

A WORKING COMPANION

The Post-PMF Manual

*Why great African startups keep dying after product-market fit.
And what to do about it.*

Seven pages. Twelve questions. One diagnostic that tells you exactly what to do.

OPERATING COMPANION TO **THE DISTRIBUTION ERA**

Audit yourself in 15 minutes.

START ON PAGE 2 ↓

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FIRST EDITION

The manifesto in 90 seconds

In 2025, a growing list of well-funded African startups shut down. Chimoney raised close to a million dollars and processed cross-border payments across 41 currencies. Okra raised more than \$16 million. Lidya ran nearly a decade. All had real product-market fit. All closed anyway.

When Uchi Uchibeke announced Chimoney's shutdown, he wrote:

"The product worked. It was distribution. I spent too much of my time building and not enough time making sure people knew what we built."

UCHI UCHIBEKE · CHIMONEY SHUTDOWN, MAY 2026

If PMF were the finish line, that story is impossible. It happened anyway.

PMF says the product can survive. **DMF** says the company can scale.

Grow means the number goes up. *Scale* means the system gets stronger as the number goes up. The gap between the two is a discipline the African ecosystem has never named. I call it **Distribution Engineering**: the systematic design of every pathway through which value is discovered, trusted, adopted, paid for, and compounded across a market.

THE SEVEN ARGUMENTS UNDERNEATH IT

- 1 **Streaks are not systems.**
- 2 **Reach is an equation:** Surface × Repetition × Trust.
- 3 **Funnel leaks are offer problems**, not marketing problems.
- 4 **Positioning is a living instrument**, not a document.
- 5 **You don't have a growth problem.** You have a memory problem.
- 6 **Discoverability is an engineering decision**, not a marketing activity.
- 7 **Strategy is the order**, not the list.

Every script in this manual is designed to move you toward **Distribution-Market Fit**. That is the milestone that actually predicts scale, and the one the next generation of African investors should be asking for.

Where are you today? 15-minute self-audit

Score each question: **1** = we do not do this · **2** = we do this partially · **3** = we do this rigorously. Tap or write in the number that fits your reality today. Do not overthink it. Your first honest answer is the correct one.

STREAKS VS SYSTEMS

- 01 Any team member can draw, on a whiteboard, the mechanism behind our best month of the last 12. 1 2 3
- 02 We can predict, within 30%, how many customers a defined unit of activity will produce next quarter. 1 2 3

REACH

- 03 We know the top three surfaces our last ten paying customers came from. 1 2 3
- 04 We have at least two named trust assets (anchor logo, institutional endorsement, respected operator advocate) actively carrying our signal. 1 2 3

FUNNEL

- 05 We know which single stage of our funnel has the largest conversion drop, and why. 1 2 3
- 06 We have rewritten our pilot contract in the last 12 months to include a kill criterion and a renewal trigger. 1 2 3

POSITIONING

- 07 We have interviewed at least five customers in the last 90 days about how they describe us to peers. 1 2 3
- 08 Our conversion rate has held or improved as our average deal size or ARR has grown. 1 2 3

MEMORY

- 09 We have a written decision log for every experiment, tagged with what we learned about the buyer. 1 2 3
- 10 A new hire, in their first week, can tell us what we learned last quarter about our customer. 1 2 3

DISCOVERABILITY

- 11 We have shipped at least one public artifact (calculator, comparison page, data table, integration directory) in the last quarter. 1 2 3
- 12 We know the top ten queries our buyers are typing into Google right now. 1 2 3

YOUR TOTAL

out of 36

- 12–18 You have a distribution deficit. Start with Script 1 on page 4. Do not attempt other scripts until it produces a documented output.
- 19–27 You have distribution activity but not a system. Run the script that maps to your two lowest-scoring questions.
- 28–36 Most pieces are present. Run Script 7 to sequence them. Then consider whether you are at DMF.

The map and the tool stack

Where each argument lives in this manual

MANIFESTO INSIGHT	SCRIPT	WHAT IT PRODUCES
Streaks are not systems	Script 1	One-page mechanism memo
Reach is an equation	Script 2	Diagnosis of which term is broken
Funnel leaks are offer problems	Script 3	Circled funnel + one offer-design fix
Positioning is a living instrument	Script 4	Rewritten one-liner + top 5 objection responses
You have a memory problem	Script 5	Decision log + quarterly ritual
Discoverability is engineering	Script 6	One shipped public artifact
Strategy is the order	Script 7	Refuse Until Later memo + 4-phase plan

The tool stack you need before starting

The rule: **if you cannot answer a question with data, you cannot run the script that depends on it.** Fix the stack first.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDED TOOLS
Product analytics Scripts 1, 3, 5	Amplitude · Mixpanel · PostHog
Web analytics Scripts 2, 6	Google Analytics 4 · Plausible · Fathom
CRM with source + stage data Scripts 1, 3, 4	HubSpot · Attio · Pipedrive
Call transcription Scripts 4, 6	Gong · Fathom · Grain
Search intelligence Script 6	Google Search Console (<i>non-negotiable</i>) · Ahrefs · Semrush
Shared knowledge base Script 5	Notion · Coda · Confluence
A/B testing Script 4	PostHog Feature Flags · VWO · Optimizely

Audit-before-the-audit: if fewer than three of the above categories are currently instrumented in your company, the tool stack is your bottleneck. Fix it this week. The scripts produce noise until the tools produce signal.

Do this one first: Script 1

Convert Your Streak Into a System

SCRIPT 1 OF 7

Trigger: self-audit Q1 or Q2 scored a 1. · **Time:** 90 minutes. · **Tools:** whiteboard, CRM export, product analytics.

Pull your team into a room. Pick your single best month of the last 12. Ask: *"Can someone draw the mechanism that produced this result?"* Then fill in the memo below.

SUPER CONSUMER

Who exactly bought · a specific archetype, not 'SMBs'

SURFACE (WHERE THEY FOUND US)

The channel, community, or referral path

TRUST TRIGGER (WHAT CLOSED THEM)

Anchor logo, case study, peer intro, compliance signal

COMPOUNDING ELEMENT (HOW THIS CUSTOMER MADE THE NEXT ONE CHEAPER)

If nothing, it was extraction, not compounding

PROOF · 3 EXAMPLES FROM THE LAST 90 DAYS

1.

2.

3.

NEXT QUARTER · 3 ACTIONS TO DEEPEN THIS

1.

2.

3.

SUCCESS METRIC

In 90 days, the next best month is explainable in one sentence by anyone on the team, using this memo's vocabulary.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · forcing an honest mechanism out of a team politically invested in the streak is the hardest single session in this manual. Book a diagnostic call (page 7).

Solve the Reach Equation

SCRIPT 2 OF 7

Trigger: Q3 or Q4 scored a 1. · **Time:** 2 hours. · **Tools:** CRM, web analytics, LinkedIn/Apollo.

Reach = Surface × Repetition × Trust.

List the top 5 places your last 10 customers *actually* came from. List the top 5 places you are currently spending time or money. Overlap ≤1 of 5 = **Surface is broken**. Fewer than 2 named trust assets currently active = **Trust is broken**. Everything else is Repetition, which almost nobody discovers as the broken term.

SUCCESS METRIC

A written diagnosis naming the broken term and the one 12-week move that fixes it.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · founders misread their own equation because they are attached to the wrong surface. An outside eye compresses this from three months of misdirected spend to one hour.

The middle four: diagnose, then decide

The Funnel Leak Audit

SCRIPT 3 OF 7

Trigger: Q5 or Q6 scored a 1. · **Time:** 2 hours. · **Tools:** product analytics, CRM, call recordings.

Map your funnel. Circle the stage where conversion drops by more than 50%. Match to one of three leak types: **Great Demo, Dead Deal** (champion can't justify spend · fix: 1-page ROI artifact) · **Signups Without Activation** (your activation moment ≠ theirs · fix: ask three engaged customers "when did you know?" and re-instrument) · **Pilot That Never Closes** (no kill criterion · fix: every future pilot contract includes both a kill criterion and renewal trigger).

SUCCESS METRIC

Conversion at the leaking stage improves $\geq 30\%$ in 45 days.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · the three leak types often coexist. Diagnosing which does the most damage takes eyes not already committed to the answer.

The Positioning Re-Tune

SCRIPT 4 OF 7

Trigger: Q7 or Q8 scored a 1. · **Time:** 2 weeks. · **Tools:** call transcription, CRM segments, A/B testing.

Interview 10 people: 3 recent closes, 2 long-term actives, 2 lost deals, 2 churns, 1 stalled. Ask: "When you describe what we do to a peer, what do you say?" Map their vocabulary against yours. Look for the Wrong Hook, the Missing Phrase, the Expired Differentiator. Rewrite four assets: the one-liner, the value prop, the sales objection doc, one case study.

SUCCESS METRIC

Demo-to-pilot conversion up $\geq 25\%$. Sales calls 15% shorter.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · founders are too close to their own vocabulary to hear the customer's. Bringing in an outside ear for the vocabulary map is often the highest-leverage hour of the whole exercise.

Build a Distribution Memory System

SCRIPT 5 OF 7

Trigger: Q9 or Q10 scored a 1. · **Time:** 1 week setup + permanent ritual. · **Tools:** Notion/Coda, calendar block, onboarding checklist.

Three non-negotiable rituals: **Decision Log** (every experiment ends with a written KILL/DOUBLE/MODIFY, not a result) · **Quarterly Three Lessons** (every quarter opens on 60 minutes of lessons drawn from the log, not gut feel) · **New-Hire Read** (every new hire reads the log in week one and references an existing decision before proposing a new one).

SUCCESS METRIC

In 90 days a new hire can name what you learned last quarter in under 60 seconds. In 180 days CAC trend flattens or improves while growth continues.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · installing the rituals is easy. Getting a team to actually trust and use the log is culture work. If two previous attempts died, the third try needs an outside push.

Engineer Your Discoverability

SCRIPT 6 OF 7

Trigger: Q11 or Q12 scored a 1. · **Time:** 2 weeks + ongoing. · **Tools:** Google Search Console (*mandatory*), Ahrefs/Semrush, call transcription, Framer/Webflow.

Mine 30 buyer queries from three sources: sales call transcripts ("how do I..."), support tickets, and [competitor] vs [competitor] alternative patterns. Pick one artifact type · calculator, comparison page, benchmark table, integration directory, programmatic pages, or public template. Not three. One. Ship in 2 weeks.

SUCCESS METRIC

In 90 days the artifact ranks page-1 for ≥ 3 target queries. Organic inbound up $\geq 25\%$.

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · picking the wrong first artifact wastes 2 weeks. An hour spent choosing the right one earns back a month.

Sequence what you do, then commit

Sequence Your Growth Strategy

SCRIPT 7 OF 7

Trigger: you scored 28+ overall, or you have run at least two other scripts. · **Time:** 1 day + 1 quarter. · **Tools:** whiteboard, shared doc, roadmap tool.

Dump every distribution tactic on a whiteboard. Then arrange them into the only sequence that lets any single one of them actually compound. Fill in your plan:

PHASE 1 · OUR REPEATABLE ACQUISITION MOTION

One channel we prove first · refuse the other 19 for 12 weeks

PHASE 2 · OUR TRUST LAYER TO BUILD

Case studies, benchmarks, compliance signals, anchor logos

PHASE 3 · OUR COMPOUNDING LOOP

Referral · network · artifact · embedded · compliance. If it needs a UTM code, it is a campaign, not a loop.

PHASE 4 · OUR ADJACENT CHANNEL CANDIDATE

The one channel that shares customer behaviour with Phase 1

REFUSE UNTIL LATER · THE MEMO

TACTIC WE ARE REFUSING

e.g. 'Launching on TikTok this year'

WHY IT IS TEMPTING

WHY WE ARE REFUSING IT NOW

WHAT MUST BE TRUE BEFORE WE RECONSIDER

SUCCESS METRIC

12 months from now you can describe your architecture in one paragraph: "Our Phase 1 channel is X, producing Y customers/month at Z CAC. Our Phase 2 trust layer is A. Our Phase 3 loop is C, producing D% of new customers without paid acquisition. We are beginning Phase 4 with E."

IF YOU ARE STUCK HERE · sequencing forces public refusals, which founders postpone the longest. Running it with an external voice makes the refusals easier to defend to the team.

The 90-day operating cadence

One script per quarter. Not more. The manual is deliberately sequenced to prevent the exact disease it treats: trying to run everything at once and doing everything badly.

Q1	FOCUS SCRIPT 	SESSION DATE 	DOCUMENTED OUTPUT
Q2	FOCUS SCRIPT 	SESSION DATE 	DOCUMENTED OUTPUT
Q3	FOCUS SCRIPT 	SESSION DATE 	DOCUMENTED OUTPUT
Q4	FOCUS SCRIPT 	SESSION DATE 	DOCUMENTED OUTPUT

Sitting with me: the shortcut

Self-audit has one blind spot the audit cannot see: **you**. You are too close to your own vocabulary, funnel, and team habits. A fresh operator's eye compresses the diagnosis from three quarters to three weeks.

TIER 1 DIAGNOSTIC CALL 60 MIN · FREE	Show up with your self-audit score. We pinpoint which script you should run first, based on your last 90 days of data. You walk away with a written 30-day plan.
TIER 2 2-WEEK SPRINT FIXED FEE	Distribution Engineering Sprint. I run the top two scripts on your real data with your team. By day 14: Mechanism Memo pinned in Slack, Refuse Until Later document sent to your board, scoped 90-day plan.
TIER 3 90-DAY RETAINER QUARTERLY	Founder retainer · plus VC portfolio audits. Weekly 30-minute calls, async review of your decision log, fortnightly audit of your Phase 1 channel. For VC firms: I score every portfolio company on the 12-question audit and produce a portfolio-level distribution risk report.

Tell me your self-audit score and which script you would start with. If your score is under 20, **come as you are**. That is the exact moment this work compounds the most.

EMAIL ME DIRECTLY:

Ogunlade Oluwole, MBA built *VoguePay* (100,000+ merchants, \$137M TPV) and *Coopify* (1,700 cooperatives, \$100M+ AUM across five countries), and advises African founders on Distribution Engineering through programs including Google Launchpad and Seedstars.

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