Lens

THE SCALE-UP CTO

STEPS FOR A SCALE-UP CTO

Hi my name is **Hutton Henry**, and I help **Founders and CEOs** of firms looking to exit but don't know if their firm is optimised for sale. They are also worried about the best cultural fit of the buyer and feel frustrated with their team's ability to speed up and get ready for sale.

One key area is ensuring your CTO, or equivalent, is ready for the step-change once a deal is made. If unprepared they can overwhelmed by the sudden increase in pace and responsibility.

So I point out some areas to help ensure **you will maximise your exit value.**

In a way that takes your confidence, your team's confidence, and your customer's confidence... **to a whole new level.**

Hutton.

EASY TO STEP-UP. IN A MONTH. ON YOUR TERMS.

Dear CTO - I want to show you how to prepare for a post-investment board presentation so you can impress your new investors or owners.

Many scale-ups focus on building their business and not their tech team, meaning many haven't seen or experienced what is expected once their firm receives a new investment or a buyout.

Hence, I focus on the most crucial next step - preparing for the first investor board presentation and helping you communicate your strategy vision confidently and coherently.

Need help prepping your busines?

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THE BOARD ROOM

Your place to shine post-deal

Post-deal environments typically demand a significant increase in pace and responsibility. CTOs accustomed to a certain operational tempo may find this sudden change overwhelming, impacting their performance and decision-making capabilities.

Workloads increase, and expectations grow from a wider audience suddenly, there is the need for:

- A clear, meaningful, investor-friendly strategy
- Higher levels of service
- Increased innovation

You have to keep the lights on, run the team and keep customers happy.

With all these added pressures, you must look after yourself and learn new skills. Your first presentation in the board room will set the scene with your management team and new investors.

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THE 5 STEPS TO A SCALE-UP CTO

1. WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Many CTOs have successfully navigated their way to investment or buyout stages, yet they find themselves challenging when new investors enter. These investors introduce a new level of governance and scrutiny, expanding the audience evaluating the CTO's performance. This change can be daunting, especially for those accustomed to working in a certain way for an extended period.

A common issue is that these CTOs have been operating in a silo, focusing on what has worked in the past. While this approach may have been effective in earlier stages, it often isn't aligned with the expectations of new stakeholders. The comfort of the familiar can lead to a mindset where the status quo seems 'good enough.'

Management teams and investors get anxious, and tensions rise. But after many years working on hundreds of deals it became obvious. The CTO isn’t aware of “What Good Looks Like”.

Once shown what the next level of delivery looks like, they quickly step up and command.

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2. BE CLEAR ABOUT ROI

Post-deal, the game changes for CTOs. It's no longer about keeping the lights on **but driving value and tracking wins.** Surprisingly, many high-revenue firms enter negotiations without a clear plan. As a CTO, you're now tasked with turning the strategy sold to investors into reality, with a **keen focus on ROI.**

A strategic roadmap is your playbook here. It's not just a series of tech projects; it's a growth engine tied directly to ROI. Lay out your milestones and expected outcomes, ensuring each aligns with both market demands and financial impact. This clarity and foresight demonstrate the real value behind every tech initiative.

Your roadmap needs to be more than comprehensive - it needs to be dynamic and adaptable to market shifts while staying true to business goals. It's about crafting a story, one that's data-driven and compelling, showing a path to ambitious yet achievable growth.

In this new phase, your role is not just about tech management; it's about strategic leadership, turning tech investments into **business successes, always with an eye on the bottom line.**

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3. GETTING LOST IN IT ALL

I can tell a CTO/CIO who's been part of a scale-up journey through the way they communicate with me. One question, which, if they answer truthfully, will tell me everything about how effective they are.

For many CTOs, the challenge isn't just in the complexity of technology or business strategy demands; it's in managing their most valuable asset – **TIME**. Often, CTOs find themselves deeply entrenched in coding or embroiled in constant firefighting. This habitual dive into technical details and urgent problem-solving can significantly hinder strategic thinking and effective time management.

This imbalance can cause a misalignment with the company's long-term goals and growth objectives.

However, at the leadership level, there's a need for a shift in focus. Strategic thinking, planning, and delegation become key components of their role. Failing to make this shift can result in missed opportunities for innovation, process improvement, and team development.

Therefore, it's imperative for CTOs to recalibrate their approach to time management, consciously stepping back from the minutiae to embrace a wider strategic view. This shift is essential for your personal brand and effectiveness.

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4. OUTDATED PERSONAL OPERATING SYSTEMS

Many CTOs we meet operate on a mindset and skillset developed 5-10-20 years ago. This gap poses a significant challenge in their need to be a scale-up CTO.

CTOs often come from backgrounds where individual contribution and technical prowess were paramount. This focus can lead to a mindset where putting others first doesn't come naturally. In leadership positions, however, there’s a critical need to shift from an individual contributor mindset to prioritising team success and organizational growth. This shift requires a **fundamental change** in how CTOs view their roles and responsibilities.

One key issue is the lack of investment in their personal and professional development. Over time, without conscious efforts to update their skills and adapt to new leadership roles, CTOs can become out of sync with the demands of today’s fast-paced, **people-centric tech environment**. This misalignment concerns technical skills, soft skills, leadership styles, and strategic thinking.

The transition involves moving away from the comfort of familiar technical work to embrace leadership challenges, such as mentoring teams, fostering innovation, and driving strategic initiatives. For CTOs stuck in an outdated operating system, it’s essential to recognize the need for this shift and take proactive steps towards personal and professional growth.

As I work with CTOs and get to this stage, the key question is, “Now you know what the role is, do you WANT it?”

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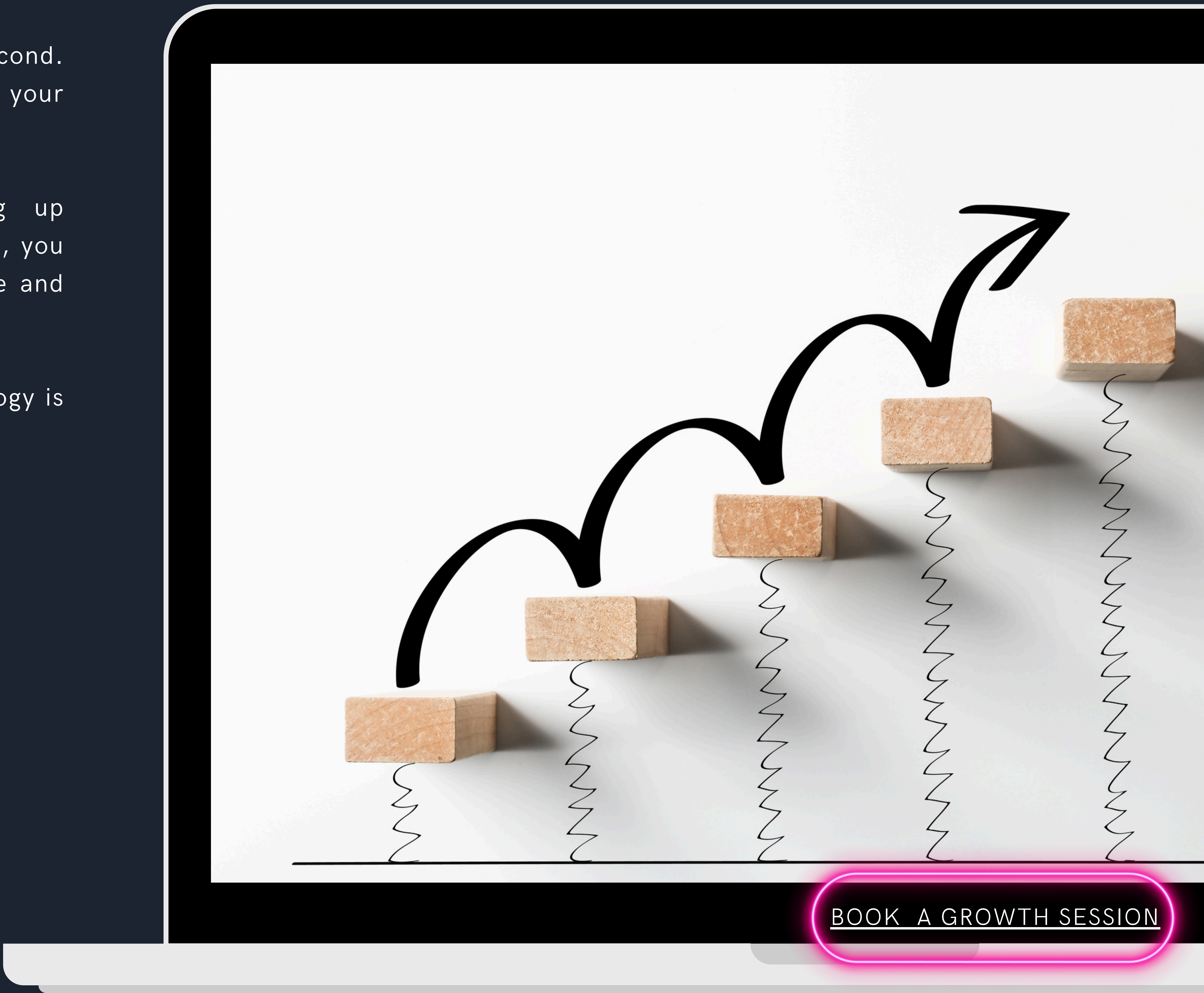
5. OWNING THE CTO ROLE

Owning the CTO role is about being a leader first and a technologist second. It's about setting the pace, driving change, and being the visionary that your team and company need.

By proactively managing your role, engaging others, speeding up communication, utilizing modern tools, and developing clear strategies, you can lead your organization to new heights of technological excellence and business success.

Be a visible presence in all business areas, demonstrating how technology is integral to every aspect of the company.



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THE SCALE-UP CTO PATH

Scale-Up CTO

Name:

Enter You Scale-Up CTO Goal:

	Role	Strategy & Roadmap	Budget & Value	Communciation	Technology
Now *State your current strengths in each area.*					
One-Month's Time *What can you change rapidly?*					
The board room *What do you need to learn to excel?*					
What good looks like? *What are the areas you need to work on as your firm scales up?*					

YOUR TURN

Writing things down is a helpful personal commitment to determine your next steps.

Typically, the areas for improvement are in these five areas.

Instructions:
Take the time to assess where you are today and note your strengths. You're probably going over-index on technology matters, and that's fine; that's your role.

Then, determine how things will be in a month. What are YOU going to do to fully own the CTO role?

NEXT STEPS

Reading and not doing provides little ROI and will add just a load of additional work to your to-do list. Putting time in will polish your business.

This could easily be what you and your team look back on three months from now when you're far more aware of how your business operates and confident to Exit.

So, take some time to map out your Scale-Up CTO journey with commitment. At the end of the day, nothing moves forward until personal change happens. And that is your responsibility to make that happen.

Speaking of raising glasses, do you want my help to take your business to the next level?

If you're a CTO and you're ready to get hands-on help from me personally, book a Scale Session with my Scale Specialist now.

We can hop on a call and figure out the best way to help you prepare your business exit.

Click here: BOOK A GROWTH SESSION