A MAP, NOT A CHECKLIST

The Commercial Strategy Map

Generating revenue in recruitment relies on three things: what you say to the market, what you actually do to win the work, and what you get paid for once you've won it. When these three are in conflict, you risk missing out on commitment, placements, and fee value. Commercial strategy keeps all three working together, driving growth.

Built from patterns we've seen whilst generating £78M+ with recruitment businesses over 18+ years in the industry, this document maps the strategy.

Resonant beresonant.co.uk August 2026

THE SHAPE OF IT

Four regions. One wheel.

Draw all four as a wheel, not a checklist. Your promise sets what clients expect, your true value proves you can deliver it, your process turns that value into consistent new business, and your products get you paid properly for it, which reinforces the promise all over again.

One **Your Promise** What you say. Positioning, message, market focus, founder story, the words clients repeat back.	*Two* **Your True Value** The value you deliver. The problems you solve, the way you solve them, the measurable impact of your work.
Three **Your Process** The four sales channels. Clarity, precision, campaign, conversion.	*Four* **Your Products** What you get paid for. The link between value and margin.

> *The Golden Thread ties them together: the alignment between what you say, what you do and what you get paid for.*
>
> When it holds, the wheel compounds. Break it anywhere, and the wheel locks, becoming a hamster wheel: more activity, more speed, zero growth.

One Your Promise

What you say

Can the market quickly identify your true value and points of greatest impact?

WHEN IT'S WORKING

A client can describe your value, why it matters and why it is relevant to them, clearly and accurately.

WHEN IT'S DRIFTING

Clients struggle to tell you apart from other agencies, or point to people as what sets you apart. They discover your value by accident rather than by design, and your strongest case study is buried three clicks deep.

This usually isn't a marketing problem, it's a lack of clarity. Most founders know what makes them a great recruiter but the promise has become something else — something more transactional and commoditised. They are experts, with a big network, in a tight niche, like everyone else. Then clients compare you on the one thing that's easy to compare: fee. Firms that grow productivity and profit make their unique value easy to see.

SELF-CHECK

- Would a client describe you the same way you describe yourselves?
- Is your greatest value clear in every sales and marketing message?

ON THE MAP

Position	Get clear on the one thing you want to be known for, not the ten things you can do.
Message	The words a client would use to describe you back to you, not your own marketing copy.
Audience	Who specifically you are the obviously right firm for, and who you are happy to lose.
Proof story	The client story that makes the promise believable, told where people will actually find it.

Two Your True Value

The value you deliver

What is your most valuable work, and what impact does it create?

WHEN IT'S WORKING

You quantify your greatest impact — the moments that create great hires. Clients recognise the depth, not just the outcome.

WHEN IT'S DRIFTING

Value is described only in placement or fee terms; the deeper commercial impact is never actually measured.

The industry often undersells its value because it's rarely asked to prove it — contingent recruitment removes the need. But once you can name the real commercial impact of the work, pricing conversations change shape entirely.

EVIDENCE

- £78M+ generated in new business for recruitment businesses over 18+ years — by naming and pricing real commercial impact, not just placements.

ON THE MAP

True value	What your business actually delivers beyond a placement, quantified in terms a client's board would recognise.
Impact	The measurable commercial outcomes your work creates for clients, over and above headcount filled.
Methodology	The processes and steps your business takes to ensure it delivers the promise every time.
Proof story	Evidence of impact, measured in the client's numbers rather than your own.

Three Your Process

How do you generate and maximise opportunities, consistently and reliably?

WHEN IT'S WORKING

You create opportunities efficiently through the most efficient channels, convert them to high value deals, and strategically increase customer value.

WHEN IT'S DRIFTING

BD has become a single messy string of reactive tasks, marketing feels random, and the wins are frustratingly transactional.

Sales strategy and commercial methodology are underdeveloped in most businesses — reactive outbound, random inbound, a few events, some referrals. None of it coherent or reliable. Each of the four channels needs the same things: clarity of message, precision targeting, a campaign cadence and a conversion process. With them, profit and productivity can grow.

SELF-CHECK

- Is the team using your BD playbook consistently, and does it cover more than job leads and speccing?
- Does your sales process make working with you exclusively feel like the only sensible option?

ON THE MAP

Inbound	Demand you've earned: content, authority, podcasts, newsletters, speaking. Best-fit clients are drawn to you.
Outbound	New business you go and win proactively (cold client acquisition), and reactively (signal-led, near-bound).
Expansion	Growing existing clients (upsell, cross-sell, multi-threading), and re-opening relationships gone quiet.
Partner channel	Business won through formal or informal partner and referral relationships, curated introducers, ecosystem partners, client-to-client recommendations.
Sales playbook	The shared method the whole team runs, so conversion does not live in one person's head.

Four Your Products

What you get paid for

Are you paid for the value you create, or only for the hires the market already knows how to buy?

WHEN IT'S WORKING

Retainers are a normal, comfortable conversation, senior or complex work is priced differently from standard contingent roles, and margin reflects the expertise and the moments that deliver real impact, not just the placement made.

WHEN IT'S DRIFTING

Every fee conversation starts from the market rate, value-based pricing is something you've talked about but never actually done, and the business rarely says no.

The work you do demands better terms and higher commitment, not just on a role by role (transactional) basis, but in partnership with your clients. Your products and terms should reflect your real value, reinforce your promise, and be the natural conclusion of your process. The deals you sign shape the way your client sees you, not just for today but for the future. That might make it the most important component of the whole map.

SELF-CHECK

- Do the deals you sign shape the way you want your clients to see you, not just today but for the future of your relationship?
- Does the way you get paid reflect your real value and the moments when you have greatest impact?

ON THE MAP

Pricing	Fee structures that reflect the value created, not just market-rate contingent norms.
Product structure	A defined ladder of offers that leads towards partnership, not just a set of transactional options.
Ecosystem	How offers connect and compound, so clients move naturally from one to the next.
Consultancy shift	The move from transactional recruitment towards work clients buy for your judgement, not just your pipeline.

Where is the widest gap?

In practice, most founders score well in one area, honestly shaky in a second, and haven't looked hard at the other two in years. The area with the widest gap between what you'd like to be true and what's actually true is usually the one capping growth. It's rarely the area itself that's the real issue, it's what that area is blocking. A founder who avoids pricing conversations is often also the one still doing all the BD. A firm with generic positioning is often also the one whose delivery never gets the credit it deserves.

> *"Ben has helped recruitment businesses generate more than £78M in new business over 18+ years in the industry, working across positioning, sales process and pricing."*

Ben Browning, Managing Director, Resonant

What do you notice as you look through the map? Are there weak points in your strategy, is the strategy missing altogether, or are you reaping the rewards of a clear strategy the whole team runs to consistently generate quality revenue?

WHEN YOU'RE READY, THERE ARE TWO THINGS YOU CAN DO

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1. **Book on to the Commercial Strategy Workshop**

A small, capped working session for recruitment business leaders. We talk the map through in detail — your numbers, your challenges, in real time.
beresonant.co.uk/commercial-strategy-workshop

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2. **Book a call with Ben direct**

Twenty minutes on where you're trying to take your firm and what's in the way. Via the workshop page, or email ben@beresonant.co.uk.
