# WHY WEALTH MANAGEMENT CLIENT ACQUISITION STALLS

And how to align marketing, distribution and enablement to unlock organic growth

SBRConsulting

# How we will tackle organic growth in 45 minutes

*A four-part journey from the problem to the practical enablement that turns marketing opportunity into adviser action.*

THE PREMISE

## Organic growth comes from alignment, not from doing more.

Marketing, distribution and adviser enablement have to point at the same client opportunities.

**45 minutes · Jonny Adams and Caroline Dabu**

**01** Background to the problem

**02** Marketing

**03** Talent segmentation

**04** Distribution enablement

# SBR Consulting at a glance

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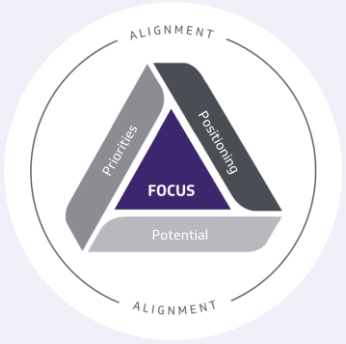
**SBR** Consulting is a global sales consultancy that focuses on **growth** and **revenue acceleration**.

**1,000+**
CLIENTS

**38**
COUNTRIES

**24 YEARS**
SERVICE




GTM Strategy




Enablement




Effectiveness

Google · KPMG · Meta · Canaccord Wealth · PKF FC · BNP Paribas Cardif · Deloitte. · Saltus · Investec · EY · RBC Brewin Dolphin · Schroders · evelyn partners

FT Financial Times | UK'S LEADING MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS | 2022-2026 | statista
SECTORAL EXPERTISE: PRIVATE EQUITY & FINANCIAL SERVICES

TOP CONSULTING FIRM

**PLATINUM AWARD FOR SALES**
**2023 - 2026**

Actum Group — Private Equity Value Creation Forum & Awards 2025 — 2025 VALUE CREATION ADVISORY FIRM OF THE YEAR FINALIST: REVENUE GROWTH

1,000 CLIENTS SERVED

MCA ASSOCIATE MEMBER

SafeSupplier Sustainable Business VERIFIED

Accredited Practitioner DiSC Certified Behaviour Profiling

# What you will take away

*A practical 45-minute session on aligning marketing, distribution and adviser enablement to unlock organic growth.*

**01** **Marketing:** focus on the priority segments you can reach and win.

**02** **Talent segmentation:** find the advisers best placed to win each segment.

**03** **Enablement:** equip and coach advisers around the same segments.



## Jonny Adams

MANAGING CONSULTANT

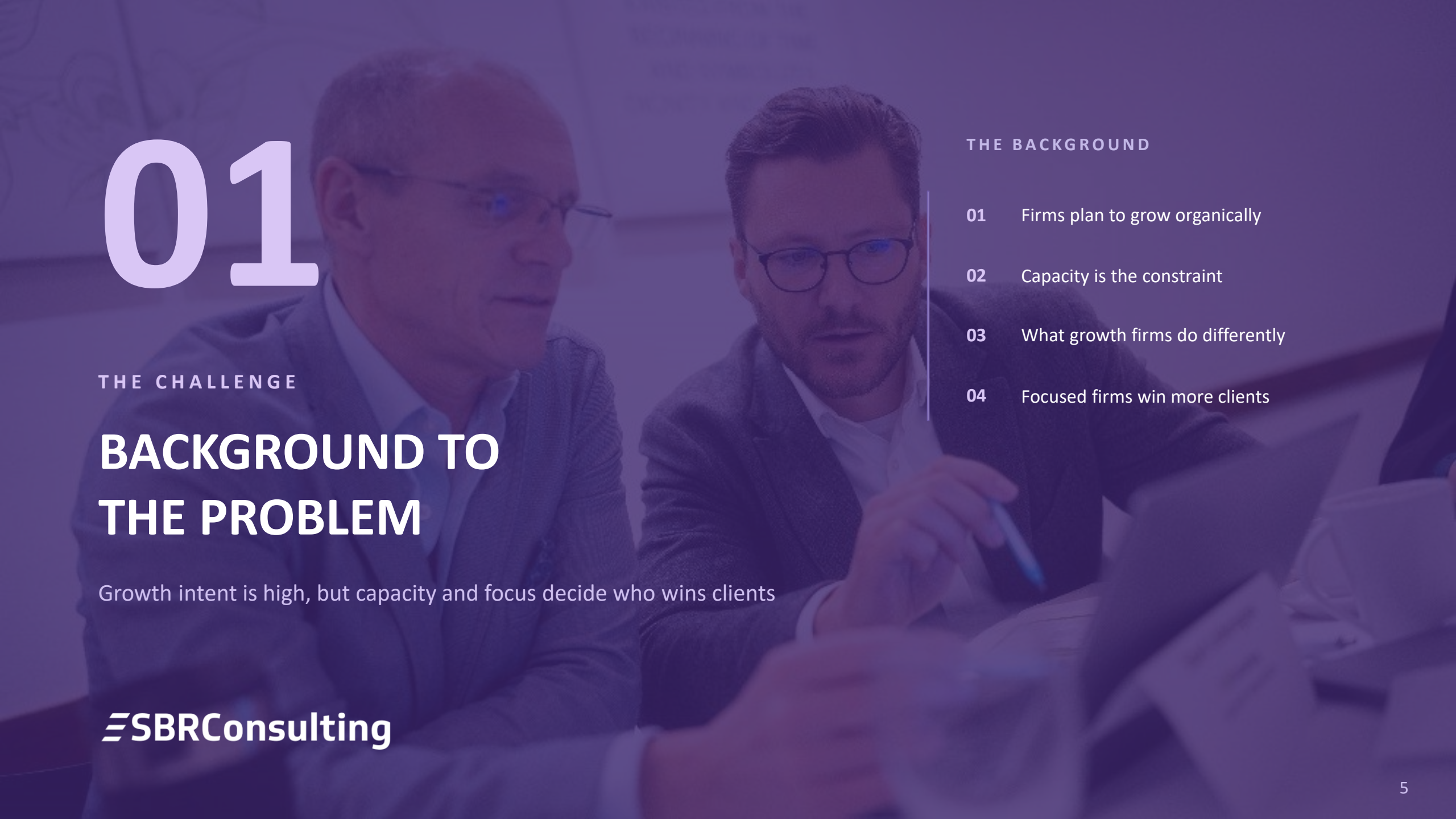
A chartered management consultant and SBR's Financial Services sector lead. He has delivered global commercial transformation programmes for over 10 years across wealth management.



## Caroline Dabu

MANAGING CONSULTANT

A strategic marketing consultant who brings over two decades of wealth strategy, marketing and distribution experience with firms in North America.



# 01

THE CHALLENGE

# BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Growth intent is high, but capacity and focus decide who wins clients

THE BACKGROUND

01 Firms plan to grow organically

02 Capacity is the constraint

03 What growth firms do differently

04 Focused firms win more clients

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# UK firms are betting on organic growth, but capacity is the constraint

*UK evidence: growth plans, capacity and size of financial advice firms, 2023–26*

**64%**

of firms plan to grow by taking on new clients*

**55%**

of firms are at or above capacity†

Growth intent is up from **50% of firms in 2023**.*

**34%** of firms name tech and admin as their biggest capacity constraint.†

## Where UK growth firms differ (2024)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Referrals** | win more new clients from professional referrals |
| **Digital** | win more new clients from digital marketing |
| **Pods** | more often organise advisers in pod teams |
| **Niche** | is where NextWealth expects most small firms to focus‡ |

* NextWealth, Financial Advice Business Benchmarks 2026 (survey of 318 UK advice professionals, June 2026). ** NextWealth and PIMFA, Financial Advice Business Benchmarks 2024 (survey of 340 UK advice professionals). † the lang cat, The Advice Gap, sponsored by Saturn, November 2026. ‡ NextWealth, Number of financial advisers in the UK, 2024 (based on FCA retail intermediary data for 2023).

# Focused firms win 87% more new clients and 2.3x the new assets

*RIAs with a documented ideal client persona, client value proposition and written marketing plan, vs. firms without*

**87%**

more new clients*

**127%**

more new client assets*

The gap has widened for seven years: **+26%** more new clients in 2018, **+67%** in 2024 and **+87%** in 2025.***

The fastest-growing firms have written down who they serve, what they offer them and how they reach them.

## What sets top-performing firms apart*

**87%**

have a documented ideal client persona, and client value proposition, vs. 68% and 64% of other firms

**12.4%**

5-year client CAGR, vs. 4.6% for all other firms

**$57.7M**

assets from new clients in 2025, vs. $20.8M for all other firms

* Schwab RIA Benchmarking Study 2026 (2025 data), 1,236 firms. *** Schwab 2018, 2025 and 2026 studies. Self-reported data from Schwab-custodied firms.

# 02

THE MARKETING

# MARKETING

Where focus breaks down, and how niche, personas and an aligned go-to-market fix it

THE FOCUS


01 Where focus breaks down

02 Finding the right niche

03 Personas you can reach and win

04 Marketing, sales and enablement as one


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# Focus is the starting point but the ecosystem must support it

*Consolidators have joined firms and advisers together without fully unifying growth strategy, proposition and execution.*

## WHERE FOCUS BREAKS DOWN

1. **Advisers not aligned to firm strategy**
2. **Competing messages dilute marketing spend**
3. **Advisers not supported in chosen segments**
4. **Capabilities misaligned: build or acquire?**

## WHY THE GAPS?

### Challenges solved in isolation

*Addressing Marketing and Sales issues separately*

### Organisational Silos

*Marketing excluded from strategy; distribution added late*

### Underinvestment in GTM infrastructure & talent

*Insufficient investment in marketing, distribution excellence, people and development*

# Build on today's growth, test it against future demand

*Map where growth comes from today, overlay where it will come from next, then test whether the firm and advisers can deliver.*

**TODAY**

## Where is growth coming from now?

1. Which segments drove our new clients and assets?
2. Which advisers are winning, and with which clients?
3. What do our best recent clients have in common?
4. Where do our referrals already come from?

**TOMORROW**

## Where will growth come from next?

1. How old are our advisers and our client book?
2. When will assets start to flow out of the book?
3. Who inherits the wealth, and do we know them?
4. Which segments are growing in the market?

**CAPABILITY**

## Can we win and serve it?

**Firm**

Proposition, service model and technology fit the segment

**Advisers**

Skills, credibility and appetite to win target clients

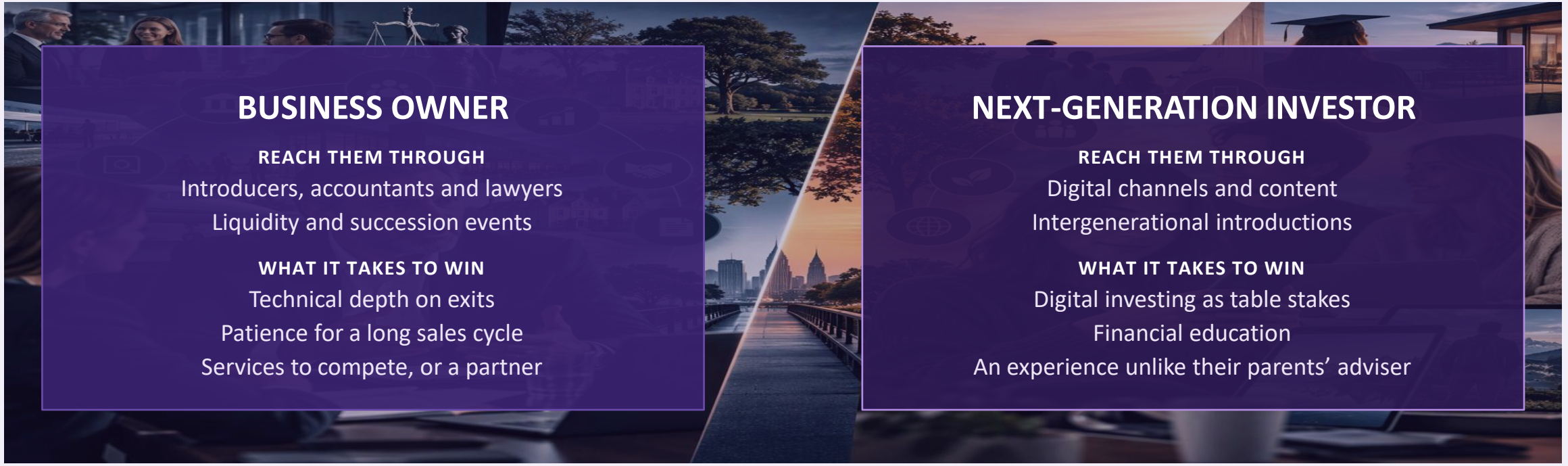
**Gaps**

Decide early whether to build, buy or partner

**CURRENT GROWTH + FUTURE DEMAND + CAPABILITY TO DELIVER = PRIORITY SEGMENT**

# Prioritise the personas you can reach and are equipped to win

*Define each persona beyond business value, then be honest about whether you can win them.*



## BUSINESS OWNER

**REACH THEM THROUGH**

Introducers, accountants and lawyers

Liquidity and succession events

**WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN**

Technical depth on exits

Patience for a long sales cycle

Services to compete, or a partner

## NEXT-GENERATION INVESTOR

**REACH THEM THROUGH**

Digital channels and content

Intergenerational introductions

**WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN**

Digital investing as table stakes

Financial education

An experience unlike their parents' adviser

**Same objective, different acquisition engine. Pick the audiences you have the capability to win.**

# A go-to-market strategy is not a marketing strategy

*Marketing finds the opportunity. Distribution decides which advisers can win it. Plan them together.*

**THE GAP** *An example of marketing and distribution planned apart*

**MARKETING SAYS**

"We have a major business-owner opportunity."

**DISTRIBUTION SAYS**

"Tell every adviser to pursue business owners."

**WHAT HAPPENS**

**Leads reach advisers without the experience, credibility or network to convert them. The campaign stalls.**

**BEST PRACTICE** *One connected go-to-market, from opportunity to adviser*

01
**OPPORTUNITY**
Size the segment and where the firm can win.

02
**PROPOSITION**
Build the offer, content and message for it.

03
**SEGMENT JOURNEY**
Map and own every touchpoint from prospect to client.

04
**DISTRIBUTION**
Route leads to the advisers best placed to win.

05
**ADVISERS**
Equip, coach and measure them on the segment.

**ALIGNMENT TEST** **Are priority segments reflected in campaigns, proposition, client journey, adviser activity, coaching and measurement?**

# Growth comes when marketing, sales and enablement are built together

*Most firms develop each function separately and hand off. Growth compounds when they make decisions together.*

**MOST FIRMS** *Built in sequence, by separate teams*

**Marketing**
Runs campaigns alone and passes on leads, often the wrong fit.
**Result:** *wrong-fit leads eat adviser time and are hard to convert.*

*hand-off*

**Sales**
Works the leads it gets, with no say in segment or proposition.
**Result:** *low conversion, and advisers stop trusting marketing.*

*hand-off*

**Enablement**
Trains advisers after the fact, often on different segments.
**Result:** *advisers aren't ready when the demand arrives.*

**37% vs 21%** Qualified, well-matched leads convert to clients at almost twice the rate of general leads.[1]

**WHAT WORKS** *Built together, around the same priority segments*




**IN PRACTICE** **Marketing shapes sales decisions, sales shapes marketing, and enablement builds for the same segments.**

1. Share of qualified prospects vs warm leads converted to clients. Source: InvestmentNews / Ensemble Practice, 2016 Financial Performance Study (2015 data).

# 03

THE APPROACH

# TALENT SEGMENTATION

Segment the adviser base to identify potential and align to priority market segments

THE OUTLINE

01 Segment the adviser base

02 Identify capability and potential

03 Align to priority market segments

04 Focus enablement where it counts

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# A £20bn wealth manager with a £30bn ambition

THE AMBITION

## £20bn → £30bn

Assets under management by 2030

## +£10bn

a 50% increase in AUM

*The business needs £500m of incremental AUM every year from organic growth; the past 12 months fell short of that.*

**10 yrs**

### Growth through acquisition

Successfully integrated 3–6 organisations a year, and now nearing the end of the investment cycle.

**2.2%**

### Organic growth is stuttering

**3.5%**

### A segmented route to growth

The account base is segmented and a strategy is identified to lift organic growth to 3.5%.

**NEXT**

### What the session covers

Identifying the untapped potential in the workforce and building the enablement infrastructure to realise it.

THE QUESTION FIRMS CANNOT ANSWER

# Firms cannot see where to invest in their talent, so growth spend is spread thin

*Three questions decide where growth capital should flow, and most firms cannot answer them with evidence.*

QUESTION 1

## Who

**should we invest in?**

Which advisers have the capability and potential to grow.

QUESTION 2

## Where

**will it pay back?**

Which segments and regions give the best return on that investment.

QUESTION 3

## By how much

**will performance improve?**

The size of the prize, valued per adviser and in total.

WITHOUT CLEAR ANSWERS

### Key-person dependency

Growth rests on a few individuals.

### Investment not backed by evidence

Development spend is spread broadly.

### Growth driven by people, not systems

Activity rises, but outcomes do not.

**Firms can't see where to invest. The biggest ROI sits with people who can grow but haven't yet.**

# The £200m question

*Same workforce, same advisers: the difference is how well the team is developed.*

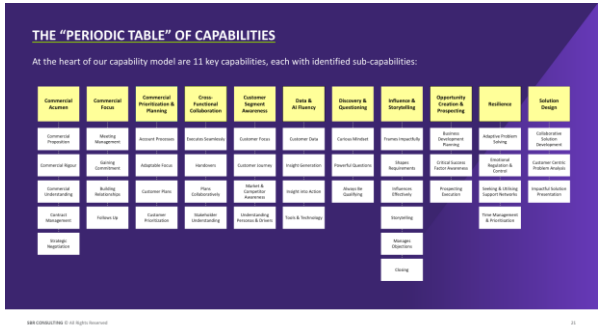
**What if you could find £200m out of £500m target with the same workforce, simply by developing the team?**

# Three inputs define the target profile

*The periodic table, Hannah AI and performance data come together to show what great looks like.*

## 1 Psychometric Analysis

11 capabilities, with 44 sub-capabilities, define what good looks like.

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## 2 Hannah AI role-play analysis

AI role-plays show how advisers apply each capability in realistic conversations.




+

## 3 Performance data

Capability scores correlated with results show which capabilities drive performance.




*Illustrative example: correlation with performance*

**TARGET PROFILE**

**What great looks like for each role**

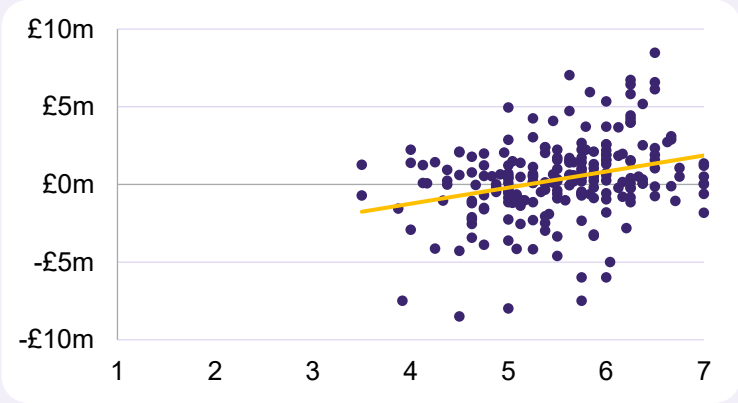
**Priority capabilities**
Weighted by their impact on performance

**One capability score**
Per adviser, built from assessment and Hannah AI

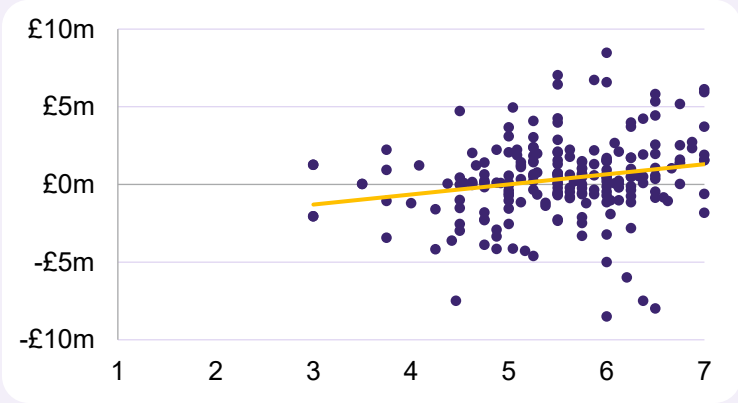
**A clear gap to target**
For every adviser and cohort

# Higher capability scores consistently drive higher net flows

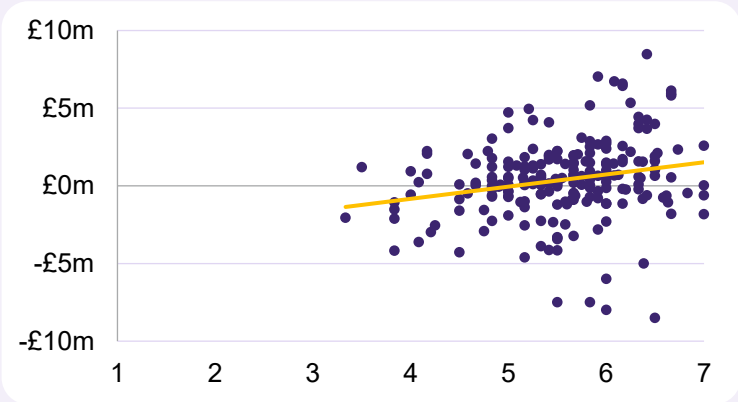
### Client Segment Awareness
~£1.0m more annual net flows per point



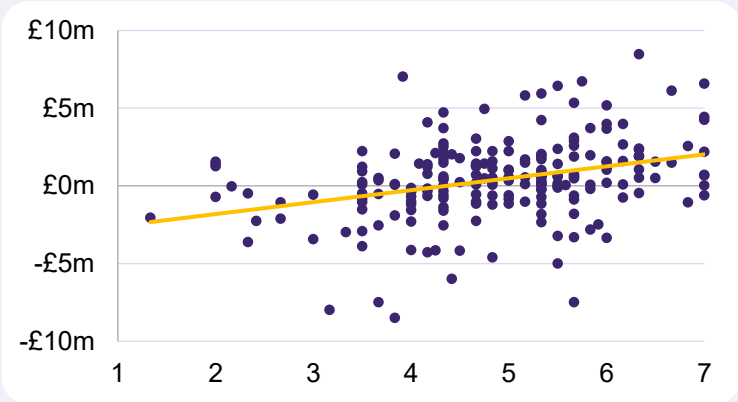

### Commercial Focus
~£0.65m more annual net flows per point




### Influencing & Storytelling
~£0.78m more annual net flows per point




### Opportunity Creation & Prospecting
~£0.77m more annual net flows per point




## WHAT THE DATA SAYS

All four capabilities are positively linked to net flows: each extra point is worth ~£0.65m – £1.0m more a year. Segment Awareness has the steepest slope, Meetings & Relationships the shallowest.

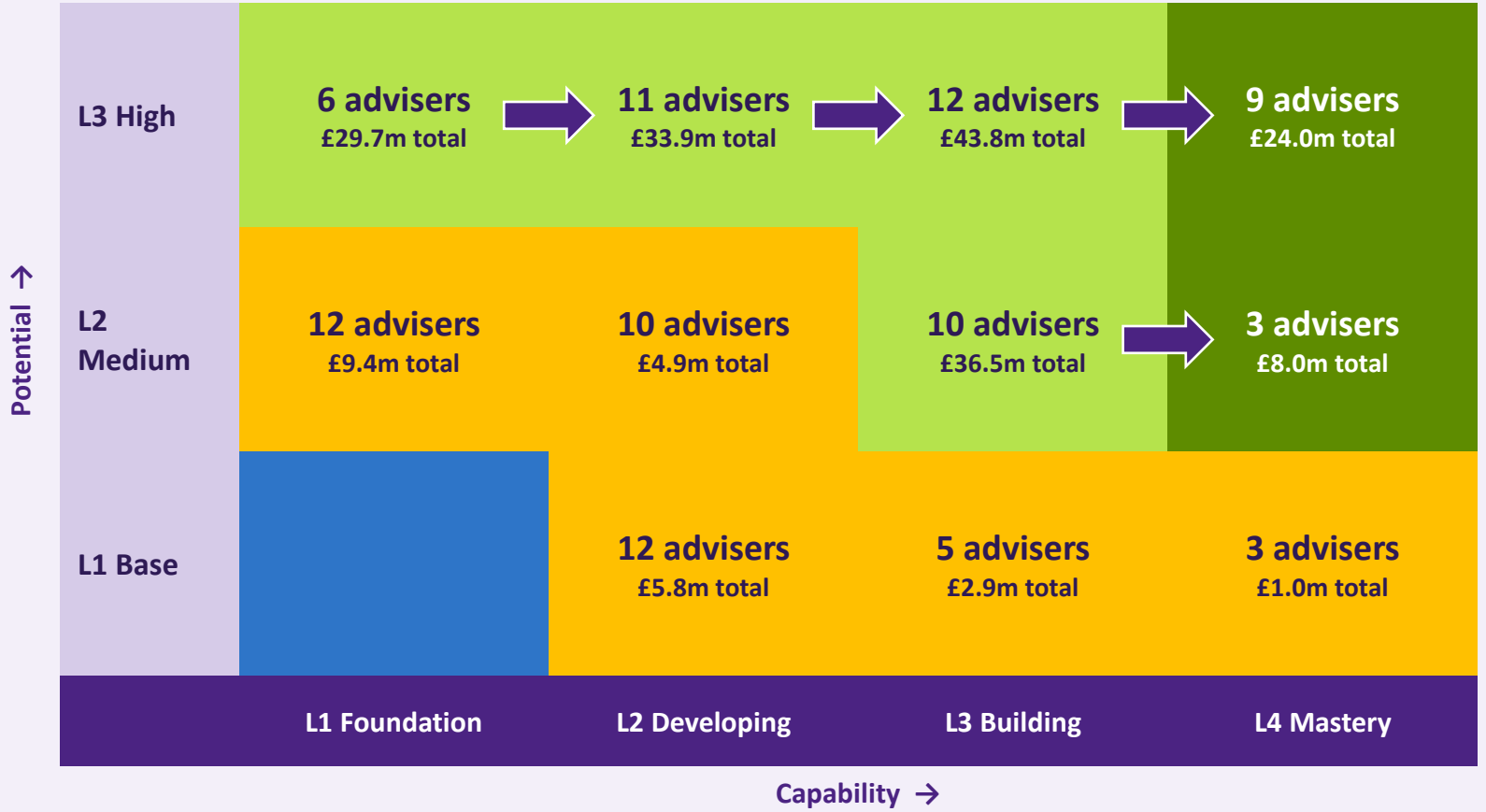
## WHY IT MATTERS

Prospecting and Influencing are also the two largest gaps between capability and potential, so they pair proven impact with the most headroom. Segment Awareness converts most directly and underpins the segmentation opportunity.

N = 115. Illustrative observations; each dot is one adviser and the yellow line is the linear trend. X axis: capability score; Y axis: annual net flows (£m).

# 115 advisers hold a £200m prize, 72% of it in Develop

*Each box shows advisers and total impact, by capability and potential level.*




**£144m**
**72% of the impact · Develop**

39 advisers (34%); move them one box right.

**£24m**
**12% of the impact · Support**

42 advisers (37%); move them half a box right.

**£32m**
**16% of the impact · Retain**

Keep them as change carriers

*Illustrative: 115 advisers sharing a £200m annual prize, with the 72% / 12% / 16% split by cohort held constant. The L1 Foundation / Base box (22 advisers) has £0 impact.*

# Build a ranked squad for each segment, with a bench ready to draft in

*Use the Organic Growth Accelerator and historic client wins to see which advisers are best placed to win each segment, region by region.*

**STEP 1**

## Define the segments

Pick the priority client segments and regions, e.g. Business Owners and Next-Generation Investors.

**STEP 2**

## Assess every adviser

Score capability and potential for each adviser with the Organic Growth Accelerator.

**STEP 3**

## Overlay historic wins

Match each adviser's past client wins to each segment and region.

**STEP 4**

## Rank by potential

Rank advisers High to Low for each segment and region.

**STEP 5**

## Form squad and bench

The top of the ranking forms the squad; the next tier becomes the bench.

**WORKED EXAMPLE: A 10-PERSON SQUAD FROM 20 CANDIDATES**

Illustrative




Rank 1 = highest potential to win the segment

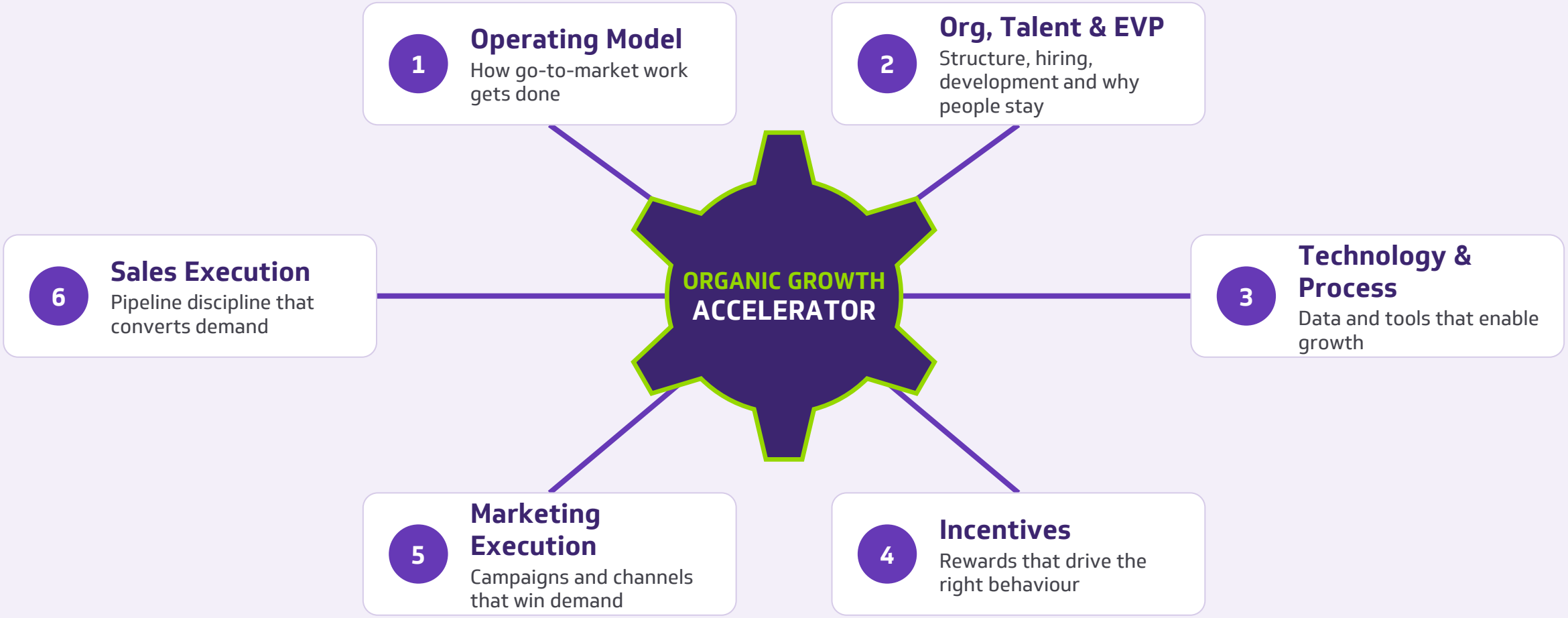
Rank 20 = lowest potential

**SQUAD · Ranks 1–10**
Highest potential. Develop them with specific coaching for the segment.

**BENCH · Ranks 11–20**
Draft in to scale up marketing spend or to replace adviser turnover.

# The organic growth accelerator feeds six organic growth levers

*The Accelerator feeds into six organic growth levers; each one has to move together for organic growth to hold.*



# 04

THE ENABLEMENT

# DISTRIBUTION ENABLEMENT

Building the enablement infrastructure: segment playbooks, training, coaching and onboarding

THE INFRASTRUCTURE

01 Segment playbooks

02 Training

03 Coaching

04 Onboarding

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EXAMPLE PROGRAMME · 12 MONTHS

# SALES CAPABILITY BECOMES ONE OF FOUR CONNECTED STREAMS

| STREAM | DIAGNOSE<br>Months 1–2 | DESIGN<br>Months 3–4 | PILOT<br>Months 5–7 | SCALE AND EMBED<br>Months 8–12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Segmentation and proposition**<br>New · Marketing | Client book and household value analysis | Priority segments, personas and propositions | Concept testing in two pilot segments | Propositions rolled out to all segments |
| **Marketing and client journey**<br>New · Marketing and sales | Marketing audit: cost per acquisition by segment | Journey workshops and leads programme design | Pilot journeys and leads in two segments | Journeys and handoffs embedded firm-wide |
| **Sales capability**<br>**Under way with SBR · Sales** | Capability assessment, re-cut by segment | Segment playbooks, tools and skills sprints | Sprints with a pilot adviser cohort | Enablement and coaching for all advisers |
| **Change and performance**<br>New · Execution | Baseline KPIs and change readiness | Case for change and leadership alignment | Pilot dashboards and adoption tracking | Incentives and handover to your team |

**HOW THEY CONNECT**

**Month 2:** priority segments set the target for sales capability. **Month 4:** playbooks and journeys share one set of personas. **Month 7:** one KPI set tracks lead to client value.



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OUR INTEGRATED APPROACH

# Our approach, mapped to where you're starting from

Under way · Partly in place · To confirm · Not yet started

## MARKETING

**Client segmentation** — Under way
Profiles set; no value view

**ICP and personas** — Not yet started
Research-based; not yet commercially tested

**Fast concept testing** — To confirm
Are segment propositions tested?

**Client value and profitability** — To confirm
Cost to serve and share of wallet?

## SALES

**Top adviser analysis** — Partly in place
Limited view of adviser focus

**Sales capability assessment** — Under way
With SBR; not tied to segments

**Segment playbooks and tools** — Partly in place
Follows priority segments

**Sales enablement** — To confirm
Adviser support by segment?

## EXECUTION

**Marketing audit** — To confirm
Cost per acquisition by segment?

**Journey workshop** — Partly in place
No lead-to-client journey

**Leads programme** — To confirm
Segment lead flow in place?

**Change management** — Partly in place
Adoption not yet planned

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# Adviser playbook build

We run a defined sequence of facilitated workshops to gather adviser and client insight:

| WORKSHOP 1 | WORKSHOP 2 | WORKSHOP 3 | WORKSHOP 4 | WORKSHOP 5 | WORKSHOP 6 | WORKSHOP 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Landmark client wins<br>• Ideal Client Profile | • Client Personas<br>• Life-Stage Needs<br>• Client Journey | • Client Journey Stages & Adviser Touchpoints | • Client Stage Details inc. Entry & Exit Criteria | • Client Meeting Structure & Themes | • Benefit articulation<br>• Discovery questions by persona | • Handling Client Concerns<br>• Value Proposition |

With participation from leading advisers, thought leaders and change champions across the firm:

| ADVISERS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Articulating value<br>• Value-led advice<br>• Client acquisition | • Matching client styles<br>• Early positioning<br>• Recognising life events | • Client qualification<br>• Whole-family relationships | • Pipeline forecasting<br>• Team collaboration | • Outreach planning<br>• Contact cadence | • Fact-finding & discovery<br>• Value articulation | • Client storytelling |

| MARKETING | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Client case studies<br>• Website content<br>• Target client lists | • Direct marketing<br>• SEO<br>• Social marketing | • Nurture cadence<br>• Engagement monitoring | • Prospect nurture and handover to advisers | • Client collateral design | • Proposition development<br>• Positioning | • Case study design<br>• Proposition management |

| PRACTICE SUPPORT / OPERATIONS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Client profile capture & targeting | • Client stage definition | • Forecasting & reporting<br>• Pipeline review support | • Prospect scoring |

**The process is designed to create “lightbulb moments” for advisers and kick-start the change process**

# Leadership Guide

## MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT CADENCE

| Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | Wk 6 | Wk 7 | Wk 8 | Wk 9 | Wk 10 | Wk 11 | Wk 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Team Meeting | | | | Team Meeting | | | | Team Meeting |
| 1-to-1 Meetings | | | | | | | | | | | |
| QBR | CQ Pipeline Review | CQ Top Deals Review | CQ Pipeline Review | NQ Pipeline Review | CQ Pipeline Review | CQ Top Deals Review | CQ Pipeline Review | NQ Pipeline Review | CQ Top Deals Review | CQ Pipeline Review | NQ Commit |

## BUILD YOUR SALES PLAN

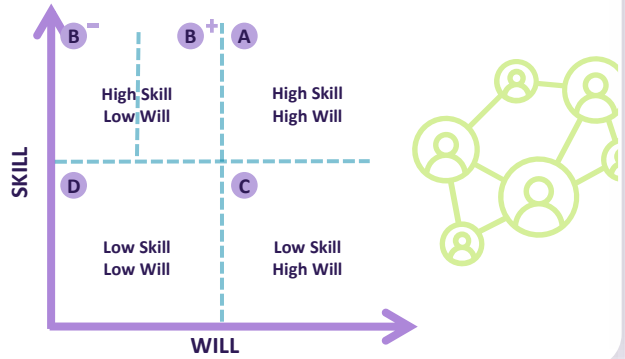


HEADCOUNT

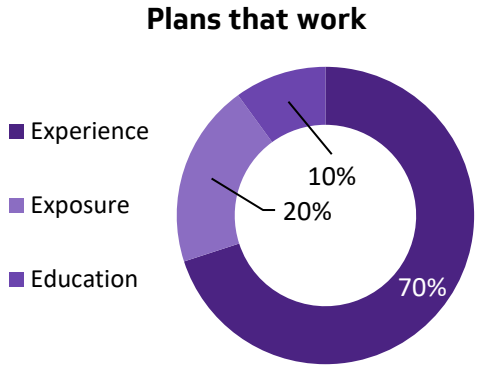
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 720 | 2:1 | Reaches |
| 360 | 3:1 | Effective conversations |
| 120 | 4:1 | Meetings |
| 30 | 3:1 | Opportunities |
| | 10 | Wins |

Target 1 million

## UNDERSTAND YOUR PEOPLE



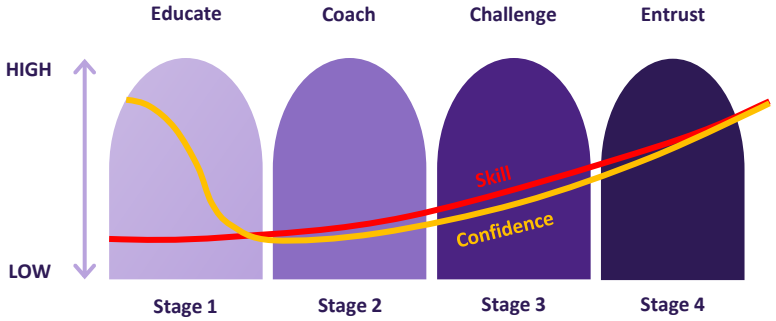

## GIVE THEM A TRACK TO RUN ON




## COACH EFFECTIVELY

- Catch up
- Objectives
- Applause / Accountability
- Clarify next steps
- Help

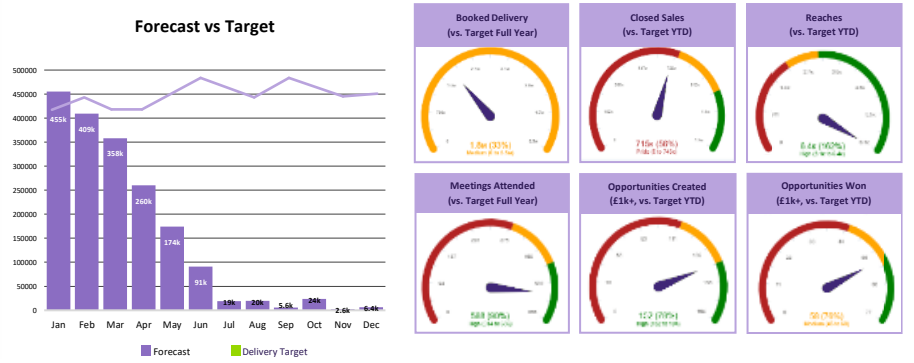
## ADAPT YOUR STYLE TO DRIVE DEVELOPMENT




## ALIGN YOUR TEAM




## MONITOR PROGRESS



# Five moves to unlock more organic growth

*A practical alignment model leaders can take back into the business tomorrow.*




**Organic growth does not come from simply creating more activity. It comes from creating more focus and aligning the commercial system behind it.**

**FINAL QUESTION: Are marketing, distribution and adviser capability pointed at the same opportunity?**