What Under New Management Really Means

Storefront belief-signaling as structural diagnostic in founder-led enterprise

Matthew Graham

Foundership Institute

ISBN 979-8-9965431-1-3

2026

thefoundership.org

What Under New Management Really Means

Storefront belief-signaling as structural diagnostic in founder-led enterprise

ISBN: 979-8-9965431-1-3

Published by Foundership Institute
thefoundership.org
matt@thefoundership.org

First edition, 2026.

Citation: Graham, M. (2026). *What Under New Management Really Means: Storefront belief-signaling as structural diagnostic in founder-led enterprise*. Foundership Institute. ISBN 979-8-9965431-1-3.

What "Under New Management" Really Means

Storefront belief-signaling as structural diagnostic in founder-led enterprise

A Foundership Institute white paper · Matthew Graham · v1 · 2026-06-06

Abstract

This paper claims that the publicly-displayed signs small businesses place in their windows and on their storefronts — *Under New Management, Family Owned Since 1962, Locally Owned, Original Owner Still Cooking, Same Great Taste — New Look, Grand Re-Opening, Going Out of Business* — constitute a publicly readable, photographable, datable system of belief-state declarations that has been operating in American small-business commerce for over a century. Drawing on linguistic landscape studies (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), atmospherics (Kotler, 1973), signaling theory in economics (Spence, 1973; Akerlof, 1970; Connelly et al., 2011), brand identity research (Aaker, 1991, 1996), and impression management theory (Goffman, 1959), the paper integrates this scholarship into the Foundership Institute framework (Graham, 2025a, 2026b) by claiming that storefront signs of these types are reading specifically as structural belief declarations — L1 resets, L1 continuity assertions, L2 maintenance signals, Identity-versus-Execution distinctions, and terminal Founder's-Gap collapse announcements — and that the Foundership Institute is positioned to read them as a coherent diagnostic system. The paper provides a taxonomy of belief-signaling signs, operational definitions, and five empirical research questions. The Foundership Institute claims the storefront belief-signaling diagnostic as a distinct contribution to the founder-led enterprise literature.

1. Introduction: The signs in every window

Drive past any commercial street in America and you will see them. *Under New Management* on a coffee shop that just changed hands. *Family Owned Since 1962* on the hardware store at the corner. *Original Owner Still Cooking* on the diner. *Same Great Taste, New Look* on a logo refresh. *Going Out of Business — Everything Must Go* in the furniture-store window that has had the same sign in it for six years. *Locally Owned* spelled out in vinyl on the side of the auto shop.

Small-business owners have been putting these signs in their windows for more than a century. They are inexpensive, photographable, geographically located, and instantly readable to passing customers. The signs are not generic marketing copy — they are *belief-state declarations*. The operator is using the storefront to tell customers something specific about what the business is and how it is to be trusted.

This paper claims that the full set of these signs constitutes a publicly readable diagnostic system. Each sign category is a recognizable type of belief declaration. Each one is doing structural work. None of the standard leadership-canon frameworks (Sinek, Schein, Kotter, Drucker, Mintzberg, Gulati, Lencioni) reads these signs as a coherent system, because none of them treats founding belief as the structural variable being declared. The Foundership Institute does — and this paper specifies the diagnostic.

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 (Graham, 2025a). A companion paper (Graham, 2026b) extended the framework by introducing the physical architectural vessel as a fourth source of belief maintenance independent of the operator.

This paper extends the framework in a third direction by claiming:

Storefront signs of the types listed above are publicly displayed declarations of operator-level belief states. They are readable as L1-reset signals, L1-continuity assertions, L2-maintenance signals, Identity-Execution distinctions, and terminal Founder's-Gap collapse announcements. The full set constitutes a coherent diagnostic system observable in American small-business commerce, in real time, on commercial streets, photographable and datable, available to any operator, consultant, or researcher who knows how to read it.

This is a small claim with substantial implications. Small claim because the signs are not subtle and the operators using them know what they are doing. Substantial implications because the leadership canon has not named these signs as structural signals, and the diagnostic that emerges from naming them is materially useful for founders, consultants, and researchers of founder-led enterprise.

3. Adjacent literatures

A defensible claim that storefront signs constitute a structural diagnostic system requires explicit engagement with the literatures that have approached this territory from other directions.

3.1 Linguistic landscape studies

Landry and Bourhis (1997) introduced the concept of the **linguistic landscape** to name "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region." Their seminal study established public signage as a research domain in sociolinguistics and demonstrated that the linguistic landscape carries informational and symbolic functions as a marker of the relative power, status, and vitality of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory.

Subsequent work has extended the linguistic landscape paradigm across multilingual and minority-language contexts (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009; Backhaus, 2007). The framework's central methodological contribution is the use of photographs of public signage as primary data, treated as evidence of community belief, identity, and power relations.

What linguistic landscape studies have named: signs in public space carry symbolic and informational meaning beyond their literal content. What this literature has not named: the specific family of belief-signaling signs in American small-business commerce constitutes a structural diagnostic of the *operator's* belief state and is readable as a measurement of founder-led enterprise dynamics. The present paper extends linguistic landscape methodology into the founder-led enterprise domain.

3.2 Geosemiotics

Scollon and Scollon (2003) developed the framework of **geosemiotics** — the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs in the world. Their core claim is that the meaning of public signs cannot be interpreted independently of the social and physical world that surrounds them. Geosemiotics integrates visual semiotics, place semiotics, and the interaction order, treating indexicality as the central concept.

Geosemiotics is the closest methodological adjacent framework to the present paper's claim. What the framework has named: signs are situated in physical contexts that change their meaning; the same sign-text in a different location reads differently. What this framework has not specified: the family of belief-signaling signs in American small-business commerce — *Under New Management, Family Owned Since*, et cetera — is a defined diagnostic category whose meaning is consistent across instances and which can be read as a structural diagnostic of founder-led enterprise belief states.

3.3 Atmospherics

Kotler (1973) introduced **atmospherics** as "the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers" — the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance purchase probability. Kotler's framework treated retail architecture, interior design, and window displays as marketing variables under operator control. Atmospherics, alongside Bitner's (1992) later servicescape framework, established physical-environment design as a recognized marketing domain.

What atmospherics has named: physical environment design is a controllable marketing variable that produces emotional and behavioral effects in buyers. What this literature has not named: certain specific sign-text categories used in commercial storefronts function as *belief-state declarations* whose primary function is not to influence purchase behavior but to declare the operator's structural position relative to the prior occupant or relative to community belief. Some atmospheric elements are belief-signaling rather than purchase-influencing. The present paper specifies this subcategory.

3.4 Signaling theory

Spence's (1973) seminal "Job Market Signaling" paper established signaling theory as a formal economic framework for analyzing communication between parties with asymmetric information. Akerlof's (1970) "Market for Lemons" had previously established the foundational problem of information asymmetry — sellers know product quality but buyers do not, which causes adverse selection and market unraveling. Spence's contribution was to show that the better-informed party (sellers, job applicants) can credibly communicate information through costly signals that the worsequality party cannot affordably imitate. Both authors received the Nobel Prize in 2001 alongside Joseph Stiglitz for this body of work.

Connelly, Certo, Ireland, and Reutzel (2011) reviewed signaling theory's deployment in management research and identified the framework as foundational across strategic management, entrepreneurship, and human resource management literatures. Signaling theory is widely cited and theoretically robust.

What signaling theory has named: economic actors with private information can communicate that information to other actors through costly signals that lower-quality alternatives cannot afford to send. What signaling theory has not named with specificity: the family of storefront belief-signaling signs in American small-business commerce constitutes a recognized signaling system in which the small-business operator is communicating belief-state information to customers under conditions of asymmetric information about the operator's intent, the prior occupant's failure mode, the lineage transmission, or the current operator-vessel match. The present paper integrates this signaling system into the Foundership framework and provides the operational definitions for treating storefront signs as belief signals.

3.5 Brand identity and equity

Aaker's (1991) *Managing Brand Equity* and (1996) "Measuring Brand Equity across Products and Markets" introduced the canonical management framework for brand identity and equity. Aaker's framework identified five pillars of brand equity (awareness, loyalty, perceived quality, associations, and proprietary assets) and treated brand identity as a strategic resource managed by the operator.

What brand identity research has named: brand identity is a strategic asset, operators can manage their brand through deliberate communication, and brand trust signals influence consumer behavior. What this literature has not named: specific storefront belief-signaling signs are reading as structural diagnostic markers of the operator's *founding* belief state — not as brand-communication choices but as declarations of the structural condition the operator is in. The present paper makes this specific contribution: brand-identity tools and storefront belief-signals are related but distinct, and the latter are structural diagnostics where the former are marketing instruments.

3.6 Impression management

Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* introduced the dramaturgical analysis of social interaction, treating self-presentation as performance with front-stage and back-stage regions, impression management as the active work of presenting an acceptable self, and "face" as the social value claimed by a particular line of action.

What Goffman's framework has named: actors actively manage impressions through deliberate symbolic performance; front-stage and back-stage are distinct regions; the projection of identity is consequential. What this framework has not specified for the present claim: small-business operators are using storefront signs as front-stage belief-state performances of a specific structural type, and the signs are interpretable as a recognized typology of belief-state declarations rather than as generic impression-management. The present paper integrates Goffman's dramaturgical model into the storefront signaling diagnostic.

3.7 The vessel framework

A companion Foundership Institute paper (Graham, 2026b) introduced the architectural vessel — the physical building inside which a small business operates — as a fourth source of belief maintenance independent of the operator, with its own four-metric Vase signature. The present paper sits adjacent to that work. Storefront signs are *operator declarations on the surface of the vessel.* The vessel has its own L1 in the bricks; the operator declares additional L1 in the window. The two are separable variables. A new operator can post *Under New Management* on a vessel whose own L1 reading is high (the vessel will accept the new belief) or low (the vessel may reject it). The two readings together — vessel-Vase plus storefront-sign declaration — give a richer diagnostic than either alone.

4. Predecessor leadership frameworks: the gap

As noted in the vessel paper, the leadership-thinking canon has operated for seven decades as if the operator's intent, communication, and behavior were the only structural variables in organizational belief. Drucker (1954), Mintzberg (1973), Kotter (1996), Senge (1990), Lencioni (2002), Sinek (2009), and Gulati (2022) all treat the operator as the load-bearing variable and treat the public-facing physical declarations of the business as either marketing communication or surface artifact. Schein (1985, 2017) is the closest fit — his three-level model of organizational culture (artifacts, espoused values, basic underlying assumptions) places signs and other physical artifacts at the surface level of organizational culture, treating them as the visible expression of deeper assumptions.

None of these frameworks names the specific family of small-business storefront signs as a structural diagnostic system. Schein's "artifacts" category includes signs but treats them as expression of the *current* operator's culture, not as a defined typology of belief-state declarations readable across operator transitions. The diagnostic precision the Foundership framework offers — *Under New Management* declares L1 reset; *Family Owned Since 1962* declares L1 continuity; *Original Owner Still Cooking* declares active L2 maintenance — is not present in the predecessor canon.

This is the gap the storefront belief-signaling claim is intended to fill.

5. Operational definitions

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

Storefront belief-signaling sign. A publicly displayed text-based or text-and-image sign at a small-business commercial location whose primary function is to declare the operator's structural belief state to passing customers. Distinguishable from purely promotional signage (sale prices, menu items, hours) by its content category (operator continuity, succession, founding date, prior occupant repudiation, terminal closure).

L1-reset sign. A storefront sign declaring that the prior operator's belief has been repudiated and a new belief is being installed. The canonical instance is *Under New Management*. Related instances: *Grand Re-Opening, Now Open Under New Owners, A Fresh Start*.

L1-continuity sign. A storefront sign declaring uninterrupted operator-lineage belief across time. The canonical instance is *Family Owned Since [year]*. Related instances: *Locally Owned, Founded by [name] in [year], Three Generations of [craft]*.

L2-maintenance sign. A storefront sign declaring active belief-maintenance practice by the current operator. Canonical instances: *Original Owner Still Cooking, Original Recipe, Same Pizza Since 1986, Made on Premises Daily*.

Identity-Execution distinction sign. A storefront sign explicitly declaring that the operator has preserved Identity while evolving Execution. The canonical instance is *Same Great Taste, New Look* (or variants substituting the relevant identity claim). This is the cleanest possible AXIS expression in retail vocabulary: Identity preserved, Execution evolved.

Terminal sign. A storefront sign declaring the operator's structural Founder's-Gap collapse and impending or current closure. Canonical instances: *Going Out of Business, Closing Sale, Final Days, Everything Must Go*.

Signal-action gap. The structural condition in which a storefront sign declares a belief state inconsistent with the underlying operational reality. The canonical instance is the perpetual *Going Out of Business* sign maintained by furniture retailers for years without actual closure — exploitation of customer concern about closure without the underlying terminal Founder's-Gap state. Signal-action gap signs are structurally significant because they reveal the framework's diagnostic working in reverse: the operator knows the sign carries diagnostic weight in the customer's mind and deploys it manipulatively.

6. The taxonomy

The full taxonomy of belief-signaling signs in American small-business commerce, with the structural reading each implies:

6.1 L1-reset signs

Under New Management. Grand Re-Opening. Now Open Under New Owners. A Fresh Start.

The operator is declaring that the prior belief is repudiated. The sign is an attempt to reverse a negative Founder's Gap signature established by the prior occupant. Customers had stopped believing in the prior operator; the sign is asking them to start believing in the new one. The sign category is structurally significant because no business posts this sign when the prior belief was working — they would advertise continuity instead. The presence of an L1-reset sign is therefore self-declared evidence that the prior operator's belief had reached a fatal state.

6.2 L1-continuity signs

Family Owned Since 1962. Locally Owned. Founded by [name] in [year]. Three Generations of [craft]. Same Family. Same Recipe.

The operator is broadcasting that operator-lineage L1 has been maintained without interruption. The sign is competing with chain-retail and franchise alternatives that lack lineage continuity. The structural read: the operator is claiming the mispriced-believer-private-form signature characteristic of heritage small business and asking customers to recognize that signature in their purchase decision. The sign category is well-attested in small-business signage practice and is recognized by sign vendors as a category of effective trust-signaling messaging.

6.3 L2-maintenance signs

Original Owner Still Cooking. Original Recipe. Same Pizza Since 1986. Made on Premises Daily. Hand-Cut Daily.

The operator is declaring that the chief-repeating-officer practice (Felkins's term, mapped onto Foundership's L2) is actively being performed. The sign is significant because the operator could declare L1 continuity without specifying L2 maintenance; the explicit L2 sign is a finer-grained declaration. The structural read: not only is the belief continuous, the operator is doing the actual daily work that produces the belief, in person, by hand.

6.4 Identity-Execution distinction signs

Same Great Taste, New Look. Same Recipe, New Owner. Updated Look, Original Promise. New Building, Same Family.

The operator is using the sign to make the AXIS Identity-versus-Execution distinction explicit. Identity is preserved (recipe, promise, family, belief); Execution has been updated (logo, building, store layout). The sign is structurally significant because it shows the operator understands intuitively what the framework specifies: certain layers of the operation can change without breaking the founding belief, and certain layers cannot. The sign is a declaration of confidence that the operator has correctly drawn the line.

6.5 Terminal signs

Going Out of Business. Closing Sale. Final Days. Everything Must Go. Closed Forever. Thank You for [N] Years.

The operator is declaring terminal Founder's-Gap collapse and impending or current closure. The sign is structurally significant in two ways. First, it confirms that the framework's predictions about belief collapse leading to commercial exit are observable in real time — the sign appears at the predicted moment in the trajectory. Second, it forecloses the diagnostic on the prior operator while opening the vessel for whoever installs next. The vessel may receive a structurally generous successor or a structurally hostile failed installation; the next sign category to appear at the address tells which.

6.6 Signal-action gap (manipulation) signs

Going Out of Business Sale [maintained for years without closure]. Family Owned [recently acquired by chain]. Locally Owned [franchise].

The operator is exploiting the framework's diagnostic recognition to extract value from customer trust without underlying structural alignment. This category is structurally significant because it confirms that the customer-reading of belief-signal signs is real and consequential — operators would not bother gaming the signals if customers did not respond to them. The framework's research program (Section 8) includes specifying the conditions under which signal-action gap can be detected by sophisticated readers and the implications for customer trust calibration.

7. The diagnostic implications

The taxonomy yields several practical diagnostic moves:

Reading a neighborhood by its signs. A commercial corridor with an unusual density of *Under New Management* signs is a corridor with structural Founder's-Gap volatility — high operator turnover, likely commercial real estate pressure, possibly category-level demand shift. A corridor with high density of *Family Owned Since* signs is a heritage commercial district with operator-lineage stability. The Foundership Institute's broader empirical program (described in Graham, 2026b) maps commercial vessels by Vase signature; this paper adds storefront-sign mapping as a complementary methodology.

Reading a transition by the sign installed. When a small business changes ownership, the sign the new operator installs is a structural declaration of their installation strategy. *Under New Management* signals an intent to reset; the new operator is repudiating the prior belief and asking customers to trust a new one. *Same Recipe, New Owner* signals an intent to preserve operator-lineage L1 across the transition; the new operator is positioning themselves as the next link in the chain rather than as a replacement. *No sign installed* signals a strategy of continuity through silence; the new operator is hoping customers will not notice the transition. Each of these is a defensible strategy under specific conditions, and the framework can specify those conditions.

Reading the gap between sign and structural reality. When the sign declared and the underlying structural state diverge, the framework predicts customer trust erosion proportional to the gap. A *Family Owned Since 1962* sign on a business recently acquired by a chain will eventually be read by customers as deceptive, with associated trust collapse. A perpetual *Going Out of Business* sign loses its signaling power over years of inaccuracy, at which point it functions as marketing noise rather than belief signal. The framework predicts that signal-action gap is a leading indicator of L1 erosion in operations attempting it.

8. Empirical research program

The storefront belief-signaling 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 Sign-prediction of operator transition survival

Question: Do small businesses that post *Under New Management* signs at operator transition show different 24-month survival outcomes than those that change ownership without posting the sign?

Design: Photograph operator-transition events in a defined commercial corridor over 24 months. Categorize each by sign installed (or absence of sign). Track 24-month survival. Test whether sign category predicts survival outcomes, controlling for operator characteristics, vessel-Vase reading (per Graham, 2026b), and category demand.

8.2 Inter-observer reliability of sign-category coding

Question: Do trained observers reliably categorize storefront signs into the typology defined in Section 6?

Design: Inter-rater reliability study. Sample of N = 200 photographed signs from defined commercial corridors. Three independent observers categorize each sign per the typology. Calculate Cohen's kappa for category agreement.

8.3 Customer-trust response to L1-continuity signs

Question: Do consumers report different trust evaluations of small businesses based on the presence and content of L1-continuity signs?

Design: Survey experiment. Sample of N = 400 adult consumers presented with photographs of small-business storefronts with and without *Family Owned Since* signs, with year of founding varied. Measure self-reported trust, purchase intent, and willingness to pay. Test whether trust evaluations track with sign presence and signaled founding year.

8.4 Neighborhood-level density of belief-signaling signs as predictor of commercial vitality

Question: Does the density and category distribution of belief-signaling signs in a commercial corridor predict corridor-level commercial vitality (vacancy rates, mean tenant duration, gross commercial revenue)?

Design: Cross-sectional study. Map sign density and categories across N = 30 defined commercial corridors. Compare against commercial vitality metrics. Test whether sign profile predicts vitality after controlling for demographic and economic variables.

8.5 Signal-action gap detection and consumer trust collapse

Question: Do consumers detect and respond to signal-action gap (deceptive belief-signaling) in ways that produce measurable trust collapse?

Design: Survey experiment. Present consumers with belief-signaling signage paired with disclosures revealing signal-action gap (e.g., a *Family Owned Since 1962* sign with a disclosure that the business was acquired by a chain in 2018). Measure trust evaluation pre- and post-disclosure. Compare to control groups receiving non-gap signage.

9. Scope notes and limitations

This paper presents a framework extension grounded in theoretical engagement with adjacent literatures and a defined typology rather than worked empirical cases. 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.

Specific limits:

- The taxonomy in Section 6 is based on observed patterns in American small-business commercial signage and is presented as a working typology, not as an exhaustive classification. Edge cases and category boundaries require refinement through the inter-rater reliability study specified in Section 8.2.
- The framework's primary applicability is to American small-business signage. Cross-cultural extension would require engagement with the international linguistic landscape literature (Backhaus, 2007; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009) and adaptation of the typology to local commercial-signage conventions.
- The signal-action gap category names a structural inversion of the diagnostic. The framework does not currently specify the detection threshold at which customers register signal-action gap, nor the trust-collapse trajectory once detected. These are empirical questions specified in Section 8.5.
- The framework treats the storefront sign as a *declaration* by the operator. The framework does not currently address how customers' interpretation of signs varies across customer demographics, sophistication, prior knowledge of the business, or community membership. This is a substantial research area beyond the present paper's scope.
- The taxonomy does not exhaustively cover all small-business signage. Promotional signage (sale prices, hours, menu items), regulatory signage (occupancy, licensing), and pure marketing copy are excluded by the operational definition in Section 5. The framework specifies a subcategory of public signage rather than claiming all public signage as structural diagnostic.

10. Conclusion: Reading the window

For more than a century, American small-business operators have been putting signs in their windows that declare structural belief states to passing customers. *Under New Management* is not just a notice of change in ownership — it is a public declaration that the prior operator's belief had reached a fatal Founder's-Gap state and a new belief is being installed in the same vessel. *Family Owned Since 1962* is not just a marketing tagline — it is a public assertion of operator-lineage L1 continuity across decades, offered to customers as a structural reason to trust the operator. *Original Owner Still Cooking* is not just a kitschy boast — it is a declaration that the chief-repeating-officer practice is actively being performed by the founder in person.

The leadership canon does not name these signs as a structural system. Sinek, Schein, Kotter, Drucker, Mintzberg, Gulati, and Lencioni each treat such signs as either marketing communication or surface artifact, missing what the operators displaying them already understand intuitively: the signs are doing structural work, declaring belief states, asking customers to read them as such.

The Foundership Institute claims this territory by naming the system, defining the categories, integrating the diagnostic with the framework's other instruments (the Vase, the vessel reading, the four-shape mode classification), and specifying the empirical research program required to validate the claim at population scale.

The signs were already there. The framework just names them.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, D. A. (1996). Measuring brand equity across products and markets. *California Management Review*, 38(3), 102–120.

Akerlof, G. A. (1970). The market for "lemons": Quality uncertainty and the market mechanism. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 84(3), 488–500.

Backhaus, P. (2007). *Linguistic landscapes: A comparative study of urban multilingualism in Tokyo*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Bitner, M. J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 57–71.

Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), 39–67.

Drucker, P. F. (1954). *The practice of management*. New York: Harper & Row.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor.

Graham, M. (2026b). The Vase is in the bricks: Architectural infrastructure as belief-maintenance variable in founder-led enterprise. *Foundership Institute white papers. ISBN 979-8-9965431-0-6*. Retrieved from thefoundership.org.

Graham, M. (2025a). *Foundership: A first-principles discipline focused on preserving founding belief.* Foundership Institute. ISBN 979-8-218-71006-4.

Graham, M. (2025b). *Bridging the Founder's gap: A position paper on belief erosion in growth-stage organizations and the structural discipline required to prevent drift.* Foundership Institute. ISBN 979-8-9965431-5-1.

Gulati, R. (2022). *Deep purpose: The heart and soul of high-performance companies*. New York: Harper Business.

Kotler, P. (1973). Atmospherics as a marketing tool. *Journal of Retailing*, 49(4), 48–64.

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16(1), 23–49.

Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mintzberg, H. (1973). *The nature of managerial work*. New York: Harper & Row.

Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. H., & Schein, P. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). *Discourses in place: Language in the material world*. London: Routledge.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Shohamy, E., & Gorter, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*. New York: Routledge.

Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. New York: Portfolio.

Spence, M. (1973). Job market signaling. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 87(3), 355–374.

The Foundership Institute · thefoundership.org · Inquiries: matt@thefoundership.org · v1 published 2026-06-06. Companion to The Founder's Gap *(Graham, 2025a) and* The Vase is in the Bricks *(Graham, 2026b). Subsequent papers in the series will cover the quantification and qualification of belief in founder-led enterprise, AXIS as the operating system of leadership thinking, and the mispriced-believer signature in private-form enterprise.*