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Simon Greally — Advisory

The Narrative *Architecture* Playbook.

A field guide for founders and CEOs building narrative that compounds — when category is forming and execution becomes agentic.

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WHY THIS PLAYBOOK EXISTS

Most narrative work dies on the founder's hard drive.

The strategic narrative wave gave B2B founders a gift. It forced them to think about why their company exists before deciding which channels to run. The problem: it produced a generation of beautiful narrative documents that never made it into the homepage copy, the sales talk track, the next sales deck, the investor narrative, or the talent pitch.

Narrative without architecture is a positioning document. Narrative *with* architecture is a system — one that runs across every customer-facing surface, holds under VC pressure, sounds the same to talent as it does to enterprise buyers, and compounds in value with every quarter the company executes against it.

This playbook is what I use with founder-led companies to build that architecture. It's drawn from the work behind $300M+ raised at Harrison.ai, the global expansion at Heidi Health, the launch of KIIS in Australia, and the patterns I've seen repeat across AI, tech, media, hospitality and consumer brand engagements.

Read it in fifteen minutes. Use the diagnostic on the back half against your own narrative. If five or more questions land uncomfortably, your narrative is probably not architected — and that's worth a conversation.

THE FRAMEWORK

The five layers of *narrative architecture*.

Narrative architecture is not a deck. It's a five-layer system that holds together across every surface the company touches. Each layer answers a different question. Each layer holds the layer above it. Get them out of order and the structure leaks.

01 The category claim.

What game are you playing — and whose category is it? Most companies inherit a category by default. The architected ones *claim* one. The claim is durable when it answers a question the existing categories don't.

> *Test: Can the founder name the category in one sentence — and is that sentence different from what the closest competitor would say?*

02 The position within it.

Given the category claim, what role does this company play inside it? Position is not preference. It's the structural answer to "what kind of company is this, relative to the others in the space."

> *Test: If you removed the company name from your homepage, would the position still be obvious?*

03 The story system.

Three sub-stories that have to sit on the same architecture: the investor story, the customer story, and the talent story. They use different language but cannot contradict each other. Most narrative leaks happen here.

> *Test: Read your last investor deck, your homepage, and your most recent careers page. Do they sound like the same company?*

04 The proof architecture.

What evidence supports the claim? Case studies, capital events, customer outcomes, talent acquisitions, partnerships. Proof is what turns a claim into a position. Without it, narrative is aspiration.

> *Test: For each of your three top positioning claims, can you cite three pieces of independent proof?*

05 The compounding rhythm.

How the narrative gets repeated, refined and reinforced across time. Quarterly cadence, signature pieces of content, founder presence, board narrative. Architecture without rhythm degrades. Rhythm without architecture is noise.

> *Test: What is the single quarterly artifact your team uses to compound the narrative — and who owns it?*

SELF-DIAGNOSTIC

Twelve questions to ask of your *current* narrative.

For each question, answer yes / no / unsure. Track how many "no" or "unsure" answers come up. Five or more is the threshold where architecture work pays back its cost within the next two quarters.

ON CATEGORY

01 Can your founder name the category in one sentence without using the words "AI", "platform", or "solution"?

02 If a journalist asked "what does this company do" — would three different people on your team give the same answer?

03 Is your category framing different from the framing your closest competitor uses?

ON POSITION

04 If you removed the logo from your homepage, would a reader still know what kind of company this is?

05 Does your position answer who this company is FOR — not just what it does?

06 Have you said "no" to a customer or hire in the last six months because they didn't fit the position?

ON THE STORY SYSTEM

07 Does the investor narrative tell the same fundamental story as the customer narrative — just with different emphasis?

08 Does your careers page read like a different company's website?

09 Is the founder's public narrative the same one the sales team uses on customer calls?

ON PROOF AND RHYTHM

10 For each of your top three claims, can you cite three independent pieces of proof — published, public, attributed?

11 Is there a named owner inside the company who is responsible for compounding the narrative across surfaces?

12 Do you produce at least one signature piece of narrative artifact every quarter — and does it land?

WORKED EXAMPLE

A clinical AI company preparing for *Series B.*

THE STRATEGIC MOMENT

Strong clinical authority and a working product. Preparing for a Series B at unprecedented scale. The narrative needed to be sharp enough to support a global capital raise — and consistent enough to hold across investor decks, customer conversations, talent acquisition and external positioning.

01 · CATEGORY CLAIM	**Before:** "AI-powered diagnostics." Generic and contested. **After:** Clinical AI infrastructure — the system layer beneath modern diagnostic medicine. Anchored the company in *infrastructure*, not in feature-level AI.
02 · POSITION	Positioned not as another AI vendor, but as the clinical authority layer that pathology and radiology operators build on. The position was defensible because it was supported by clinical credentials no startup competitor could match.
03 · STORY SYSTEM	**Investor:** infrastructure for the next decade of diagnostic medicine. **Customer:** clinical-grade AI you can deploy in your workflow tomorrow. **Talent:** the chance to build the operating system for clinical AI. Same architecture. Three different surfaces.
04 · PROOF	Clinical publications, real-world deployment data, partnership announcements with hospital systems, capital partners, regulatory milestones. Each claim had attributable, public evidence to support it.
05 · RHYTHM	Quarterly clinical evidence releases, signature founder pieces on category definition, board narrative rhythm aligned to capital milestones. The narrative compounded — every quarter made the next quarter's claims stronger.
OUTCOME	**$300M+ raised** across multiple capital events, including Australia's largest-ever Series B at $129M. International expansion across UK, EMEA, US and Asia. Category position held under scrutiny.

NEXT STEPS

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If five or more diagnostic questions landed uncomfortably, the next conversation is worth thirty minutes.

The work in this playbook is what I do with founder-led companies. Sometimes as a four-to-eight-week advisory project — sharper scope, defined deliverables, clear handoff. Sometimes as an ongoing retainer when the narrative needs senior counsel through a multi-quarter season of capital, category or scale. Sometimes as a one or two-day intensive with the founder and executive team.

The right pathway depends on the moment you're in. The right starting point is usually a conversation.

BOOK A CONVERSATION

A 30-minute scoping call.

Tell me where you are, what you're building, and what the next twelve months look like. If there's a fit, we'll talk about how to architect the narrative for what comes next. If there isn't, I'll point you to someone better suited.

Book at simongreally.com →