

REDACTED SAMPLE ARTEFACT

Client-identifying details have been removed. Figures describe the organisation at the time of the engagement. The reasoning and diagnosis are shown faithfully; selected supporting evidence has been summarised for confidentiality and readability.

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MARKETING DIAGNOSTIC

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

One question. Examined properly. Written down.

This is a real, anonymised engagement. It shows the evidence, reasoning and diagnostic verdict a client received after bringing Qallann one diagnostic question.

PREPARED BY:

Lorraine A

Founder & Principal Strategist

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EXECUTIVE DECISION SUMMARY

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION
BROUGHT TO QALLANN

What should we change to turn our existing marketing activity into new business?

PROPOSED MOVE BEFORE THE
EXAMINATION

More marketing activity and another business-development hire.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE
INDICATED

The organisation had credibility, attention, and CEO-led conversion - but had not made the commercial offer and sales logic transferable beyond the founder.

WHAT SHOULD STOP

Further business-development hiring and visibility-led investment as the immediate answer.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT

Define the buyer problem, transferable offer, and sales logic before deciding what marketing or sales capacity is actually required.

VERDICT IN ONE LINE

Do not increase marketing or sales activity until the business can reliably translate buyer interest into a commercial decision without depending on the CEO.

“Why is the organisation's existing marketing activity not turning into new business?”

CLIENT

Anonymised
Professional services firm

SECTOR

NGO / professional services
Africa, UK and Europe

AT ENGAGEMENT

15 years operating history
5 years operating as a for-profit business
5 team members at the point of
engagement

03 WHAT INFORMED THIS DIAGNOSTIC

This Diagnostic examined the evidence relevant to one diagnostic question:

Why is the organisation's existing marketing activity not turning into new business?

Commercial and sales evidence

- Available CRM and sales records.
- New-business and repeat-business patterns.
- The source of won work where this could be identified.
- The existing sales process.
- The CEO's role in successful commercial conversations.

Marketing and communications evidence

- Existing marketing activity and content output.
- Website traffic and engagement signals.
- Webinars, events and audience-building activity.
- Three content strategies developed within one year.
- The rebrand, website and related presentation activity.

Organisational evidence

- The history, turnover and outcomes of four business-development hires.
- Annual OKRs and stated commercial expectations.
- Interviews with the CEO and marketing lead.
- The organisation's transition from communications-led work to a for-profit commercial model.
- CRM ownership, data-capture practices, and the relationship between sales conversations and recorded information.

This was a focused examination of the evidence that could change one consequential decision.

Credibility and conversion need different systems. The organisation had built the first.

For its first ten years, it operated as a nonprofit. Its communications function was built to establish credibility, communicate complex work, support partnerships and convene audiences around its mission. At its peak, the team had more than 15 members.

Five years before this engagement, it began operating as a for-profit professional-services business.

A communications system designed to build credibility is not automatically a commercial system designed to convert buyer need into repeatable revenue.

The commercial question was no longer only,
“Do people understand our work?”

It was:

“Can the organisation translate its expertise into an offer the right buyer will pay for - and that someone other than the CEO can sell?”

05 WHAT WAS HAPPENING: KEY NUMBERS

15 Years

of sector experience,
relationships and institutional
credibility

5 people

in the team at the point of
engagement (team had reduced
by two thirds)

5 years

operating as a for-profit
business

4

business-development hires
made over five years

0

sales reliably traceable to the
business development hires' work

1

person still closing every new
commercial deal: the CEO

The organisation had credibility and activity. It did not yet have a repeatable commercial system that could turn buyer interest into new business without the CEO.

06 WHAT THEY TRIED: THE INTERVENTION SPIRAL

As revenue pressure increased, the organisation responded by changing another visible layer.

CONTENT

Three content-strategy changes in one year

PRESENTATION

Rebrand → case-study page redesign → case-study-led social content

SALES CAPACITY

Four business-development hires → repeated performance pressure → turnover

SYSTEMS

CRM introduced → marketing trained BD and later updated data it did not own

PRODUCTISATION

Offers converted into on-demand courses to create scale and more BD capacity

ORGANISATIONAL PRESSURE

More team members pulled into BD → morale fell → team reduced from 15 to 5

Buyer research was proposed.
Under immediate revenue pressure,
it was not fully prioritised.

**The organisation had effort,
ideas and activity in
abundance. It needed a
shared explanation strong
enough to tell it what to stop
changing.**

07 ACTIVITY, STRAIN AND THE MISSING LINK

SIGNS OF ACTIVITY

- Three content strategies in one year.
- Consistent publishing, webinars, events and audience-building.
- Rebrand, website and later case-study experience redesign.
- Case-study-led social content.
- Four business-development hires.
- CRM implementation.
- Attempted productisation through on-demand courses.

SIGNS OF STRAIN

- Case-study-led social content performed worse than educational, awareness and entertainment-led content.
- New business remained CEO-led.
- BD hires did not produce reliably traceable sales.
- Marketing administered a CRM without owning most sales conversations.
- Buyer research did not proceed fully.
- Revenue pressure drew more of the team into BD.
- Morale fell and the team later reduced from 15 to 5.

THE MISSING LINK

The organisation had evidence of visibility and engagement. It did not yet have reliable evidence of which buyer problem created commercial urgency - or a transferable way to move that buyer from interest to a buying decision.

£180,000+

spent on fixes downstream of the real problem

£174,000+

gross salary for each Business Development hire per year

£6,000+

spent on a rebrand: new identity, website, business cards, banners

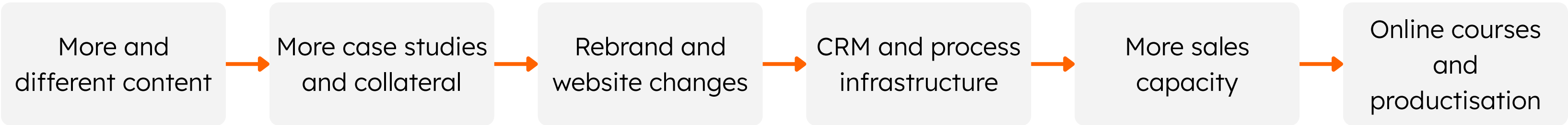
The figure excludes

- Recruitment and onboarding.
- CRM purchase, setup, training and administration.
- Content-strategy changes and website / case-study redesign work.
- Product-conversion work for online courses.
- CEO and team time in performance management and BD activity.
- The effects of morale decline, turnover and retrenchment (team reduced by two thirds).

The cost included leadership attention, organisational capacity and repeated activity directed at a question nobody had yet answered.

“People do not understand what we do well enough to buy from us.”

It was plausible. So each response aimed to make the organisation easier to see, easier to understand, easier to scale, or better equipped to sell.



The organisation kept changing the form of the answer. It had not yet tested whether the explanation itself was true.

That is what an untested explanation costs:
the first intervention and every subsequent decision built on it.

WHAT APPEARED TO BE WORKING

Audience and engagement were growing.

Website traffic was high.

Content output was sustained.

The business had an operating CRM.

CEO-led sales and repeat business continued.

WHAT COULD NOT BE EXPLAINED BY 'PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND US'

Four BD hires could not reproduce CEO-led conversion.

New business from marketing and BD channels was negligible or not reliably traceable.

Case-study-led social content underperformed prior content.

CRM data did not provide a complete view of sales activity.

Buyer research had not established what prospects needed to understand before buying.

The organisation had activity and attention. It did not yet have a reliable system for converting, capturing or learning from commercial evidence.

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WHAT THE RESPONSE PATTERN REVEALED

The organisation kept treating a commercial problem as a visibility, capacity or process problem.

WHAT HAPPENED	THE RESPONSE	WHAT REMAINED UNANSWERED
Marketing activity did not create clear new-business conversion	Change content strategy, create more case studies, redesign the website experience	Which buyer problem was urgent enough to create a buying decision?
Business-development hires did not close work	Hire again, increase performance pressure, add CRM processes	What was the CEO doing in live conversations that the hires could not reproduce?
The offer did not scale beyond the founder	Convert products into online courses	Was the offer clearly defined and commercially buyable in the first place?

The interventions changed the output, channel, people and system. They did not yet change the commercial logic underneath them.

THE QUESTIONS THEY WERE ASKING

“How do we make more people understand what we do?”

“Which activity should we change next?”

THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

“What does the CEO do in a live sales conversation that the rest of the organisation cannot reproduce - and what buyer problem is being solved in that conversation?”

13 THE DIAGNOSIS

VISIBLE PROBLEM	Low and untraceable conversion from marketing and business-development activity into new commercial work
ASSUMED PROBLEM	“Buyers did not understand the organisation well enough to buy.”
REPEATED INTERVENTIONS	Content and presentation changes; CRM and process changes; repeated BD hiring; productisation; wider team involvement in BD.
EVIDENCE THAT CHALLENGED IT	CEO-led sales and repeat business continued; four BD hires could not reproduce that conversion; CRM data was incomplete; buyer research had not yet clarified commercial need.
WHERE THE PROBLEM SAT	The organisation had not translated founder-led commercial judgement into a defined buyer problem, transferable offer, and repeatable sales logic
SYSTEM EFFECT	Marketing, BD, CRM, productisation and team effort were compensating for an undefined commercial system.
THE VERDICT	Before adding further marketing, hiring, productisation or systems activity, examine the buyer problem, offer and founder-led sales logic.

The problem sat in commercial translation, and every downstream function was being asked to compensate for it.

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THE VERDICT AND IMMEDIATE NEXT MOVE

Do not add another salesperson yet.

Do not increase marketing spend yet.

Do not add another content strategy, product format, or CRM process yet.

First, establish the commercial foundation those activities are being asked to carry.

Then establish:

DECISION OWNER	IMMEDIATE ACTION	TIMING
CEO / leadership team	Pause further sales hiring and marketing expansion pending offer examination	Immediate
CEO + commercial lead	Review successful sales conversations and recurring buyer triggers	Within 2 weeks
Leadership team	Decide whether to scope offer-definition work internally or externally	After review

- The recurring buyer problem.
- The stable core of the offer.
- What the CEO currently improvises in live conversations.
- The commercial logic others need to sell.
- Ownership of commercial evidence and data capture.
- Whether buyer research is required before further activity is approved.

The immediate need was a commercial system the organisation could see, test, learn from and transfer.

The evidence supported the following conclusions:

- There was evidence of market demand: CEO-led sales and repeat business continued.
- The organisation had visibility and consistent communications activity.
- Marketing and business-development activity had not become a reliable, traceable route to new commercial work.
- The founder's commercial judgement was doing work the system could not yet reproduce.
- Adding another hire or more visibility would likely repeat the same result.

What this map did not establish

- The final offer design.
- Future channel, budget or sales-team choices.
- Exact historical attribution for every marketing interaction.
- Whether a future BD hire would succeed after the sales logic was clarified.
- The full implementation plan.

The Diagnostic
protected against:

The client was able to
pause:

PAYING TO FIX THE WRONG PART
OF THE BUSINESS

REPLACING PEOPLE OR PARTNERS
WHO WERE NEVER THE CAUSE

A fifth business-development
hire

PAYING TO FIX THE WRONG PART
OF THE BUSINESS

Further investment in
presentation before the
commercial offer was
examined.

CONTINUING WITH AN
EXPLANATION BECAUSE YOU HAVE
ALREADY INVESTED IN IT

More attempts to solve a sales-
system issue through
marketing activity alone.

It also reduced the risk of

- Repeating the same hiring cycle without a transferable offer or sales system.
- More spend on presentation while the commercial problem remained unresolved.
- Continued pressure on marketing and the wider team to compensate for an unresolved commercial problem.
- Further reliance on the CEO's finite capacity to close new work.

The Diagnostic gave the organisation a basis to stop repeating an untested explanation before more money and organisational capacity were committed.

THE FINDING, IN ONE LINE

The problem sat in commercial translation.

Until the organisation could turn founder-led commercial judgement into a transferable offer and sales logic, more visibility was unlikely to produce repeatable new business.

HAVE A DECISION LIKE THIS?

You do not need to know what is wrong before you bring it to us. Bring the decision you are about to make or the result you cannot explain, and we shape the diagnostic question.

One

consequential decision

One

evidence-led examination

90-minute

of your team's time

7 days

to a written Diagnostic Report

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