO.

START HERE

Ready to hand over the seat?

Ops Leadership runs as a small number of embedded engagements at a time, and every journey starts with a complimentary Ops audit.

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