THE FIELD GUIDE

Every framework in An Outsider's Playbook, on one page each.

See it. Win the room. Build the moat. Scale the enterprise.

A working companion to the Outsider's Arc.

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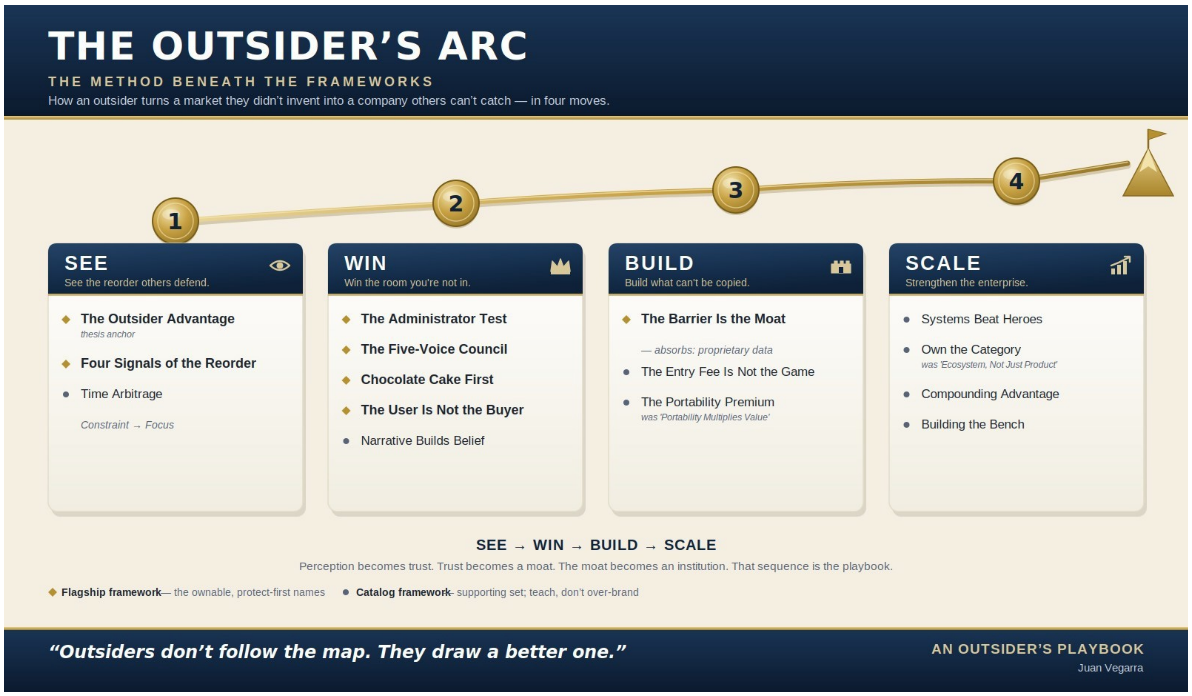
How to use this guide

A principle you cannot use on a Tuesday afternoon is just a nice thing to have heard once. What follows is the entire book reduced to tools, each one built to be run on a real decision, in a real room, this week. Every tool tells you what it is for, how to run it, and how to know when you are failing it. Dog-ear the page. Argue with it in the margins. Then use it.

The tools are not a pile. They follow the path every outsider walks: first you *see* the reorder others are too close to notice, then you *win* the room you were not born into, then you *build* what cannot be copied, then you *scale* it past yourself. That is the Outsider's Arc, and the frameworks below are grouped by the stage where you will reach for them.



1 SEE — *see the reorder others defend*

Four Signals of the Reorder

Chapter 3

WHAT IT'S FOR

Seeing the turn before the crowd does.

RUN IT

Watch for four things. A technology quietly crosses the threshold where people who could never use it before suddenly can. An incumbent starts defending its workflow instead of the customer's outcome. A real frustration has gone so unanswered that people have stopped complaining about it. And the best talent, the people with the most to lose, begins quietly moving toward the problem before it shows up in revenue. One signal is noise. Three at once is a market about to change hands. Position before the consensus, not after it.

THE TELL

You are waiting for proof, and the proof is the thing that arrives wearing your competitor's name.

The Five-Voice Council

Chapter 2

WHAT IT'S FOR

Stress-testing any decision big enough to hurt.

RUN IT

Before you commit, walk the decision past five voices in your own head. The Skeptic asks who has tried this before and why you are the exception. The Engineer asks where your moat actually leaks. The Acquirer asks what in here would make the company hard to own. The Accountant asks which soft number the whole story falls apart without. The User asks what this gets them, and whether it is worth changing what they already do. When two of the five object hard, listen. They are usually buying you a quarter you would otherwise have lost.

THE TELL

Everyone in the room already agrees, and no one has said the uncomfortable number out loud.

The Ceiling of Assumptions

Chapters 10 & 18

WHAT IT'S FOR

Finding the limit an industry has stopped noticing it accepted.

RUN IT

Ask what everyone in the business treats as fixed, then ask who decided it and when. Most ceilings were rational once and nobody revisited them: which markets deserve coverage, who the customer is, what the product is allowed to cost, how long the cycle has to be. Write the assumption down as one sentence, name the era that set it, and look for the evidence that it still holds. Then test one by acting as though it were not there, in a market small enough that being wrong is survivable. Africa, India, and the Middle East went from $8M to $120M in eighteen months because the ceiling was an assumption about which markets deserved coverage, not a fact about demand.

THE TELL

Every explanation for why the number cannot move begins with the words in this industry.

2 WIN — *win the room you're not in*

The Administrator Test
Chapter 1

WHAT IT'S FOR

Checking whether your value survives the people who have to carry it.

RUN IT

Picture your value proposition spoken not by you, but by the least technical person in the chain, to the person who actually signs. Strip out every word that needs you in the room to explain it. What remains is your real pitch. Build that sentence on purpose, for the administrator and the signer, not for the expert who already agrees with you.

THE TELL

Your own jargon handed back to you with confidence. A real pass is clumsy, the outcome in someone else's homemade words.

The Cake Test
Chapter 7

WHAT IT'S FOR

Making sure you are selling the outcome, not the recipe.

RUN IT

Say, in one plain sentence, what the person across the table actually gets. Not what your product is, not how it works, but what changes for them. Then hand that sentence to someone who knows nothing about your field and ask them to repeat it back. If it survives, you understand what you are selling. If it does not, you are still describing the flour.

THE TELL

You start explaining the architecture before anyone has asked what the thing does.

Outcome Over Feature
Chapter 7

WHAT IT'S FOR

Catching a product that has started serving itself instead of the customer.

RUN IT

List what your team is most proud of, then ask, beside each item, whether the customer can feel it on the first day. The features that pass are your product. The ones that do not are your ego. Reorder the roadmap accordingly, and be honest about how much of it was built to impress people who think like you.

THE TELL

Your product is clearly better and quietly losing.

The User Is Not the Buyer
Chapter 5

WHAT IT'S FOR

Aiming your product and your pitch at the person who actually decides.

RUN IT

Name the person who uses the thing and the person who pays for it. They are often not the same person, and they never want the same sentence. Build the product to delight the user, and build the case to convince the buyer, the one with the budget and the problem and no patience for features. Confuse the two and you will win love and lose the deal.

THE TELL

Your users adore you and your revenue does not move.

3 BUILD — *build what can't be copied*

The Barrier Is the Moat

Chapter 6

WHAT IT'S FOR

Deciding whether a hard, slow market is a trap or a fortress.

RUN IT

Find the wall: the regulation, the long proving period, the expensive integration. Ask two questions. Can I get over it. And once I am across, does it keep the next ten competitors out for years. If both answers are yes, the wall that nearly kills you is the same wall that protects you. If the wall is low, you have no business, only a head start, and a head start is what gets cloned.

THE TELL

Your product is beautiful and nothing stops a bigger company from copying it.

Every Industry Has a Moat

Chapter 6

WHAT IT'S FOR

Finding the defensible position in a business that looks like a commodity.

RUN IT

In any industry, ask what compounds: the dataset that gets richer with use, the position in the workflow nobody can route around, the input everyone downstream depends on. Own that, and price and features stop being the whole fight. The moat is rarely the product. It is usually the thing the product sits on top of.

THE TELL

You are competing entirely on price and calling it strategy.

The Entry Fee Is Not the Game

Chapter 4

WHAT IT'S FOR

Telling permission to compete apart from an actual business.

RUN IT

Write down the hard thing you did to get in: the clearance, the integration, the first reference customer. Now ask, coldly, whether that thing is the business or merely the toll you paid to reach it. If everyone who enters pays the same toll, the toll is not your advantage. The game starts after it.

THE TELL

You are celebrating getting in as though you have already won.

Own the Instrument

Chapters 14–15

WHAT IT'S FOR

Positioning for where value moves as intelligence gets cheap.

RUN IT

When the model becomes abundant, value moves to whatever owns the data the model needs. Ask what generates the proprietary data in your field: the instrument, the sensor, the place the real-world signal is captured. Own that, secure the rights to the data it produces on the first day, and you own the one thing that does not get commoditized. Rent it, and you are improving someone else's position.

THE TELL

Your advantage is a model anyone can now buy, sitting on data you do not own.

4 SCALE — *strengthen the enterprise*

Prove the Motion, Then Pour
Chapter 12

WHAT IT'S FOR

Not burning your capital scaling something that does not yet work.

RUN IT

Before you pour money into growth, prove the motion at small scale. One repeatable sale, made the same way twice, by someone who is not the founder. Only when the motion repeats without you do you add fuel. Take your last ten deals and ask whether they were closed by one repeatable reason or by ten different miracles. Miracles do not multiply, and if you are not sure the motion is proven, it is not.

THE TELL

You are hiring a sales team to discover a sales process you have not found yet.

Building the Bench
Chapter 17

WHAT IT'S FOR

Building a team that can run when you are not in the room.

RUN IT

Hire people who are better than you at their craft, and then let them be. The real test is not whether you can find them, it is whether you are secure enough to be outshone by them. Build for consensus first and loyalty second, and check, honestly, whether the company keeps moving on the days you are gone. If it stops, you have not built a bench. You have built a bottleneck with your name on it.

THE TELL

Nothing important happens unless you are in the room.

The Dilution Math
Chapters 12 & 19

WHAT IT'S FOR

Deciding whether to hold your percentage or grow the pie.

RUN IT

When the choice is owning all of something small or part of something large, do the arithmetic. What is bigger, a hundred percent of a hundred, or fifty percent of five hundred. Take the dilution when the money brings expertise, contacts, and a real shot at the larger number. Refuse it when it brings only cash. Ownership is not the goal. Outcome is.

THE TELL

You are guarding your slice while the pie stops growing.

How You Say No
Chapter 16

WHAT IT'S FOR

Protecting your yes by spending your no well.

RUN IT

Treat strategy as subtraction. The easy no, to a bad idea, costs nothing. The no that matters is to a good thing in the wrong place, and it has a price: a relationship, a patron, a door that closes. Say it anyway, fast and honestly, and pay the price on purpose, because every no you fail to say is a yes you cannot honor.

THE TELL

Your calendar is full of good things and none of them is the main thing.

HOW I INVEST

Get Inside or Pass

I only invest where I can make a difference as a contributor: through C-level work, an advisory role, or a board seat. Capital alone is not a strategy; contribution is. It is also how I keep faith with the people who trust me with their money. A check I cannot improve is a risk I have no way to manage.

Get Inside or Pass

Chapter 12

WHAT IT'S FOR

Deciding whether to make an investment, including a bet on yourself.

RUN IT

Before you commit money, ask whether you can get inside: a board seat, an operating role, a real line of sight into how the thing actually runs. If you can, you can help, and you can see trouble early. If you cannot, you are a passenger trusting a stranger with your capital. When you cannot get inside, the honest move is usually to pass.

THE TELL

You are relying on a famous name to understand the thing you do not.

Run them when it is hard

None of these is complicated, and that is the point. The work was never in understanding the tools. It was in having the discipline to run them when the room is excited, the clock is short, and every instinct you own is telling you to skip straight to the thing you already wanted to do.

The full playbook

Each of these frameworks earns a chapter, and a story that cost something to learn, in *An Outsider's Playbook: How Generalists Build Extraordinary Companies in Industries They Didn't Invent.*

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