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THE MISSING BALANCE IN MODERN B2B

Why Operational Strength Without Business Development Kills Scale And Why We Are Already Late to Fix It

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Deepak Singh. C

Founder & CEO, Dataillam Private Limited

ceo@dataillam.com · +91-98401 04952

All data cited in this paper is sourced from publicly verifiable research.

Let me be honest with you.

I started Dataillam from Chennai with one clear observation. Most B2B companies in India are not failing because they build bad products or deliver poor service. They are failing because they never build the business side of their company. And the hard truth is, we are already late to address this.

I have sat across the table with hundreds of founders. From bootstrapped SaaS companies in Chennai and Bengaluru to funded SMEs in Mumbai and Hyderabad. The story is almost always the same. Strong team. Good product. Real clients. But no structured business development, no pipeline that runs without the founder personally pushing every deal, and no understanding of how their product or service is actually going to impact their client's business.

That last part is the one people miss the most. Most companies just want to sell their services or their product to the next prospect. They don't stop to understand how what they are offering is going to change that client's business. If they start focusing on that, on genuinely developing the client's business, then the client grows. And when the client grows, you grow with them. That is what business development actually means. Not sales. Not lead generation. Business development.

India is known as a services-based country, not an innovation-based country. We serve the US market mostly because of the bill rate conversion. We can get good revenue generation that way. That is why we do it. And even the products that the US has, most of them were built here in India. And then we use the same products at a higher price. That is the main issue, which has been going on for years.

To change this, we don't need three to five more years of waiting. We needed to start yesterday. Companies need an extended business development partner who can come in and identify where they are actually lacking, what they are not doing right, and get it done. Because internally they are too busy with operations, delivery, and keeping the lights on.

"Business development professionals who work in this domain for ten years,when they come out of employment, they change track into operations and delivery. Why? Because no one has told them what the future of business development looks like. That is the gap this paper is addressing".

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Every B2B company runs on two pillars. Most only build one.

Every B2B company from a 10-person product startup to a 500-person services firm is built on two foundational pillars. Not one. Two. Both are non-negotiable. You cannot scale by being excellent at one and absent on the other.

THE BUSINESS PILLAR	THE OPERATIONS PILLAR
→ Drives growth, positioning and market direction → Finance revenue architecture, not just bookkeeping → Extended business development function → Market positioning not just content output → GTM strategy, pipeline, revenue governance	→ Ensures execution, delivery and internal efficiency → Process management and operational workflow → HR team structure, hiring and culture systems → Delivery output quality and client management → Internal rhythm, governance and accountability

Operations without Business is a machine with no direction. Business without Operations is a promise with no delivery. The problem in modern Indian B2B is not that companies chose the wrong pillar. It is that the founding culture of the last decade almost always prioritised one, and quietly assumed the other would build itself. It does not.

"The management team is trying to run the campaigns, but in the end, they are not able to even position their products in the market.They shut down after a couple of years because they don't have financial backing.And the reason is because they never built the business side."

02 · WHERE THE IMBALANCE BEGAN

This is not about blame. It is about understanding a pattern that is already late to fix.

The B2B startup wave in India, from 2012 to 2022, was led by builders. Engineers. Technical founders. People who could build a product, staff a team, and get a client live in 90 days. That capability is real and valuable. But here is what happened in most cases.

The first few clients came through the founder's personal network. No pitch, no GTM, no positioning, just a phone call and a prior relationship. Those early clients generated revenue. The company hired more delivery people. The founder continued to sell personally. The team continued to deliver. This looked like a functioning company. Then the personal network ran dry. And the company had no system to respond.

Usually, the founders and management team are technical people. They don't understand how actual business development works. So what they do is get a salesperson to do the job. And within the second month, they start expecting results. That is not how it works.

"Business got redefined as execution. If you were delivering, you were assumed to be doing business.That is the root of the imbalance."

74% of high-growth startups fail due to premature scaling

70% of startups in the Startup Genome dataset scaled prematurely along at least one dimension, while business model and strategy were left underdeveloped. [Startup Genome · 3,200 startups]

Startup Genome, Premature Scaling

This is not abstract. This is happening right now. And we are already late.

Some papers describe problems that could happen. This one describes a problem that is actively happening right now, at scale, in the Indian B2B ecosystem. We should have addressed this three to five years ago. Now it is already late.

28,000+ Indian startups shut down in 2023 and 2024 combined. 15,921 in 2023. 12,717 in 2024. A structural collapse, not a rounding error. [The Wire / Tracxn · 2025]

12× The rate of Indian startup closures has multiplied 12 times versus 2019–2022. Primary causes: cash burn, growth without structure, failure to build sustainable business models. [Founder India / Tracxn]

90% of Indian startups fail within five years, a failure rate significantly higher than the UK (60%) or US (80%). Leading causes are strategic gaps, not operational ones. [Deutsche Consulting · 2025]

37/day Between 2023 and early 2026, over 39,860 Indian startups shut down, most of them operationally active at the time of closure. [TheIndiaJobs.com · 2026]

These are not companies that failed to build a product. These are companies that built the product, found early clients, and then could not convert operational momentum into structured growth. They were operationally strong. Strategically empty. And no one told them that was the problem until it was too late.

“Their customers don’t even know that an alternate product like this exists in the market.That is the thing we wanted to solve.not because it is a gap, but because it is a need of the hour. The market needs this now”.

04 · THE THREE PATTERNS

What the missing business layer looks like on the ground.

The missing business layer does not show up as a single obvious failure. It shows up as three recurring patterns. Any founder reading this will recognise at least two of them immediately.

Pattern 01 — Strong delivery. Weak positioning.
The company delivers excellent work. Clients who use the product or service like it. But no one outside the existing client base knows who they are or what they stand for. There is no defined ICP. No structured market narrative. No clear answer to: why you and not the next company? Business development happens reactively, through referrals, warm introductions, or the founder personally pushing every deal.

Pattern 02 — Good product. No scalable growth.
The product works. Early adopters are satisfied. But the pipeline is thin and undocumented. There is no Go-To-Market engine, no defined channels, no acquisition architecture, no repeatable process. Revenue is entirely dependent on the founder's personal outreach. Growth is experimental by default, not by choice.

Pattern 03 — Efficient operations. Incomplete business structure.
The internal machine runs well. Projects are delivered. HR has a process. Finance is tracked. But finance is reactive, bookkeeping and GST filing, not revenue forecasting or business intelligence. There is no Business Development function. There is a founder doing business development between all their other responsibilities. The management people think they understand business development, think they know what to do. Even if they know, they will not do it. That is why nothing gets started.

“Most companies have a business development team, but they use it as a fancy word instead of a sales team. What a business development professional is actually supposed to do is develop the client’s business, That is the main objective which people don’t see clearly”.

05 · THE CORE PROBLEM

Execution is not a business strategy. Business development is a widely misunderstood concept.

Let us be precise about what the structural gap actually is. Execution is a function. Business development is an architecture. You need both. But they are not the same thing and one cannot substitute for the other. Sales can be a part of business development. But both are not equal. Right now in the industry, most companies use business development as a fancy replacement for the word sales. What a business development professional is actually going to do is develop the client's business, not sell their own services to the next prospect.

When a company mistakes its ability to execute for its ability to scale, it creates what I call Strategic Incompleteness, a state where the company is operationally capable but institutionally underdeveloped on the business side. Operationally strong. Strategically incomplete. They run, but they do not scale.

WHAT STRATEGIC INCOMPLETENESS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

→ No documented GTM strategy. Growth direction changes every quarter. Every new opportunity feels like starting from scratch.

→ Business development lives in the founder's head. No structured pipeline, no stage-based qualification, no forecasting methodology.

→ Finance is bookkeeping, not intelligence. The company knows what it earned last month. Not what it will earn next quarter or why.

→ Marketing is output-driven, not outcome-driven. Content gets published. Events are attended. The market position does not shift.

→ No standalone Business Development function. The founder is the BD team. The company cannot grow beyond the founder's personal bandwidth.

43% of startups fail specifically because of 'no market need', the direct result of building without positioning clarity or a validated GTM thesis. [CB Insights · 431 companies · 2024]

95% of new B2B products launched every year fail, despite the global B2B SaaS market reaching $273 billion in 2024. BD structure is the bottleneck, not the product. [Axis Intelligence · 2024]

"It is a widely misunderstood concept, business development. If they start focusing on how their product is going to impact the client's business, then the client's business grows. And eventually your business grows too. You establish a long-term relationship. Sales is just a one-time thing. There is a lot of difference in the terms itself."

06 · THE REAL COST

Strategic Incompleteness compounds across every dimension of the business.

Cost 01 — Revenue ceiling

40% of B2B businesses consistently miss revenue goals, not because of bad products, but because they have not built a structured pipeline. [Martial B2B Sales Guide · 2025]

28% more revenue generated by companies with a formal, documented business development process versus those operating without one. [Harvard Business Review]

Cost 02 — Positioning weakness and price competition

68% vs 71% 71% of B2B marketers believe their marketing communicates a distinct brand position. 68% of buyers say it does not. Measured across 14,000+ buyer interviews.

$1.9T B2B opportunities delayed or lost due to weak brand positioning. Decision cycles have increased by 54 days since 2021, directly linked to lack of vendor differentiation. [Dentsu / WARC · 2024]

Dentsu Superpowers Index · 2024

Cost 03 — The scale ceiling

20× Startups that build the business model and strategy layer in parallel with operational execution grow 20 times faster than those that scale operations first and retrofit strategy later. [Startup Genome / Duet Partners]

93% of startups that scaled prematurely never broke the ₹85 lakh ($100K) revenue per month threshold. Operational momentum without business architecture creates a faster burn rate, not scale. [Startup Genome / Techli]

07 · CLOSING THE GAP

What building the business layer actually requires.

Closing this gap is not about adding more headcount or running more campaigns. You cannot solve this by getting a salesperson and expecting results in the second month. It requires building the business layer as a structured, institutional function, with defined ownership, documented systems, and measurable governance. Five specific dimensions must be built.

DIMENSION 01 — STRATEGIC POSITIONING

A clearly defined ICP. A market thesis, a documented position on why you win, not a feature list. Competitive differentiation that is not 'we have great service', every competitor says that. A positioning statement that holds across business development, marketing, and investor conversations without needing to be re-explained each time.

DIMENSION 02 — GTM ARCHITECTURE

A structured Go-To-Market engine with defined channels, target segments, conversion logic, and clear ownership. Not a campaign. A system. Campaigns are temporary. Systems are institutional. A GTM motion that is documented, repeatable, and independent of whether the founder is in the room.

DIMENSION 03 — BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM INSTITUTIONALISATION

Documented pipeline stages with clear qualification criteria at each gate. A forecasting methodology, not a guess, an actual calculation with activity-based logic. A business development playbook that captures how the best deals are won, and gives it to the team, not just the founder.

DIMENSION 04 — REVENUE PROCESS GOVERNANCE

Finance positioned as strategic intelligence, forecasting, runway modelling, pricing architecture, unit economics. Revenue targets linked directly to business development activity, not set arbitrarily from last year's number. A monthly business rhythm beyond just delivery reviews.

DIMENSION 05 — MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

Leadership aligned around growth execution, not just delivery metrics. Every department connected to a revenue outcome. Founder dependency is systematically reduced. Business Development as a standalone, staffed, accountable function, not a hat the founder wears between everything else.

"The vision here is very simple: to establish business development as a standalone industry. Like digital marketing. Like website development. There is so much scope for this and people have not understood it yet."

Business Development as a Service, the institutional answer to a structural problem.

Business Development as a Service, BDaaS, is a model where an external institutional partner designs, builds, and operates the complete Business Development function inside a company. Not as a consultant who delivers a deck and leaves. Not as an agency that runs campaigns within a brief. As an extended business development partner, with real ownership over the business layer.

This particular model, the vision behind it is not just to solve a gap or create a new service line. This can be established as a standalone industry. Like digital marketing. Like website development. There is so much scope for business development and people have not understood it yet.

"We don't have any product or technical services offering. We help other B2B-based companies in their growth, being their extended business development partner. Not a sales partner. Extended business development partner. That is the right way."

Model	**What They Deliver**	**What They Don't Build**
Traditional Consulting	Strategy decks, market frameworks, recommendations	Execution, embedding, accountability, or ownership
Marketing Agencies	Campaigns, content, lead generation activities	Business structure, GTM architecture, or revenue systems
Internal Hires	Role-level execution within an existing structure	Institutional frameworks or cross-domain systems design
Fractional CXOs	Part-time leadership presence	Full-time embedded ownership of the complete business layer
BDaaS,Dataillam	Designs, builds and operates the complete BD function inside the	Decks without delivery,we stay until the system runs on its own

"Dataillam does not advise growth. It builds and operates the systems that create growth. The difference between a recommendation and a result is execution ownership."

09 · WHO THIS IS FOR

Recognise your company.

This is not a problem that only affects struggling companies. Some of the most operationally strong B2B companies in India face this exact structural imbalance. If your company matches three or more of these, the business layer gap is real and active.

B2B STARTUPS	B2B SMES
→ Founder-led BD with no structured handover plan	→ Revenue plateau after an initial growth phase
→ Good product-market fit but no repeatable acquisition system	→ Multiple departments in silos with no shared revenue thesis
→ Positioning undefined, explained differently to every prospect	→ No pipeline visibility, no forecasting, no stage discipline
→ No documented GTM, growth is founder-driven and experimental	→ Strong operational capability but no BD function
→ Pipeline exists in a spreadsheet or WhatsApp, not a managed system	→ Leadership can deliver, but cannot design a growth architecture
→ Revenue is lumpy, some months great, some months panic	→ Investment conversations delayed, business structure not ready

"If your company runs well but does not scale, the gap is in the business layer. Not the product. Not the team. Not the market timing."

10 · CONCLUSION

The business layer is where scale is built. And we are already late.

Running a company and scaling a company are two different activities. Running requires operational discipline, the ability to deliver, hire, manage, and serve. Scaling requires business architecture, the ability to position, acquire, systematise, and grow without the organisation becoming bottlenecked by the founder's personal bandwidth.

Most B2B companies in India are excellent at running. Very few have built the second capability. Not because they are not capable of it, but because no one told them it was a separate thing that needed to be built deliberately. The companies that closed last year, many of them were good. They just never built this layer. And we are already delayed in addressing this.

I won't say this is a market gap. I say this is a need of the hour for the market. If you see the number of startups which have started in the last five to ten years, everyone is into services or into products without much knowledge of business development, positioning, or how to actually grow. The management team is trying to run the companies, but in the end, they are not able to even position their products in the market. And they shut down after a couple of years.

The diagnosis is structural. The fix is institutional. Build the business layer, deliberately, systematically, and with the same discipline you applied to building your operational capability. Not as an afterthought. As a parallel commitment from day one. That is what Business Development as a Service is designed to do. That is why Dataillam exists, to build and institutionalise it. Not as an external advisor. As your extended business development partner.

"Easily there are going to be 3,000 to 4,000 companies which are going to benefit from this. Because let us assume each company is serving 2,000 to 3,000 companies, doing business development for them, getting their products to market, helping them grow. That is the scale of what this industry can become."

CONTACT

Deepak Singh. C, Founder & CEO, Dataillam Private Limited

ceo@dataillam.com · +91-98401 04952 · +91-44464 35664 · Developing SMEs into MNCs

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