



— EDITION 002 · COMPANION TO SIX PATTERNS

# Six Signals.

The behavioural signals that show a fix is taking hold,  
before the revenue line confirms it.

STUDIED IN \$500K-\$10M COMPANIES · HOLDS IN MOST B2B UP TO ~\$50M, WHERE  
FOUNDER MEANS WHOEVER OWNS THE REVENUE MOTION

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**Ben J. Abbey**

22 YEARS IN THE FIELD  
\$100M+ IN REVENUE

COMPANION TO FIELD NOTES 001  
SAME EVIDENCE BASE, SAME BAND  
36 ENGAGEMENTS · LAST 12 MONTHS

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

# Edition 001 mapped what's broken. This edition shows what fixed looks like **before** the revenue confirms it.

Every signal in this edition is behavioural and observable. If it can be claimed without producing evidence, it is anecdote, not proof. Self-reported progress is the false positive we see most, and the most expensive. Figures throughout are based on observed patterns across these engagements, not best cases.

For each of the six patterns in edition 001, this edition surfaces four things: the signal that proves the fix is holding, the false signal that mimics it without the substance, the single owner accountable for that signal, and a concrete check that distinguishes one from the other. The order in which the signals appear matters and is treated separately at the close.

*Founder* below means whoever owns the revenue motion: the founder in founder-led companies, the CRO or head of sales higher up the band. The signals read the same way.

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**6 Signals**

ONE PER PATTERN

**100%**

BEHAVIOURAL · NOT CLAIMED

**36**ENGAGEMENTS · \$500K-\$10M

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INSIDE THIS BRIEF

# Six Signals, one per pattern from 001.

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**01**     **Process that holds** PG 05  
Evidence in the CRM, not opinion. Pairs with Pattern 01.

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**02**     **Pain surfaces before any demo** PG 07  
Quantified cost. Named trigger. Pairs with Pattern 02.

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**03**     **Founder and hire describe the same job** PG 09  
One paragraph each. They match. Pairs with Pattern 03.

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**04**     **Wins without the founder in the room** PG 11  
Above-average deals, closed by someone else. Pairs with Pattern 04.

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**05**     **Pipeline nameable by account** PG 13  
Sources identifiable. Coverage built. Pairs with Pattern 05.

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**06**     **Drive and coachability tested in the room** PG 15  
Live exercises, not resume proxies. Pairs with Pattern 06.

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CLOSING

PG  
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**Signals show up in order. Out-of-order means something underneath is unsolved.**

# 01

## Process made visible.

Any rep states the stage-exit evidence for their next deal without hedging. Forecast accuracy holds across a quarter, and reviews largely stop being about whether deals will close, but when.

### THE SIGNAL

Specific artifact, statement, or commitment cited per stage advance.

### THE FALSE SIGNAL

Populated CRM. Stage names. Calendar density.

### OWNER

Sales leader, or the founder if no leader is in seat.

### THE CHECK

Three deals at random. What evidence advanced each?

# Evidence in the CRM, not opinion.

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**A**ny rep states the stage–exit evidence for their next deal without hedging. The evidence is specific: an artifact the buyer produced, a recorded statement, a commitment with a date attached. Forecast accuracy holds above 75% across a full quarter. Pipeline review shifts from arguing whether deals will close to working out what is missing for the ones that won't.

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

A populated CRM with familiar stage names. Calendar density read as structure. Reps describing the process by repeating the sales deck back at standup. These can all exist for years without an underlying system, which is why the symptom is invisible to the people inside it.

## What evidence did the buyer produce to reach this stage?

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership sits with the sales leader. If no leader is in seat, it sits with the founder, who cannot delegate the test until the seat is filled. The test itself is fast: pull three open deals at random and ask the owner what the buyer has produced to advance each one. A specific artifact, recorded statement, or confirmed commitment is a pass. "We had a good call" or "I think they are ready" is a fail.

Run the test across a cohort of reps, not a single one. One rep passing while three fail means the system lives in that rep's head, not in the company.

## WHAT CHANGES

### ↑ Forecast accuracy

Typically from around 40% to north of 75%, within a quarter of the evidence criteria holding.

# 02

## Discovery that finds pain.

Cost-of-inaction surfaces in the buyer's own numbers, with a named trigger event, before any demo. Deal size climbs while discount rates fall.

THE SIGNAL

Quantified cost in buyer's numbers. Trigger event named and dated.

THE FALSE SIGNAL

Enthusiasm. "This is great" without commitment.

OWNER

Sales leader. Mechanism is call coaching, daily.

THE CHECK

Five recorded discovery calls. Score for cost + trigger.

# Cost-of-inaction shows up before any demo.

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**D**iscovery calls surface cost-of-inaction in the buyer's own numbers, not the rep's framing. A trigger event has a name and a date attached to it. Average deal size climbs while discount rates fall in parallel. Losses cluster on fit issues, less so on price, because the pain side of the deal has been quantified before pricing enters the conversation.

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

Buyers calling the demo "great" or the product "exactly what we need." Enthusiasm in the moment that doesn't survive to procurement. A pipeline weighted toward upper-stage deals with no quantified pain underneath them, which is how forecasts blow up in the final week of a quarter.

**What is this costing them today, in their own numbers?**

## THE ARITHMETIC OF WHY COMPANIES BUY

Companies buy for exactly three reasons: to increase revenue, decrease cost, or decrease risk. ROI is the gain over the cost of the solution. With an unknown numerator, no denominator divides into a number worth signing. Quantify the gain or there is no case.

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership sits with the sales leader, and the work happens through call coaching rather than a deck about discovery. To test where the muscle is, listen to the last five recorded discovery calls and score each one for two things: a quantified cost in the buyer's own numbers, and a named trigger event. Three of five missing both means the muscle is not there yet, regardless of what reps describe in standup.

An adjacent signal: who in the buyer's organization cares the most about the cost being quantified. If the rep can name that person and describe their stake, an early champion exists. Without that name, the deal is running on the wrong altitude.

## WHAT CHANGES

**↑ Deal size - ↓ Discounting**

Driven by the conversation moving off price and onto the cost of inaction, not by negotiating the discount.

# 03

## Motion the hire runs.

The founder describes the required motion in one paragraph. The hire executes that motion visibly. Ramp is measured against a defined template.

### THE SIGNAL

Founder and hire describe the same job, in their own words.

### THE FALSE SIGNAL

A polished hire who presents well in pipeline review.

### OWNER

Founder, until the hire owns themselves against a template.

### THE CHECK

Ask each, separately. The descriptions should match.

# Founder and hire describe the **same job.**

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**T**he founder, or in larger companies whoever owns the revenue motion, can describe the motion the hire was brought in to run, in one paragraph and without notes. The hire executes that same motion visibly in the CRM and on recorded calls. Ramp is measured against a defined template: deals closed by week, stage progression rate, time-to-quota. Conversation in pipeline review centres on the template, not on whether the hire is "fitting in."

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

A hire who presents well in pipeline review. Slide quality and the confidence to speak at length about deals. The polished "experienced operator" register read as competence because the founder has no benchmark to test against it. A pipeline that grows in number of deals but not in close rate.

## Describe the motion the hire was brought in to run.

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership stays with the founder or the revenue leader until the hire is operating against the measurable template. Two separate questions test the signal: ask whoever owns the motion to describe it in one paragraph, then put the same question to the hire. The two descriptions should match in substance, not in phrasing. A mismatch means either the owner has not articulated the job clearly enough for anyone else to do it, or the hire is running a different motion than the business actually needs. Both diagnoses are recoverable, in different ways.

## WHAT CHANGES

### ↓ Time to first solo close

Shortens once the hire runs the documented motion instead of improvising; a plateau means the motion still lives in someone else's head.

# 04

## Closing that scales.

Someone other than the founder closes above-average deals at the founder's rate. The operating system runs without the founder dialling in. Most acute in founder-led companies; higher up, read *founder* as whoever owns the revenue motion.

### THE SIGNAL

Reps closing above-average deals without the founder on the call.

### THE FALSE SIGNAL

The founder being on fewer calls. Lower activity, same gravity.

### OWNER

Founder during extraction, sales leader after.

### THE CHECK

Last ten above-average wins. Count founder presence. Watch trend.

# Wins without the founder **in the room.**

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**S**omeone other than the founder closes above-average deals at the founder's rate. The sales operating system runs without the founder dialling in. Reps stop asking for "help close" support and start asking for coaching on a specific objection or a specific stage. The founder's calendar opens up, not because they are less needed, but because the need is concentrated into a few high-leverage moments instead of every deal.

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

The founder being on fewer calls. A drop in observable activity that does not reflect a drop in actual dependency. Work shifted into "internal review" or "approval" without leaving the founder's brain. Reps still designing their close strategy around the founder's particular style, just with the founder not in the room.

**Of the last ten wins above average deal size, how many had the founder on a call?**

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership during the extraction project belongs to the founder. After extraction, the sales leader owns the signal, with the founder reviewing on a quarterly cadence. To test where it is, pull the last ten wins above the company's average deal size and count how many had the founder on at least one call. The absolute number matters less than the direction across the last three quarters. A flat or rising number is the signal that extraction has not happened, regardless of what the system documentation claims.

## WHAT CHANGES

### ↓ **Founder Dependence Score**

The share of above-average wins that needed the founder in the room. When the fix is real it drops by 50% or more across three quarters; a flat or rising line means extraction has not happened.

# 05

## Pipeline named by account.

Next quarter's pipeline lists by account on a single page. A named owner is comped on net-new creation. Outbound shows up in calendars at the volume the cadence specifies.

THE SIGNAL

Pipeline coverage 3x or higher, sources identifiable per deal.

THE FALSE SIGNAL

A healthy aggregate number that hides composition.

OWNER

SDR lead, AE on prospecting blocks, or founder until the role exists.

THE CHECK

Source each deal. Outbound under 30% means the function isn't built.

# Coverage **built**, not hoped.

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**N**ext quarter's pipeline can be listed account by account on a single page, without anyone scrambling to fill in gaps. A single named owner is comped on net-new creation. Outbound activity shows up in calendars and call logs at the volume the cadence design specifies, week by week. Pipeline coverage sits at 3x or higher of the booking target, and the deals composing the coverage have identifiable sources.

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

A pipeline number that looks healthy in aggregate. Inbound and warm referrals counted as net-new generation. Old deals re-aged with a fresh next-step date. Reporting that hides composition behind a single total. A "good quarter" of pipeline that turns out, in retrospect,

to have been one large opportunistic deal masking the absence of a system underneath.

## Source each deal in next quarter's pipeline. What percentage is outbound?

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership is whoever runs outbound: an SDR lead, an AE on dedicated prospecting blocks, or the founder until that role exists in the org. The test is account-by-account categorization. List every deal expected to close next quarter. Tag each one with a source: outbound, inbound, referral, founder network, channel. If outbound is under 30% of the count, the function is not built. If outbound is over 50% but coverage is below 3x, the function is built but cadence volume is undercalibrated.

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## WHAT CHANGES

### ↑ Pipeline coverage

From around 1.5x toward 3x of the booking target, with outbound an identifiable, repeatable share of it.

# 06

## Hires who compound.

Recent hires went through a live coaching exercise inside the interview loop. References were checked on coachability and effort, not just quota attainment and cultural fit.

THE SIGNAL

Behaviour cited as the reason for the hire, not resume keywords.

THE FALSE SIGNAL

A smooth Q&A. Familiar logos. No live exercise.

OWNER

Hiring manager, or founder/leader for later stages.

THE CHECK

Last three hires. Recall the drive and coachability signal for each.

# Drive and coachability, tested in the room.

## §01 THE SIGNAL

**R**ecent hires were screened with a live coaching exercise inside the interview loop. Behavioural interviews focused on ownership stories rather than job titles.

Reference checks asked about coachability and effort under pressure, not quota attainment.

Hiring decisions cite interview behaviour, not resume keywords. The team being built selects for two traits regardless of background.

## §02 THE FALSE SIGNAL

An interview pipeline full of impressive resumes. Candidates with familiar logos. Q&A loops where the candidate answers smoothly without being asked to try anything in the room. A hiring rubric that emphasises years of experience and domain knowledge over how the candidate behaves under live feedback.

## What was the interview signal for drive and coachability, in the last three hires?

## §03 THE CHECK

Ownership sits with the hiring manager, or with the founder if hiring decisions still escalate. The test is to walk through the last three hires and ask one question for each: what was the interview signal for drive, and what was the interview signal for coachability. A specific recalled behaviour (the candidate took live feedback and adjusted, the candidate described owning a hard stretch and what they did about it) is a pass. "Came across as motivated" or "had great energy" is a fail. Vagueness in the answer is the diagnosis.

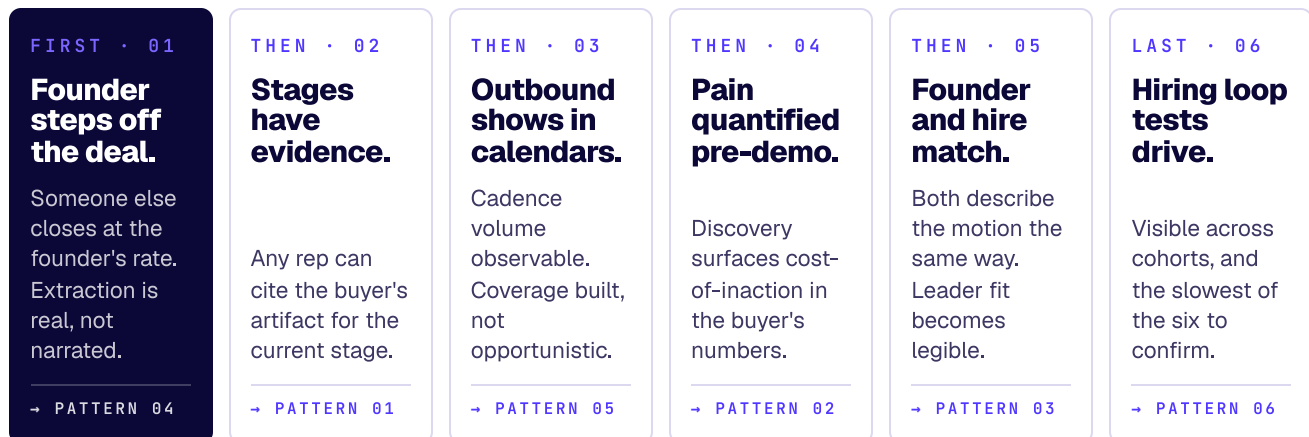
## WHAT CHANGES

### ↓ Ramp time

About half the ramp time of the wrong hire, with far less risk of a washout twelve months in.

## CLOSING

# Signals show up in order. Out-of-order means something underneath is unsolved.



These six signals surface in the same order edition 001 prescribes the fixes: extraction, process, outbound, discovery, leader, hiring. That pairing is the point of a companion piece. When signals appear out of that order, something underneath is unsolved. Outbound sits ahead of discovery for a mechanical reason: there is not enough call volume to coach discovery against until outbound supplies it, so the volume has to exist before the conversation inside it can be fixed. Outbound volume climbing before process is built, though, will look like growth on the dashboard and land as exhausted reps and shrinking win rates within two quarters. Hiring more reps before the discovery muscle exists adds cost without lift. The signals confirm the fix held; they do not produce the fix.

This sequence starts from founder-led companies, where step one is founder extraction. Early on, the absence of that first proof is expected, not alarming: a company that has not started has nothing to show yet. Higher up the band, read *founder* as whoever owns the revenue motion, and step one as single-point-of-failure dependency rather than founder dependency.

FOR FOUNDER USE, OR A PORTFOLIO REVIEW

## Six checks. Behavioural answers only.

Self-reported answers do not count. Each check below has a behavioural artifact attached to it. The diagnosis is binary and fast: a specific recalled behaviour passes, a generalisation does not.

Where edition 001's checklist tests state against a threshold (is the dependency there yet?), these checks read trend across quarters (is it moving?). One diagnoses, the other confirms; that is the division of labour between the two editions.

<p>Signal 01</p> <p><b>Pull three open deals: can the owner show the buyer's evidence for the current stage? Vague answers fail.</b></p>	<p>Signal 02</p> <p><b>Last five discovery calls: how many had a quantified cost and a named trigger? Under three, the muscle isn't there.</b></p>
<p>Signal 03</p> <p><b>Founder and first hire each describe the motion. A mismatch is structural, not a coaching gap.</b></p>	<p>Signal 04</p> <p><b>Last ten above-average wins: how many needed the founder? Flat across three quarters means not extracted.</b></p>
<p>Signal 05</p> <p><b>Source next quarter's pipeline by account. Outbound under 30% means the function isn't built.</b></p>	<p>Signal 06</p> <p><b>Last three hires: name the live signal for drive and coachability. A resume isn't a signal.</b></p>

Then

**How many signals are present, and in what order did they appear?**

END OF BRIEF

# Behaviour confirms what would otherwise have to be claimed.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ben J. Abbey is the founder of GTMomentum. GTMomentum systemizes sales for B2B companies from \$500K to \$10M and then coaches the leaders running them and the sales reps where present. The goal is to have them running the systems so success continues after the engagement ends.

Field Notes 002 is the companion to edition 001, drawn from the same 36 engagements. If reading 002 first, edition 001 maps the six patterns this edition expects to see fixed.

## WORK WITH US

GTMomentum installs the sales system that produces these signals and coaches the leaders running it. Engagements are diagnostic, extraction, or team-enablement, depending on which signals are missing and which are mid-installation.

**Book a 30-min diagnostic call.**

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