

The Vase Is in the Bricks

Architectural infrastructure as belief-maintenance variable in
founder-led enterprise

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The Vase Is in the Bricks

Architectural infrastructure as belief-maintenance variable in founder-led enterprise

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Abstract

This paper extends the Foundership Institute framework (Graham, 2025a) by introducing a fourth source of belief maintenance in founder-led enterprise: the **vessel** — the physical architectural infrastructure inside which a small business operates. At small-business scale, the physical building is itself a belief-maintenance variable that operates partially independently of the current operator. The vessel carries its own four-metric Vase signature (L1, L2, L3, Virtue). The match or mismatch between vessel-Vase and operator-Vase predicts venture survival. Triple-layer L1 maintenance — vessel + operator-lineage + product — constitutes a canonical Intact-mode signature observable in heritage small businesses across belief categories. Through engagement with the adjacent literatures of servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992), third-place sociology (Oldenburg, 1989), neighborhood vitality (Jacobs, 1961), place attachment (Lewicka, 2011), and organizational aesthetics (Strati, 1999; Yanow, 2006), the paper specifies what the Foundership claim contributes that prior frameworks did not name. Two worked cases — Cascade House, Lynnwood, Washington (vessel since demolished; operator Jimmy Markezinis Sr.) and Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, Stanwood, Washington (1986-present; operators John and Chris Markezinis) — are presented through a participant-observer longitudinal methodology to demonstrate (a) triple-layer L1 maintenance, (b) the separability of operator-lineage belief signature from vessel signature, and (c) vessel-L1 persistence in customer memory after physical vessel demolition. The paper closes with five testable research questions specifying the empirical program implied by the framework extension.

1. Introduction: The corner diner

Drive through any small town in America and you will find a corner with a diner on it. Same building it was in 1957. Same address. Same windows. The booths may have been reupholstered and the menu may have a few new items, but the building is still a diner because the building was *built* to be a diner.

Now look at who has run it. Across twenty years on that one corner you may find three or four different operators. One family ran it for thirty years and retired. The next operator tried to convert it into a coffee shop and lasted eighteen months. After that, someone put up an “Under New Management” sign and reset it back to a diner. The current owner has been there four years.

The operators came and went. The building stayed. And in that small fact — *the building stayed* — is a structural variable that the leadership canon has not named.

The building is the vessel. The vessel holds belief.

2. Premise

The Foundership Institute has been operating on the claim that founding belief in a founder-led enterprise is a maintenance-dependent structural asset measurable through a four-metric instrument (the Vase): belief continuity (L1), maintenance energy (L2), realized value (L3), and virtue (alignment of action with founding belief). The signed delta between L1 and L3 (the Founder's Gap) and the categorical mode (Intact, Founder's Gap, Restored, Belief Performance) together characterize the structural state of the enterprise.

This paper extends the framework by claiming:

At small-business scale, the physical architecture inside which an enterprise operates is itself a belief-maintenance variable. The vessel carries its own four-metric Vase signature, and that signature operates partially independently of the current operator.

This is not a metaphor. The claim is structural: the walls, the windows, the kitchen layout, the seating capacity, the parking, the visibility from the street, the foot traffic patterns, and the neighborhood association the building has accumulated all constrain what kind of founding belief the vessel can hold, reinforce belief that fits the vessel's shape, and reject belief that does not.

A separable claim, which the worked cases in Section 7 will demonstrate, is that the operator-lineage belief signature can persist *across* vessels — even after a specific vessel is physically demolished — through transmission rituals that move belief from one operator generation to the next. At small-business scale, the Vase is in the bricks, but the bricks are not the only place the Vase can be found.

3. Adjacent literatures: What has been named, what has not

This claim arrives in territory that has been engaged from several directions in the social sciences. A defensible introduction of vessel-as-belief-maintenance-variable requires explicit acknowledgment of these adjacent literatures and a precise specification of what the present claim adds.

3.1 Servicescape theory

Bitner (1992) introduced the concept of the **servicescape** to name the role of the physical environment in shaping the behavior of customers and employees in service organizations. The servicescape framework identified spatial layout, signage, ambient conditions, and physical artifacts as variables that influence approach/avoidance behavior, social interaction, and the cognitive and emotional responses of service participants. Subsequent work has extended servicescape theory across hospitality, retail, and other service domains (Lin, 2004; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011).

Bitner's contribution names architecture as a variable affecting customer and employee *experience*. It does not name architecture as a variable maintaining *founding belief* across operator transitions. The servicescape lens treats the operator as the deployer of the environment; the present paper claims the environment carries belief-maintenance properties that persist *across* operator deployments.

3.2 Third place sociology

Oldenburg (1989) introduced the **third place** concept to name a category of community spaces — coffee shops, bars, general stores, barber shops — that function as informal gathering spaces beyond home (first place) and work (second place). Oldenburg's framework identified physical and locational characteristics that make a space a viable third place: accessibility, neutral ground, regulars, low profile, playful mood. The third place concept has been widely cited in urban planning and community development scholarship (Jeffres et al., 2009; Mehta & Bosson, 2010).

Oldenburg names the *community-binding* function of certain architectural spaces. The present paper treats architecture as a substrate of *organizational belief continuity* — a related but distinct claim. A diner can be a third place; the vessel-Vase signature operates whether or not the diner functions as a third place. The two frameworks address different mechanisms.

3.3 Neighborhood vitality

Jacobs (1961) established the foundational claim that small-scale commercial vitality in urban neighborhoods depends on architectural variables — short blocks, mixed primary uses, aged buildings of varied conditions, sufficient population density. Jacobs's framework treats the architecture of the neighborhood as the substrate of commercial sustainability. The present paper extends the unit of analysis from the neighborhood to the individual vessel within the neighborhood, claiming that the vessel itself carries an architectural belief-maintenance signature distinguishable from the neighborhood-level signature.

3.4 Place attachment

Lewicka (2011) reviewed four decades of place-attachment research and observed that the literature has heavily emphasized the *Person* component of the tripartite model (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) at the expense of the *Place* and *Process* components. The vessel-Vase claim contributes to the under-theorized Place and Process sides of place attachment: it specifies one mechanism by which the place itself carries structural properties (vessel L1, L2, L3, Virtue) that operate on the operator and the community over time. The persistence of customer-side memory of vessels that have been physically demolished (demonstrated in the Cascade House case, Section 7.1 below) supports Lewicka's call for greater theoretical attention to the Place component.

3.5 Organizational aesthetics

Strati (1992, 1999, 2010) and Gagliardi (1990) developed the field of **organizational aesthetics**, which examines how the sensory and symbolic properties of organizational artifacts carry meaning beyond their instrumental function. Yanow (1998, 2006) examined how built spaces convey organizational identity through their physical form. Rafaeli and Pratt (2006) collected this work into a comprehensive treatment of artifacts as organizational variables. This literature is the closest adjacent body of work to the present claim and the most important to distinguish from.

What the organizational aesthetics literature has named: built spaces convey organizational meaning; artifacts function as carriers of identity and culture; physical form is interpretable as text by organizational members.

What this literature has not named: built spaces carry a quantifiable belief-maintenance signature *independent of the current organizational occupant* — a signature that persists across operator transitions and predicts venture survival when operator belief is installed. The vessel-Vase claim is a specification within and beyond the territory Strati and Yanow opened. The Foundership Institute claims this specific extension as a distinct contribution.

3.6 Schein and the organizational culture canon

Schein (1985, 2017) is the closest fit within the leadership canon to the territory of belief-maintenance in organizations. Schein's three-level model of organizational culture — artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions — placed physical artifacts at the surface level of organizational culture, treating them as the visible expression of deeper assumptions. Schein's framework names the building, the office layout, and the workspace as *artifacts* in the culture sense. The framework does not name the building as a *carrier of belief continuity across operator transitions* — Schein's analysis remains operator-centric in its assumption that the artifacts reflect the current organization's culture, not that the artifacts independently maintain belief signatures that the next operator inherits.

The present paper extends Schein by claiming that the artifact layer is not only expression of the operator's current belief, but is itself a structural variable that influences which beliefs the next operator can install.

4. Predecessor leadership frameworks and the vessel gap

Beyond Schein, the leadership-thinking canon has operated almost entirely on the assumption that the operator is the load-bearing variable in organizational belief and physical infrastructure is background. A brief, sourced review:

- **Drucker (1954)** treated management as a discipline of decisions, objectives, and structure within the firm. The physical infrastructure of the firm did not appear as a variable.
- **Mintzberg (1973)** characterized managerial work through observation of managers and their roles. Architecture appeared only as the setting of the observation, not as a substantive variable.
- **Kotter (1996)** specified an eight-step process for leading organizational change. The change-management framework treats infrastructure as a vehicle of the change, not as a variable that holds or rejects the change independently.
- **Senge (1990)** named the learning organization as the unit of analysis with disciplines such as systems thinking, personal mastery, and shared vision. Architecture did not enter the framework.
- **Lencioni (2002)** identified five dysfunctions of teams operating at the interpersonal and behavioral level. Architecture was not part of the diagnosis.

- **Sinek (2009)** introduced the Golden Circle (Why-How-What) as a positioning framework for inspirational communication. The framework is operator-centered; the building does not enter.
- **Gulati (2022)** developed *deep purpose* as a strategic frame for purpose-driven organizations. The treatment is values-based and operator-centered; the architectural vessel is not a variable.

The leadership canon over seven decades has operated as if the operator's intent, communication, and behavior were the only structural variables in organizational belief. At Fortune 500 scale, where buildings are interchangeable, this assumption is reasonable. At small-business scale, where the building is irreplaceable and accumulated vessel-level history is a substantial variable, the assumption is structurally incomplete.

This is the gap the vessel-Vase claim is intended to fill.

5. Operational definitions

For the claim to be testable, the following constructs require operational definition:

Vessel. The physical architectural infrastructure inside which a founder-led enterprise operates. At small-business scale this is typically the building, but the construct includes the location, neighborhood, parking, visibility, and accumulated history of prior occupants of the same address.

Vessel-L1 (vessel belief continuity). The stability of belief category the vessel has held across its operating history. Operationalized through the count of operator transitions in the same belief category over a defined window divided by total operator transitions. A diner-shaped building that has held diner operators for six consecutive transitions over 60 years scores high vessel-L1. A building that has held five different belief categories in twenty years scores low vessel-L1.

Vessel-L2 (vessel maintenance energy). The structural reinforcement the vessel provides to the current belief through daily operational constraint. Operationalized through fit between architectural specifications (kitchen size, seating capacity, plumbing routing, parking) and the operational requirements of the current belief category. High fit = high vessel-L2.

Vessel-L3 (vessel value). The commercial scale the vessel can currently realize independently of operator. Operationalized through foot traffic counts, comparable commercial rents for the same address category, and visibility / accessibility metrics.

Vessel virtue. The historical alignment between the vessel's architectural intent and its actual occupancy use. Operationalized through ratio of in-category use to out-of-category use across the operating history.

Structurally generous vessel. A vessel with high vessel-L1, high vessel-L2, and high vessel-virtue in a defined belief category. Predicts survival for new operators whose installed belief fits the vessel's category.

Structurally hostile vessel. A vessel with low vessel-L1, low vessel-L2, low vessel-L3, or low vessel-virtue. Predicts failure for new operators across belief categories.

Operator-vessel match. The degree to which the operator’s installed belief category fits the vessel’s accumulated belief signature. Operationalized through alignment scoring between the operator’s L1 anchor terms and the vessel’s historical belief category.

Triple-layer L1 maintenance. The condition in which the enterprise’s belief continuity is reinforced simultaneously by (a) vessel L1, (b) operator lineage L1, and (c) product L1. Predicts maximum durability of Intact-mode classification.

Operator-lineage L1 signature. A belief signature carried by a family or apprenticeship chain across multiple vessels and generations. Operationalized through identification of stable anchor terms across the lineage’s documented operations over time. Separable from any specific vessel-L1.

6. The Foundership extension

The vessel-Vase claim extends the existing Foundership framework in three specific ways:

(1) The four-metric instrument applies at the vessel level, not only at the enterprise level. Where the standard Vase reading measures L1, L2, L3, and Virtue for the founder-led enterprise, this paper claims the same four metrics apply independently to the vessel itself. Two readings result: vessel-Vase and operator-Vase. Both must be considered in any small-business analysis.

(2) Operator-vessel match becomes a survival predictor. The match between operator-Vase and vessel-Vase is hypothesized to predict venture survival above and beyond the predictive power of operator-Vase alone.

(3) Triple-layer L1 maintenance becomes a canonical Intact-mode signature. When vessel-L1, operator-lineage L1, and product L1 are all high simultaneously, the framework predicts the most durable possible Intact classification. The worked cases in Section 7 demonstrate this signature in a documented heritage small business and demonstrate the separability of operator-lineage L1 from vessel-L1 through a vessel-demolition observation.

7. Methodological positionality and worked cases

7.1 Positionality declaration

The worked cases that follow are presented from a participant-observer longitudinal methodological position. Transparency about the author’s relationship to the cases is required for the reader’s evaluation of the evidence presented.

The author was a customer of Cascade House restaurant in Lynnwood, Washington, during childhood and adolescence (approximately 1975–1990), attending in family groups associated with the author’s parents’ church community. The author has continuous customer memory of the vessel’s interior layout, color palette, and the operational characteristics of its menu (notably the omelettes and hash brown portions favored by the author’s father). Cascade House was owned and operated by Jimmy Markezinis Sr.

In the fall of 1991, at age 19, the author was employed as a prep cook and dishwasher at Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta in Stanwood, Washington, by John Markezinis (then age 25), the founder’s son and primary operator. The employment lasted approximately six months and ended in the author’s voluntary departure following a series of operational reprimands, including a documented incident in which the author was reprimanded for cutting lettuce incorrectly for dinner salads. In the author’s retrospective assessment as a current founder-CEO running his own vertically-integrated production operation in the same community, the reprimands were consistent with appropriate operational discipline being correctly enforced on a 19-year-old employee whose work product was not meeting the operation’s standards.

The author has been a continuous customer of Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta from 1991 to the date of writing — a 35-year customer relationship — with a stable weekly family order. The author and John Markezinis are current peer founder-CEOs in the same community; Markezinis is a regular visitor to the author’s manufacturing operation at ARES Watch Company in Stanwood. Additionally, ARES Watch Company has catered events at its facility using Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta as the food vendor for two consecutive years (2025 and 2026), in the context of joint events hosted with a British watch company partner around an annual Vancouver, BC trade show. At these events, the British company’s customers and ARES customers were served Jimmy’s pizza at ARES HQ. This represents a B2B operator-to-operator transactional relationship in which the author has chosen the Markezinis operation as the food vendor representing his own brand to international watch-industry customers across two consecutive years.

This declaration is provided so the reader can evaluate the evidence presented in this section in light of the author’s positionality. The participant-observer longitudinal position is treated here as a methodological *strength* — direct multi-decade access to a heritage small-business case at customer, employee, and peer-operator layers — comparable to the consulting-engagement positionality from which Schein (1985, 2017) developed organizational culture theory. The author’s relationship to the Markezinis operations has been declared in advance of any future publications using these cases.

The published primary sources cited below — the HeraldNet review by Poole (2007) and the “Our Story” page written by O’Hagan and hosted on the restaurant’s website (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.) — establish the documented record. Direct observation supplements but does not replace those sources.

7.2 Cascade House (Lynnwood, WA) — the precedent vessel

Cascade House operated as a full-service restaurant in Lynnwood, Washington, under the ownership of Jimmy Markezinis Sr. for a period spanning at least the 1970s through some point thereafter. The vessel was demolished and the site redeveloped some years before the date of this paper. The exact founding and closing dates are not yet established in the documented record and remain to be confirmed through primary interview with surviving operators.

The vessel’s belief category was full-service American family restaurant with substantial breakfast service. From the author’s direct customer-side memory: the interior featured a recognizable color palette and dining-room layout the author can still picture decades after the vessel’s demolition; portions were generous; the omelettes

and hash browns were specifically remarkable; the restaurant functioned as a recurring third-place destination for the author's parents' church-group community. The author's father's preference for the portion size was a stable customer-side belief alignment that drove the family's regular attendance.

The Cascade House observation is structurally significant for two reasons:

First, the author's customer-side memory of the vessel has persisted decades after the physical vessel's demolition. This supports the framework claim that vessel-L1 is carried partly in customer memory and is not solely a property of the standing physical structure. Place-attachment literature (Lewicka, 2011) is the relevant adjacent framework here; the persistence of detailed sensory recall years after demolition supports Lewicka's call for greater theoretical attention to the Place component of place attachment.

Second, Cascade House and Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta together constitute a natural experiment in the separability of operator-lineage L1 from vessel-L1. Cascade House was Jimmy Markezinis Sr.'s vessel; Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta is his sons' vessel. The vessels differ in city, in belief category specifics (full-service family restaurant versus Italian pizza & pasta), and in physical building (Lynnwood location since demolished; Stanwood location continuing). What persists across the two vessels is the operator-lineage L1 signature — Italian-comfort-food, generous portions, family-anchored hospitality, multi-generational recipe transmission. Operator-lineage L1 persisted across the vessel transition and the eventual demolition of one of the vessels.

The framework's prediction is that the operator-lineage L1 signature in a heritage family business is separable from any specific vessel-L1 and can be transmitted to subsequent vessels through proper installation rituals (apprenticeship, recipe transmission, supplier handoff). The Cascade House → Jimmy's transition is one observed instance of this prediction holding in practice.

7.3 Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta (Stanwood, WA, 1986-present) — the continuing vessel

Sources Primary sources for this case are (a) the restaurant's own founding history as told by John Markezinis and written by Jeremiah O'Hagan of the *Stanwood Camano News*, published on the restaurant's website (Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta, n.d.); (b) a 2007 restaurant review by Anna Poole, Herald Restaurant Critic, in the *Everett Herald* (Poole, 2007); (c) the restaurant's current public business records at 9819 State Route 532, Stanwood, WA; and (d) the author's participant-observer position declared in Section 7.1.

Founding context: the vessel before installation The building at 9819 State Route 532 in Stanwood was previously occupied by Gino's, a pizza restaurant that filed for bankruptcy (Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). The prior operator had failed in the vessel. In the vessel-Vase framework, this places the vessel at a moment of post-Founder's-Gap collapse: the prior operator's belief had failed; the building was structurally available for a new belief installation.

Critically, the vessel itself was not structurally hostile to the pizza-restaurant belief category. The kitchen layout, seating capacity, and street visibility had been built for restaurant occupancy and remained in-category compatible. What had failed was the operator-level installation, not the vessel-level fit.

The L1 installation ritual In 1986, Jimmy Markezinis Sr. observed the bankruptcy of Gino's and identified the vessel as available. He proposed to his sons John (age 20) and Chris (age 21) that they take it on. The terms of the installation are documented:

- Jimmy Sr. “put his house down as collateral and said, ‘Don’t screw it up’” (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). The father’s house — the family’s existing physical infrastructure — was pledged against the new vessel acquisition.
- Before opening, the brothers traveled to Queen Anne in Seattle to work at Olympia Pizza House under Spiro, “their dad’s friend,” for nine months *for free* (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). This was a deliberate L1 transmission ritual: not employment, but apprenticeship.
- “In exchange, ‘he taught us the pizza,’” John recalled. “They also got Spiro’s blessing and his recipes — he even set the brothers up with his suppliers” (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.).

This is a complete L1+L2+L3 installation through a multi-generational network: belief content (recipes), operational competence (technique), and economic infrastructure (supplier network) transferred together over nine months of unpaid apprenticeship.

The lineage layer The operator-lineage L1 transmission predates the founding by a generation. The brothers’ father, Jimmy Sr., had himself learned his meat-sauce recipes from “a Camano islander named ‘Papa Jack’” (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). The brothers’ product L1 thus traces through three named transmissions: Papa Jack → Jimmy Sr. → John & Chris. The naming of the restaurant after the father (“Jimmy’s”) encodes the lineage in the L1 corpus permanently. The lineage extended additionally through Jimmy Sr.’s prior operation (Cascade House, Lynnwood) and through Spiro’s nine-month apprenticeship at Olympia Pizza House.

The L2 maintenance practice observed from inside the operation (1991) In the fall of 1991, during the restaurant’s fifth year of operation, the author was employed as a prep cook and dishwasher under John Markezinis. The kitchen discipline observed during this period is consistent with active L2 maintenance at the level of individual ingredient preparation. One specific incident is admissible to the case as a documented operational illustration: the author was reprimanded for cutting lettuce incorrectly for dinner salads. This is a small example with structural significance — at the prep-cook layer, the chief-repeating-officer practice manifests as enforcement of standards on individual ingredients. The L2 maintenance discipline that produced the 40-year Intact-mode signature is built from such reprimands, applied consistently across decades. The reprimands the author found unpleasant at age 19 are, in the author’s current assessment as a peer founder-CEO running a production line of his own, the correct enforcement of standards being applied to a teenager whose work product was not meeting the operation’s required quality.

The product layer Forty years after the founding, the operator describes product L1 explicitly: “Consistency... We keep it the way we learned it” (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). The pizza recipe has not changed. The pasta sauce has not changed. “Most of the menu has [stayed the same], as the brothers have tried to keep the food essentially Italian” (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.). The customer-belief alignment is explicit: “Our customers aren’t coming here for an out-of-body experience — they’re coming here to eat. It’s about comfort food.”

The only documented belief-category evolution is the addition of the “Mama’s Special” pizza, which the founders’ mother insisted on against the brothers’ initial resistance — a within-belief enrichment that preserved the founding Italian-comfort-food identity while adding family-belief contribution (Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta, n.d.).

The vessel layer The vessel itself was modified post-installation. The brothers remodeled the building, including a notable architectural modification: John took a sledgehammer to a back wall (without consulting his father, the building’s owner) and installed the arched windows that have since become a defining feature of the interior. The 2007 restaurant review notes: “The restaurant’s interior incorporates arched windows, brick walls and wooden chairs and tables in three large, casual and inviting dining rooms” (Poole, 2007).

The vessel modification was within-category — the architectural change adapted the space to the founding belief without breaking its restaurant category. The arched windows became part of the vessel’s L1 over time. By 2007 they were noted in published criticism as a defining feature of the institutional identity.

The four-metric reading Applying the vessel-Vase framework to Jimmy’s Pizza & Pasta in 2026:

- **Vessel L1:** High. The vessel has held the same belief category (Italian-comfort-food pizzeria) for 40 consecutive years under continuous operator ownership.
- **Vessel L2:** High. The architectural specifications (kitchen size, three dining rooms, seating capacity, parking on State Route 532) fit the operational requirements of the current belief tightly.
- **Vessel L3:** Substantial relative to small-business scale. The location on a primary state route, the foot traffic, the institutional status, and the customer-base loyalty all support sustained commercial realization.
- **Vessel Virtue:** High. The vessel has been used in alignment with its restaurant intent throughout the documented history.
- **Operator-vessel match:** Complete. The Markezinis brothers installed a belief category fully aligned with the vessel’s architectural shape and accumulated history.
- **Triple-layer L1 maintenance:** Confirmed. Vessel L1 (architectural reinforcement) + operator-lineage L1 (three-generation product transmission via Papa Jack → Jimmy Sr. → John & Chris, plus the second generational layer of Jimmy Sr.’s own Cascade House operation, plus the apprenticeship layer through Spiro at Olympia Pizza House) + product L1 (“we keep it the way we learned it”) all reinforce the same founding belief.

The categorical mode reading is **Intact**, with a small mispriced-believer-private signature characteristic of belief-anchored heritage small businesses whose belief carrying capacity exceeds their realized commercial scale.

7.4 What the two cases together demonstrate

Considered jointly, the Cascade House and Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta cases demonstrate:

1. **Triple-layer L1 maintenance produces durable Intact-mode operation.** When vessel L1, operator-lineage L1, and product L1 are reinforcing the same founding belief, the resulting categorical reading is the most durable form of Intact mode observable at small-business scale.
2. **Operator-lineage L1 is separable from vessel L1.** The Markezinis-family belief signature operated through at least two vessels (Cascade House, then Jimmy's) with continuity of belief category and operator discipline. Vessel demolition does not terminate operator-lineage L1.
3. **Vessel L1 persists in customer memory after physical vessel demolition.** Detailed sensory recall of vessel interiors decades after demolition (Cascade House) supports the framework claim that vessel signatures are carried partly in the customer corpus, not only in the standing physical structure.
4. **Installation rituals matter.** The Spiro apprenticeship at Olympia Pizza House (nine months unpaid in exchange for recipe, blessing, and supplier handoff) is an explicit operator-lineage L1 installation ritual. Heritage small businesses that show high-durability Intact-mode signatures appear to have explicit installation rituals in their founding histories. The empirical research program in Section 8 specifies how this observation could be tested at population scale.
5. **Heritage operators recognize and transact with each other's belief signatures.** The author's choice to use Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta as the food vendor at ARES Watch Company brand-facing events for two consecutive years constitutes one observed instance of a structural prediction implied by the framework: that other heritage founder-CEOs in the same community can recognize a triple-layer L1 maintenance signature in a peer operation and will transact with it preferentially when their own brand reputation is at stake. The B2B catering choice is itself a peer-validation signal of the Markezinis operation's Intact-mode signature, registered from the position of another founder-CEO running a vertically-integrated heritage operation in the same town.

7.5 Scope notes on these cases

The Cascade House case is presented at a lower evidence tier than the Jimmy's case. The author's customer-side memory of Cascade House is direct but childhood-period; primary sources for vessel dates, ownership transitions, and operating history have not yet been retrieved and remain to be confirmed through primary interview with John Markezinis (forthcoming). The Cascade House observation is included here to demonstrate the separability claim and to establish a natural-experiment frame; substantiation at full Tier B evidence level will be incorporated in a subsequent revision following primary interview.

The Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta case rests on (a) published secondary sources (Herald-Net, the restaurant's own published Our Story page), (b) the author's documented employment and continuous customer relationship, and (c) the operator's current accessibility for primary interview and consultation. The case is presented as one worked example demonstrating the framework's application at small-business scale; generalization across the population of heritage small businesses requires the empirical program outlined below.

8. Empirical research program

The vessel-Vase claim implies a defined empirical program. Five research questions are specified here at a level concrete enough that another researcher could execute them.

8.1 Vessel-Vase reliability across observers

Question: Do trained observers produce consistent vessel-Vase readings for the same address using the operational definitions in Section 5?

Design: Inter-rater reliability study. Sample of $N = 50$ small commercial vessels in a defined urban area. Three independent observers per vessel produce vessel-Vase readings using the protocol. Calculate Cohen's kappa for categorical mode and intraclass correlation coefficient for numerical scores.

8.2 Operator-vessel match as survival predictor

Question: Does operator-vessel match predict venture survival above the predictive power of operator-Vase alone?

Design: Longitudinal cohort study. Sample of $N = 200$ small businesses at point of opening, with vessel-Vase reading at T_0 . Track survival at 24, 60, and 120 months. Regress survival on operator-Vase, vessel-Vase, and operator-vessel match score. Test incremental variance explained by the match score.

8.3 Vessel-Vase prediction across operator transitions

Question: Does vessel-Vase reading taken before an operator transition predict the survival outcome of the subsequent operator?

Design: Natural-experiment study. Identify addresses undergoing operator transitions over a 24-month window. Take vessel-Vase readings *before* the new operator's installation is observable. Track new-operator survival at 24 months. Test whether vessel-Vase predicts independent of operator characteristics.

8.4 Triple-layer L1 as durability predictor

Question: Do small businesses with triple-layer L1 maintenance exhibit greater durability than single-layer or double-layer cases?

Design: Cohort study of heritage small businesses (defined as continuous operation >20 years). Code each case for layer count. Test durability outcomes (continuous operation across operator-generation transitions, succession success rates) against layer count.

8.5 Installation rituals as predictor of operator-lineage L1 durability

Question: Do heritage small businesses whose founding histories include explicit installation rituals (apprenticeship, recipe transmission, supplier handoff between operator generations) show longer survival across operator transitions than those without?

Design: Retrospective historical study. Sample N = 100 heritage small businesses (defined as ≥ 20 years continuous operation) with documented founding histories. Code each for presence/absence of explicit installation rituals at founding. Compare survival across operator-generation transitions. The Markezinis-Spiro apprenticeship documented in the Jimmy's case is one positive instance of this hypothesized pattern.

9. Scope notes and limitations

This paper presents a framework extension grounded in (a) two worked cases, one with full published primary sources and one at lower evidence tier pending primary interview; and (b) explicit theoretical engagement with adjacent literatures. The framework extension is presented as a structural claim with operational definitions sufficient for testing. The claim itself awaits the empirical program specified in Section 8 for validation across the small-business population.

Specific limits:

- The worked cases (Cascade House and Jimmy's Pizza & Pasta) are selected as instances of triple-layer L1 maintenance and operator-lineage continuity. Demonstration through one operator-lineage's two vessels is illustrative, not generalizing. The empirical program in Section 8 specifies the design that would test the framework against the heritage small-business population at scale.
- The vessel-Vase numerical scoring proposed in Section 5 is operationally defined but the metric instruments themselves require calibration against an independent small-business sample. The 509-firm calibration library currently underlying the standard Vase reading is composed primarily of public-company corpora; small-business vessel calibration requires a parallel reference population.
- The framework is most clearly applicable at scales where the vessel is irreplaceable (sole-location small businesses; founder-led restaurants, retail, services, light manufacturing). At enterprise scales where buildings are routinely substitutable, the vessel claim weakens. The framework does not claim equal applicability at all scales.
- Place-attachment literature (Lewicka, 2011) has documented strong individual-level psychological binding to places. The vessel-Vase claim is structural, not psychological. The two frameworks are compatible but distinct; the present paper does not contribute directly to place-attachment theory.

- The author’s participant-observer position relative to the Markezinis operations is declared in Section 7.1 for the reader’s evaluation. The methodological strength of multi-decade direct access is acknowledged as is the corresponding obligation of positional transparency.

10. Conclusion: Naming the territory

The Foundership Institute extends the founder-led-enterprise framework by naming, for the first time in this literature, the role of the physical architectural vessel as a fourth source of belief maintenance independent of the operator. The vessel carries its own four-metric Vase signature. Operator-vessel match predicts venture survival. Triple-layer L1 maintenance constitutes a canonical Intact-mode signature observable in heritage small businesses across belief categories. Operator-lineage L1 is separable from vessel L1 and persists through vessel transitions and even vessel demolition through documented transmission rituals (apprenticeship, recipe transfer, supplier handoff).

This extension is consistent with — and distinct from — Bitner’s servicescape framework, Oldenburg’s third-place concept, Jacobs’s neighborhood vitality framework, Lewicka’s place-attachment literature, Strati and Yanow’s organizational aesthetics, and Schein’s organizational culture model. The present paper specifies what the prior frameworks did not name: that the building independently maintains belief signatures across operator transitions, that the operator-lineage carries its own belief signature separable from any specific vessel, and that both signatures together (with product continuity) constitute a measurable triple-layer maintenance structure observable in heritage small business.

At small-business scale, the Vase is in the bricks. And when the bricks come down, the Vase persists in the lineage.

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AXIS framework as the operating system of leadership thinking, and the mispriced-believer signature in private-form enterprise.