IESE Business School University of Navarra School of Founders

Manifesto

for the IESE School of Founders



Entrepreneurship, when guided by purpose and conscience, is humanity's greatest force for progress.

Why we exist

We see entrepreneurs as catalysts for renewal and progress. Founders are essential to solving the world's complex challenges and shaping a better future. The School of Founders is a home for those who question established paradigms, imagine better ways of working, and create solutions that truly serve people, society, and the planet.

Unfortunately, the world's entrepreneurial potential is barely realized. Millions of businesses start each year, but only a few ever scale to meaningful impact. Too many are founded for narrow reasons, while others - the ones that should exist - lack the means to grow. Those that succeed often lose their soul as they scale.

Starting and scaling a business remains difficult, often marked by struggle, personal sacrifice and waste. We created the School of Founders to change this. It was born from a shared conviction that companies can be built with less suffering, and higher chances of lasting success.

Our mission is to improve the odds for those companies that should exist - purposeful, profitable, and human-centered organizations that make the world better. We help founders grow ventures that scale with integrity, stay true to their purpose, enrich lives, and respect the planet.

What we believe in

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1. **Founders as forces of progress** – We believe in the founder as the engine of progress. Societal renewal is unthinkable without entrepreneurs who challenge conventions and find profitable solutions to meaningful problems. Because they shoulder uncertainty and sacrifice to move humanity forward, they deserve our trust, support, and the freedom to build.

2. **Purpose before profit** – We believe in building for meaning, not just money. Companies exist to create value for society. Valuation is not value. Healthy unit economics and profits are essential for growth and a fair return to investors - but they are not, in themselves, a worthy purpose. Creating something meaningful requires time. What endures is rarely rushed; it grows through intention and care.

3. **Leadership as an inner practice** – Leadership is more about who we are than what we do. Founders must lead with integrity, humanity, and courage. They need to scale themselves, to scale their businesses. We believe in founder-led companies. Founders should remain at the helm as long as they can grow with their organizations. Leading a fast-growing company is an ongoing act of learning, unlearning, and renewal.

4. **Freedom with responsibility** – Founders are trustees of the future. They need freedom to express themselves, but with freedom comes accountability to society. Just because something can be built and sold doesn't mean it should exist. Capitalism must evolve beyond growth and profit. We believe every company has a responsibility to create good jobs, nurture local communities, protect the planet, and treat all stakeholders with fairness and respect.

5. **Ambition sustained by a life well lived** - Ambition is vital to the entrepreneurial journey. Building something meaningful requires intensity and resilience, but it must be grounded in a rich and balanced life. Entrepreneurship should not come at the cost of health or relationships. We believe in harmony, where caring for mind and body sustains the drive to build something that lasts.

6. **Fair rewards for creators** – Risk and reward must be shared fairly. Founders and their teams bear the greatest weight and must be treated justly by those who fund their companies. We value creativity, courage and contribution above capital. Many of society's problems stem from companies failing to share value with those who create it.

7. **Building with craftsmanship and beauty** – At its highest form, entrepreneurship is a craft that creates both moral and aesthetic beauty. Buildings, products, and ideas can become expressions of grace and harmony that inspire. Moral beauty lives in people. We feel awe when we witness courage, compassion, and goodness in action. Business, at its best, elevates the human spirit.

8. **Technology that serves life** – Technology holds immense potential - but only when guided by awareness. Innovation must serve life, restore balance, and prevent new harm. We are part of nature, not apart from it. Nature inspires clarity and humility, reminding us that every organization must honor the living systems that sustain it.

9. **Entrepreneurship as a collective journey** – We believe in entrepreneurial ecosystems of trust, collaboration, and shared learning that nurture both people and ideas. Founders grow best among peers who understand, challenge, and inspire them. Personal growth is individual work you cannot do alone.

10. **Balancing energies** – Business has leaned too heavily toward the masculine - aggressive, logical, expanding - while our complex world now calls more for the feminine: intuitive, relational, and regenerative. We champion the feminine. This is not a matter of gender but of energy - two forces essential to sustainable creation. When balanced, companies become wiser, more whole, and more enduring.

What we commit to

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We commit to being the best in the world at equipping founders with the mindset and skills to lead through growth and change.

We commit to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Company building is both art and science - and we aim to advance both. We generate and share insights that raise the odds of success and deepen the understanding of conscious leadership at every stage.

We commit to connecting exceptional thinkers and entrepreneurs with the founders who learn with us. Through dialogue and collaboration, we amplify those reimagining how business can better serve people and the planet.

We commit to making company building uplifting and meaningful. Founders and teams should rediscover joy in their work and bring humanity back to creation.

We commit to helping entrepreneurs build companies so beautiful they would never want to sell them.

Join us

If this manifesto inspires you, join us - as a student, teacher, mentor, advisor, coach, or friend - and help us build something meaningful, impactful, and lasting.

Barcelona, June 2026

And if you are a scaleup founder and want to learn how to build this way? Join the Foundations of Scaling Program.

www.iese.edu/fos

"Build businesses so beautiful you would never want to sell them."

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