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The firms that last

What the evidence says about venture firms that reach a fourth fund, and the one input a small fund controls.

A venture firm lasts when it raises its next fund. Many do not. This brief sets out five findings on what separates those that do, adds one count of my own, and ends with five things I would test. It is a reading of public research, not advice on any one firm.

41%
NEVER RAISED AGAIN

Survival is the first test.

Of venture funds raised since 2000, 41% never raised a successor. For the 2019 vintage, 47% have yet to.[1]

So: most of the risk to a firm's life sits between one fund and the next.

88%
TO FUND FOUR AND LATER

Capital is flowing to firms that have already lasted.

Through the third quarter of 2026, firms on their fourth fund or later took 88.2% of US venture capital raised. Emerging managers closing a fund fell from 927 in 2022 to 211.[2]

So: a younger firm cannot win on the size of its cheque. It has to win on which founders it reaches first.

3x
MORE LIKELY ACCEPTED

Reputation has a price, and founders pay it.

Among startups with competing offers, those from high-reputation investors were three times more likely to be accepted, and bought equity at a 10 to 14% discount.[3]

So: what founders believe about a firm before the first meeting is worth money.

8%
PER EARLY WIN

Early wins compound through access, not through a gift for picking.

Each extra IPO among a firm's first ten investments predicts an IPO rate up to 8% higher on later ones. The authors find no lasting skill at choosing sectors or timing. What persists is better access to deals.[4]

So: access is the asset. Everything that widens it compounds.

30%
FOUND BY THE INVESTOR

Nine deals in ten do not arrive on their own.

In a survey of 885 venture investors, 30% of deals were self-generated, over 30% came through professional networks, 20% from other investors, 8% from portfolio companies and 10% inbound from founders.[5]

So: the self-generated third is the only source a firm fully controls.

HOW THE FIVE CONNECT

Sourcing	Access	Early wins	Reputation	The next fund
The part a firm controls	Seeing the right company early	Partly judgment, partly timing	Founders choose you, and pay to	And better access again

Page 2: one count of my own, and five things I would test.

Sources are listed on page 2.

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ONE COUNT OF MY OWN

This month I read 43 venture fund websites in the Gulf and Singapore the way a founder with no introduction would, looking for one thing: how to reach the investment team.

27

publish an email address. Most are a general inbox. A few name a partner or a route for applicants.

6

offer only a form. The founder cannot tell who reads it, or when.

10

offer neither. The only way in is someone who already knows the team.

It is a small sample and a single measure. It matters most for one group: founders arriving from outside the region. Indian and Singapore companies are now choosing the Gulf as their first market abroad, and they arrive without a local network. For them the website is the door.

THE GULF, THIS YEAR

Early-stage deals across the Middle East and North Africa fell 42% in the first nine months of 2026, and 7.3% of the region's early-stage startups go on to raise a Series A.[6] My reading: with fewer rounds, each good one is seen by every fund. The edge moves to whoever sees it first and can say why.

FIVE THINGS I WOULD TEST

1	**Find it before it is announced**	What share of last year's deals did the firm find for itself, against the 30% average?
2	**Keep score**	Early success is partly timing. Can the firm list last year's calls, each with a probability, and what happened?
3	**Make the door visible**	How long does it take a founder outside the network to learn whom to write to, and what the firm wants to see?
4	**Use the portfolio as a scout**	Portfolio companies supply 8% of deals. How many introductions did the firm's founders send last quarter?
5	**Write the judgment down**	A firm outlives its partners when its reasons are on paper. Could a new analyst read why the firm passed on its ten best misses? This one is my view, not a finding.

What I do about the first two

I built a sourcing agent that screens new rounds against a fund's thesis and puts every call on record with a probability and a date. From 4 January to 26 February 2027 I want to run it on site for one fund. To see it first: send me your thesis, and I will send three companies with dated calls within 24 hours.

Sources. 1. StepStone Group, market research on venture fund formation, 17 Dec 2024: stepstonegroup.com. 2. PitchBook data to Q3 2026, reported by SaaStr, 26 Oct 2026: saastr.com. 3. D. Hsu, "What Do Entrepreneurs Pay for Venture Capital Affiliation?", Journal of Finance, 2004: repository.upenn.edu. 4. R. Nanda, S. Samila and O. Sorenson, "The Persistent Effect of Initial Success: Evidence from Venture Capital", NBER working paper 24887, published in the Journal of Financial Economics, 2020: nber.org. 5. P. Gompers, W. Gornall, S. Kaplan and I. Strebulaev, "How Do Venture Capitalists Make Decisions?", NBER Digest, Dec 2016: nber.org. 6. MAGNiTT, early-stage funnel report, data to the third quarter of 2026: magnitt.com. The website count is my own, from 43 fund sites read between 12 and 14 November 2026.

Free to share. If one finding is wrong for your firm, I would like to hear which.

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