

# The Sagentix Signal

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## Your GTM strategy survives diligence only if its evidence does

**Y**ou raised capital on a TAM slide your board now wants to audit. The slide hasn't changed. The standard has.

B2B SaaS venture capital funding exceeded \$75 billion in 2025 ([GrowthList, 2026](#)), and most of it landed in companies whose go-to-market strategy is four slides of assumption. You set pricing once during beta and never revisited it. Your sales process is whatever you do in meetings. Your value proposition lists features every competitor also lists. The TAM slide says "\$50B" with no citation, no methodology, and no answer to the question a diligence analyst will ask in week two: *where did that number come from?* Post-2023 funding discipline made "we believe the market is large" a losing sentence ([OpenVC, 2026](#)).

The question isn't whether your GTM deck looks professional. Every deck looks professional now. The question is whether your deck can name its sources when a Series B partner's associate re-runs the numbers. That is the bar. The bar moved while you were shipping features.

### Specialization is the new defensibility

The U.S. management consulting market is fragmented by design, with no single firm holding more than 1% share (Sagentix, 2026). In a market where anyone can generate a passable analysis in twenty minutes with an AI tool, generalist credibility collapses and specialist credibility compounds. The firms winning mandates in 2026 can name their vertical, name their methodology, and name the clients who validated it ([Six Paths Consulting, 2026](#)).

"Other Management Consulting" is the NAICS bucket that captures specialized advisory outside general management, HR, marketing, and logistics. It is where GTM work lives. Small firms in this segment produce \$222,000 in revenue per employee (Sagentix, 2026), a benchmark that

only survives when the work is productized, the deliverables are defensible, and the engagement does not collapse into bespoke hourly consulting. The 7% producer price decline across the category (Sagentix, 2026) is the market telling you that undifferentiated advisory is repricing down. Credentials, published methodology, and sourced evidence are the only margin defenders left.

**DECISION RULE:**

If your GTM artifact cannot be traced to a named source within two clicks, it isn't strategy — it's narrative. Rewrite it or cut it this week.

That rewrite is not a stylistic question. It is a sales question, because buyers have started pricing evidence the same way they price product.

## Evidence is now a purchase criterion, not a nice-to-have

Buyers (and the boards that fund them) evaluate vendors and strategies through a lens of traceability. The technical buyer evaluates features. The economic buyer evaluates risk. Evidence reduces risk. Adjectives do not. When every competitor describes themselves as "AI-powered, proactive, real-time," the vocabulary becomes meaningless and the decision defaults to brand, price, or existing relationships (Deloitte, 2026). Growth-stage companies lose on all three defaults.

The fix is structural, not cosmetic. Every market statistic in your deck needs an APA 7 in-text citation linked to a full reference. Every competitive claim traces to a premium research source, a regulatory filing, or validated primary research. Every strategic recommendation connects to a specific data point, not a general impression (HBR, 2025). This is the methodology top-tier firms charge \$200,000 and wait 12-16 weeks to deliver. The price of admission changed. The delivery economics did not have to.

Three of the last four founder conversations we took opened with the same sentence: *"Our TAM slide isn't going to survive this round."* The fourth had already rebuilt theirs. That founder closed in 14 days.

**Do this this week:** Open your current investor deck. Count the unsourced claims on the TAM slide, the competitive slide, and the pricing slide. If the count is above five, you are not ready for the conversation your next lead investor will start. The filter is the credibility, and that filter begins on the next slide.

# The Second Signal

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## Your addressable market is a filter, not a headline

The "Other Management Consulting" segment contains 110,600 establishments in the United States (Sagentix, 2026). That is the largest potential client pool in the specialized advisory universe. It is also the reason most consulting TAM slides are wrong. Counting establishments is not counting customers. A headline number without a filter is a vanity metric dressed as a business plan.

The 0.03% fit figure is the one that matters (Sagentix, 2026). Of those 110,600 firms, only a narrow slice (B2B technology companies in the \$2M-\$50M ARR band with a live GTM strategy need) represents genuine demand. The remainder are system integrators, managed service providers, IT support shops, and web development firms whose buying patterns and budgets do not map to productized GTM advisory. A bottom-up TAM build that ignores this filter produces a number boards discount to zero. A bottom-up TAM build that shows the filter produces a number investors fund.

Your own GTM deck needs the same muscle. A \$50B TAM slide with no filter tells the reader you haven't done the work. A \$50B TAM slide that walks from total establishments, to ICP filter, to reachable buyers, to win-rate-adjusted revenue shows the reader the work *is* the answer (Minto, 2009). The filter is the credibility. Investors funding the 2026 cohort of B2B SaaS companies are explicit that bottom-up builds with named sources now outrank top-down estimates sourced from analyst press releases ([GrowthList, 2026](#)). That preference is not stylistic. It is a diligence-survival requirement.

The uncomfortable implication: the most honest slide in your deck is the smallest number. A defensible \$120M serviceable addressable market beats a decorative \$50B TAM every round after Series A. The firms closing rounds in 2026 are the ones whose small numbers are real. The firms that have already made the same trade-offs on pricing, positioning, and sales process are the ones we write about next.

# From the Field

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The four dispatches below extend the same thesis into specific founder decisions you are making right now.

- **The Evidence Gap: Why Most GTM Strategies Fail** Growth-stage founders face a false binary: \$200K Big 4 engagements over 12-16 weeks, or unsourced AI-generated analyses that collapse under diligence. The U.S. management consulting market generated approximately \$470 billion in 2025 and remains fragmented with no firm above 1% share. Firms that prove their methodology will capture disproportionate share. Read this if your board has asked "where did that number come from?" in the last 90 days.
- **B2B SaaS VC Funding Exceeded \$75B. Most Founders Are Still Guessing Their GTM.** The \$75B that flowed into B2B SaaS in 2025 funded engineers, roadmaps, and compliance. It rarely funded rigorous GTM strategy. The piece names the four guesses hiding in every Series A deck: pricing set once during beta, sales process equal to founder personality, feature-list value propositions, and TAM slides with no citation. Read this before your next board prep cycle.
- **Better Product, Worse Positioning: Why Cybersecurity Companies Lose on Brand** A technically superior vendor kept losing enterprise deals because the competitor had stronger evidence of credibility: named case studies, framework-mapped messaging, and a proof pack that pre-answered procurement questions. Enterprise buyers do not choose the best technology. They choose the least risky vendor, and evidence reduces risk. Read this if your win rate is lower than your product quality would predict.
- **We Have the Best Product. We Just Can't Explain Why.** In a CEO's last seven competitive deals, he lost five, all to weaker products. The sales team's differentiator line was identical, word for word, to four competitor websites. Feature-parity vocabulary is the enemy of differentiation, and in 100% of the CEO's won deals the actual champion was a compliance or risk leader, not the technical evaluator. Read this if your sales team sells to the wrong buyer role.

That pattern — evidence beating features, traceability beating volume — is now visible in the macro signals we track.

## What We're Watching

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The AI-driven compression of consulting delivery is the signal we are watching hardest over the next fortnight. Specialization and productization are becoming the only durable moats in a market where a first-draft analysis is now a 20-minute commodity ([Future of Consulting AI, 2026](#)). Firms that invest in named methodology, peer-reviewed evidence libraries, and credentialed delivery ([CMC-Canada, 2026](#)) are pulling ahead of generalist peers on win rate and price realization ([AlphaSense, 2026](#)).

The parallel signal is the continued flight-to-quality in B2B SaaS funding. Late-stage investors are tightening bottom-up evidence requirements on every round, and the proportion of Series B decks that survive diligence without a re-built TAM slide has dropped measurably versus 2023 vintages [Unverified]. The compounding effect: founders who rebuilt their evidence layer six months ago are closing now. Founders who are about to rebuild are six months late.

Over the next 14 days we are watching two inputs: the next wave of 2026-vintage B2B SaaS term sheets and the diligence notes attached to them, and the producer-price trajectory for specialized advisory as AI-assisted delivery keeps compressing margins (OECD, 2026). Both converge on the same founder decision: defend your evidence layer now, or reprice later. The offer below is built for the first option.

## Work With Us

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If you are closing Q2 board prep and your TAM slide, pricing page, or competitive matrix cannot name a source, that is the gap we close.

Phase 1 Market Intelligence is a flat CA\$4,000-CA\$5,000 engagement delivered in 14 days. Every market statistic is APA-cited. Every competitive claim traces to a named source. Every deliverable passes a citation-density quality gate before it reaches your inbox.

**MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE: IF THE EVIDENCE DOESN'T HOLD ON A LINE-BY-LINE AUDIT, YOU DON'T PAY.**

Reply to this email with "Phase 1" or book a 20-minute scoping call at [sagentix.ca/contact](https://sagentix.ca/contact). We take four new engagements per month. Two remain for May.

— Stephane Raby CMC · CISSP · P.Eng. · 25+ Years · Executive MBA

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