

PSP Maturity Scorecard

The diagnostic I run in week one with every new client. Score yourself honestly across eight dimensions — the gap map tells you where to fix before you spend another dollar on tactics.

WHEN TO USE

Work through all 8 dimensions in one sitting. Use the shared 1-5 legend. Don't negotiate with yourself — 'we sort of do this' is a 2, not a 3. Total the score. Read the band recommendation. The band tells you whether your PSPs are actually functioning as segmentation, or whether you have a laminated persona deck in a folder somewhere.

Preamble. A Pain Signal Profile is a segmentation unit defined by observable, recent, named-signal behavior — not firmographics, not personas. The eight dimensions below are what separates a PSP that books meetings from a PSP that sits in a Notion doc. Most teams score a 17/40 on their first pass. The ones who compound are the ones who run this scorecard quarterly and watch the number climb.

Source lineage:

- Christensen/JTBD — pain is hired, not sold (dimension 1, 2)
- Blank customer-development manifesto — facts exist outside the building (dimension 3)
- LinkedIn B2B Institute / Ehrenberg-Bass 95/5 — out-of-market vs. in-market (dimension 2)
- Schwartz Breakthrough Advertising — awareness-level matching (dimension 6)
- Deming 85/15 — variation lives in the system, not the person (dimension 8)

Scoring legend (1-5). Every dimension uses the same 1-5 scale:

- 1 — Absent:** You do not do this. Either you have not built it, you built it and retired it, or the discipline does not exist in the org.
- 2 — Ad-hoc:** Someone does this, sometimes, when they remember. No cadence, no owner, no artifact. Cannot be audited.
- 3 — Documented:** An owner exists. A cadence exists. An artifact exists. Not yet measured; not yet feeding other layers.
- 4 — Measured:** Outputs are tracked against a baseline. Reviewed at least quarterly. Decisions are made from the numbers, not vibes.
- 5 — Compounding:** Outputs feed back into upstream layers. Every cycle makes the next cycle sharper. The discipline survives the person who built it.

Total possible: 40. Your band determines where to look first.

Score range	Band	Where to look first
≤ 16	Foundation missing	Your PSPs are personas with lipstick. Stop shipping outbound. Go run 8-12 customer interviews against your three best-fit accounts and rebuild two PSPs from scratch with the Foundation Stack. Everything else is leverage waste until the segmentation layer exists.
17 – 26	Leaking between layers	You have PSP scaffolding but the feedback loop is broken. Pick the two PSPs driving the most pipeline and tighten them: validate signals, name an owner, put a quarterly review on the calendar. Skip the long-tail PSPs until the top two compound.
27 – 34	Working, not compounding	Your PSPs produce pipeline but are not yet learning between campaigns. The gap is the cadence loop. Put the quarterly review ritual in place, build an EVP messaging grid, and instrument reply-rate trend per PSP. The jump from "working" to "compounding" is ritual, not insight.

35 – 40	Compounding	Your PSPs are an institutional asset. Two things to protect: (1) the quarterly review cannot slip, and (2) anti-fragility (dimension 8) is where compounding teams usually break when a founder leaves. Stress-test that dimension this quarter.
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 DECISION CRITERIA

1. Signal specificity

Are your PSP signals observable and specific (tech install, hire pattern, public post), or are they inferred from firmographics (industry, employee count, stage)? Firmographics describe the universe; signals describe the moment.

Score 1 (low): PSP is a firmographic segment dressed up as a pain segment — "VPs of Revenue at \$5-50M B2B SaaS" is a persona, not a PSP.

Score 5 (high): Each PSP has 3+ observable signals, each specific enough that someone outside the org could verify them from public data.

Recommendation: Rewrite every PSP until it references at least three observable behaviors — each one something you could screenshot. If you can't screenshot the signal, it isn't a signal.

2. Signal recency

How fresh are the observations behind each signal? A signal older than 90 days is a lagging indicator at best; beyond 6 months it is usually wrong. The 95% of the category that is out-of-market today will not stay there.

Score 1 (low): PSP signals reference things that happened 12+ months ago — or have no dates at all.

Score 5 (high): Every signal has a freshness window (30/60/90 days) and the PSP definition triggers a review if signals go stale.

Recommendation: Tag every signal with a freshness window. Put a calendar reminder on the stalest one. Retire any PSP where 2+ signals have gone stale without a refresh plan.

3. Segment validation

What evidence proves the PSP exists as a real segment — not a hypothesis? The evidence should come from outside the building: reply data, discovery-call transcripts, win-loss interviews. Anecdotes are not validation.

Score 1 (low): Segment was drawn on a whiteboard. No reply data or call transcripts have been mined against it.

Score 5 (high): 5+ verified instances from at least 2 independent sources (replies + calls). Reply-rate data confirms the pattern holds.

Recommendation: Mine the last 90 days of outbound replies and discovery-call recordings. Count verified instances per PSP. Any PSP with <5 instances moves back to "candidate" status until you validate it.

4. Feedback cadence

How often do you update the PSP definition? A PSP is a living hypothesis; the replies you get between campaigns are the sharpest signal you will ever have. Teams that let PSPs ossify watch reply rates decay quarter by quarter.

Score 1 (low): PSPs were written once, laminated, and filed. No update cadence exists.

Score 5 (high): Quarterly PSP review is on the calendar, pre-work includes a maturity rubric, decisions are published in a memo within 72 hours.

Recommendation: Put a quarterly 90-minute PSP review on the calendar today. Pre-work = this scorecard run again. Decision = promote / maintain / refresh / retire each PSP.

5. Operator ownership

Who owns each PSP? If the answer is "marketing" or "RevOps" or "we all do," the PSP will decay. A PSP needs a single named human accountable for its maturity and retirement — not a team.

Score 1 (low): No named owner. PSPs live in a shared doc nobody maintains.

Score 5 (high): Each PSP has a named owner whose role description includes that PSP. Owner rotation happens through a handoff ritual, not a Slack message.

Recommendation: Assign one owner per PSP by end of week. Put the ownership in the PSP document itself. Retire any PSP that cannot find a volunteer owner — unowned PSPs are already decaying.

6. Cross-channel consistency

Does the PSP definition translate cleanly across outbound, LinkedIn, paid, and demand-side content? If your PSP

Score 5 (high): One PSP, one awareness level header (consistent), one per channel variant of the same EVP.

Consistent across email, LinkedIn, paid, landing, and podcast.

Recommendation: Build an EVP messaging grid (PSPs × awareness level × channel). Each cell has canonical copy. If a channel manager rewrites it without going through the grid, the PSP review catches it.

7. Documentation quality

Can a new hire understand the PSP in 10 minutes? Documentation is the durability test — a PSP that only lives in the head of the person who built it will die when they change roles.

Score 1 (low): PSP lives in someone's head, a Slack thread, or a 47-slide deck that nobody opens.

Score 5 (high): Each PSP has a one-page document: signals, recency, validation evidence, EVP hypothesis, decay criteria. New hires read it in 10 minutes.

Recommendation: Convert every live PSP to a one-page format this week. If a PSP cannot be expressed in one page, the PSP is not yet crisp enough — rework it.

8. Anti-fragility (survives team changes)

If the person who built the PSP left tomorrow, does the PSP survive? Deming's 85/15 rule applies: most variation in segmentation quality comes from the system, not the individual. A PSP that depends on one person's intuition is a system-level failure mode.

Score 1 (low): PSP knowledge concentrated in one person. Their departure would require starting over.

Score 5 (high): PSP definition, signal sources, validation evidence, and owner rotation are all externalized. The system survives any single departure.

Recommendation: Stress-test with the "backup test": pick a PSP, hand it to someone new, give them 48 hours, see if they can run a campaign against it without calling the original owner. Gaps surface immediately.