

Strategic Anchoring Canvas

PSF Name

Author

Date

Clients	Pain Points	Services
Who are your Priority Client?s	What Strategic Pain Points are you solving?	What solutions do you provide?
In Which Sectors do they operate?	How urgent are these pain points?	How scalable and replicable are these solutions?
Value	Differentiation	Domain Configuration
How do your solutions create measurable value?	Who are your major competitors?	Which External domains are the most critical to delivering value & Differentiation
How much value do your solutions bring about to your client?	Why are your solutions superior to your competition?	Which Internal domains are the most critical to delivering value & Differentiation

Guidance Notes:

BOX 1: CLIENTS

Primary Question: Who are your Priority Clients?

Prompts:

- List 3-5 specific client archetypes (e.g., "PE-backed CEOs in manufacturing scale-ups" not "business leaders")
- For each archetype, describe:
 - Title/role (who specifically makes buying decisions?)
 - Company size/stage (revenue range, employee count, growth phase)
 - Current state (what situation are they in when they need you?)

Sub-Question: In which sectors do they operate?

Prompts:

- Name 2-4 priority sectors (be specific: "Automotive OEMs" not "manufacturing")
- For each sector, note:
 - Why this sector values your expertise
 - What makes this sector different from others you could serve
 - Market size and growth trajectory

Validation Questions:

- If you had to turn away 50% of potential clients, which would you keep? (That's your priority)
- Could you describe your ideal client in enough detail that your team would recognize them?
- Are you listing "everyone we've ever worked with" vs. "who we're best positioned to serve"?

BOX 2: PAIN POINTS

Primary Question: What Strategic Pain Points are you solving?

Prompts:

- List 3-5 specific pain points (not vague problems like "need better strategy")

- For each pain point, articulate:
 - **The symptom:** What observable problem does the client experience? (e.g., "losing 15% market share annually")
 - **The cause:** What underlying issue creates this symptom? (e.g., "legacy business model disrupted by digital entrants")
 - **The impact:** What's at stake if unsolved? (e.g., "business viability within 3 years")

Sub-Question: How urgent are these pain points?

Prompts:

- Rate each pain point: **Critical / High / Medium / Low**
 - **Critical:** Client faces existential threat, will pay premium for fast solution
 - **High:** Significant business impact, active problem-solving mode
 - **Medium:** Important but not acute, may defer
 - **Low:** Nice to solve, competes with other priorities
- For each, identify:
 - **Cost of inaction:** What happens if they do nothing for 12 months?
 - **Decision urgency:** Are they solving this now or "when we get around to it"?
 - **Budget availability:** Do they have money allocated or must they create budget?

Validation Questions:

- If pain point isn't urgent, why would clients prioritise working with you?
- Can you point to clients who contacted you because this pain became acute?
- Are these "problems you can solve" vs. "problems clients are actively trying to solve"?

BOX 3: SERVICES

Primary Question: What solutions do you provide?

Prompts:

- List 3-6 core service offerings (not every project variation)
- For each service, specify:

- **What you deliver:** Concrete deliverables/outcomes (not activities)
- **Typical engagement scope:** Duration, team size, investment range
- **Client outcome:** What changes for the client after you deliver?

Sub-Question: How scalable and replicable are these solutions?

Prompts: For each service, honestly assess:

Scalability:

- Can you deliver 2x engagements with less than 2x resources? (Y/N)
- What % requires senior partner time? (High >50% / Medium 20-50% / Low <20%)
- Can you train others to deliver this? (Y/N / Partially)

Replicability:

- Do you have documented methodology? (Y/N / In progress)
- What % is standardized vs. custom each time? (Write ratio: 70/30, 40/60, etc.)
- Have you delivered this 5+ times with consistent quality? (Y/N)

Warning flags:

- Every engagement feels like a custom project
- Only 1-2 people can deliver this
- You spend significant time "figuring it out" each time
- Quality varies significantly depending on who delivers

Validation Questions:

- Could you deliver 3x current volume with 1.5x current team? (That's scalable)
- Could a talented new hire deliver this well after 6 months? (That's replicable)
- Are you claiming scalability while actually depending on specific individuals?

BOX 4: VALUE

Primary Question: How do your solutions create measurable value?

Prompts: For each service, describe value mechanism:

- **Cost reduction:** Saves €X annually (specify: hard savings or cost avoidance?)
- **Revenue increase:** Generates €X in new/protected revenue (timeframe?)

- **Risk mitigation:** Prevents €X loss or reduces probability of \$Y event
- **Efficiency gain:** Reduces time/resources by X%, enabling Y outcome
- **Strategic position:** Creates competitive advantage worth \$X (how measured?)

Framework for articulating value:

1. **Baseline state:** Current situation (quantified)
2. **Intervention:** What you deliver
3. **Changed state:** New situation (quantified)
4. **Delta:** The measurable difference
5. **Timeframe:** When value is realized

Sub-Question: How much value do your solutions bring about to your client?

Prompts:

- For each service, specify typical value range:
 - Conservative: €XXX,XXX (worst case but still positive)
 - Expected: €X,XXX,XXX (normal outcome)
 - Best case: €XX,XXX,XXX (when everything works optimally)
- **Value-to-fee ratio:** If engagement costs €200K, what value does it create?
 - Minimum acceptable: 3:1 (create €600K value)
 - Good: 5-10:1
 - Exceptional: >10:1

Evidence requirements:

- Can you cite 3+ examples with specific client results?
- Do you have quantified case studies?
- Can clients articulate ROI independently?

Validation Questions:

- Would your client pay 20% of the value created? (If \$1M value, \$200K fee)
- Can you quantify value for at least 60% of your work?
- Are you describing "activities performed" vs. "value created"?

BOX 5: DIFFERENTIATION

Primary Question: Who are your major competitors?

Prompts:

- Name 3-5 specific competing firms (not "other consultants")
- For each, note:
 - **Type:** Large firm (MBB, Big 4) / Specialist boutique / Independent practitioners / In-house alternatives
 - **Overlap:** What % of your opportunities do they compete for?
 - **Win rate:** When you compete head-to-head, who usually wins?
- Also consider **indirect competitors**:
 - Client doing it themselves (insourcing)
 - Technology platforms replacing your service
 - Adjacent providers expanding into your space
 - "Do nothing" (biggest competitor is often inertia)

Sub-Question: Why are your solutions superior to your competition?

Prompts: For each competitive set, articulate specific superiority:

Framework: The "Only" Test

- "We are the only firm that..."
- If you can't complete this sentence uniquely, you're not differentiated

Validation Questions:

- If client asked your top competitor "why should we choose you over them?", what would they say? (Be honest since this reveals real competitive position)
- Can you prove superiority with evidence? (Case studies, metrics, testimonials)
- Is your differentiation something competitors could claim too? (If yes, it's not differentiation)

BOX 6: DOMAIN CONFIGURATION

Primary Question: Which External domains are the most critical to delivering value & differentiation?

External Domain Options:

1. **Sector Authority:** Market recognition as industry thought leaders
2. **Client Relationship Mastery:** Deep client understanding and retention
3. **Technical & Advisory Expertise:** Demonstrable problem-solving capability
4. **Brand & Visibility:** Market awareness and reputation

Prompts:

- Review your answers in Boxes 1-5 (Clients, Pain Points, Services, Value, Differentiation)
- For each External domain, ask: "How essential is this domain to delivering our stated strategy?"

Rating Framework:

- **Critical (30-40%):** Strategy fails without excellence here
- **Important (20-30%):** Significant contributor to success
- **Supporting (10-20%):** Helpful but not essential
- **Minimal (<10%):** Not a strategic priority

Sub-Question: Which Internal domains are the most critical to delivering value & differentiation?

Internal Domain Options:

1. **Methodology & Process:** Proprietary frameworks and systematic approaches
2. **Relationships & Network:** Strategic connections and ecosystem position
3. **Data & Technology:** Information assets and technical infrastructure
4. **Ethics & Sustainability:** Values-driven practice and long-term responsibility

Prompts: Same rating framework, but focused on **what enables** your delivery:

Integration Check

After completing both Internal and External allocations:

Coherence validation:

- Does your **External** domain weighting support the differentiation you claimed? (Box 5)
- Does your **Internal** domain weighting enable delivery of your services? (Box 3)
- Do high-weight domains align with where you create most value? (Box 4)

OVERALL CANVAS VALIDATION

After completing all six boxes, review for strategic coherence:

Horizontal Coherence (Left to Right)

- Do your **Services** (Box 3) logically solve your **Pain Points** (Box 2)?
- Does your **Value** (Box 4) justify urgency of **Pain Points** (Box 2)?
- Does your **Differentiation** (Box 5) align with why **Pain Points** are best solved by you?

Vertical Coherence (Top to Bottom)

- Do your **Clients** (Box 1) actually experience these **Pain Points** (Box 2)?
- Can your **Services** (Box 3) realistically create stated **Value** (Box 4)?
- Does your **Differentiation** (Box 5) rest on your **Domain Configuration** (Box 6)?

The "So What?" Test

Read your completed canvas to someone unfamiliar with your firm:

- Can they explain your strategy back to you clearly?
- Do they understand why clients would choose you?
- Can they see how the pieces fit together?

If not, you haven't achieved strategic clarity yet.

The "Evidence" Test

For each box:

- What evidence supports these claims?
- Where could sceptics poke holes?
- What assumptions need validation?

Mark boxes **Green** (strong evidence), **Yellow** (some evidence), **Red** (assumptions/weak evidence)

Red boxes = priority research areas