

THE ASCEND ETHOS

ADVOCATING FOR FOUNDERS

SUPPORTING THEIR DREAM



FOUNDERS
ASCEND™



Introduction

CHAMPIONING RESILIENCE and POSSIBILITY

At Founders ASCEND, we believe entrepreneurship is one of the boldest acts of courage—and one of the most underserved when it comes to ongoing support, advocacy, and growth. Founders carry the vision, the pressure, and the responsibility to build something that didn't exist before, often in isolation and under uncertainty.

Supporting entrepreneurs—especially those from underestimated or underrepresented backgrounds—is not just about business success. It's about fueling innovation, driving economic mobility, and building stronger communities from the ground up.

The Need for Advocacy

Founders are risk-takers, problem-solvers, and change-makers. But behind every pitch deck and prototype is a person navigating cash flow anxiety, imposter syndrome, staffing challenges, and market pressure—often alone. Many founders lack access to traditional capital, networks, or mentorship. They may not have an Ivy League degree or a Silicon Valley zip code—but they have the grit, ideas, and work ethic that can drive real-world impact. That's why Founders ASCEND exists: to be the scaffolding under their climb. We offer a platform of support, education, community, and advocacy—meeting founders where they are and helping them move forward with clarity and connection.

Highly Transferable Skills

Entrepreneurs build muscle in areas many overlook:

Resilience and Adaptability

Founders face uncertainty daily—from shifting markets to failed launches and unexpected setbacks. Resilience is what keeps them moving forward, learning from missteps without losing momentum. Adaptability means reworking the plan, not abandoning the mission. Founders who master both can pivot quickly, stay agile, and turn challenges into growth opportunities.

Execution Under Pressure

When time, money, and resources are limited (and they almost always are), founders must make decisions quickly and effectively. Execution under pressure isn't about rushing—it's about focus, prioritization, and problem-solving. It's the ability to move from idea to action even when the stakes are high and the support is thin.

Technical Expertise

Many founders start with a specific area of expertise—a craft, a trade, a skill they've mastered through experience. Whether it's being a great plumber, a brilliant coder, or an exceptional baker, that expertise becomes the foundation of a business. But turning a skill into a company requires more than talent—it takes vision, business acumen, and the courage to take that first leap. At Founders ASCEND, we believe expertise is just the beginning. We help founders build the structure, strategy, and support around that expertise to turn it into a sustainable, thriving business.

Visionary Thinking

Entrepreneurs don't just solve problems—they imagine what doesn't yet exist. Visionary thinking is the ability to spot trends, disrupt norms, and create something valuable before others can see it. This mindset drives innovation and allows founders to inspire belief—not only in their product or service, but in a better future.

Leadership and Culture-Building

Founders are often the first leaders and the culture-setters of their business. Their vision shapes the values, behaviors, and energy that ripple through their team. Strong founder-leaders inspire others to join the mission—not just with compensation, but with purpose. They create environments where people want to contribute, grow, and stay.



Supporting the Journey

Founders don't just need funding—they need foundations. At Founders ASCEND, we recognize that building a business takes more than a good idea or a great product. It takes structure, support, and a community that believes in the person behind the vision. That's why our approach is centered around advocacy, resources and education. We provide the guidance, tools, and connections that help entrepreneurs not only survive, but thrive.

Readiness & Coaching

Starting a business is one thing — building it with purpose and sustainability is another. Founders ASCEND supports entrepreneurs in the early stages of their journey with personalized coaching, mentorship, and our signature H.O.P.E. for HR course — focused on Hiring, Onboarding, Performance, and Engagement. We help founders create strong foundations in people and process, empowering them to grow their businesses with clarity, confidence, and heart.

Leadership & Organizational Health

Great businesses start with healthy, human-centered leadership. Through our H.O.P.E. for HR course, we guide founders and small business leaders to build workplaces rooted in Humanity, Optimism, Perspective, and Empathy. This framework helps organizations create cultures that value people as their greatest asset — driving retention, engagement, and purpose. It's not just professional development; it's personal growth that shapes better teams and stronger communities.

Visibility & Voice

Representation matters. Founders ASCEND amplifies the voices and stories of diverse entrepreneurs through events, media, and thought leadership opportunities. We ensure that the world sees the value in founders who are changing industries, uplifting communities, and breaking barriers—on their own terms. Founders ASCEND believes every story of perseverance deserves to be heard. Our ASCENDING Beyond Barriers podcast spotlights the journeys of founders who are breaking through obstacles and redefining what success looks like. By giving them a platform to share lessons, challenges, and victories, we inspire other entrepreneurs and strengthen the collective voice of small business leadership across the nation.

Economic and Social Impact

When we help a founder succeed, we don't just lift a business—we ignite ripples of progress that extend across families, neighborhoods, and entire industries. Founders ASCEND supports entrepreneurs not only for their potential to generate revenue, but for the transformative effect they can have on the economy and society as a whole.

Jobs that Strengthen Communities

When founders succeed, they hire. And when they hire, they fuel economic stability, reduce unemployment, and build wealth that stays in the community. Every thriving small business creates not just paychecks—but purpose, belonging, and upward mobility for those it employs.

Confidence that Inspires the Next Generation

Founders who look like their communities—and who succeed—become role models. Their visibility shows young people what's possible when talent meets opportunity. Confidence is contagious, and when one founder rises, they inspire others to believe they can build too. It's a cycle of empowerment that creates legacy.

Innovation that Solves Real Problems

Entrepreneurs are natural problem-solvers. They spot gaps in the market, inefficiencies in systems, and unmet community needs—then build solutions that often outpace those of larger institutions. By empowering more founders, especially those closest to the problems, we foster innovation that is practical, inclusive, and transformative.

Closing the Gap to Equitable Hiring

Talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn't. Founders ASCEND is committed to closing the gap by ensuring that underestimated entrepreneurs—particularly women, veterans, people of color, and individuals from rural and under-resourced communities—have equitable access to networks, tools, and capital. Inclusive entrepreneurship leads to inclusive progress.



At Founders ASCEND, we don't just see entrepreneurs—we see economic engines, creative forces, and community changemakers. We believe the success of a founder doesn't end at profit margins; it ripples through families, reshapes neighborhoods, and redefines what's possible for future generations. When we uplift the person building the business, we uplift everyone the business will impact. That's the power of inclusive, supported entrepreneurship—and that's why we do what we do.

The Role of Society

Today, advocacy happens not just in boardrooms or policy discussions, but in conversations that inspire action. Through initiatives like the H.O.P.E. for HR course and ASCENDING Beyond Barriers, The ASCEND Collective cultivates a culture that values empathy, learning, and inclusive leadership. Advocating for founders is a collective responsibility that requires the involvement of individuals, businesses, and government agencies. Society plays a vital role by creating a culture that values innovation, reduces barriers, and celebrates the courage it takes to build something from the ground up. When communities, institutions, and policymakers support access to resources, fair funding, and inclusive opportunities, they empower entrepreneurs to thrive—not just survive. Founders shape our economy and solve our most pressing challenges; society's responsibility is to ensure they are seen, supported, and set up for success. This includes:



- Raising Awareness: Educating the public about the unique challenges founders face and the value they bring to the economy.



- Policy Advocacy: Promoting policies that support entrepreneurship, increase access to funding for founders, reduce regulatory barriers, and create incentives for inclusive business ownership and growth.



- Community Support: Building networks of support that connect founders with resources, mentors, and opportunities.

Conclusion

Advocating for founders means equipping them with tools for sustainable growth – from advocacy and mentorship, personal development through H.O.P.E. for HR, to public visibility through the ASCENDING Beyond Barriers podcast. These initiatives help entrepreneurs lead with empathy, amplify their voices, and build organizations that reflect their values. The ripple effect of this support reaches far beyond individual ventures – fueling innovation, economic growth, and a more connected, compassionate business ecosystem.

Together, we can ensure that founders are not only seen for their courage to start, but empowered to build a future that is more inclusive, sustainable, and full of possibility.



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