

fierce



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IMPACT REPORT

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The Missing Layer

Access. Preparation. Results.

There is no shortage of conversation around female founders in tech. The usual narratives: pipeline issues, lack of ambition, lower performance. But the data tells another story - **women founders are outperforming.**

Globally, companies with female founders deliver stronger returns per dollar invested, and exit faster than their peers. And yet they receive just 20% of venture capital. The gap is not in the founders - it is in the infrastructure around them. Ireland is no exception; just ~15% of startup funding here reaches companies with a female founder.

Fierce exists to fix that. Not by changing the founders - by preparing them to win in a system that was not built for them, and connecting them to the networks that drive real outcomes. **We do not talk about the gap. We close it.**

Last year, we supported over 350 founders, working intensively with 24 of them - taking a number to New York and London, opening doors, and putting them in front of the right people. The result: over €5.7 million raised by Fierce founders. Investment is not the only measure of a thriving company - but when founders are closing capital, it tells us the model works.

Lorraine E. Curham
Founder, Fierce

Powered by Dogpatch Labs and NDRC



Missing Layer

Same Talent. Different Outcomes.

This Is The Gap. And This Is Why It Exists.

Access
Gap

Irish startup funding reaches companies with a female founder - below the European and US average.

15%

- Not a pipeline problem.**
Women are starting companies at record rates.
- Not a performance problem.**
Women-founded companies deliver stronger returns per dollar invested.
- Not a growth problem.**
Women founders exit faster and at higher valuations.

Sources: TechIreland, Pitchbook, Gusto, Enterprise Ireland, BCG, MassChallenge

Then, why? Same game, but different rules.

Data shows women are asked different questions than men in investor rooms - and it costs them. Prevention questions instead of promotion questions, making them 5x less likely to secure funding. They are held to higher standards. Networking advice can actively work against them. The system was built for different players.

Sources: Harvard Business School, London Business School

Then, why? Same networks, but different access.

Over 80% of investment deals and B2B customer relationships start through warm introductions. Female founders are 38% less likely to have direct access to those introductions - for capital and for customers.

Sources: Founders Forum, Edelman Trust Barometer

Address these two things and the 15% changes.
That is what Fierce does.

The Fierce Growth Model

How Access Becomes Outcomes

The Fierce Growth Model was shaped through three years of operating across the ecosystem, combining founder experience, network insight, and global best practice. It guides how Fierce builds access and supports founders to scale.

Sequence: Prepare the founder → Connect her to the right network → Unlock growth



1 Founder Readiness

Prepared for the system as it actually exists - not as it should be. Without preparation, access does not translate into progress.

- Go-to-market sprints
- Investor Q&A coaching
- Network strategy
- Customer positioning

2 Network Access

Direct access to the networks that drive startup growth - investors, operators, and decision-makers. When access is intentional, relationships compound.

- Investor introductions
- Operator connections
- Peer founder network
- Global access

3 Growth

Customers and capital determine whether a company scales. When founders are prepared and connected to the right networks, these outcomes accelerate.

- €5.7m raised in year one
- 350+ founders supported
- 24 intensively supported
- New York & London sprints

Founder Outcome

EstateMin

EstateMin founder Isabella Hughes joined a Global Sprint in New York. Working with our mentors, she pivoted to the US market and converted a connection from the sprint into her first American customer - this is the Fierce Growth Model in action.



EstateMin - Global Sprint NYC

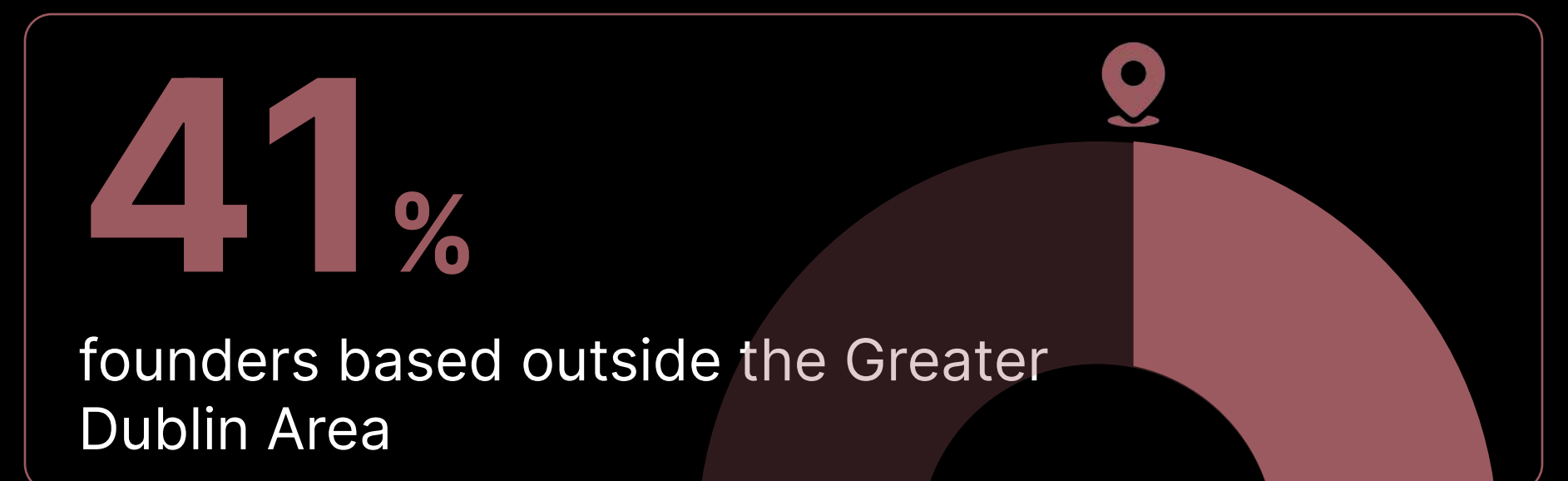
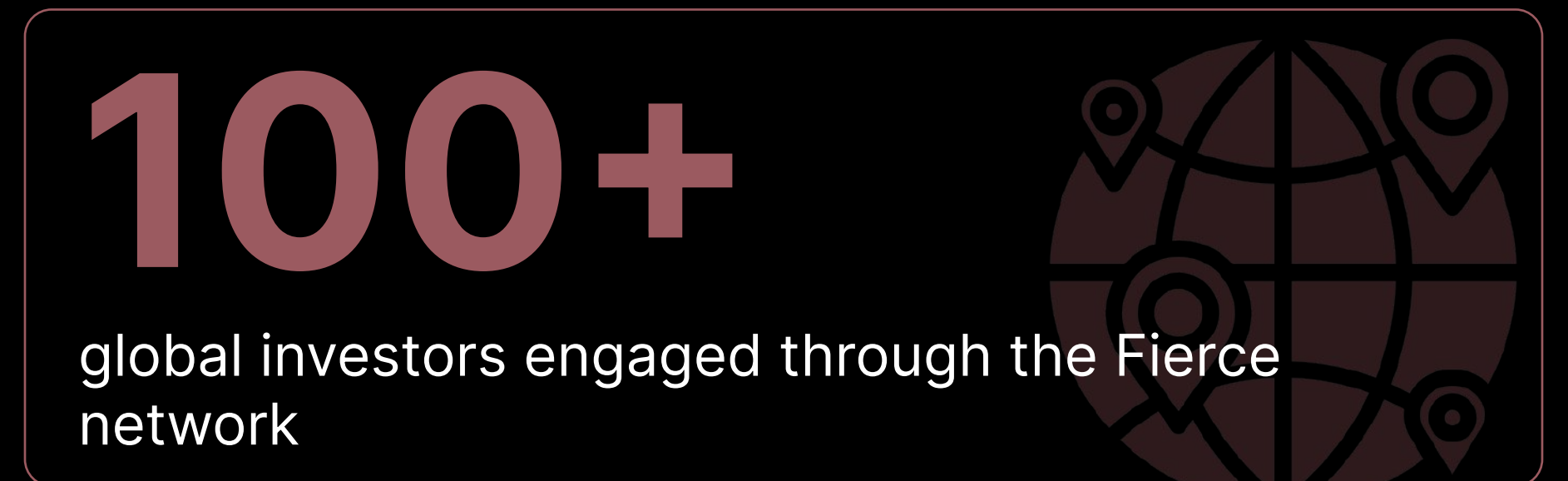
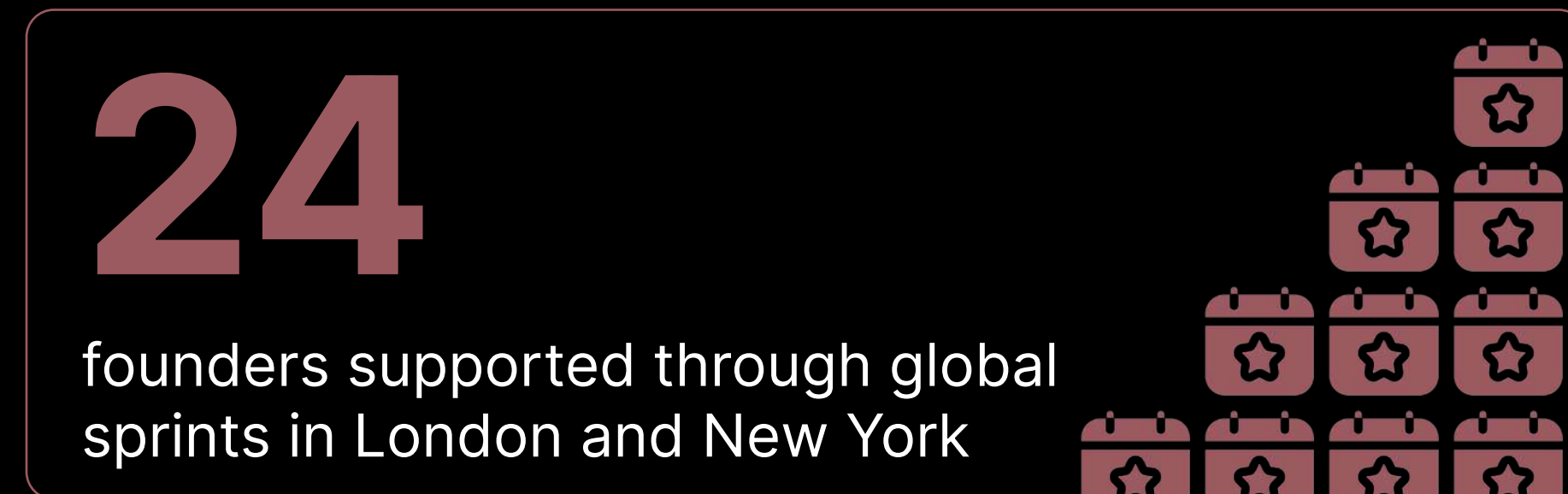
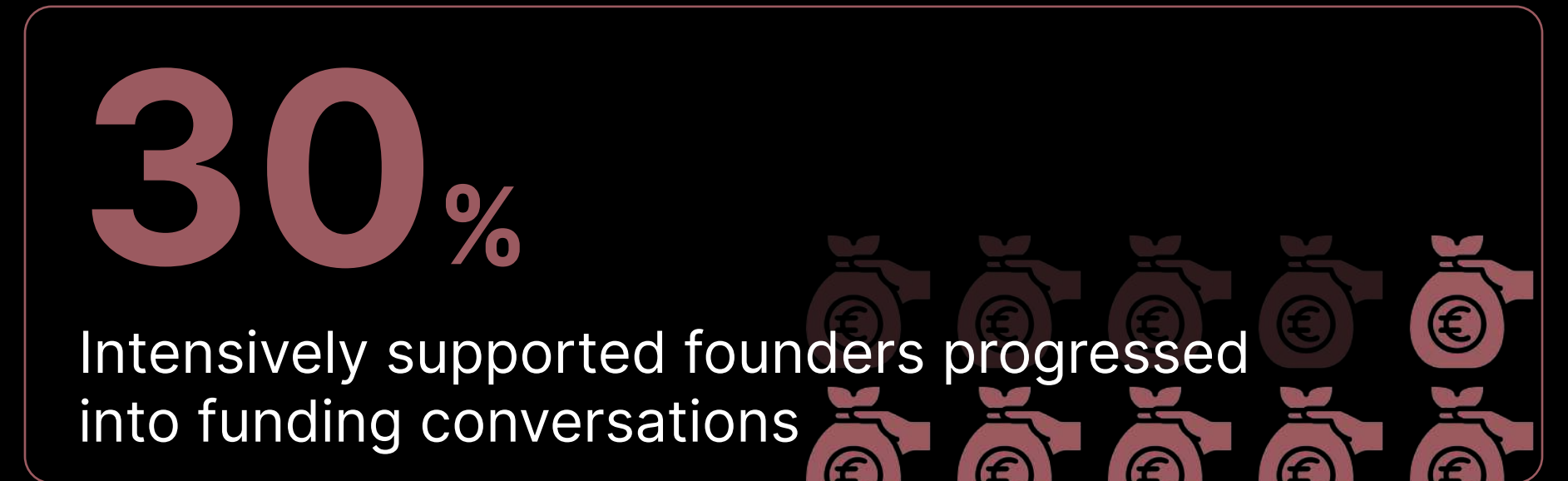
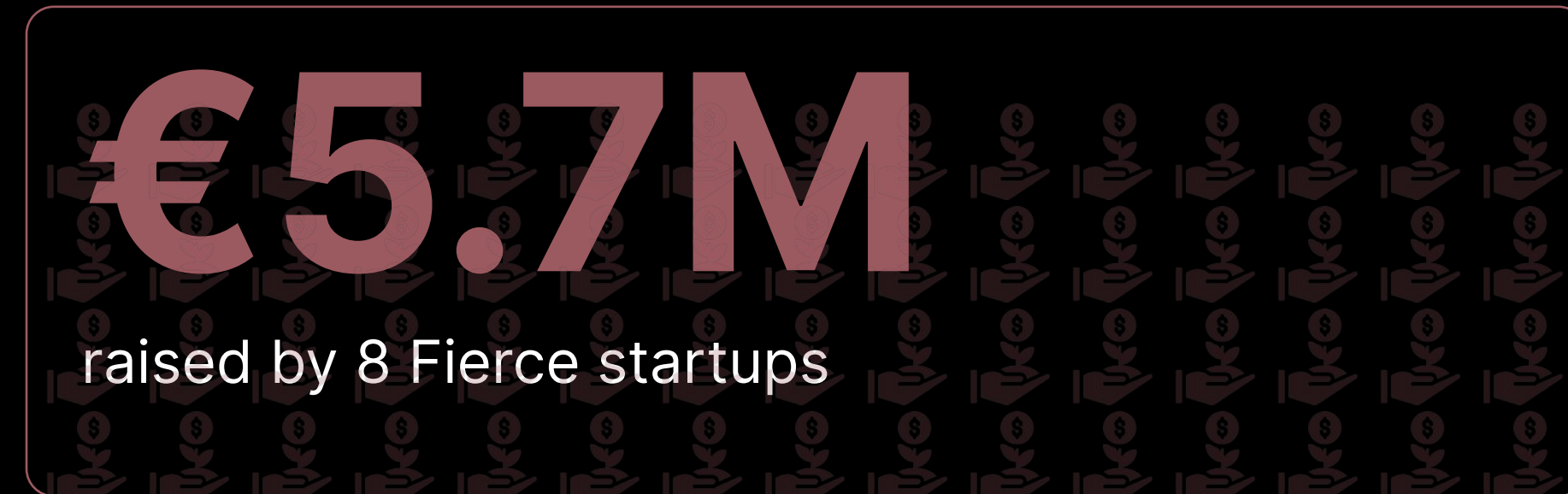
Growth Model

This Is What Closing The Gap Looks Like

Results Across The Fierce Network

The Fierce network is designed to translate access into outcomes. The figures below reflect the scale of founder engagement, investor connectivity, and capital progression delivered over the past 12 months.

impact



How Access Turns Into Outcomes

The Programmes, Events And Engagements That Make It Happen

Fierce creates direct access between founders and the networks that drive startup growth. These environments are designed to convert introductions into measurable outcomes.

1. National Summits

Invite-only, high-trust events connecting early-stage women founders with exited founders, investors, operators, and ecosystem partners. 100 founders, 20 sessions, 30+ successful founders, investors and operators.

Highlights

200+

women founders engaged across two annual summits

>10%

entered funding pipelines

2. Global Sprints

International immersion in New York, London, or other major city, embedding founders within investor, customer, and operator networks through curated meetings and in-market engagement.

Highlights

€2.6M

raised within two weeks of the London Sprint

24

women founders supported across New York and London

Founder Outcome - London Sprint

LindaAI was raising when they attended the Fierce London Sprint. At our founder-investor dinner with around 50 founders and investors, we made a warm introduction to 6 Degree Capital. Within two weeks, they closed a €2.6M round with 6 Degree Capital as the lead investor.



Fierce in Action

3. Investor Dinners & Roundtables

Private cross-border engagement with active investors across Ireland, the UK, Europe, and the US. Designed to deepen relationships and strengthen capital pathways into women-led tech startups.

Highlights

100+ investors

30% founders closed rounds



4. Fierce Five

Intensive support for five high-potential women-led tech startups. Combined mentorship, founder coaching, and operator expertise to strengthen investor readiness, traction, and international growth.

Highlights

>€1m raised

60% companies reached key revenue milestones



5. Strategic Access Forums

Closed-door engagements connecting founders with senior leaders, operators, and technical talent. Sessions included Sarah Friar, CFO of OpenAI, SaaS Stock forums and engineering access for founding teams.

Highlights

€400K OpenAI credits for Fierce founders

80 engineer intros made



Zoe Chambers, Frontline

“We see Fierce as the leading initiative for women founders in Ireland; practical, results-driven, building a network of exceptional founders”.

Partners & Sponsors

Those Backing The Missing Layer

The Organisations Making This Possible

Fierce operates alongside leading technology companies, investors, and ecosystem organisations committed to strengthening access for ambitious women founders. The organisations shown here represent a selection of those who supported this work through sponsorship, partnership, and engagement.



TaylorWessing



Accel

Frontline



J.P.Morgan



earlybird



UNLOCKVC

techstars_

.SVV

CHE
RRY



The Work Continues

Over the past three years, Fierce has operated across Ireland's technology ecosystem, building trusted connections between founders, investors, operators, and institutions. Through that work, one insight has remained consistent: when founders gain access to the right networks early, outcomes change.

The work ahead is not about expanding activity. It is about strengthening the connective layer that enables ambitious founders to scale - deepening trusted networks, increasing international reach, and continuing to support founders at the moments where access matters most.

This progress reflects the contribution of a wider community across the ecosystem, founders, investors, partners, and institutions who believe stronger networks create stronger companies.

The work continues.



What's
Next



Be Part Of What Comes Next

Fierce connects experienced founders, investors, operators, and institutions strengthening access for early-stage women founders across Ireland's tech ecosystem.

Access to capital, customers, and growth is relationship-driven. Exceptional women founders scale when they are connected to the networks that determine those outcomes.

Join us at fiercetekfounders.com

Join