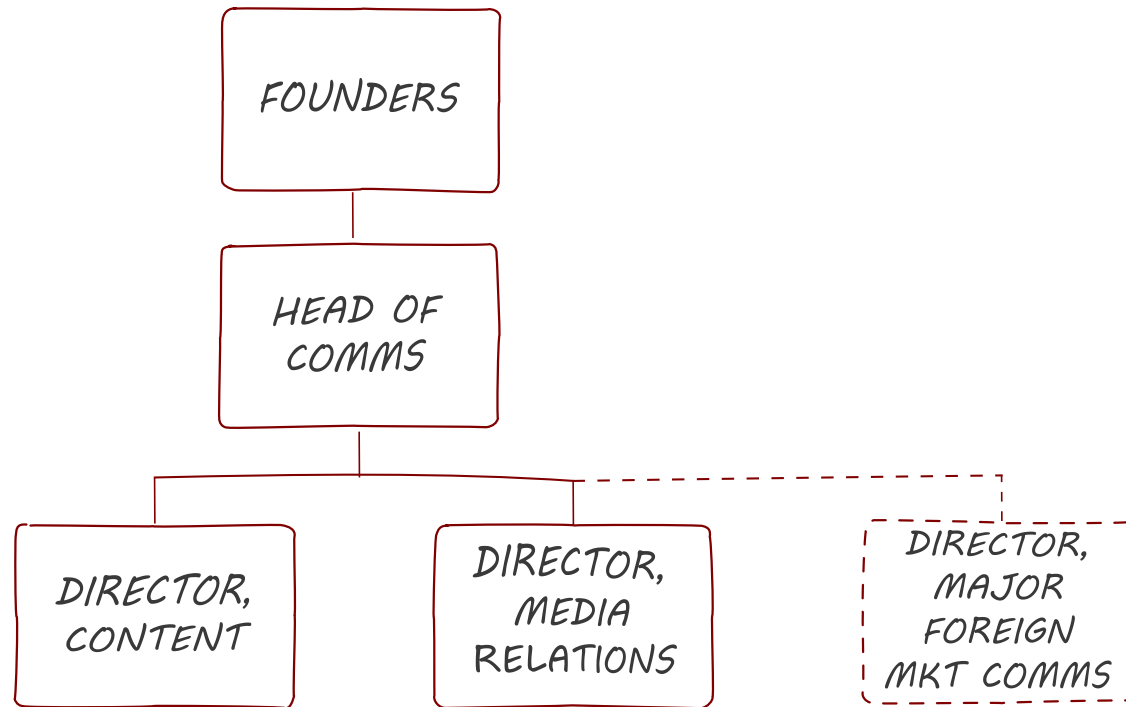


# Ramping Up: Making Early Hires



No matter how good the company's first communications hire is, at some point – and probably not too far down the road – it will make sense to build an internal team to handle employee communications, financial communications, international messaging and even public policy. Again, it helps to start the process well ahead of time – before a staffing need becomes a business problem.

The precise timing and the skills you prioritize hiring for will depend on the

unique needs of the business and your communications objectives. Regardless of their precise roles, those first hires will be crucial because they will grow into the first layer of management below the top communicator. They might start out in very hands-on, tactical roles, but they should also be people you can envision growing into more strategic roles in the not-too-distant future.

One relatively common approach we have seen is to start by hiring one director-level

communicator to handle the more direct-to-customer tasks that bleed into the pure marketing realm (branding, owned content generation, social media engagement) and another to handle more traditional public relations efforts (media relations, issues management). A company with a relatively advanced global strategy might also consider adding leaders in important regions. Whatever their functional areas, the more opportunity you can give all these people to grow into their roles before building out staff below them, the better.