



SAGENTIX
Advisors

The Evidence Gap — White Paper

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The Evidence Gap: Why Most GTM Strategies Fail Before They Launch

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Executive Summary

Growth-stage companies face a false binary: hire a Big 4 firm at estimated \$250K+ based on published engagement minimums and wait 12-16 weeks, or build it yourself with AI tools and hope the numbers survive board scrutiny. Both paths fail. The first is economically inaccessible. The second is unverifiable. The gap between them — what we call the Evidence Gap — is where most go-to-market strategies die.

This paper examines why the Evidence Gap exists, what seven phases of research-backed analysis reveal about the consulting industry's structural inability to serve growth-stage companies, and how productized, research-backed GTM advisory bridges the gap at 4-19x lower cost and 2-4x faster delivery.

The governing insight: the gap between vendor claims and buyer trust is the central market tension. Buyers do not break ties on "AI-powered" claims — 79% of executives cite AI readiness gaps; only 24% believe their organizations can execute. They break ties on provability: "Can you show me that your strategy recommendations are traceable to verifiable sources?" (Deltek, 2026; Anderson, Kumar, & Narus, 2014).

1.0 The Problem: A \$470 Billion Industry That Cannot Serve Its Fastest-Growing Segment

The US management consulting market generates \$470 billion in annual revenue across more than 5 million firms. No single firm holds more than 1% market share (IBISWorld, 2025). This is one of the most fragmented professional services markets in the world.

At the top, McKinsey, BCG, Bain, and the Big 4 serve Fortune 500 clients at estimated \$250K+ based on published engagement minimums per engagement with 12-16 week timelines. Their work is research-backed, methodologically rigorous, and citation-disciplined. It is also economically inaccessible to any company below \$50M in revenue. The labor pyramid model — junior associates at \$250-\$500/hour billing against senior partner oversight — produces 30-40% gross margins and structurally prevents price reduction (RocketBlocks, 2026; Slideworks, 2026).

At the bottom, 70.3% of IT security consultants — and a comparable proportion across management consulting verticals — are sole proprietors (IBISWorld, 2025). These practitioners offer expertise but not methodology. Their output quality is talent-dependent, not process-dependent. It varies by who is assigned to your project.

In the middle sits the fastest-growing segment of the economy: growth-stage companies with \$2M-\$50M in annual recurring revenue. Series Seed through Series B. 5 to 200 employees. Products that work. Go-to-market strategies that do not.

These companies need Big 4-caliber strategy. They cannot afford Big 4 pricing. And so they face the false binary.



2.0 The Evidence: What Market Data Reveals

2.1 The Fragmentation Opportunity

The management consulting industry's extreme fragmentation creates a structural opportunity for productized advisory. When no firm holds more than 1% market share, the market signals that differentiation is failing. Most consulting firms compete on relationships and brand, not on methodology and evidence.

Multi-source market intelligence confirms the pattern across adjacent markets:

- **US Management Consulting:** \$470B revenue, 5M+ firms, <1% concentration at the top (IBISWorld, Report 54161, 2025)
- **US IT Security Consulting:** \$20B revenue, 70.3% sole proprietors, Accenture holds 25.7% share (IBISWorld, Report 54151, 2025)
- **Canadian Software Publishing:** \$23.2B revenue, 4.4% CAGR, private investment growing 7.3% CAGR (IBISWorld, Report 51121CA, 2025)

2.2 The DIY Trap: \$106K-\$292K in Hidden Costs

The perceived "free" path — courses, AI tools, and founder time — carries a true cost of \$106K-\$292K when accounting for opportunity cost (Sagentix internal analysis, Phase 06):

Cost Component	Estimate
Course and tool fees	\$500-\$2,000
Founder time (300+ hours at \$300/hour)	\$90,000+
Revenue delayed by 3-6 month GTM gap	\$50K-\$200K
True total cost	\$106,000-\$292,000

This is not a hypothetical calculation. It reflects the documented experience of founders who attempt DIY GTM strategy: 3-6 months of fragmented effort, partial deliverables, and inconsistent messaging that requires rework when the board meeting or fundraise approaches.

2.3 The VP Hire Alternative: 6-12 Months and \$250K/Year

Companies considering a VP of Marketing hire face a different cost structure but the same Evidence Gap:

Dimension	VP Hire	Sagentix
Time to hire	6-12 months	Immediate
Annual salary + benefits	\$250,000+	\$12K-\$50K (one-time)
Ramp time to full productivity	3-6 months after hire	2-8 weeks
IP that survives departure	None (tribal knowledge)	Complete work package (retained)
Evidence standard	Experience-dependent	APA 7th, page-level provenance

A VP hire is an operational investment. GTM strategy is a strategic investment. They are complementary, not substitutes. But the VP cannot build what they do not have: access to paywalled industry databases, a structured methodology across 10 integrated phases, or 194 evidence tables with page-level provenance.



2.4 AI Is Automating the Wrong Layer

AI tools can generate plausible prose. They can search the web. They can create outlines and framings quickly. According to industry analysis, AI is automating approximately 40% of consulting tasks — specifically the tasks that were already low-value: first drafts, formatting, basic web research, and slide creation (McKinsey Global Institute, 2025).

What AI cannot automate is the high-value layer: accessing paywalled industry databases (\$40K+/year subscriptions), cross-referencing findings across a 10-phase integrated strategy, applying academic frameworks (Christensen's JTBD, Osterwalder's VPC, Porter's Five Forces) with practitioner judgment, and producing evidence tables with page-level provenance.

The firms that recognize this distinction — that AI augments methodology rather than replacing it — will command 30-40% fee premiums over generalist competitors. Specialists with systematized IP are structurally advantaged in a market where AI commoditizes generic output (Anderson, Kumar, & Narus, 2014).

3.0 The Integration Gap: Why AI Tools Alone Cannot Bridge the Evidence Gap

The Evidence Gap is not just about data access. It is about integration.

Ask any AI tool to build your TAM/SAM/SOM. It will produce plausible numbers from web searches. Then ask it to derive a pricing model from that TAM. It will produce a reasonable pricing structure. Then ask it to write sales scripts that reference that pricing for each buyer persona. It will write competent scripts.

Now check: do the TAM numbers in the pricing model match the TAM numbers in the market report? Do the buyer personas in the sales scripts match the JTBD in the value proposition? Can you trace the competitive claims in the pitch deck back to a specific industry report, page, and publication date?

You cannot. You have three disconnected outputs — different numbers, no cross-references, and no way to trace claims back to a verifiable source.

This is the Integration Gap. It exists because:

1. **AI tools cannot access proprietary databases.** IBISWorld, Gartner, Forrester, and industry-specific databases are paywalled. AI produces estimates. Estimates do not survive board scrutiny.
2. **AI tools produce stateless output.** Each prompt produces an independent response. There is no persistent knowledge base connecting your TAM to your VP to your messaging to your pricing to your business model. Integration across 10 phases requires structured methodology, not prompt engineering.
3. **AI tools lack evidence discipline.** APA 7th edition citations, page-level provenance, 194 evidence tables linking claims to source material — these are methodological practices, not generation capabilities. An AI tool can format a citation. It cannot verify that the cited source actually supports the claim. Source integrity verification (anti-hallucination) is a methodology layer.
4. **AI tools cannot apply frameworks with judgment.** Christensen's Jobs-to-Be-Done theory, Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas, Porter's Five Forces, the Diamond-E strategy framework, Tiebreaker Selling justifiers — these are not templates to fill in. They are analytical lenses that require practitioner experience to apply correctly. A JTBD analysis that lists features instead of jobs is worse than no analysis at all.
5. **AI tools cannot enforce cross-phase consistency.** When Phase 6 (Pricing) references a TAM figure from Phase 1 (Market Intelligence), a 16-check quality gate catches mismatches. When



Phase 5 (Sales Process) references buyer personas from Phase 2 (Value Proposition), the quality gate validates alignment. This cross-referencing across 10 integrated phases is what produces a revenue engine rather than a collection of documents.

4.0 The Competitive White Space: High Rigor + Fast Delivery

The competitive landscape reveals a clear two-by-two matrix:

	Slow (12-16 weeks)	Fast (2-8 weeks)
High Rigor	Big 4 / MBB (estimated \$250K+ based on published engagement minimums)	Sagentix (\$12K-\$50K)
Low Rigor	Boutique firms (\$20K-\$100K)	DIY / AI tools (\$500-\$2K)

Only Sagentix occupies the "High Rigor + Fast Delivery" quadrant. This is not a marketing claim — it is a structural position enabled by platform economics:

- **64% gross margin** vs. 30-40% for labor-pyramid firms (Phase 07, Business Model Design)
- **727+ reusable IP artifacts** eliminate per-engagement reinvention
- **16-check automated quality gate** replaces manual partner review
- **Credential convergence** (CMC + CISSP + P.Eng.) provides cross-domain expertise in a single practitioner

The competitive moat is not the AI platform — AI platforms are replicable. The moat is the methodology IP, the credential convergence, and the evidence standard operating together as an integrated system (Phase 02, §6.0).

5.0 The Bridge: Productized, Research-Backed GTM Advisory

Sagentix Advisors was built to bridge the Evidence Gap. The model: deliver Big 4-caliber GTM strategy at growth-stage pricing by systematizing the methodology that makes Big 4 work rigorous.

5.1 The Knowledge Base

Every engagement draws from a structured consulting knowledge base of 727+ curated consulting IP artifacts:

- **54 proprietary frameworks** — repeatable methods refined through real engagements, grounded in published academic research
- **136 peer-reviewed research briefs** — from Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review, Industrial Marketing Management, and domain-specific journals
- **66 industry reports** — paywalled market intelligence with revenue, CAGR, concentration, competitive dynamics, and buyer/supplier power
- **194 evidence tables** — linking claims to source material with page-level provenance
- **43 meta-prompts** — structured prompts ensuring consistent deliverable quality
- **42 deliverable skeletons** — reusable templates for every phase output
- **16 foundational strategy books** — Christensen (JTBD), Osterwalder (VPC/BMC), Kahneman (behavioral economics), Porter (competitive strategy), Collins (Built to Last), Flyvbjerg (reference class forecasting), Kim & Mauborgne (Blue Ocean), Minto (Pyramid Principle)

5.2 The 10-Phase Pipeline

The methodology delivers 10 integrated phases, each building on the last:



1. **Market Intelligence** — Research-backed TAM/SAM/SOM, competitive landscape, regulatory context
2. **Value Proposition** — JTBD with gain-type tags, 12 differentiators (D1-D12), Diamond-E alignment, strategy canvas
3. **Messaging** — 4-Part architecture with Message House, vertical playbooks, activation plan, GenAI brand prompts
4. **Pitch Deck** — Modular, investor/partner/client configurations with speaker notes and client branding
5. **Sales Process** — Hybrid SPIN/MEDDPICC engine, Win Room, RevOps architecture, buyer enablement
6. **Pricing** — Value-based 3-tier model, TCO comparison (4-19x advantage), vertical pricing playbooks
7. **Business Model** — BMC canvas, hybrid advisory-platform model, 64% gross margins, 3-scenario projections
8. **Strategy Execution** — 90-day roadmap, KPIs, team alignment
9. **Digital Audit** — Website, LinkedIn, AI readiness assessment
10. **Evidence Discipline** — Claims audit, 44 experiments, measurement plan

5.3 The 12-Point Quality Gate

Every phase passes a 16-check quality audit modeled on Big 4 internal standards:

1. Word count and depth validation
2. APA 7th citation count and format (minimum 10 in-text citations)
3. Evidence table completeness
4. Declarative title compliance (McKinsey billboard test)
5. Cross-phase reference accuracy
6. No Data Dump rule (synthesis callouts after every table)
7. Vertical transition bridges and micro-implications
8. Regulatory terminology enforcement
9. Document Architecture conformance (G8-G16)
10. Source integrity verification (anti-hallucination)
11. Cross-document consistency
12. Post-draft validation tool execution gates



5.4 The Economics

Dimension	Big 4	Sagentix
Price	\$200,000-\$600,000	\$12,000-\$50,000
Timeline	12-16 weeks	2-8 weeks
Cost savings	Baseline	4-19x less
Phases delivered	2-3 workstreams	Up to 10 phases
Evidence standard	Internal (proprietary)	Published (APA 7th, verifiable)
Quality audit	Internal partner review	Automated 16-check gate
Gross margin	30-40% (labor pyramid)	64% (platform delivery)
Post-engagement	Relationship-based	Continuous Intelligence (\$3K-\$5K/mo)

The 4-19x cost advantage is not because the work is lower quality. It is because the methodology is systematized. Reusable IP eliminates reinvention. Automated quality gates replace manual partner review. Platform economics (64% gross margin) replace the labor pyramid. The output quality matches. The input cost does not.

6.0 Three Verticals, Three Justifiers

6.1 Management Consulting (MC)

Justifier: NRC IRAP MAS Qualification. Government-subsidized customer acquisition — clients may recover up to 80% of engagement fees. The only GTM advisory practice identified with this qualification.

6.2 Cybersecurity Advisory (CS)

Justifier: CPCSC Readiness Advisory. Level 1 mandatory April 2026. CISSP-led compliance positioning bridges the gap between technical compliance and strategic market positioning. First-mover advantage for firms preparing now.

6.3 B2B SaaS Startups (SS)

Justifier: Phase 1 Money-Back Guarantee. Zero-risk entry neutralizes the founder's default objection ("I can do this myself for \$20/month"). The guarantee shifts the decision from trust-based to evidence-based.

7.0 The Differentiator Stack

Six primary differentiators anchor Sagentix's competitive position:



ID	Differentiator	Why It Matters
D1	Evidence Discipline	APA 7th citations, 194 evidence tables, page-level provenance — no competitor offers verifiable source tracing at this price point
D2	Credential Convergence	CMC + CISSP + P.Eng. + 25+ years + uOttawa Telfer EMBA (#1 worldwide) — no identified competitor holds this combination
D4	Platform Speed	2-8 weeks vs. 12-16 weeks — platform economics enable speed that labor-pyramid firms structurally cannot match
D5	Research Depth	66 industry reports + 136 papers + 727+ IP artifacts — the structured knowledge base replaces per-engagement research
D6	JTBD-to-Justifier Bridge	Maps buyer jobs directly to provable tiebreakers — no Big 4 equivalent exists
D7	Continuous Intelligence	Fact-based change detection with version management — strategy stays current post-delivery

8.0 Start With Zero Risk

The Evidence Gap thesis is verifiable. You do not need to take our word for it.

Phase 1 Proof-of-Concept: \$4,000-\$5,000 with a money-back guarantee (subject to engagement terms).

Phase 1 (Market Intelligence) delivers a 30+ page research report with 50+ APA citations, proprietary market research, TAM/SAM/SOM, competitive landscape, and regulatory context. Compare it to anything your team, a course, or an AI tool can produce.

If the Phase 1 deliverable does not exceed your standard in depth, accuracy, and presentation quality — full refund, no questions asked. 100% of Phase 1 investment credits toward any tier within 30 days.

The Evidence Gap is real. The bridge exists. The risk is zero.

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