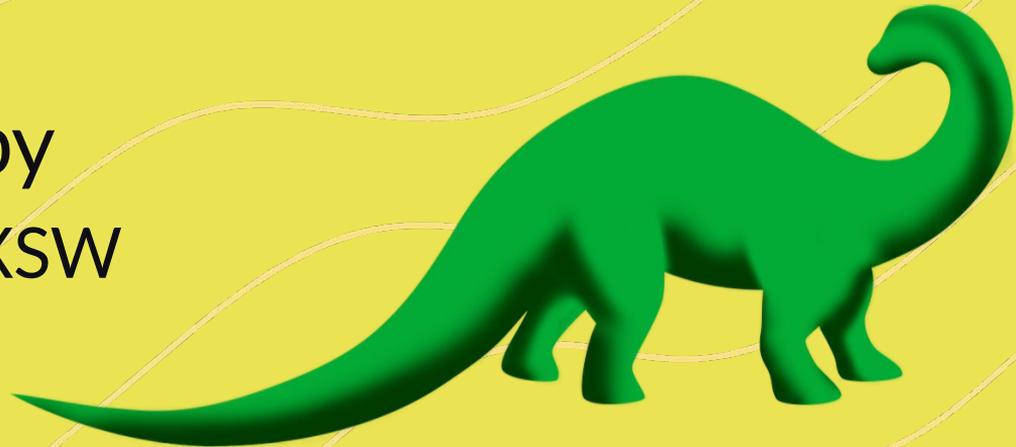


The Art of Scaling Your Startup ***Without*** Venture Capital

Joe Colopy

03.13.26 @ SXSW



Show of Hands



The Dominant Startup Narrative

**Raise
Money**

**Grow
Fast**

**Become
A Unicorn**

The Silicon Valley Model

My 15-year(ish) Overnight Success

Summer 2000

**Left
Paycheck**

2002

**Started
Bronto**

2015
**Sold to
NetSuite /
Oracle**

The Bootstrap Path







BrontoMail - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address: http://brantomail.net/home/index.php

 Welcome BrontoMail! [Sign Out](#)

[Home](#) [Add](#) [View](#) [Send](#) [Help](#)

Welcome to BrontoMail

Account	
Username:	BrontoMail
Email Address:	brantomail@joeism.com
Password:	Change
Created:	8 Mar 02
Plan:	Complimentary
Emails Sent:	140 (since inception) 140 (this month) 10000 (monthly limit)

[help](#) [How to Get Started](#)

Subscriber Lists			
Name	Subscribers		
BrontoMail Feature Update	4 (active) 0 (disabled)	Customize	
BrontoMail NEWS!	289 (active) 0 (disabled)	Customize	Create List

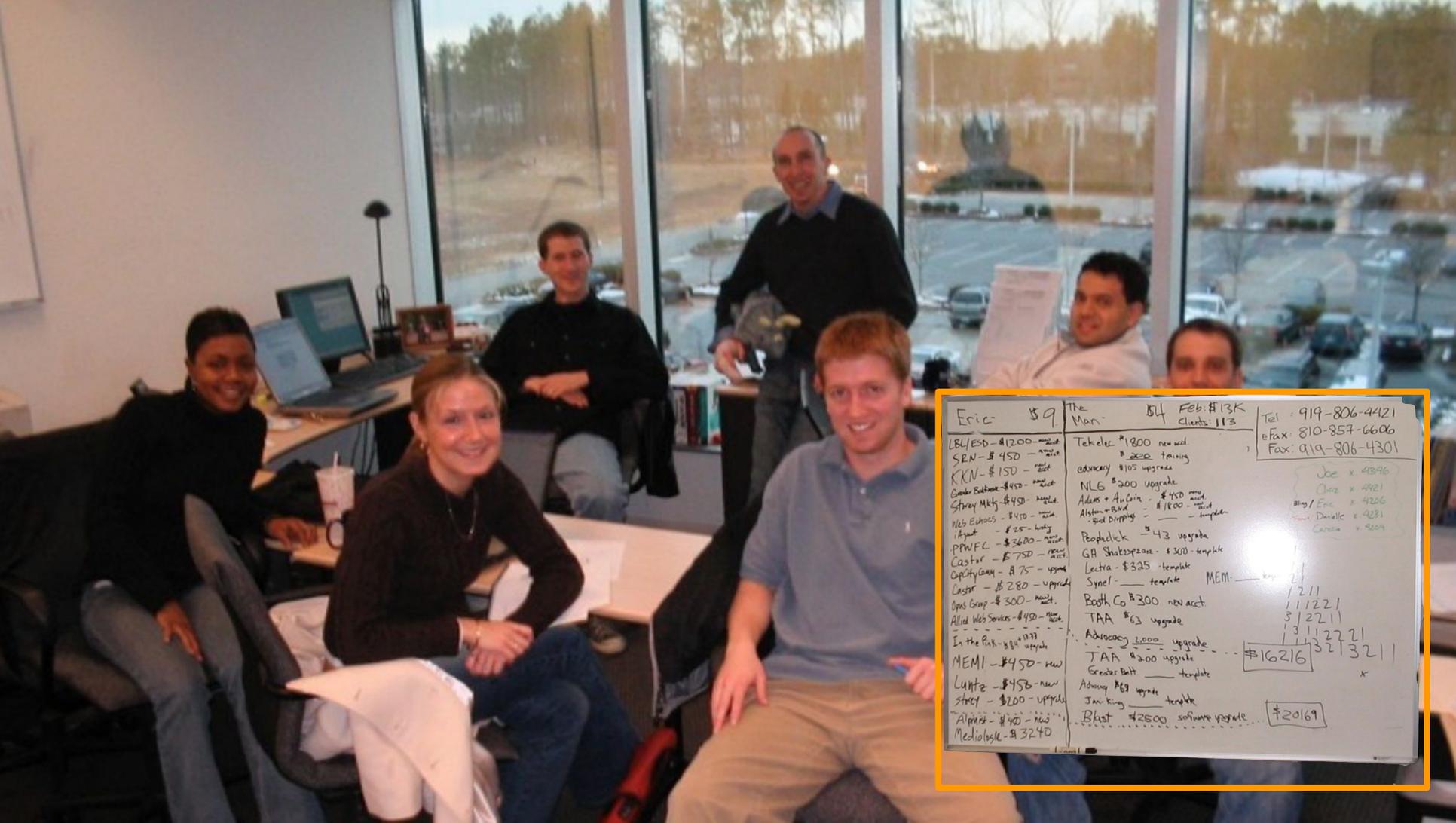
Email Campaigns			
Date	Subject	Subscriber List	Status
25 Mar 02	Release of BrontoMail v1.35!	BrontoMail Feature Update	sent
17 Mar 02	Release of BrontoMail v1.38!	BrontoMail Feature Update	sent

[See All](#)

Copyright 2002 BrontoMail v1.35 | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Anti-Spam Policy](#)

Internet





Eric - \$9	The Mon: 54 Feb #13K Clients: 113	Tel: 919-806-4421 eFax: 810-857-6606 Fax: 919-806-4301
LBL/ESD - \$1200 - new SRN - \$450 - new KKN - \$150 - new Gender Balance - \$450 - new Strategy Mktg - \$450 - new NES Echoes - \$450 - new iAgent - \$25 - new PWFEC - \$3600 - new Castor - \$750 - new CapCity/CAAM - \$75 - new Castor - \$260 - new Ops Group - \$500 - new Allied Web Services - \$450 - new In the Park - \$800 - new MEMI - \$450 - new Lyntz - \$450 - new stacy - \$200 - new Alvin - \$400 - new Mediologic - \$3240	Tekler - \$1800 new acct advocacy \$200 training advocacy \$105 upgrade NLG \$200 upgrade Adams + AuCoin - \$450 new Alston + Bird - \$1800 new Bud Dipping - new - complete Peopledick - \$43 upgrade GA Shakespeare - \$300 - template Lectra - \$325 - template Synel - new - template Booth Co - \$300 new acct TAA - \$63 upgrade Advocacy \$2000 upgrade JAA - \$200 upgrade Greater Balt - new - template Advocacy \$68 upgrade Jan King - new - template Blast - \$2500 software upgrade	Joe x 4346 Chaz x 4421 Amy / Eric x 4206 Danielle x 4281 Carolee x 4209 MEMI - new 1/211 1/1221 3/2211 13/12221 11/3213211 x \$16216 \$20169







Bronto Software was founded in 2002 and bootstrapped until sold to NetSuite in 2015 for \$200m. NetSuite acquired by Oracle in 2016.

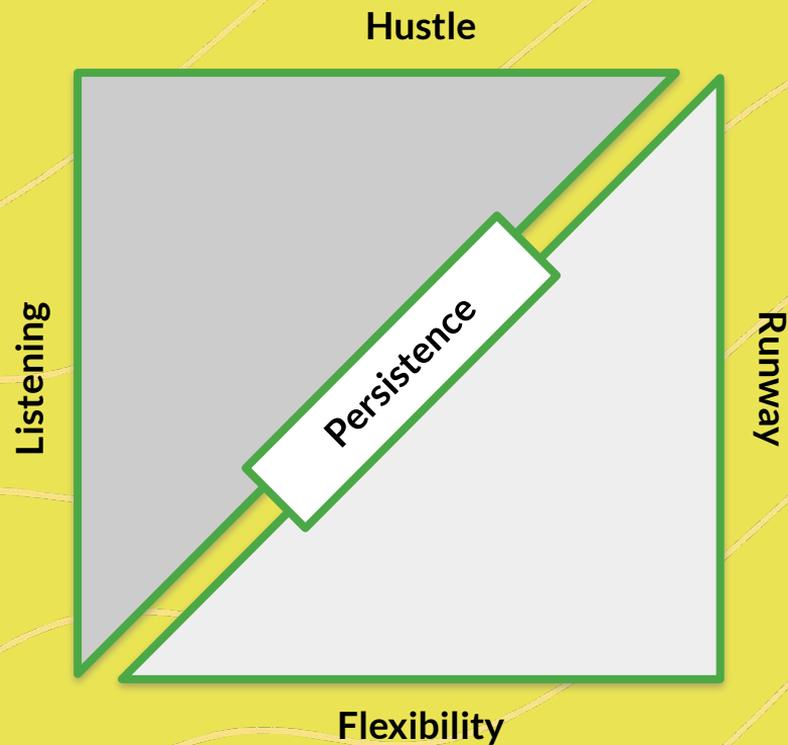
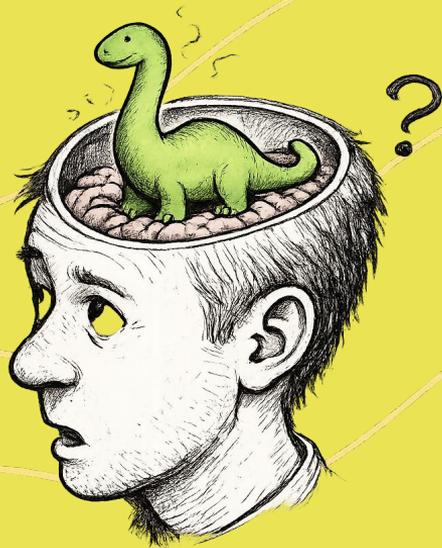
Cloud application. Software-as-a-Service. #1 in Commerce Marketing Automation.

300+ people. HQed in Durham, North Carolina. Offices in London, Sydney, NYC and LA.

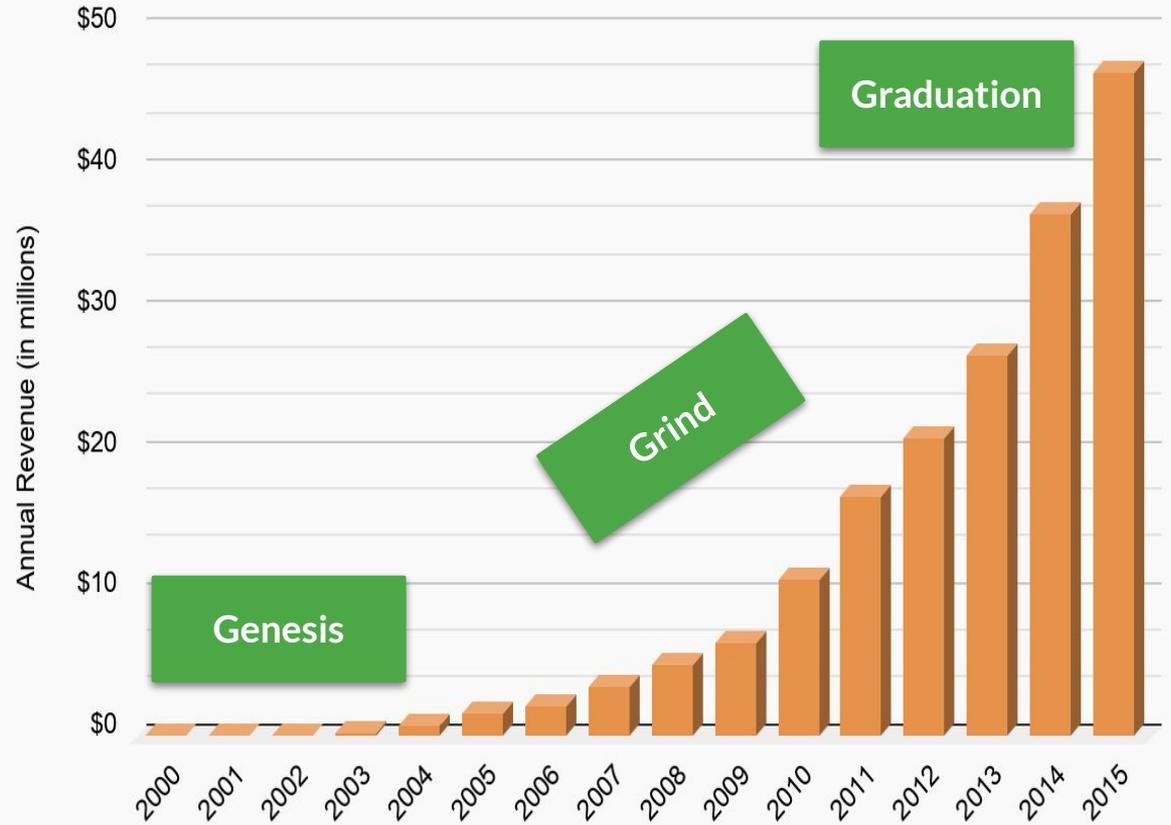


***Frameworks
Playbooks
And Lessons
(oh my!)***

Bootstrapping Mindset



The Three Gs



Bootstrapping Model



Track Record

Cash Flow &
Pricing

Circumstances

Ownership

Propensity

Control

Business Model

Varies

The Myths

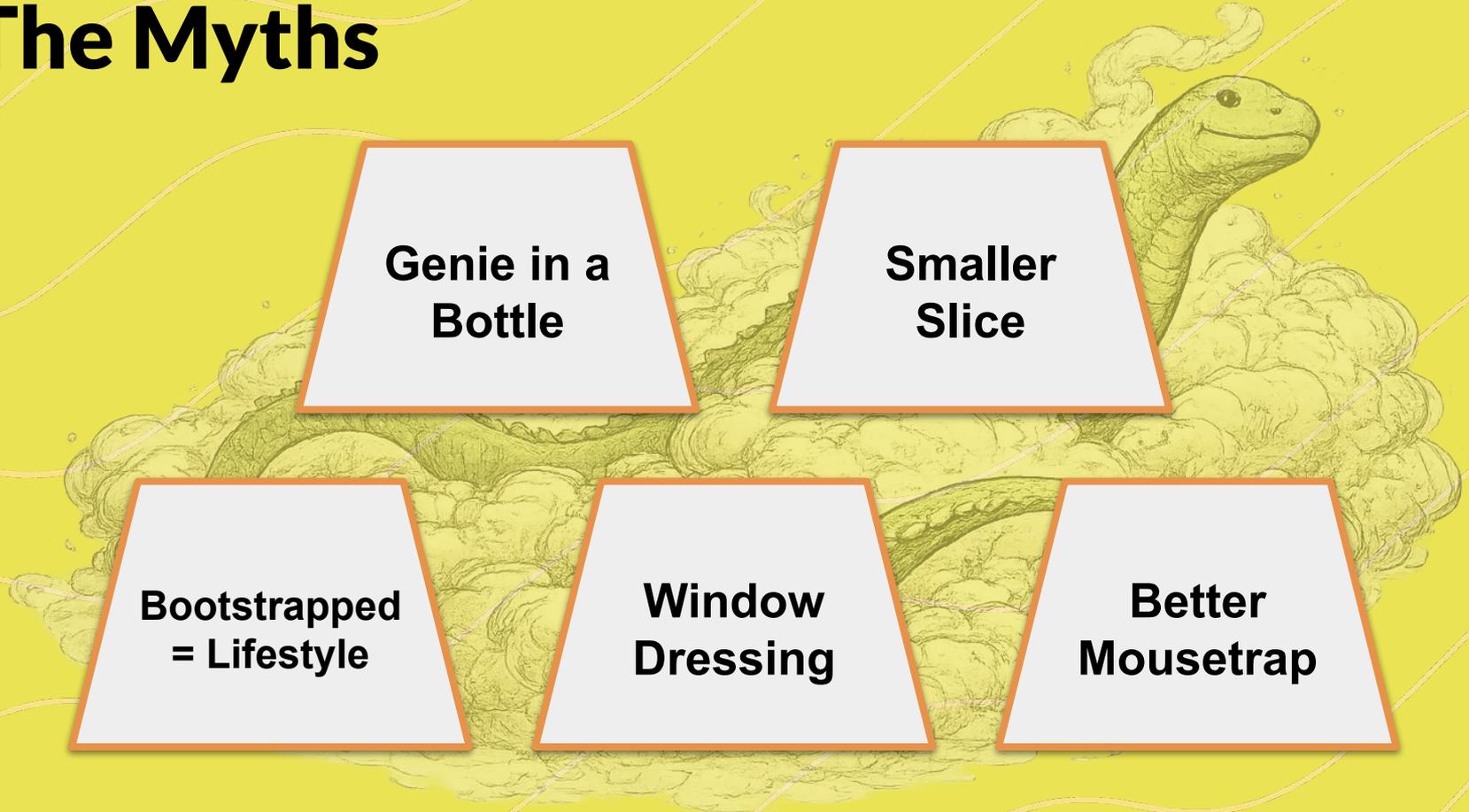
**Genie in a
Bottle**

**Smaller
Slice**

**Bootstrapped
= Lifestyle**

**Window
Dressing**

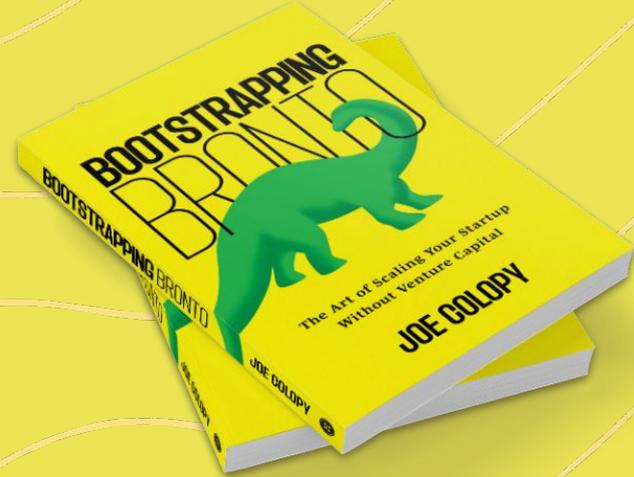
**Better
Mousetrap**



The Fourth G

THE COLOPY KEIRETSU





GrepBeat

Nonprofit media organization covering startups throughout North Carolina.

<https://grepbeat.com>

The screenshot shows the GrepBeat website interface. At the top left is the GrepBeat logo with the tagline 'TRIANGLE TECH AND BEYOND!'. To the right is a banner for 'GREP-A-PALOOZA 2026', described as 'The Startup Conference for the Triangle and Beyond' with tickets available. Below the header is a navigation bar with categories: MILDLY BREAKING NEWS, PODCASTS, IRLS, MERCH, STUFF, and MORE. A 'NEWS TICKER' section shows the current article: '[March 11, 2026] In The Soup: Live! Shaping'. A search bar is on the right.

The main article features a large green banner with a photo of Alex Bloom, CEO, and the text 'LIVE In The SOUP Shaping Communities As a CEO'. It is sponsored by Curious Ant. Below the banner is the article title 'In The Soup: Live! Shaping Communities as a CEO' by Katelyn Crespo, dated March 11, 2026. The article text begins: 'Happy In The Soup 🍲 Wednesday! Welcome to the finale episode of the Winter 2026 season of "In The Soup!" As always, thank you so much for listening and continuing on this [...]'.

Below the article are three featured content cards: 'TRIANGLE' (Launch/KPMG Accelerator Kicks Off Third Cohort in Chapel Hill), 'MONDAY MIX' (Monday Mix: LiLa, Seed The South, a DEEEFER Dive, and...), and 'WILMINGTON' (Empowering Carolina Beach Vendors with EventureMap).

On the right sidebar, there is a 'Get Some Inbox Love' subscription prompt, a 'POPULAR POSTS' section with three items, and an 'UPCOMING EVENTS' section with two events: 'Mar 12 LiLa: Building Confidence for Conference Season' and 'Mar 24 GrepBeat After-Party for CED Venture Connect'.

Primordial

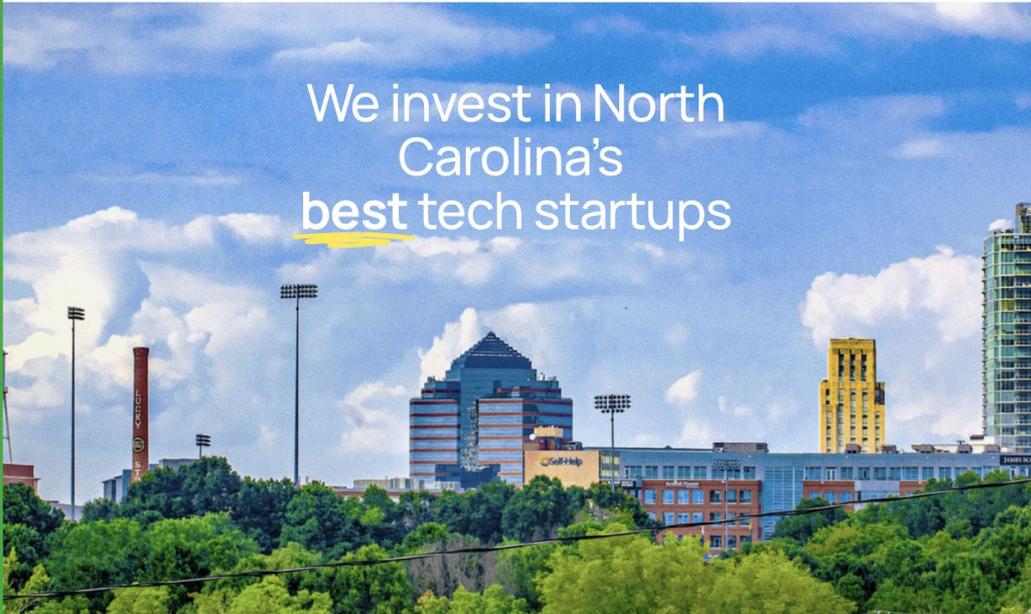
Primordial Ventures is a pre-seed/seed investor in North Carolina startups.

<https://primordial.io>



[Focus](#) [Team](#) [Portfolio](#) [Community](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

A photograph of a cityscape, likely Charlotte, North Carolina, featuring a prominent blue and white building with a pyramid-shaped roof, surrounded by green trees and other buildings under a blue sky with white clouds.

We invest in North
Carolina's
best tech startups

About us.

We invest in and support the best early-stage software startups based in North Carolina.

Bootstrapping Bronto

Published in September 2025.

<https://colopy.com/bootstrappingbronto>

<https://a.co/d/0cFtPKIO>

The screenshot shows the Amazon product page for the book "Bootstrapping Bronto: The Art of Scaling Your Startup Without Venture Capital" by Joe Colopy. The page is displayed on a desktop browser with a dark theme. At the top, the Amazon Prime logo is visible, along with the delivery location "Durham 27701" and a search bar. The book cover features a green dinosaur on a yellow background. The price for the Kindle edition is \$9.23, available instantly. Other formats include Hardcover at \$27.12 and Paperback at \$19.99. The book has a 4.8-star rating from 27 reviews. A "Read Now" button is prominently displayed, indicating the user already owns the item. The "Follow the author" section shows a "Follow" button for Joe Colopy. The bottom of the page includes options for "Print length" (148 pages) and "Language" (English), along with a "Report an issue" link.

amazon prime Deliver to Joe Durham 27701 Kindle Store Search Amazon

Bootstrapping Bronto: The Art of Scaling Your Startup Without Venture Capital

Kindle Edition
by Joe Colopy (Author) | Format: Kindle Edition
4.8 ★★★★★ (27) See all formats and editions

Your startup can be successful without venture capital.

Joe Colopy did it. So can you.

In 2002, Colopy co-founded Bronto Software and, over the next thirteen years, grew it to over \$40 million in revenue and 250 employees until it was acquired for \$200 million. And he did it without a dime of outside capital.

Bootstrapping Bronto not only tells Colopy's story, sharing the hard-won lessons learned from being in the bootstrapped trenches, but also celebrates this alternative path for building a startup.

Follow the author

Joe Colopy Follow

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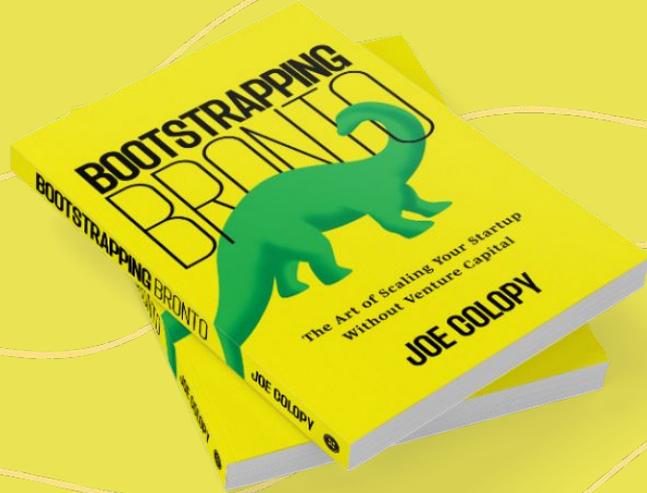
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