A Trading Play?

Growth stage	Stage 1 Start-up	Stage 2 Young Growth	Stage 3: High Growth	Stage 4 & 5 Mature Stable	Stage 6 Decline
Key Questions	Is there a market for the product or service? How big is that market? Will you survive?	Do people use your product or service? How much do they like it?	Will people pay for the product or service? Can you scale up, i.e., grow as you get bigger?	Can you make money of the product and service and sustain profitability in the face of competition?	What will you get if you sell your assets? How do you plan to return cash flows to your investors?
Pricing Metrics & Measures	Market size, Cash on hand, Access to capital	Number of users, User intensity (EV/User)	User engagement with model, Revenues (EV/Sales)	Earnings levels and growth (PE, EV/EBIT)	Cash flows, Payout & Debt servicing (PBV, EV/EBITDA)
Narrative vs Numbers	Mostly or all narrative	More narrative than numbers	Mix of narrative & numbers	More numbers than narrative	Mostly or all numbers
Value Drivers	Total market size, Market Share & Target Margin	Revenue Growth (and its drivers)	Revenue Growth & Reinvestment	Operating margins and Return on capital	Dividends/Cash Returns & Debt ratios
Dangers	*Macro delusions,* where companies are collectively overpriced, given market size.	*Value distractions,* with focus on wrong revenue drivers.	*Growth illusions,* with failure to factor in the cost of growth.	*Disruption Denial,* with failure to see threats to sustainable profits.	*Liquidation leakage,* with unrealistic assumptions about what others will pay for liquidated assets.
Transitions		*Potential to Product*	*Product to Revenues*	*Revenues to Profits*	*Profits to Cash flows*

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