

Advisor Equity Research

Market benchmarks, standard structures, and where Will's deal sits.

MARKET BENCHMARKS — WHAT ADVISORS ACTUALLY GET

SOURCE	DATA TYPE	PRE-SEED ADVISOR	STRATEGIC ADVISOR	EXPERT/HEAVY
Carta (actual grants, 2025)	Real data	0.24%	—	—
FAST Agreement (industry template)	Standard	0.25%	0.50%	1.0%
ICanPitch (2026 guide)	Recommended	0.25-0.50%	0.50%	1.0%
SeedLegals (2026)	Recommended	0.25-0.50%	0.50-1.0%	1.0-2.0%
Incentrium (2026 guide)	Recommended	0.25%	0.50%	1.0%
pactdraft.ai (2026)	Recommended	0.25-0.50%	—	1.0%

Key finding: The market ceiling for a standard advisor is 1%. The average pre-seed advisor grant on Carta is 0.24%. Anything above 1% is non-standard and requires justification.

PART-TIME CO-FOUNDER BENCHMARKS

SOURCE	COMMITMENT	TYPICAL RANGE
Hustle Fund	Part-time, keeps day job, 10-20 hrs/week	5-15%
Pillsbury / JD Supra	Contribution-based splits	10-25% for late co-founders
culta.ai	Part-time vs full-time founder	"15-30% of what full-time founder gets"
Under30CEO (2026)	Joining after product built	10-20%

Key finding: Part-time co-founders who keep their day jobs and contribute 10-20 hrs/week typically get 5-15%. For lighter involvement (2-5 hrs/week), the range drops to 2-5%.

THE SPECTRUM — ADVISOR TO CO-FOUNDER

ROLE	HOURS/WEEK	TYPICAL EQUITY	VESTING	WHAT THEY DO
Standard advisor	2-5/month	0.25-0.50%	2yr monthly	Intros, advice, quarterly calls
Strategic advisor	2-5/week	0.50-1.0%	2yr monthly	Regular strategy input, some intros
Expert/heavy advisor	5-10/week	1.0-2.0%	2yr monthly	Deep involvement, domain expertise
Part-time contributor	5-10/week	2-5%	2-4yr, cliff	Real work product, code, sales
Part-time co-founder	10-20/week	5-15%	4yr, 1yr cliff	Owns a domain, keeps day job
Full-time co-founder	40+/week	20-50%	4yr, 1yr cliff	All in, quits job

WHERE WILL'S DEAL SITS

ASPECT	MARKET STANDARD	WILL'S DEAL	ASSESSMENT
Base equity	0.25-1% (advisor) or 5-15% (PT co-founder)	7%	Above advisor ceiling, within PT co-founder range
Maximum equity	1% (advisor) or 15% (PT co-founder)	10%	Generous for the commitment level described
Commitment	2-5 hrs/week for strategic advisor	"Few hours/week, flexible"	Matches strategic advisor level
Vesting	2yr monthly (advisors), 4yr w/ cliff (co-founders)	2yr, 60-day cliff	Standard advisor vesting
Hourly quota	None for advisors, defined for co-founders	None	Appropriate for advisor role

Will is getting part-time co-founder equity (7-10%) for strategic advisor commitment (few hours/week, flexible). That's 7-40x market rate for what's described. The justification is the friendship, the Google/Brown credibility, and the potential for Will to deepen involvement over time.

STANDARD VESTING STRUCTURES

TYPE	SCHEDULE	CLIFF	USED FOR
Advisor standard	2 years, monthly	None or 3 months	Light advisors
FAST standard	2 years, monthly	None	All advisor tiers
Co-founder standard	4 years, monthly	1 year	Full-time co-founders
Will's deal	2 years, monthly	60 days	Hybrid — advisor timeline, co-founder-level equity

INCENTIVE DESIGN RESEARCH

What motivates advisors to stay engaged (from behavioral economics + startup compensation research):

1. **Visibility into impact** — advisors who can see their contribution's effect stay 3x more engaged than those who can't (GrowthMentor, 2022)
2. **Specific asks over standing quotas** — "Can you join this call Thursday?" beats "Do 10 hours this week" (Tran VC, 2026)
3. **Shared wins** — real-time communication when milestones hit creates emotional investment (Billy Okeyo incentive design, 2026)
4. **Upgrade path credibility** — advisors contribute more when they believe deeper involvement leads to more equity, not just more work (Incentrium, 2026)

What kills advisor engagement:

- No engagement structure (equity sits there, advisor forgets about you)
- Hourly tracking (feels like employment, not advising)
- Milestone formulas (mechanical, not motivating)
- Lack of information (advisor can't see if their help mattered)

SOURCES

SOURCE	DATE	URL
Carta — Advisor Equity Data	Nov 2025	carta.com/learn/startups/equity-management/advisory-shares
FAST Agreement (Skala 2025)	Sep 2025	skala.io/fast
ICanPitch — Advisor Guide	Jan 2026	icanpitch.com/blog/startup-advisor-equity-guide
SeedLegals — Advisor Shares	Feb 2026	investguiding.com (SeedLegals reprint)
Incentrium — Advisory Shares	Mar 2026	incentrium.com/blog/advisory-shares
pactdraft.ai — Advisor Equity	Feb 2026	pactdraft.ai/blog/startup-advisor-equity-guide
Hustle Fund — PT Co-Founder	Aug 2023	hustlefund.vc/blog
Pillsbury / JD Supra — Co-Founder Equity	Aug 2025	jdsupra.com
culta.ai — Bootstrapped Equity	Mar 2026	culta.ai/blog/cofounder-equity-salary-split
Tran VC — Advisor Equity	Jan 2026	tran.vc
GrowthMentor — Advisor Compensation	Jun 2022	growthmentor.com/blog/startup-advisor-compensation
Billy Okeyo — Incentive Design	Feb 2026	billyokeyo.com/package-scheme-of-incentives
FasterCapital — Accelerated Vesting	Apr 2025	fastercapital.com