

Auxil Seed Raise

60-Day Prep Plan

Prepared April 24, 2026. Target close window: June 23, 2026.

1. Executive Summary

Auxil is an AI-native customer support platform for BigCommerce and WooCommerce merchants. The platform is roughly three weeks into active development as of April 23, 2026. MVHP live beta is targeted for the coming weeks. You are not raising against production revenue. You are raising against a shipped product, a deep domain moat, and a credible path to \$100M ARR in a category currently dominated by Shopify-first incumbents structurally locked out of BC and WC depth.

Over the next 60 days, the goal is to close a SAFE round of **\$1M to \$2M**, angel-first, priced-round deferred. A SAFE keeps the round simple, skips valuation negotiation, closes on a one-page instrument, and matches the financial reality: you have roughly \$30K of personal runway and MVHP cash flow covering household and pitch prep. Angels typically close in two to four weeks. VC funds typically take six to twelve weeks. Angels are the near-term cash path. Funds stack on top in Days 26 to 60.

Financial reality check. \$30K personal cash, not per month. MVHP cash flow is the covering float. Compression to 60 days is necessary, not aspirational. Urgency is real; desperation is not the frame. The frame is: 15 years of merchant credibility raising capital to accelerate a category that finally belongs to founders who actually run stores.

Timeline strip

Day 0 to 10	Day 11 to 25	Day 26 to 45	Day 46 to 60
Foundation + Angels	First Checks	VC Meetings	Close
MVHP beta live. SAFE template ready. First 10 warm angel asks out.	\$100K to \$250K signed. 2 additional design partners closed. Deck V2.	15 to 20 fund targets in pipeline. 3 to 5 live meetings by Week 7.	Parallel term sheets, SAFE signatures. \$1M to \$2M total.

2. ACV and Path to \$100M ARR

Auxil ARR stacks three layers: base plan, per-resolution AI fees, and AI Assist add-on. Real ACVs per customer profile:

Tier	ACV	Customer profile
Starter	\$2,796/yr	3 agents, 500 tickets, 100 AI resolutions. \$59 plan + \$99 AI + \$75 Assist.
Growth	\$16,128/yr	7 agents, 3,000 tickets, 1,000 resolutions. MVHP is a Growth-profile customer.
Pro	\$48,000/yr	15 agents, 10,000 tickets, 3,500 resolutions. ~\$4,000/mo blended.
Enterprise	\$60K to \$200K+	Custom pricing, SSO, unlimited agents, Assist included.

Three paths to \$100M ARR

Scenario	Starter	Growth	Pro	Enterprise	Total
Path A (SMB-heavy)	15,000 x \$2.8K = \$42M	2,500 x \$16K = \$40M	300 x \$48K = \$14M	25 x \$150K = \$3.75M	~\$100M
Path B (balanced), recommended	5,000 x \$2.8K = \$14M	3,500 x \$16K = \$56M	1,000 x \$48K = \$48M	100 x \$150K = \$15M	~\$100M
Path C (enterprise-led)	2,000 x \$2.8K = \$5.6M	1,500 x \$16K = \$24M	800 x \$48K = \$38M	220 x \$150K = \$33M	~\$100M

Advocate Path B in the deck. It is the most credible mix. Enterprise is hard and slow and requires a sales motion not funded in a seed. Path A requires a higher-velocity self-serve engine than a seed can fund. Path B uses Growth and Pro as the center of gravity, which is exactly where MVHP-shaped merchants and direct competition with Gorgias Pro sit.

LTV and CAC assumptions

Segment	Annual churn	ACV	GM	LTV (gross)	Target CAC	LTV:CAC
Starter (SMB)	8%	\$2,796	93%	~\$13K	\$500 to \$1,500	8x to 25x
Growth (mid-market)	5%	\$16,128	93%	~\$90K	\$3K to \$8K	11x to 30x
Pro	3.5%	\$48,000	93%	~\$310K	\$10K to \$20K	15x to 31x
Enterprise	2%	\$150,000	85%	~\$1.3M	\$30K to \$75K	17x to 43x

Churn assumptions follow the standard playbook: 8% SMB, 5% mid-market, 2% enterprise. Gross margin from the 93 to 94% Sonnet-level cost basis. CAC targets assume a blend of inbound (BC app store, content), partner-led (BC Partner Program), and outbound.

3. Differentiation and Moat

Why Auxil wins

Every incumbent in customer support was built for Shopify or for generic B2B ticketing and has bolted AI on top of an old data model. Auxil was designed AI-first, from a merchant who has lived 15 years inside the problem. The moat is not a feature list. It is proprietary training data the incumbents cannot touch, a platform-fit gap the incumbents chose not to close, and merchant credibility no VC-funded team in San Francisco can manufacture. Kustomer and Gorgias will keep winning Shopify Plus. Auxil owns the 100,000+ BC and WC merchants they never served.

The stack, in priority order

- 1 Nicki Covey's 15+ years as a BC merchant.** Speaks the language, ships for her own store, references her own P&L. This is the defining moat.
- 2 980GB of proprietary support conversation data.** Real customer threads from MVHP across 200+ brands and 33,000 SKUs. The RAG training set every competitor would have to pay for and most could not buy.
- 3 BigCommerce App Store first-mover.** BC OAuth flow live, webhooks wired, catalog sync shipped, BC-JWT embedded iframe working. Partner program positioning is open because nobody has locked it down with depth.
- 4 Sub-8-agent pricing.** Kustomer cannot sell below 8 seats at \$89 each. Gorgias AI Agent does not support BC at all. This is a structural lockout, not a positioning claim.

5 **MVHP as anchor design partner.** A real Inc 5000 merchant stress-testing the platform at 33K SKUs. Not a toy test tenant.

Competitive comparison

Capability	Kustomer	Gorgias	Intercom	Zendesk	Auxil
BC native depth	Read-only order	AI Agent not supported	Thin	Connector only	Native app, OAuth, catalog sync, order actions
WC native	None	Lags Shopify	None	Generic	First-class
Entry pricing	\$8,544/yr, 8-seat min	~\$10/mo, spikes	\$39+ seat	\$55+ seat	\$708/yr, no min
AI pricing	\$0.60/conv + \$40/user	Bundled, volume-scaled	Fin tiers	Bolt-on	\$0.99/resolution, transparent
Zero-config onboarding	Steep learning curve	Configured	Configured	Admin-heavy	MemorySession DriveSync +
Handoff continuity	Unified timeline	Limited non-Shopify	Mixed	Bolt-on	Context carries, no re-asking
Training data	Generic retail	Shopify corpus	Generic SaaS	Generic	980GB proprietary conversation data

Sierra handoff failure (April 23, 2026). Sierra AI (\$4B valuation, Bret Taylor) surfaced order number, name, email, phone, line items, loyalty tier, then dropped it all when a human agent took over. Live transcript, national apparel retailer, 2026. Textbook 'AI drops the baton' failure mode. Use abstracted in pitch: 'a national apparel retailer using Sierra.' Do not name Gap or Nicki publicly.

4. Founder-Market Fit

This is the strongest slide in the deck. Do not soften it. Do not share oxygen with anything else.

Nicki Covey

- Founder and owner of Mountain View Hearth Products (mountainviewhearth.com, stove-parts-unlimited.com, heatnglo-parts.com)
- 33,000 live SKUs across 200+ brands (MVHP + EPP + HNG)
- Inc 5000 honoree
- 980GB of proprietary support conversation data, now training Auxil's RAG
- Headquartered in Whitefish, Montana. Running an e-commerce business since age 23, inside the family stove industry since age 13
- Built Auxil to solve her own customer support pain after hitting the ceiling on Gorgias, Zendesk, and bolted-on AI from every retrofitted incumbent

The one-sentence founder story

'I built Auxil because I ran a 33,000-SKU BigCommerce store for 15 years and every support platform in the category was built for somebody else. I am the customer I am selling to.'

This is the frame for every pitch. It is not 'solo founder + AI.' That frame commoditizes the product. Any founder with a Claude subscription could ship code. What no other founder has is 15 years of shipping orders, 980GB of conversation data, and a running Inc 5000 merchant business in the exact category Auxil serves.

One line about capital efficiency belongs elsewhere, not on the team slide. A fair way to phrase it if asked: *'AI-assisted engineering has let me ship a production-grade platform at a fraction of traditional burn. First engineering hire lands post-seed. The real moat is 15 years of merchant experience and data, not the code.'* That is the extent of it.

5. Traction Playbook

What design partner means here

A real merchant running Auxil against their real support volume in exchange for close collaboration on product direction and (optionally) discounted or free use during beta. Named in the deck, willing to take a reference call, ideally willing to sign a soft LOI at production pricing after beta. Three design partners is the right target for a seed pitch.

Honest assessment of the four candidates

Candidate	Profile	Fit	Verdict
Mom (Volusion)	E-commerce merchant on Volusion	Good fit	Yes. Adds a third platform beyond BC and WC. Proves expansion story. Close this one.
Paz (Montana Hybrid Academy)	School, not a commerce business	Not a fit	No. Schools do not have the support-ticket profile Auxil solves. Keep as friend, not design partner.
Auxil / Eulada	Own brands inside MVHP umbrella	Not separate	MVHP already counts as a design partner. Do not double-count.
Adam (CFO consultant)	Consulting firm	Not a fit	No. Consulting firms do not have support-ticket volume. Ask him for BC merchant intros instead.

Net: MVHP is design partner 1. Mom is design partner 2. You still need 1 to 2 more.

How to find the remaining 1 to 2

- 1 BigCommerce Partner Program.** The partner team actively warm-intros app developers to merchants looking for solutions. Reach out to the app partnerships lead.
- 2 Whitefish / Kalispell / MT regional merchants.** Jarvis at Whitefish Marine and others. Local BC merchants are a soft-warm list.
- 3 Brock at Go Fish Digital.** He manages BC merchant accounts and sees ticket volume daily. Ask him for three intros to clients who complain about Gorgias costs.
- 4 LinkedIn search.** Title contains 'Founder' or 'CEO' or 'Owner' + 'BigCommerce' in company description + 50 to 500 employees.
- 5 BC merchant Slack and Facebook groups.** 'BigCommerce Merchants' FB group has ~10K members. Helpful-not-salesy posting.
- 6 WooCommerce community forums + BuildWP.** Same play, different tribe.

Design partner outreach template

Subject: Quick question from another BigCommerce merchant

Hi [First name],

I run Mountain View Hearth Products, a 15-year-old BigCommerce store with 33,000 SKUs. I built Auxil because every support platform in our space was either built for Shopify or priced like we all have enterprise budgets.

Auxil is an AI-native customer support platform, BC and WC first. It is about to go live with our own store as the anchor, and I am opening 2 design partner slots for other BC merchants with real support volume.

What design partner means for you: Free access through beta (6 months minimum). Direct line to me on product direction. A named reference or case study if the platform delivers, optional and only if you are comfortable.

What I need from you: Honest feedback. 1 to 2 calls a month for 30 minutes each. Access to your support inbox so the AI can train on your patterns (same privacy controls your team already has).

Would you be up for a 20-minute call next week? I will not try to sell you anything. If it is a fit we will talk. If not I will hand you back to your Monday.

Nicki Covey, Founder, Auxil. nicollette@stove-parts-unlimited.com. 406-272-9850.

30-day traction build

Week	Milestone	Actions
Week 1	MVHP live beta, Mom signed	Ship MVHP into Auxil production. Send Mom the one-page partner MOU. Email BC partner team. Email Brock. Draft LinkedIn outreach template.
Week 2	20 LinkedIn outreaches, 5 BC-partner intros requested	Send 5 LinkedIn asks per weekday (20 total). Follow up BC partner team. Post in BC Merchants FB group. Ask Adam for 3 BC intros.
Week 3	5 to 8 discovery calls, 2 LOIs pending	Hold discovery calls. Convert 2 of 5 to design partner conversations. Send one-page MOU to the hottest 2.
Week 4	3 design partners total, first reference screenshots	Close design partner 3. Capture screenshots, CSAT scores, ticket resolution metrics from MVHP. Prep into deck V2.

6. Investor Target List

Angels first, funds second. Angels close in 2 to 4 weeks on a SAFE. Funds close in 6 to 12 weeks. Given runway, angels write the first \$250K to \$500K. Funds stack on top in Days 26 to 60.

Angels (Priority A, start Week 1)

Name / Source	Profile	Why they write	Source of intro
BigCommerce executive alumni	Former BC VPs and directors	Know merchant pain, often invest in app ecosystem	LinkedIn, BC partner team
BigCommerce corp dev	BC corp dev lead	Strategic signal alone can move a round	BC partner program
Klaviyo alumni angels	Early Klaviyo team post-IPO	Closest living playbook for e-commerce infra SaaS	LinkedIn + mutuals
Gorgias alumni (non-active)	Former Gorgias execs no longer employed	Know the problem from the incumbent side	LinkedIn
Zendesk alumni	Former Zendesk PM/eng leads	Ready to bet on AI-native reset	LinkedIn
Shopify alumni	Former Shopify commerce team	Cross-platform commerce interest	LinkedIn
MVHP vendor executives	US Stove, HNG, Enviro, etc.	Warm personal relationship, belief in Nicki	Direct
Inc 5000 alumni network	Other Inc 5000 e-commerce honorees	Shared credential, angel peer behavior	Inc 5000 alumni groups
BigCommerce Partner Advisory Council	App developers inside BC ecosystem	Closest peer group to Auxil	BC partner team
Brock (Go Fish Digital) network	Agency principals with merchant clients	Brock can identify 2-3 angels in his orbit	Direct
Jason Calacanis / LAUNCH syndicate	High-visibility SaaS angel	\$25K-\$100K solo + larger via syndicate	Apply via LAUNCH
AngelList syndicates (SaaS / e-comm)	Sahil Lavingia, Elad Gil, Naval-adjacent	Can move \$100K-\$500K quickly post-lead	AngelList direct
Tope Awotona (Calendly)	SaaS founder who angel invests	SMB SaaS thesis alignment	Angel list / LinkedIn
Laura Behrens Wu (Shippo)	E-commerce founder infra	Shipping + support adjacency	LinkedIn
Will Larson (Carta/Stripe alumni)	Engineering SaaS angel leader,	AI tooling + SaaS thesis	LinkedIn
Band of Angels	Oldest seed angel group	\$250K-\$750K collective check	Member referral
Pacific Northwest Angel Network	Northwest regional angels	Regional pride + SaaS appetite	Direct apply
Montana Angel Network	Local regional angel group	MT-based founder, regional thesis	Direct apply
Frontier Angels (MT / Rockies)	Rocky Mountain angel group	Regional founder preference	Direct apply
Female Founder Collective / All Raise	Women-founded focused	Bonus thesis alignment	Apply + warm intro

Placeholder note. Specific individual names above (Calacanis, Awotona, Behrens Wu, Larson) are well-known SaaS angels who write into this category. Confirm active-angel status before sending any cold outreach. Cross-reference Nicki's LinkedIn network for 1st and 2nd-degree connections and prioritize those first.

Seed funds (Priority B, open pipeline Week 3)

Fund	Category	Thesis fit
Commerce Ventures	Vertical commerce	Directly funds commerce infra SaaS. Perfect fit.
Costanoa Ventures	Vertical SaaS / AI	SMB SaaS + AI-native thesis. Repeat category backers.
Forerunner Ventures	Consumer / commerce	Consumer and commerce infra. Founder-market-fit language.
Equal Ventures	Vertical SaaS	SMB / vertical SaaS, AI-native category leaders.
Stage 2 Capital	GTM-focused seed	Backs seed SaaS with clear GTM signal.
XYZ Venture Capital	Commerce / infra	Writes \$500K-\$2M into commerce SaaS.
Homebrew	Generalist seed	Strong SaaS track record. Small-team positive.
Uncork Capital	Generalist seed	SMB SaaS thesis, classic seed lead profile.
Susa Ventures	Data-heavy seed	Data moats are their thesis. 980GB fit.
Precursor Ventures	Pre-seed / seed	Underrepresented founders + solo-founder friendly.
Initialized Capital	Generalist seed	Backs capital-efficient AI-native teams.
Conviction (Sarah Guo)	AI-native	Actively funds AI-native category leaders.
Basis Set Ventures	AI + data	AI-first infra seed. Exact thesis match.
Radical Ventures	AI-native	Applied AI; backs AI-first category resets.
South Park Commons	Pre-seed / solo	Community of technical founders.
Foundation Capital	Early-stage SaaS	SaaS and B2B software. Flexible check size.
Work-Bench	Enterprise SaaS	Bias enterprise; pursue if Path C upside lands.
Afore Capital	Pre-seed specialist	First-check friendly.
Hustle Fund	Pre-seed	Founder-led fund, fast yes/no on SMB SaaS.
Lightspeed (seed practice)	Multi-stage, active	seed Potential lead if signal round builds.
BigCommerce strategic	corporate Strategic	Platform alignment. Marketing signal.
Salesforce Ventures	Strategic	Service Cloud adjacency. Long cycle, strong follow-on.
Klaviyo Ventures	Strategic	E-commerce stack adjacency.
ZoomInfo / Intuit Ventures	Strategic SMB SaaS	Distribution fit for Starter and Growth tiers.

Sequencing logic. Open with the 3 angels most likely to say yes in a week (MVHP vendor execs, Inc 5000 peers, personal network). Use first-commit momentum to unlock angel group meetings. Parallel-track Costanoa, Commerce Ventures, and Conviction as the first 3 fund conversations. Those three together cover the thesis ground and will tell you within a week whether the deck resonates.

7. Pitch Deck Outline (12 slides)

- 1 **Title / tagline.** 'Auxil. AI-native customer support for BigCommerce and WooCommerce merchants.' Logo, URL, one-line value prop.
- 2 **Problem.** E-commerce support is broken. Retrofitted AI, Shopify-first incumbents leaving BC and WC underserved, pricing shock at scale. Include the Sierra handoff failure (abstracted) as the 'AI drops the baton' case study.
- 3 **Solution.** Auxil is AI-native, BC/WC first, priced per-resolution, zero-config onboarding. Two modes: autonomous responder + Assist copilot. Confidence scoring routes between them.
- 4 **Why now.** 2026 is the AI-first reset of the category. Incumbents are mid-pivot (Kustomer down-round, Gorgias AI does not run on BC, Zendesk bolt-on).
- 5 **Product demo.** Live screenshot walkthrough. MVHP inbox, confidence score, auto-resolution, handoff with full context preserved. Side-by-side with the Sierra failure mode.
- 6 **Market size.** ~100K+ BC and WC merchants addressable, \$5B+ TAM on customer service software, ~\$2B SAM on SMB + mid-market commerce. Bottom-up from pricing tiers.
- 7 **Business model.** Three-layer pricing. Base + per-resolution + Assist. Gross margin 93-94%. Real ACVs: \$2.8K Starter, \$16K Growth, \$48K Pro, \$60-200K Enterprise.
- 8 **Traction.** MVHP live beta, 2 to 3 design partners signed, soft LOI count, CSAT from MVHP, first resolution-volume metrics.
- 9 **Competition.** Full table from section 3. Anchor on BC/WC depth + pricing structure + 980GB training data.
- 10 **Team.** Nicki Covey, merchant-turned-founder. 15+ years running a BigCommerce store, Inc 5000 honoree, built Auxil to solve her own pain. One line at the bottom: 'AI-assisted engineering for capital efficiency. First engineering hire post-seed.'
- 11 **Financials.** Path B scenario to \$100M ARR. Burn model, 12 to 18 months runway from \$1M to \$2M, milestone mapping.
- 12 **The ask.** \$1M to \$2M SAFE, working cap \$8M to \$15M. 12 to 18 months runway. Milestones: 20 paying customers by month 6, 75 by month 12, \$1M ARR run-rate by month 15, Series A ready month 18.

The team slide is Nicki-centric, period. Do not put 'Solo + AI' as a headline. The solo+AI language belongs in one sentence at the very bottom of the team slide or spoken aloud only if asked. The moat is 15 years of merchant credibility + 980GB of data, not capital efficiency. Capital efficiency is a footnote.

8. Data Room Checklist

Build in Google Drive or a purpose-built room (DocSend, Papermark, Notion page with password). Structure for self-serve diligence so investors who want to move fast can do so without 5 back-and-forth emails.

Required (must have by Day 20)

- Pitch deck V2 PDF
- Executive summary (2-page)
- Cap table (current + post-SAFE model)
- SAFE template (standard YC post-money form)

- Valuation cap rationale memo (1 page)
- Financial model: revenue, costs, burn, 18-month cash flow
- Competitive landscape doc (section 3 expanded)
- Product roadmap (next 12 months)
- Architecture diagram + tech stack summary
- Pricing structure + unit economics spreadsheet
- Customer/design partner list with logos and references
- C-Corp certificate of incorporation + bylaws
- IP assignment agreement (Nicki to Auxil entity)
- Trademark filings (Auxil wordmark + logo, if filed)
- Founder bio + LinkedIn link + Inc 5000 verification

Strong-to-have (by Day 40)

- MVHP beta metrics (tickets processed, CSAT, resolution rate, time-to-resolution)
- Signed design partner MOUs or LOIs (non-binding intent)
- Customer testimonial quotes (even informal, from beta users)
- Sierra handoff case study (anonymized)
- BigCommerce app listing status
- Key vendor contracts (Mailgun, Anthropic, Stripe, DO)
- Security and privacy posture (encryption, access controls, TOTP, audit logging)
- GTM plan (content, BC partner program, LinkedIn, direct outbound)
- Hiring plan (first eng hire, customer success, part-time ops)

Nice-to-have (if time)

- Recorded 3-minute product demo video (Loom)
- Press coverage clippings (once PR ships)
- Customer case study PDFs
- Board-ready quarterly plan template

9. Risk Register (VC objection pre-empts)

Objection	Answer
'You are a solo founder. What about engineering scale?'	'I use AI as an engineering force multiplier. It is how I got to a shipped platform in weeks instead of quarters. My first senior engineer hire closes with this round. The moat here is not code; it is 15 years of merchant context and 980GB of proprietary support data. Code is table stakes in this category.'
'Kustomer and Gorgias are funded to the teeth. Why do you win?'	'Kustomer just took a 75% down round. Their entry floor is \$8,544 a year. Gorgias AI Agent literally does not run on BigCommerce. I am not fighting on their battleground. I am serving the 100,000+ BC and WC merchants they chose not to serve.'
'Customer support is a red ocean.'	'Legacy support is red. AI-native support is a greenfield category being reset in real time. Every incumbent is mid-pivot with bolt-on AI on old data models. The founders who reset the category in 2026 own the next decade.'
'How do you win with zero name recognition against Sierra?'	'Sierra is selling to Gap. We are selling to 100,000 BC merchants and the tail of WooCommerce. Different buyer, different price, different integration surface. And Sierra just surfaced every authenticated data point to a customer and then dropped it all on human handoff. We are building the platform where that does not happen.'
'Why BigCommerce and WooCommerce instead of Shopify?'	'Because Shopify is the saturated game every funded team is playing. BC has 50K+ active merchants and is under-served. WC has 5M+ stores and is almost entirely ignored by AI-native support. Starting where competition is absent is the thesis.'
'980GB of conversation data. How do you legally use it for training?'	'MVHP owns the data. I own MVHP. We have explicit ToS permitting internal model training. Data is PII-scrubbed before ingestion. The RAG is tenant-scoped: MVHP data trains the MVHP-specific RAG. No cross-tenant leakage.'
'What if OpenAI or Anthropic builds this themselves?'	'They are building horizontal foundation models. The vertical wedge is e-commerce merchant workflow, BC OAuth, ShipHero ties, catalog sync, order actions, returns logic. That is merchant software, not model weights. Foundation players become better underlying infrastructure; Auxil is the application layer.'
'Your round is small. Can you get to Series A?'	'\$1M to \$2M funds 12 to 18 months. Series A milestones: \$1M ARR run-rate, 75 paying customers, 2 verticals proven, first engineering hire scaled to a team of 3. That is the Series A story for commerce infra in 2026.'
'What is the AI moat if every team has Claude?'	'The moat is not Claude. The moat is the data layer plus merchant context. Claude is interchangeable with whatever model lands next. Auxil's architecture is model-agnostic: Haiku, Sonnet, Opus routed by confidence. The asymmetry is training data, merchant knowledge, platform fit.'
'Whitefish, Montana. Can you hire and scale from there?'	'I have been running a 15-year Inc 5000 business from Whitefish. Remote-first is the 2026 default. First senior eng hire can be anywhere. Quarterly Bay Area / NYC visits for investor updates. Location is a wash now.'

10. 60-Day Timeline (compressed)

Compressed from a classic 90-day plan because runway does not allow 90. Every week is budgeted. If a week slips, re-plan the tail. Do not cascade delays.

Days 1-10: Foundation + angel outreach start

- [] Close MVHP live beta launch (Big C finishes remaining P0 items)
- [] Angel outreach Wave 1: 10 warm targets (vendor execs + Inc 5000 peers + local MT angels)
- [] SAFE template ready (standard YC post-money form, fill with placeholder cap)

- Pitch deck V1 (12 slides from outline in Section 7)
- Legal cleanup: C-Corp confirmation, cap table in Carta or spreadsheet, IP assignment doc signed
- Data room V1 stub on Drive (deck + exec summary + SAFE template + cap table)
- Mom signed as design partner #2

Days 11-25: Design partner closing + angel meetings

- Close design partner 3 via BC Partner Program or LinkedIn outreach
- Hold 8 to 12 angel meetings
- Target first checks signed: \$100K to \$250K by Day 25
- Pitch deck V2 with first traction metrics from MVHP beta
- Data room V2 (add: design partner references, MVHP beta metrics, product demo video)
- Set valuation cap on SAFE based on early angel feedback (working \$8M to \$15M)
- Angel group applications: Band of Angels, Montana Angel Network, Frontier Angels

Days 26-45: VC fund warm-up and parallel pitch

- Open VC pipeline: 15 to 20 fund targets (Commerce Ventures, Costanoa, Conviction, Homebrew, Susa, Basis Set)
- Parallel pitch meetings: 3 to 5 first-meetings per week by Week 6 to 7
- Collect fund objections into a shared doc; iterate deck weekly
- Progress update to existing committed angels every 10 days
- First soft fund commitments targeted by Day 45

Days 46-60: Close

- Parallel-track any term sheets or SAFE commitments still open
- Close remaining angel SAFEs
- If a fund lead emerges, bring in the valuation cap and sign
- Announce close only after everything is signed and wired
- Target total SAFE closed: \$1M to \$2M by Day 60
- First senior engineer hire search opens Day 60

11. Next Steps This Week (from DC)

Concrete items Nicki can do from the plane or hotel. Each is self-contained. No dependency on being back at her desk.

- 1 **List 20 angel candidates.** From memory and LinkedIn: ex-Shopify, ex-BC, ex-WC, ex-Klaviyo, ex-Gorgias, ex-Zendesk alumni she knows directly or through one degree. MVHP vendor execs. Inc 5000 alumni peers. Two Montana local angels. Rank 1-3 on likelihood of yes.

- 2 **Sketch the team slide draft.** Nicki-centric. Bullet list of MVHP track record, Inc 5000, 980GB data moat, 15 years in category. One line at the bottom only about capital efficiency. No 'Solo + AI' framing.
- 3 **Email Mom about being a design partner.** One-paragraph ask. 'I want you to be one of three design partners for Auxil. It means 30 minutes twice a month, free access for 6+ months, and a named reference if it goes well. Say yes by Friday and I will send the one-page MOU.'
- 4 **Research Adam's and Paz's networks for BC merchant intros.** They are not design partners, but Adam likely knows 3 to 5 retail businesses he works with, and Paz may have parents who run local e-commerce. Ask each for two intros.
- 5 **Pre-read Venture Deals chapters 1-3.** Financing Rounds, Overview of a Term Sheet, Valuation. Skip preferred-stock mechanics for now (SAFE skips most of it). Focus on: pre-money vs post-money, cap vs discount on SAFE, pro-rata rights.

12. Open Questions

Decisions Nicki needs to make before or during the raise. Working defaults in parentheses.

- [] **Final SAFE round target.** Working: \$1M to \$2M. Lock by Day 10.
- [] **Valuation cap on the SAFE.** Working: \$8M to \$15M post-money cap. Lock by Day 15 based on first 3 angel conversations.
- [] **Angel allocation vs VC allocation mix.** Working: \$500K to \$750K angels, \$500K to \$1.25M funds.
- [] **Dilution tolerance.** SAFE at \$10M cap + \$1.5M raise = ~15% dilution. Standard seed is 20-25%. Tighter than that, which is fine.
- [] **Strategic angels (BC corp dev, Klaviyo alumni).** Include them? Yes, but only if they can close quickly. Slow strategic processes waste time in a 60-day window.
- [] **Timeline for first engineering hire post-close.** Working: search opens Day 60, first hire signs Day 90 to 120 post-close.
- [] **Geographic flexibility.** Stay in Whitefish. Quarterly Bay Area / NYC trips only as needed.
- [] **Big C's role in the raise narrative.** Big C is Claude Cowork, not a cofounder. One-line mention of AI-assisted engineering is the entire extent.
- [] **Whether to name Gap / Banana Republic in the Sierra handoff story.** No, not publicly. Abstract to 'a national apparel retailer.' Keep the specific names to private investor conversations only if they ask for evidence.

Plan built April 24, 2026. Source memory: auxil_vc_strategy, auxil_current_state, auxil_pricing, auxil_vs_pages, kustomer_competitive_analysis, sierra_ai_handoff_gap_incident. Password-gated HTML version at projects.nicolettecovvey.com/auxil_seed_prep.html. Do not share publicly until Nicki approves.