Northwind Data Partners.
Seen the way your buyers see you.

An outside-in teardown across the five vectors where pipeline is actually decided: ICP truth, offer sharpness, message coherence, journey coverage, and the evidence beneath your beliefs. Every claim next to its source. Every open question named.

PREPARED BY	DATE	METHOD	NOTE
ProspectWise	**September 2026**	**Zero internal access**	Northwind Data Partners is a fictional firm. This sample shows the depth and format of a real teardown.

Zero access. Public evidence only.

What we could see is exactly what your buyers can see.

You gave us six form fields: your website, your name, revenue band, average deal size, your target customer in one line, and your biggest pipeline frustration. Everything else was found, not asked for. That is deliberate. Your buyers do not interview you before they judge you. They judge you on what is publicly visible, in minutes, without telling you. This teardown holds your engine to that standard.

We examined your website page by page, audited your founder's and company's LinkedIn activity over 90 days, pulled your public reviews, listened to how buyers like yours talk about their problems in public, ran the searches your buyers would run, and studied the firms competing for the same buyer at the same deal size. We also checked the technical layer that decides whether your email is trusted; that sits in a sidebar on page 11, because plumbing is not strategy.

The report is organized around five vectors. ICP truth: do you know, at the right altitude, who your best buyer is? Offer sharpness: is your offer the sharpest expression of your capability, or a category description? Message coherence: do your assets tell one story? Journey coverage: where does your buyer meet you during the weeks they spend deciding? Evidence and signal: which of your operating beliefs has proof behind it? These are the same five questions we settle, with full access and live market signal, inside a GTM Viability Sprint. This teardown is the outside-in version.

Two disciplines to note as you read. Where a finding is verifiable, its source is named and logged in the appendix. Where a finding is a hypothesis, we label it a hypothesis. A diagnosis that cannot tell the difference between the two is part of the disease this report describes.

32 /100

A $6M firm running on *an unverified GTM thesis.*

ENGINE STATUS

Running on assumption

0 to 40 running on assumption. 41 to 70 partially verified. 71 to 100 evidence-led. Five vectors, page 12.

The one-paragraph version. Northwind's growth plan rests on seven load-bearing beliefs about its market, buyer, offer, and channels. On public evidence, zero are verified, three are untested, and four are contradicted. Delivery quality earned the first $6M through referrals, and referrals let a firm skip every question this report asks. Now that referrals have slowed, the unanswered questions are the pipeline problem.

On your form you wrote: **"Referrals dried up this year. Outbound got us nothing."** These are not two problems. A referred buyer arrives pre-sold, so vague positioning, thin proof, and an empty journey cost nothing. A stranger reached by outbound has to be convinced by exactly those assets, and they are not built for convincing. The channels did not fail. The thesis underneath them was never tested.

By the end, you should be unable to shake three questions:

QUESTION 01

Do we truly know our best buyer, or a composite from five years ago?

QUESTION 02

Is our offer the sharpest expression of what we can do, or a category description?

QUESTION 03

Which of our beliefs about channels and buyers has evidence behind it?

A teardown that hands you a to-do list has aimed too low. These questions cannot be closed with tasks, only with evidence.

01 ICP truth: the altitude problem

SAMPLE

On your form you described your target customer as **"mid-market healthcare and fintech companies modernizing their data stack."** Before asking whether your website serves this ICP, a sharper question: is this even the right way to describe a buyer? An ICP can fail in two directions. Written too abstractly, it sounds like everyone and moves no one. Written too narrowly, it walls off real demand your capabilities could serve. Yours fails toward abstraction, in three specific ways.

Two industries is not a segment. "Healthcare and fintech" spans a 20-clinic provider group and a global payments company. They share no budget owner, no trigger event, no buying committee, and no vocabulary. An ICP that requires two different sales motions is two ICPs wearing one label, and assets written for both serve neither.

"Mid-market" names a size, not a situation. Nothing in your ICP says who feels the pain, what event makes it urgent, or why this quarter rather than next year. A right-altitude ICP reads like a situation the buyer recognizes as theirs: the role that owns the problem, the moment it starts to hurt, the pressure that makes waiting expensive.

"Modernizing their data stack" describes your project, not their problem. No buyer wakes up wanting modernization. They wake up unable to trust a number in front of their board. When the ICP is written in the vendor's language, everything downstream, the website, the outreach, the founder's posts, inherits the vendor's language too. Section 02 shows exactly that inheritance.

And the website confirms the undecidedness. Nine service lines with none marked core. Case studies across six industries. Two of eight homepage logos from your named verticals. The word "healthcare" appearing once, in a footer list. The ICP exists in your head and your form response. It does not exist anywhere a buyer can see.

Evidence: your request form; full-site review, September 2026. Counts verifiable on services, case studies, and homepage.

SAMPLE

01 ICP truth: their words, your words

The fastest test of ICP understanding is language. A firm that knows its buyer writes in the buyer's sentences. A firm that knows only a market writes in the market's sentences. Compare:

WHAT BUYERS LIKE YOURS SAY IN PUBLIC	WHAT YOUR WEBSITE SAYS BACK
"Our board pack takes three weeks to build and nobody trusts the numbers in it." *"We merged three systems last year and reporting has been chaos since."*	*"End-to-end data solutions that drive business value."* *"Unlock the power of your data."*

The left column is illustrative in this sample; in a live teardown those quotes are mined verbatim from the public places your buyers actually talk, with sources. The point survives either way: not one sentence on your site meets your buyer inside their own sentence. Referred buyers forgive this, because trust arrived before the words. Strangers do not.

The segment you may be missing. Abstraction does not only weaken conversion. It hides opportunities. Reading your delivery history against the market, one wedge stands out that neither of your named industries captures:

> HYPOTHESIS, NOT FACT
>
> Organizations mid-consolidation: two or three acquired systems that must become one trusted reporting layer, on a deadline set by a board or an integration plan. Post-merger provider groups live there. So do acquisitive fintechs. Your capabilities map to this situation exactly, the pain has a built-in "why now," and almost nobody positions for it directly.

Notice what we are not doing: telling you to bet on it. A segment hypothesis this specific deserves a live test before it deserves a website. Whether it survives contact with the market is exactly the kind of question quick-probe testing answers in weeks. What it demonstrates here is the altitude your ICP thinking should operate at: situation, trigger, owner, deadline. Not industry and company size.

The question this section leaves: do we know our buyer, or do we know a market?

02 Offer sharpness: the sameness test

Here are five headlines. One is yours. The other four belong to firms competing for your buyer. Cover the letters and try to pick yours.

A	**End-to-end data solutions that drive business value**
B	**Data and analytics consulting for the modern enterprise**
C	**Turn your data into your competitive advantage**
D	**Unlock actionable insights from your enterprise data**
E	**We help companies harness the power of their data**

Yours is A. If your own leadership team has to pause, consider the buyer with eleven tabs open and no loyalty to any of them. This is the sameness test, and it is the single most useful exercise a services firm can run on itself, because it converts "our positioning is fine" from an opinion into an observable result.

The economics of sameness are brutal and simple. When every firm claims the category, the claim stops carrying information, and the buyer falls back to the only signals that still differentiate: the sharpest proof, the clearest specialization, or the lowest price. Section 05 of this report showed your proof is unverifiable in public. Section 01 showed your specialization is undeclared. That leaves price, which is exactly the conversation a premium firm must never be forced into.

Sharpness, to be clear, is not cleverness. A sharp offer is a specific promise, to a specific situation, with a reason to believe attached. It is downstream of ICP truth: you cannot write a sharp offer for a buyer you have described abstractly, which is why this vector and vector 01 fail together and will only be fixed together.

In a live teardown, B through E are real competitor headlines, linked and screenshotted.
The question this section leaves: what claim could only we make?

SAMPLE

02 Offer sharpness: one offer is not an offer

There is a second, less discussed dimension of offer design: altitude of intent. Buyers arrive at different temperatures, and a complete offer is a ladder with a rung for each. The canonical shape:

LOW INTENT · PROBLEM-AWARE

An insight worth their name

Something a curious buyer takes without talking to anyone: a benchmark, a diagnostic, a point of view unavailable elsewhere. Its job is to earn permission to stay in touch.

Northwind today: nothing.

CONSIDERATION · COMPARING

Proof of how you think

A working sample of your judgment applied to their situation. It converts "sounds capable" into "these people see what others miss." The report you are reading is our version of this rung.

Northwind today: nothing.

HIGH INTENT · READY TO ACT

A de-risked first yes

A fixed-scope, fixed-time entry engagement with a verifiable outcome, sized so yes is easy and the larger commitment is earned rather than demanded.

Northwind today: "Contact Us," then a proposal.

Northwind currently has one rung: a sales conversation. Every buyer not yet ready for that conversation, which is most buyers on most days, has nothing to say yes to, so their interest expires uncaptured. This is why a website can draw genuine attention and still produce an empty calendar.

The ladder above is deliberately canonical. Which rungs your buyer needs, in what form, carrying what promise, is design work that depends on the ICP altitude you choose in vector 01 and the differentiation you claim in the sameness test. Get those wrong and a beautifully built ladder leans against the wrong wall. That sequencing, truth first, offers second, is the argument of this whole report.

The question this section leaves: what can a not-yet-ready buyer say yes to?

03 Message coherence: four assets, four firms

Buyers cross-check. A VP who likes your homepage will read your founder's LinkedIn profile the same afternoon, then your case studies, then your about page. Each asset is a witness, and your witnesses disagree.

HOMEPAGE	FOUNDER'S LINKEDIN	CASE STUDIES	ABOUT PAGE
"End-to-end data solutions"	*"Digital transformation leader"*	*Mostly BI dashboards*	*"An engineering-first culture"*
The everything firm.	A different, bigger category.	A narrower firm than either.	A story about you, not them.

Each mismatch quietly withdraws trust, and the withdrawals compound precisely at the moment of highest interest, because cross-checking is what interested buyers do. The least convinced visitor reads one page. The most valuable visitor reads four, and meets four different firms.

It matters to name the real cause. This is not a copywriting problem, and a copywriter cannot fix it. Incoherence is the visible symptom of an undecided strategy: when a firm has not chosen what is true about its buyer and its offer, every asset takes its own guess, and the guesses drift apart over the years. The homepage guesses broad to be safe. The founder guesses aspirational. The case studies tell whatever happened. The about page retreats to identity. Alignment is downstream of decision, which is why messaging architecture, in our world, is the last artifact built, never the first.

The encouraging read: coherence is the cheapest vector to fix once vectors 01 and 02 are settled, because it requires no new capability, only a single agreed answer propagated everywhere. The expensive part is the deciding. The propagating is a week.

Evidence: homepage, founder profile, case study pages, about page, September 2026.
The question this section leaves: if our assets disagree about what we are, what is our outbound claiming?

SAMPLE

04 Journey coverage: six weeks, five stages, empty rows

At your deal size, a buyer's decision is a journey of weeks, most of it invisible to vendors. They realize the pain, research it, shortlist firms, validate claims, and only then act. The strategic question is not "is our website good." It is "at each stage of that journey, what does our buyer find from us?" Here is the map:

BUYER STAGE	WHAT THEY DO	WHAT THEY FIND FROM NORTHWIND	VERDICT
Problem-aware	Searches the pain: "board reporting takes weeks"	Nothing. Zero first-page results across six buyer searches.	ABSENT
Researching	Reads points of view, follows practitioners	Founder: 5 posts in 90 days, all reshares, median 4 reactions. Blog dormant 11 months.	FAINT
Shortlisting	Compares 4 or 5 firms in open tabs	The sameness test, page 6. Nothing to remember you by.	BLENDED IN
Validating	Hunts for numbers, names, recent reviews	3 case studies without numbers. Newest Clutch review January 2024.	UNVERIFIABLE
Ready to act	Wants the fastest path to a conversation	A 7-field form, budget required, no calendar link, "we'll get back to you."	FRICTION

Five stages, none covered well. Read the verdict column top to bottom and you can watch a stranger's interest die in sequence: never finds you, finds nothing to follow, cannot tell you apart, cannot verify you, and finally, if they somehow persist, meets a form that asks for their budget before offering a calendar.

This map also explains the referral era's hidden subsidy. A referred buyer skips directly to "ready to act" with trust pre-installed by the referrer, so four empty stages cost nothing. Referrals were not just a channel. They were a subsidy covering an unbuilt journey, and when the subsidy ended, the emptiness got invoiced all at once. Rebuilding is not "do content" or "do SEO." It is deciding, stage by stage, where your buyer must meet you and with what asset, which is what a customer journey map is for.

Evidence: search captures, LinkedIn review, site walkthrough, review platforms, September 2026. The question this section leaves: where is our buyer during their six weeks, and where are we?

05 Evidence and signal: the assumption ledger

SAMPLE

Every growth plan runs on beliefs. That is unavoidable and fine. What separates evidence-led firms is that they know which beliefs are verified and which are load-bearing guesses. Here is Northwind's ledger, assembled from your form and the public record:

LOAD-BEARING BELIEF	STATUS, ON PUBLIC EVIDENCE
"Healthcare and fintech are our best segments"	ASSUMED Chosen from delivery history, never tested against demand
"Referrals will come back"	CONTRADICTED Referral networks age with the relationships feeding them; no refresh mechanism exists
"Our win rate is around 25%"	ASSUMED Quoted from memory on your form, no measured baseline
"Buyers want the full end-to-end offer"	CONTRADICTED Rivals are winning your buyer with narrow, productized offers
"Our proof is strong because our delivery is strong"	CONTRADICTED In public, your proof is three unnumbered stories and a stale review page
"Outbound does not work for firms like ours"	CONTRADICTED Much of yours never reached an inbox; see the engine room, page 11
"More activity will fix the pipeline"	ASSUMED The constraint documented in this report is the system, not the effort

0 verified · 3 assumed · 4 contradicted

This ledger is the report's real finding, and it is the one no task list can close. An assumption does not become knowledge by being written on a whiteboard or believed for another year. It becomes knowledge by touching the market: a small, fast, real test with real buyers, designed so the answer is unambiguous either way. Run in weeks, before real money is committed, such probes are cheap. Run implicitly, by betting the year's plan on the untested belief, they are the most expensive research a firm ever buys.

The question this section leaves: which of these seven would we bet the next twelve months on, unverified? Because currently, we are betting on all seven.

We also checked the plumbing. *Fix these regardless.*

None of this is strategy, which is why it sits in a sidebar and outside your score. All of it is leaking, and all of it is fast to fix.

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CHECKED SEPTEMBER 2026 · ALL PUBLIC · TWO MINUTES TO VERIFY YOURSELF

DMARC  p=none    no enforcement    |  DKIM  not found on root domain
SPF    present                      |  MX    clean, not blacklisted
SPEED  54/100    mobile, PageSpeed |  FORM  7 fields, budget required, no calendar
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The expensive one is email authentication. DKIM is the signature proving an email really came from you, and yours is missing. DMARC tells Gmail and Outlook what to do with mail that fails checks, and yours says "do nothing." Together they invite providers to distrust your domain, and providers accept the invitation quietly: messages route to spam with no error, no bounce, no signal. When you told us outbound got you nothing, part of the truth is that a meaningful share of it was never seen by a human being. The campaigns failed before the copy had a chance to.

Note what this does to the assumption ledger. "Outbound does not work for firms like ours" was contradicted, not because outbound is guaranteed to work, but because your one experiment was invalid. The instrument was broken, so the experiment measured the instrument. This pattern, a broken layer silently corrupting a strategic conclusion, is why we check the plumbing at all: not because plumbing is the work, but because bad plumbing produces false beliefs, and false beliefs are strategy killers.

The fixes: publish DKIM, move DMARC to an enforcement policy, run future cold outreach from a separate warmed subdomain, drop the budget field, add a calendar link. Under a week in total, and the email items must precede any new outbound, because sending from a mistrusted domain digs the hole deeper.

Sources: MXToolbox, dmarcian, PageSpeed Insights, site walkthrough, September 2026.

SAMPLE

ICP truth	4 /10
Offer sharpness	3 /10
Message coherence	4 /10
Journey coverage	3 /10
Evidence and signal	2 /10

32 /100

FIVE VECTORS, SCALED TO 100.
PLUMBING EXCLUDED ON PURPOSE.

ENGINE ROOM · UNSCORED: EMAIL AUTH FAIL · SPEED FAIL · CAPTURE FAIL · DNS PASS

Why the plumbing is excluded: a firm can pass every engine room check and still be invisible, undifferentiated, and unverified. The five vectors above are where pipeline is decided, and they are not independent. ICP truth is upstream of everything: choose the wrong buyer, or describe the right one at the wrong altitude, and sharp offers, coherent messages, and covered journeys all serve the wrong target. Evidence and signal is the vector that protects all the others, because it is how you find out you are wrong while it is still cheap.

Read as a system, Northwind's pattern is common and specific: strong delivery, undecided strategy, unverified beliefs, empty journey. Firms in this pattern do not need more effort, more tools, or more channels. They need a short, disciplined period of finding out what is true, and then a build that follows the findings. In that order.

The same five vectors are scored in every teardown, so reports are comparable across firms and across time. Rubric available on request.

MOVE 01 · WEEK 1 · CLEAR THE ENGINE ROOM

DKIM published, DMARC to quarantine, outbound moved to a warmed subdomain, budget field dropped, calendar link added. A few days of work that stops the silent losses, and a precondition for any future outbound.

MOVE 02 · WEEKS 1 TO 2 · PICK ONE ALTITUDE, ON PURPOSE

Choose a single ICP articulation, even provisionally, and rewrite your first 30 seconds for that buyer alone: their situation, their words, one true number, one low-friction next step. A provisional choice beats a permanent hedge, because a choice can be tested and a hedge cannot.

MOVE 03 · WEEKS 2 TO 4 · PUT ONE REAL STORY IN THE MARKET

Your best client, real numbers, a named quote, published on your site and on Clutch. Then your founder tells that story on LinkedIn, in his own words, twice a week for a month. Watch who responds; that is your first faint market signal, free.

These moves stop the bleeding. Not one of them verifies the thesis.

What they cannot do is close the ledger. Whether healthcare or fintech or the consolidation wedge is your real segment, what offer your buyer will actually respond to, which journey stages convert, what your true win rate is: these are questions about the market, and only the market can answer them. That is the job of the GTM Viability Sprint, and it is why the Sprint exists as a diagnostic, before any build:

THE QUESTION THIS TEARDOWN RAISED	WHAT SETTLES IT, IN THE SPRINT	HOW
Do we truly know our best buyer?	**ICP Deep Research**	Evidence, not recollection
Is our offer the sharpest it can be?	**Messaging Architecture**	Designed against the sameness test
Who are we losing to, and why?	**Competitive Landscape**	Mapped, not guessed
Where must we meet the buyer, with what?	**Customer Journey Map**	Stage by stage, asset by asset
Which beliefs survive contact with the market?	**Quick-probe live tests**	Real signal in weeks, not quarters

For calibration: one recent engine, an IT services firm in the $1-3M band that came to us after 100K failed cold emails with a previous vendor, reached $1.2M in pipeline, 36 meetings, and 20 proposals in its first 90 days. Real client, real numbers. **Next step:** a 45-minute call with our founder to walk this teardown together and decide, honestly, whether a Sprint makes sense. If it does not, we will say so. Book at prospectwise.io.

Every finding traces to a source below, all public, all checked September 2026. In a live teardown each row links to the capture. Hypotheses are labeled as such in the text and appear here only as hypotheses.

SOURCE	WHAT WE TOOK FROM IT	USED IN
northwinddata.com	Hero and page copy, services count, industries count, logo mix, conversion path, form fields, blog recency	Vectors 01, 02, 03, 04; engine room
Public buyer conversations	Verbatim pain language from places your buyers talk (illustrative in this sample)	Vector 01
Founder LinkedIn profile	Headline, post count, cadence, content type, engagement over 90 days	Vectors 03, 04
Company LinkedIn page	Posting cadence and content mix	Vector 04
Google Search	Six buyer-intent queries, first-page presence	Vector 04
Rival firm websites	Headlines for the sameness test, offer structure, proof depth, pricing visibility	Vector 02
Clutch	Rating, review count, review recency	Vector 04
MXToolbox, dmarcian	SPF, DKIM, DMARC, MX and blacklist status	Engine room; ledger row 6
PageSpeed Insights	Mobile performance score	Engine room
Your request form	Revenue band, deal size, target customer, stated win rate, stated frustration	Verdict; vectors 01, 05

This sample describes a fictional firm, Northwind Data Partners, built to resemble the firms we serve: founder-led B2B tech services and consulting companies between $3M and $15M in revenue. All Northwind findings are illustrative. The ProspectWise client result cited on page 13 is real. A live teardown is produced for your firm, from your public footprint, with linked evidence throughout, and is delivered with a recorded video walkthrough by our founder.

We find out what is actually true about your market. *Then we build.*

Full-stack prospecting engines for founder-led B2B tech services and consulting firms, $3M to $15M, in the US, UK and Australia.

Diagnose. Build. Operate. Always in that order. Built in your stack, run to its numbers, then handed over. You own everything.

No meeting quotas. No rented SDRs. No agency lock-in.

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Free teardown. Recorded by our founder. Limited to a few each week.