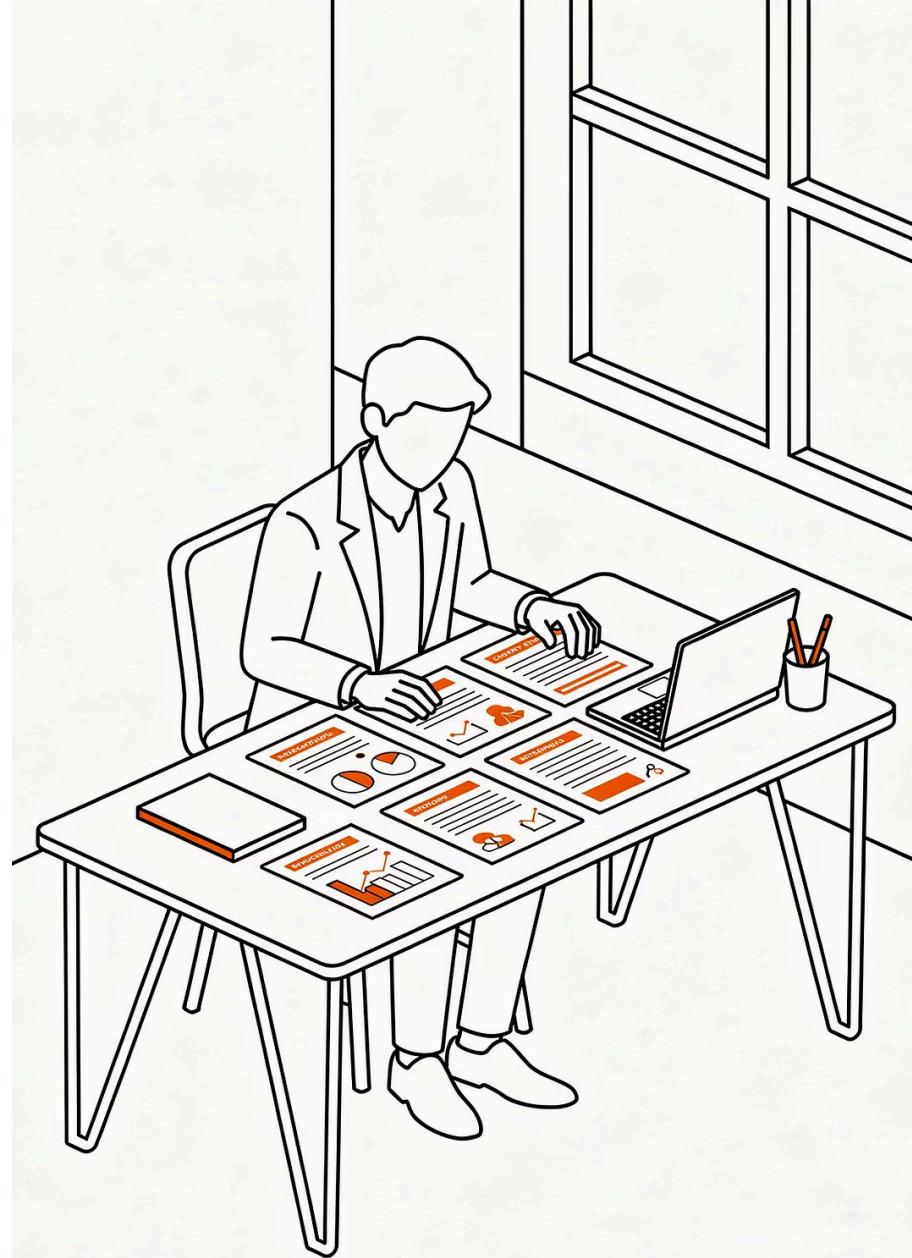


ICP VALIDATION AUDIT

# A Simple Audit to Validate ICP Clarity (Before You Fix Your Marketing)

Most B2B leaders believe they know their ideal customer. Very few can prove it.

They move forward assuming clarity—then wonder why messaging feels generic, sales cycles drag, or "good leads" don't convert. This audit exists to answer one question **before** you optimize anything: Do we have real ICP clarity, or are we operating on assumptions?



# Why This Audit Was Developed

In B2B companies, ICP breakdowns usually happen in two places:



## Best customers are defined too broadly

Companies cast wide nets hoping to capture opportunity, but end up diluting focus and clarity across marketing and sales efforts.

## Customer insight is inferred instead of confirmed

Teams rely on assumptions and internal perspectives rather than validated, first-hand customer conversations and evidence.

When that happens, marketing speaks in company language, sales explains instead of resonates, and execution accelerates in the wrong direction. This audit slows things down just enough to protect momentum.

# Who This Audit Is For



## B2B Founders and CEOs

Leaders who need to validate strategic direction before committing resources to marketing and sales optimization initiatives.

1  
2

## Fractional Leaders

CFOs, COOs, and CMOs who need rapid clarity validation to guide their strategic recommendations and execution plans.



## Service-Based Firms

Organizations delivering professional services who must ensure they understand their best-fit clients before scaling operations.



## Leadership Teams

Cross-functional teams aligning marketing and sales who need a common framework to ground strategic decisions.

- This is **not** training. This is **not** a framework. It is a **quick audit** to validate readiness before you invest in execution.

# The Principle Behind the Audit

Strong marketing starts with clarity.

01

## **Knowing who you serve best**

Not just who could buy from you, but who generates the best outcomes, stays longest, and values your work most deeply.

02

## **Understanding why they buy**

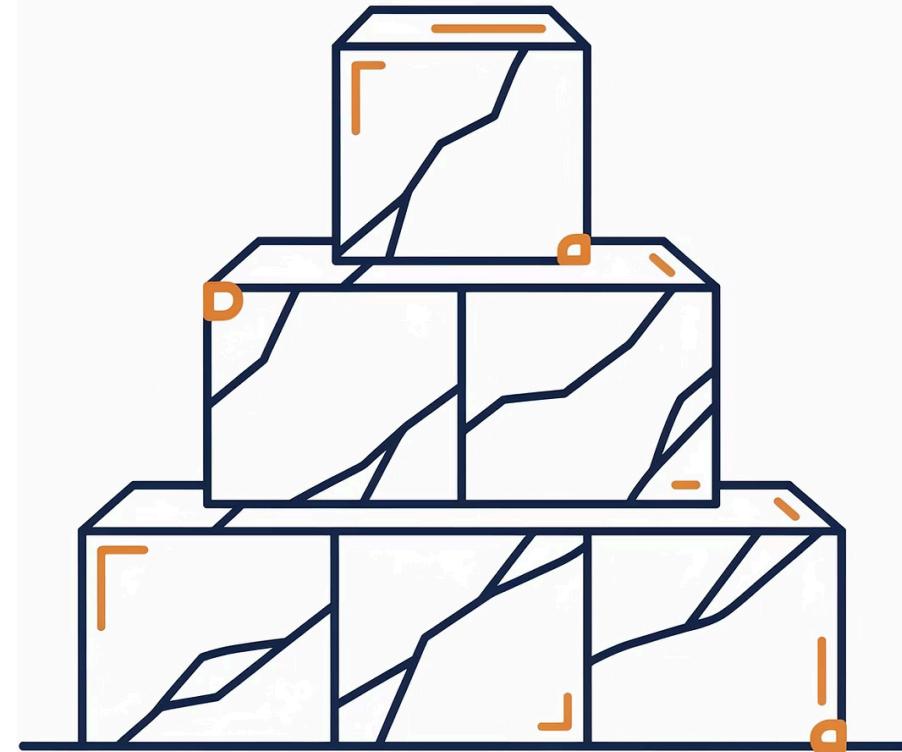
The actual problem they're solving, the outcome they're pursuing, and the context that makes your solution compelling.

03

## **Using their words—not yours**

Speaking in the language your customers actually use to describe their challenges, not the polished terminology you prefer internally.

If those inputs are weak, everything built on top of them is fragile. No amount of optimization, messaging refinement, or tactical execution can compensate for unclear foundations.



# Running Example: Fictional Fractional CFO Firm



We'll use a fictional Fractional CFO firm throughout this audit to demonstrate how the process works in practice.

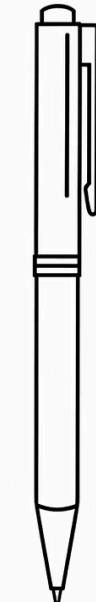
## Their initial belief:

"We serve growing businesses that want better financial visibility."

Reasonable—but untested.

### The Question

The audit will determine whether that belief is **specific, current, and usable** enough to ground marketing and positioning decisions.



THE AUDIT

# ICP Clarity + Customer Interview Audit (B2B)

## Purpose

Quickly validate ICP clarity and recent customer insight **before** marketing or sales optimization.

## When to Use

Before refining messaging, launching campaigns, or adjusting positioning decisions.

Owner:

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Last Updated:

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# Section 1: Best Customer Definition

5 POINTS TOTAL

## **List your top 10 customers by profit or lifetime value**

Focus on actual contribution, not just revenue. Consider factors like engagement level, referrals, ease of delivery, and strategic value.

## **Remove customers you would not want to replace**

Be honest. Some high-paying customers drain resources, create conflict, or misalign with your direction. Exclude them from this analysis.

## **Confirm remaining customers stay long-term and engage regularly**

Best-fit customers demonstrate sustained commitment through renewal patterns, active participation, and ongoing engagement with your team.

## **Write down the job title of the primary decision-maker**

Identify who actually makes the buying decision, not just who signs contracts or manages the relationship day-to-day.

## **Identify one shared pattern across these customers**

Look for commonalities in company size, revenue stage, industry, growth trajectory, or organizational structure that connect your best customers.

# Section 2: Customer Interview Proof

5 POINTS TOTAL

- **Confirm 5+ direct customer conversations in the last 90 days**

Recent conversations matter more than historical ones. Customer needs, language, and context evolve over time.

- **Confirm these were not sales, delivery, or renewal calls**

Discovery conversations have a different purpose. They focus on understanding, not transacting or reporting progress.

- **Ask: "What problem were you trying to solve when you hired us?"**

This specific question reveals the context, urgency, and frame customers use to evaluate solutions like yours.

- **Capture the exact language customers used**

Write down their words verbatim. Don't translate, summarize, or polish. Authentic language is your most valuable marketing asset.

- **Confirm 3+ customers described the same core problem**

Consistency across multiple customers signals a validated pattern worth building your positioning around.

**Critical note:** If the conversation included selling, reporting, or delivery updates, it does **not** count. Those contexts change how customers communicate.

# Section 3: Buying Insight Validation

4 POINTS TOTAL



## What customers tried before

Understanding their previous attempts reveals what didn't work and why they needed a different approach.

## What failed or frustrated them

Pain points become clear when customers explain what broke down in their previous solutions or approaches.



## Why they chose you instead

The differentiation story comes from customers, not from your internal assumptions about competitive advantage.

## Confirm they describe a desired outcome

Strong customers talk about the result they want, not the service you provide. That's the language that resonates.



## Section 4: Clarity Test

 PASS / FAIL

Write a **one-sentence ICP description** and a **one-sentence problem statement** using customer language.

### **The Standard**

A real customer would read your descriptions and say: "**Yes—that's me.**"

If you can't write this confidently, or if it requires internal jargon or explanation, the audit reveals a clarity gap.

This is an all-or-nothing checkpoint. You either have validated clarity that can guide decisions, or you don't. There's no partial credit here.

## Scoring Model

# 15-Point Total

01

### Each checked item = 1 point

Score honestly. If a box is unclear, ambiguous, or incomplete, score it as 0. Partial completion does not count.

02

### Section 4 = all or nothing

The clarity test is pass/fail. You either have validated, customer-backed language that works, or you need to go back and gather it.

03

### If a box is unclear, score it 0

Uncertainty in the audit signals uncertainty in your foundation. Don't round up or give yourself credit for proximity.

- This audit rewards **evidence**, not confidence. If you think you know the answer but can't prove it with recent customer conversations, that's a gap.

# Score Interpretation (Stoplight)

## Green (12–15)

**Clear and validated → proceed**

You have strong ICP clarity backed by recent customer evidence. You're ready to refine messaging, adjust positioning, or optimize campaigns.

## Yellow (8–11)

**Assumed → validate before acting**

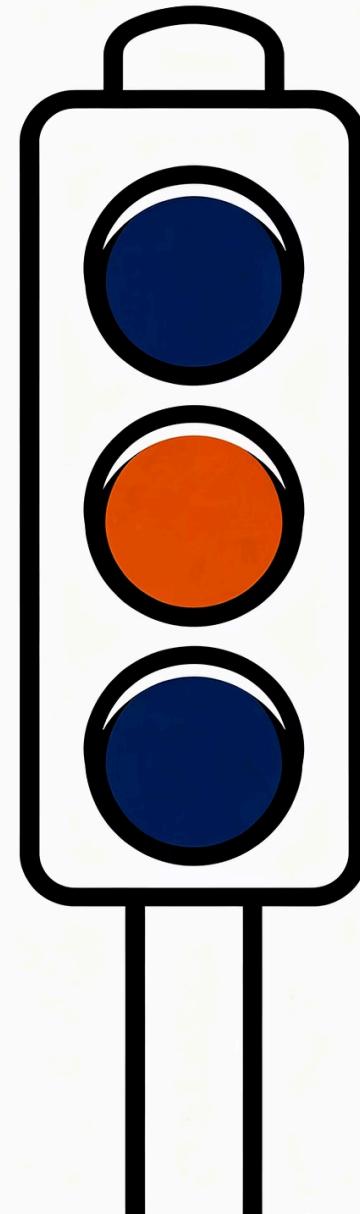
You have some clarity, but it's built on assumptions or outdated insight. Interview customers before making positioning or messaging decisions.

## Red (0–7)

**Stop → interview first**

You do not have validated ICP clarity. Do not optimize marketing yet. Run customer discovery interviews before proceeding with any strategic work.

If your score is yellow or red, **do not optimize marketing yet**. You'll be building on unstable ground.



# Fictional Fractional CFO Firm: How the Audit Revealed Clarity Gaps

## Initial Assumption

"Our best clients are growing companies that want better reporting."



## Audit Findings

### Best clients identified

**\$3M–\$15M service businesses** consistently delivered the highest profit margins and longest engagement periods.

### Decision-maker confirmed

**Founder / CEO** made the hiring decision in every case, not CFOs or finance directors.

### Critical gap discovered

They hadn't conducted **non-delivery interviews** in over six months. Their "insight" was actually inference from project work.

### Repeated customer language

- "I don't trust the numbers."
- "I'm afraid to hire."
- "Cash surprises keep me up at night."

## Refined Clarity

### ICP

Founder-led service businesses between \$3M–\$15M revenue.

### Core Problem

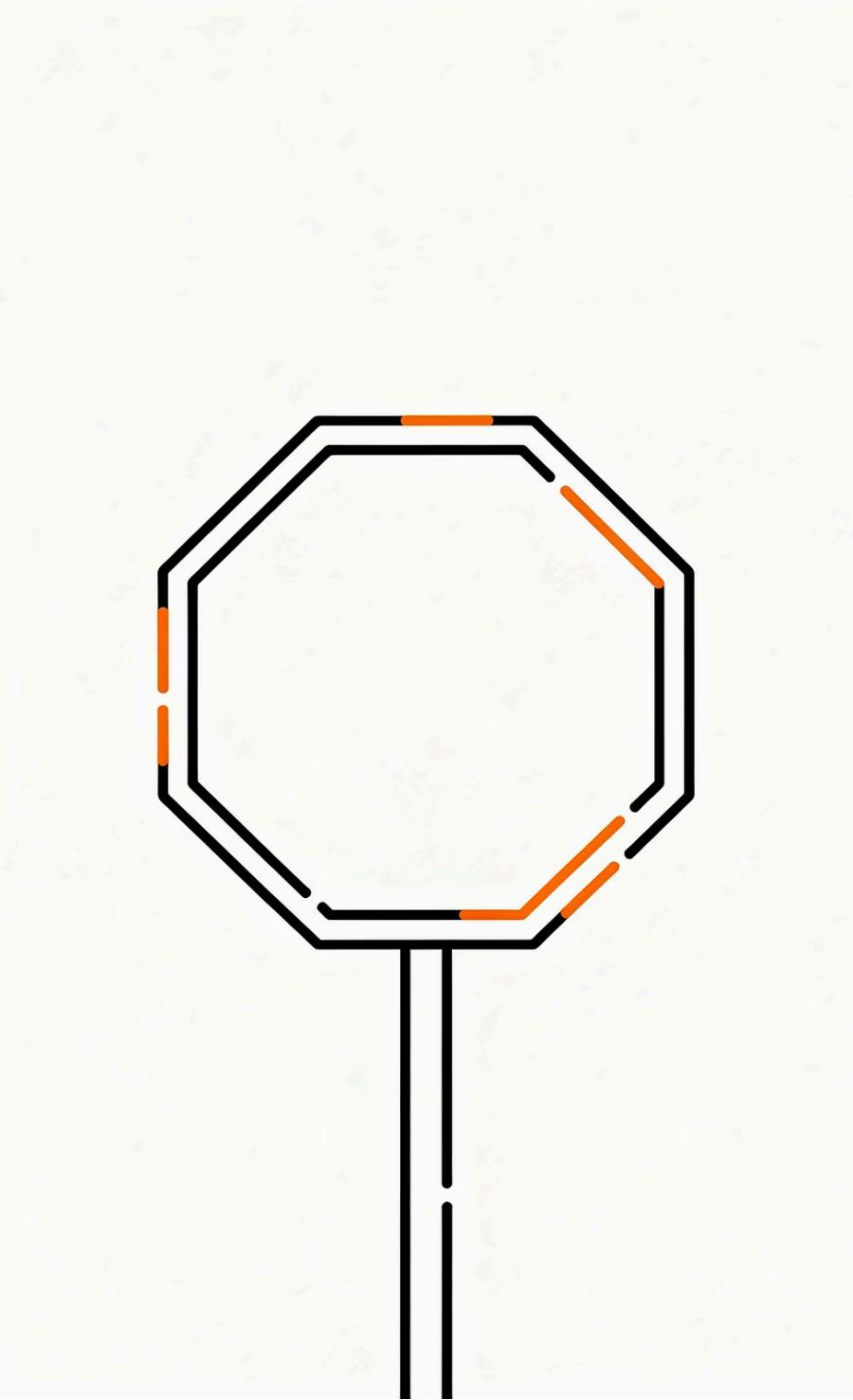
"I'm making big decisions without trusting my numbers."

# 13/15

### Final Score

**Green** – Ready to proceed

They were ready to refine messaging—but only *after* closing the interview gap and conducting five additional discovery conversations to validate patterns.



# When Not to Use This Audit

This audit is designed to validate clarity **before** execution. It loses value when run at the wrong time.



## After campaigns are already live

The audit can't help you mid-execution. It's a preventive tool, not a diagnostic one for active initiatives.



## Mid-website rewrite

If you're already rebuilding messaging or content, running this audit may reveal that your foundation needs work first.



## Once positioning decisions are locked

Don't audit for validation after you've already committed to a strategic direction. That's confirmation bias, not clarity.

Run it **first**—or not at all.

# Before You Move On

You just worked through an audit designed to test something most teams assume they already have: validated ICP clarity. That's not easy work, and it's not always comfortable work. If you scored yellow or red, that doesn't mean you've been doing things wrong—it means you've been operating on inference instead of evidence. That's common, fixable, and worth addressing before you optimize anything else.

## What This Tool Was Meant to Do

This audit was built to surface clarity gaps—not to fix them. It doesn't tell you what your ICP is. It doesn't generate messaging. It doesn't prescribe next steps. It simply reveals whether you have enough validated customer insight to ground strategic decisions. If you don't, that's useful information. It protects you from building campaigns, refining positioning, or scaling efforts on assumptions.

## A Note on Unclear or Incomplete Results

If your results feel uncertain or incomplete, that's normal. Most teams haven't conducted structured, non-transactional customer interviews in months—or ever. You may have strong gut instincts about who your best customers are, but struggle to prove it with recent evidence. You may realize that the "customer language" you've been using is actually internal shorthand, not validated wording from real conversations. These gaps don't mean you're behind. They mean you now know where to focus before moving forward.

## Where You Might Go From Here

1

### Learn: Review the FlowOps360™ ICP Clarity Guide

If this audit revealed foundational gaps, start by understanding what validated ICP clarity actually requires. The guide walks through how to structure customer interviews, capture usable language, and translate insight into positioning. *No commitment required—just context.*

2

### Validate: Run 5–7 Customer Discovery Interviews

If you scored yellow or red, your next step is evidence gathering. Use a simple interview structure to ask customers what problem they were solving, what they tried before, and why they chose you. Document their exact language. *This is work you can do internally, or with guidance if helpful.*

3

### Align: Share Results with Your Leadership Team

If this audit surfaced disagreement or inconsistency across your team, that's a signal. Use the results to start a conversation about what "validated clarity" means for your organization, and whether your current positioning decisions are grounded in shared evidence. *Alignment happens through conversation, not consensus.*

## About Tingom Group

We help **B2B service businesses** solve the **gap between what they promise in sales and how they actually run** by installing **FlowOps360™ Delivery Systems**, so they can **turn clarity into predictable execution**.

## One Last Thought

Confidence without evidence feels like momentum. Evidence without action feels like delay. The audit helps you tell the difference.