

Hear me talk about business & operations

David Bernat // Starlight LLC // July 21, 2026

Listen. I genuinely appreciate that you are taking your time to learn about my perspective, and I like to keep a sense of humor about things. From what you know about me so far, you must know I would pass my content through an AI system to show you that I could auto-write this instead.

Correct?

Let us be real: every day when I sit down to write, I have a specific purpose and language which I intend to use with my very serious audience. I have a perspective I specifically sit down to introduce into the head of my audience; the writing is the artifact of that. So, in some ways this childish use of a Large Language Model to write on my behalf is a meta construct used to introduce you to me.

That said, should you not know me from Adam, you may look for the specific key indicators of the prejudices and business opportunities that I employ with the specific framing of specific language.

Let me tell you what I have learned about business, ~~because I spent a decade not knowing it.~~ The founders and the operators are not the same people. This is not a complaint. ~~This is the first thing you need to accept before you can actually get anything done.~~ The founders **innovate within the possible** ~~draw the maps.~~ The operators walk the terrain. **The founder is responsible for the survey.**

I remember sitting in a ~~windowless~~ conference room **with a fishbowl view for all the staff to see,** in a building that smelled like ~~stale coffee~~ **old corporate real estate carpet** and ~~someone else's~~ **an odd ambition of my foreign founder.** We had raised ~~two~~ **fourteen** million dollars. **Every day for two years the CTO had begged me to explain what once upon a time his foreign investors had said would be true: a math that could solve any formulae.** We had a slide deck that made the numbers sing. ~~The~~ **We had a timeline was set and true and with arrows pointing upward and to the right. We would be flying to Redmond and Silicon Valley for our introductions into the AI big time: the really big show.**

The way I think about it now ~~is this:~~ a business is a set of decisions that recur. **Chief of Operations** is the practice of noticing which decisions recur, and building something that makes **hard decisions** ~~them~~ easier to get right the hundredth time than they were the first time. I wanted the strategy to be undeniable. I wanted the technology to be beautiful. I wanted the architecture to be elegant. **To me. The architecture is a lived-in space we maneuver within to make day-to-days seamless and scale.**

First, the structure of your operation is the structure of your thinking. If your processes are tangled, your product will be tangled. ~~If you have~~ **No process at all? Then you have no operations product.** Second, capital is not a substitute for operations. You cannot spend your way out of operational chaos. You can only ~~think your way out, and then~~ build your way out, and then test your way out.

The real meat of operations for me is a boss who can deliver the clients paying for the technology that will build the technology that we use to increase operations, in continuous feedback of growth.

The infinite growth hypothesis is not the strategic key, though many shall perennially find in Silicon Valley investors hungry for infinite growth and chomping at the bit for similar sustenance (see, I told

you we deploy humor here, and I was not joking). But instead, growth is a metric that is objective enough to focus the company's observation of success around yet strong enough to power the revenue-generating dynamo keeping the lights on and factories producing. Instead, what if we drive operations expenditures to zero while driving operations capacity to the maximum necessary?

Do you see what I mean?

+ Thought: 318ms

All five written. Here is how they differ – each takes a distinct angle on the same title:

File	Angle
bo.001.md	Founders vs. operators – mapmakers vs. terrain-walkers. The gap between strategy and execution. Operations as the discipline of paying attention.
bo.002.md	Market doesn't care about effort, cares about arrangement. The bore work. Business as a loop, not a line. Why experience compounds.
bo.003.md	Operations as a physics problem dressed as a psychology problem. The woman with the sheet of paper. Building a system that does not need you.
bo.004.md	The edge vs. the machine. Sentences vs. paragraphs. The Ohio manufacturer who could build it a thousand times. The operation as the thing that learns.
bo.005.md	Activity vs. progress – the worst mistake. Metrics that lie. Operations as a conversation with reality, alignment over efficiency.

Same voice, same register, same fragment-and-flow cadence. Five different conversations with the same subject.