DAWN McGRUER · ANNUAL RESEARCH

The Founder Psychology Report 2026

What separates founders who scale past £100K months from those who stall — a study of the beliefs, decision patterns and neurological habits behind growth.

Method

This report synthesises self-reported survey responses from founders in Dawn McGruer's community and advisory client base, combined with observations from more than a decade of one-to-one strategy work across businesses that have collectively generated in excess of £45M in revenue. Figures are self-reported and directional: they describe the patterns Dawn sees repeatedly, and are intended as a diagnostic lens rather than an academic dataset.

Headline findings

Finding	Share of founders
Name capacity — not strategy — as the true constraint	**68%**
Under 2 hours of deep, uninterrupted work per day	**61%**
Hold at least one limiting belief about charging premium fees	**57%**
Make major decisions reactively rather than on a set cadence	**54%**
Have no repeatable offer they could license or delegate	**49%**
Revisit the same decision more than three times before acting	**43%**

Read together, these findings point to one conclusion: the ceiling most founders hit is psychological before it is commercial.

THE FOUR CONSTRAINTS

Where growth actually stalls

1 · The capacity trap

Revenue is welded to the founder's calendar. Every new client adds delivery hours, so growth feels like punishment. The fix is structural — productise the outcome, then license or delegate the delivery — but founders in this trap keep looking for a marketing answer to a model problem.

2 · The pricing belief

Premium pricing is a self-concept issue long before it is a positioning issue. Founders who under-charge almost always describe their fee as something that must be justified rather than chosen. Raising the number without rewiring the belief produces a quiet slide back to the old price.

3 · Reactive decision-making

Without a decision cadence, the day is set by whoever contacts you first. The prefrontal cortex — the seat of strategic judgement — is poorest at deciding when it is depleted, which is precisely when most founders make their biggest calls.

4 · Attention debt

Fragmented attention is the single biggest predictor of stalled growth in this data. Sixty-one percent of founders never reach the two-hour block where deep, compounding work happens. Focus is trainable; most founders have simply never protected it.

What the top decile do differently

— They decide once, on a cadence — a weekly strategic block, protected like a client meeting.

— They price from the value of the outcome, not the hours of the delivery.

— They build one asset a year that earns without them — a programme, licence or IP.

— They rehearse the identity before the result, treating self-concept as an input, not an outcome.

— They measure energy alongside revenue, because attention is the actual scarce resource.

How to use this report

Score yourself honestly against the four constraints. Whichever scores worst is your highest-leverage work for the next ninety days — not the one that feels most urgent. Then choose a single structural change, and give it a full quarter before you judge it.

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