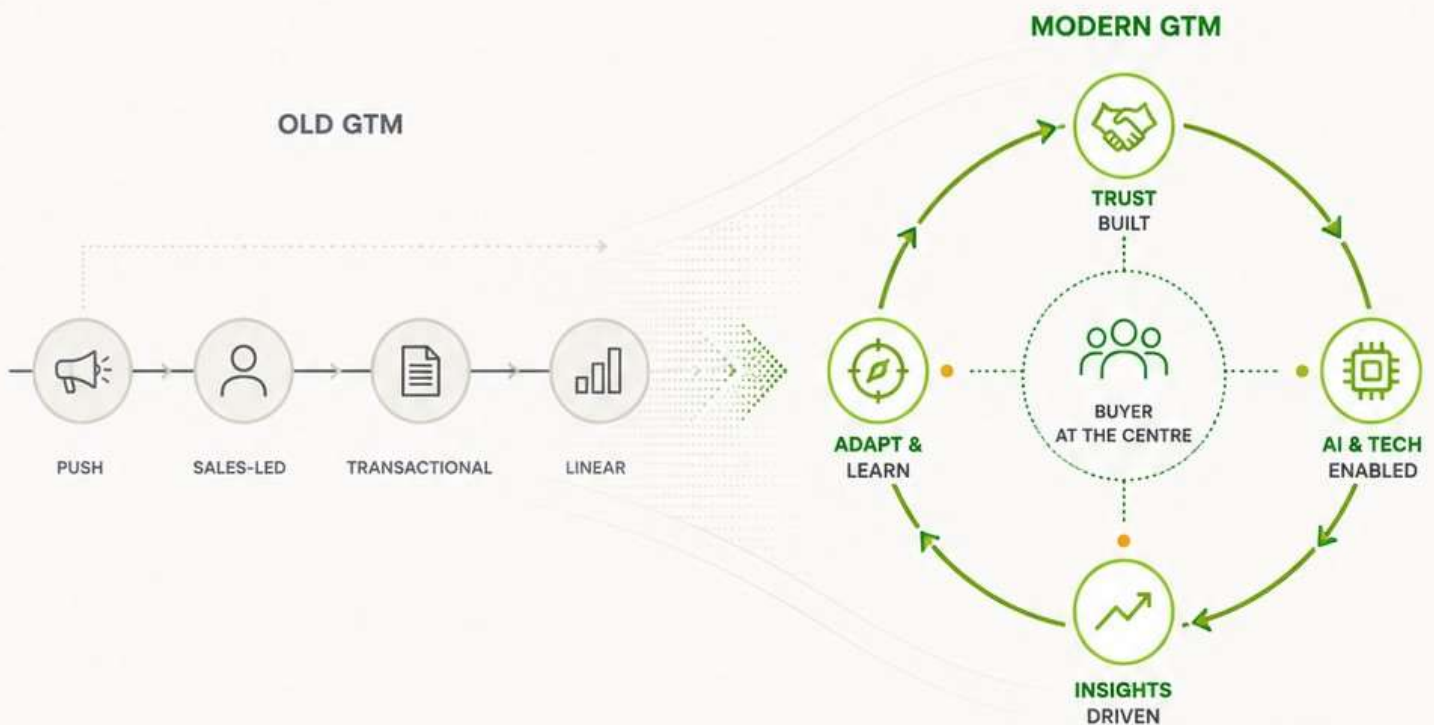


The B2B Shift in Go-To-Market

How buyer behaviour, trust, AI and technology shifts are changing B2B launch strategy and execution

Mark Conway



Oak Consult
Whitepaper Insight

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Foreword

Go-to-market used to sound like a fairly neat phrase. You built the product or shaped the service. You worked out who it was for. You created the proposition. Marketing built the campaign. Sales was briefed. Leads were generated. Pipeline was tracked. Revenue, in theory, followed.

Most B2B leaders know it has never been quite that simple, but for a long time, that model gave organisations a useful way to organise commercial effort. The problem is that the market has moved.

Buyers are doing more of their thinking before they speak to suppliers. Buying groups are larger, more cautious and harder to read. Younger professionals are shaping research, comparison and internal confidence long before they hold final budget authority. AI and digital tools have made it easier to find information, compare options and produce content, but they have not made it easier to build trust. If anything, they have made judgement, evidence and credibility more important.

This is why I believe B2B go-to-market needs a reset. Not because campaigns no longer matter; they do. Nor because sales no longer matters; it matters more than ever when the role shifts from information delivery to confidence-building. It is also not because product, proposition, marketing, delivery or customer success have somehow become less important. They are all essential.

The reset is needed because modern GTM can no longer be treated as a sequence of functional handovers. It has to operate as a joined-up commercial system.

A related lesson sits behind Oak Consult's Account-Based Growth work.

In that paper, we argued that Account-Based Marketing only becomes strategically useful when it matures into Account-Based Growth: a governed, cross-functional approach that connects board ambition, commercial activity, customer experience, data, decisions and trust. The same principle applies to go-to-market. A product launch, proposition refresh or commercial campaign cannot be judged only by the amount of activity it creates. It has to be judged by whether it strengthens the organisation's understanding of the market, improves buyer confidence, aligns internal teams and creates a stronger basis for growth after launch.

At Oak Consult, we often come across the same underlying issue: organisations often know more than they are using. Sales hears the objections. Customer success sees the adoption friction. Product knows the roadmap logic. Marketing sees the engagement patterns. Delivery understands the practical risk. Leadership sees the ambition. But unless those pieces are connected, the organisation can still launch into a market it believes exists rather than the one customers are actually experiencing.

That is where confidence breaks down.

A business can be busy and still unclear. It can produce more content and still be less trusted. It can generate leads and still fail to influence the real buying group. It can launch a product and still miss the practical conditions needed for adoption. It can have dashboards everywhere and still lack one shared commercial truth.

This is where Customer Spectacles also matter. Too often, go-to-market activity is built around an internal version of the customer. The market is defined. The persona is created. The proposition is written. The messaging is approved. The campaign is built. But somewhere in that process, the real customer can become strangely distant.

The organisation talks about the customer, but does not always look through the customer's eyes.

That is dangerous, because customers rarely experience a supplier's proposition in the neat way it appears in a launch plan. They experience it through their own pressures, priorities, risk concerns, internal politics, operational constraints, procurement requirements, technical questions and personal credibility. They are not just asking whether the product or service sounds useful. They are asking whether it is believable, whether it is safe to recommend, whether it will survive internal scrutiny, and whether it will make their working world better or harder.

That is why customers, prospects and frontline evidence need to be involved much earlier in GTM thinking.

Good go-to-market should not be built only from the supplier's ambition. It should be tested against customer reality before the organisation scales the activity. That does not mean customers design the strategy for you. Leadership judgement still matters. Proposition discipline still matters. But customer evidence should challenge the internal story before the market does.

This whitepaper is about that shift.

It argues that B2B go-to-market has moved from launch activity to market confidence. The organisations that succeed will not simply be those that launch louder, produce faster or report more activity. They will be those that understand customer reality earlier, build evidence more deliberately, align teams more honestly and learn from the market faster than their assumptions harden.

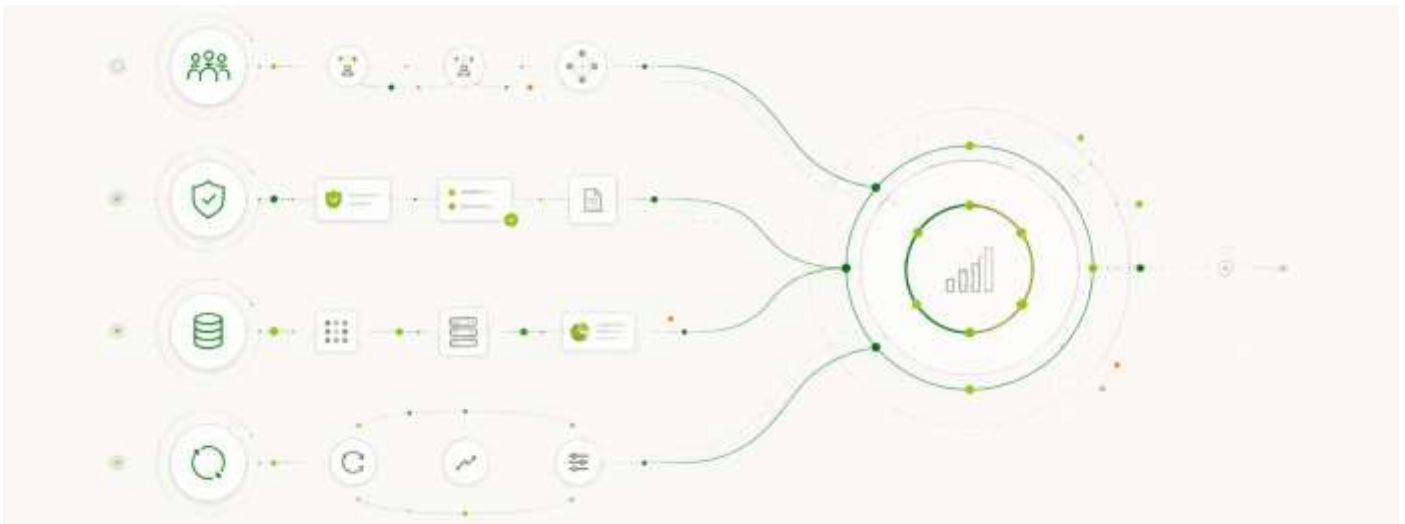
The MARKET Model introduced in this paper is designed as a practical way to support that shift. It is not a replacement for good sales, marketing, product or delivery discipline. It is a way of making those disciplines work together around the same commercial truth.

It asks six simple questions:

- What is changing in the customer's world?
- Who really shapes the decision?
- Why does this proposition matter now?
- What proof will buyers believe?
- Are our teams working from one truth?
- What are we learning after launch?

Those questions are simple. Answering them honestly is harder. My hope is that this whitepaper helps CEOs, founders, commercial leaders, product teams, marketers and sales leaders look at go-to-market with a little more discipline and a little less internal comfort. The question is no longer simply whether the campaign is ready. The better question is whether the market confidence is strong enough to support it.

Mark Conway Oak Consult



Executive Summary

B2B buyers are now doing the majority of their research and forming strong preferences **before** they engage suppliers. Buying groups have grown larger and more complex. AI has made it faster and cheaper to produce content and campaigns, while technology has created more data without necessarily creating more shared clarity. The result is a market where activity is plentiful, but trust and confidence are harder to earn. Four shifts now define modern B2B go-to-market:

- **Buyer behaviour has moved upstream** — Significant parts of the decision process now happen before a supplier is contacted.
- **AI has raised the noise floor** — It increases the volume and speed of GTM output, but does not automatically increase credibility.
- **Technology has fragmented the commercial system** — More tools and dashboards do not automatically create one joined-up view of customer reality.
- **Product launch has become a learning system** — The launch date is no longer the end point; it is the moment assumptions meet market evidence.

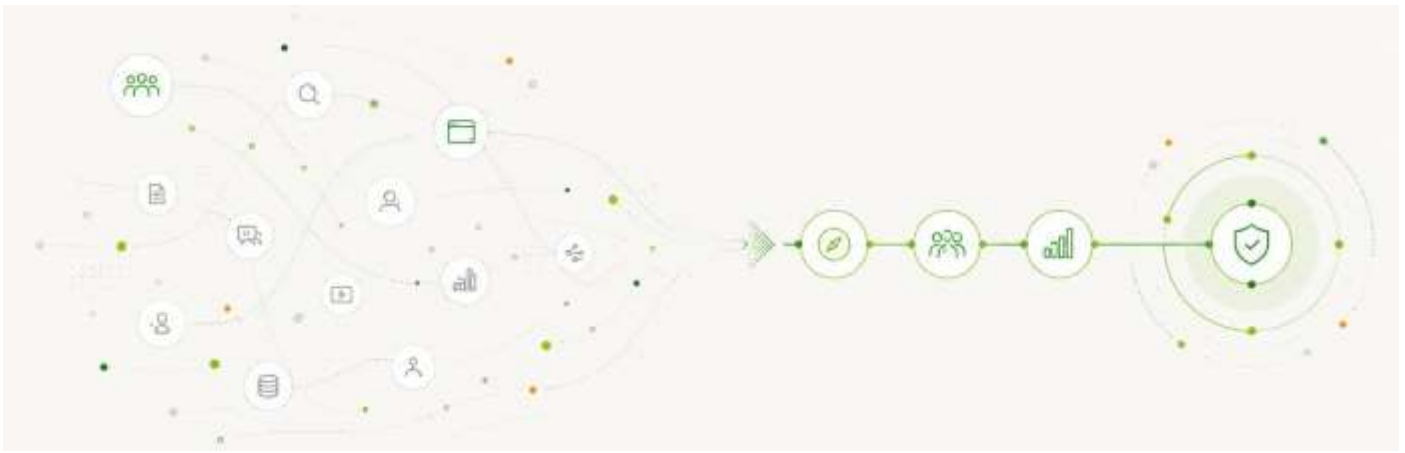
Traditional GTM success was judged by whether the organisation could generate activity and pipeline. Modern success depends on something more valuable but harder to measure: **market confidence**.

Oak Consult's **MARKET Model** offers a practical framework to help organisations build that confidence. It connects six elements:

- **Market Reality** — understanding what is actually changing in the customer's world
- **Audience and Buying Group** — understanding who shapes the decision and what they need to believe
- **Relevance and Proposition** — explaining why the offer matters now
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust** — providing the proof buyers need before they engage
- **Execution Alignment** — ensuring product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success work from one commercial truth
- **Traction and Adoption** — using what happens after launch to improve the next cycle

The central leadership question is no longer simply: **“Are we ready to launch?”**. It is: **“Do we understand the market well enough — and have we created enough trust, evidence and alignment — for buyers to believe us?”**

Organisations that continue to optimise primarily for activity will find it increasingly difficult to win. Those that treat go-to-market as a system for earning market confidence will be better positioned to grow.



1. Why Go-To-Market Has Changed

For many B2B organisations, go-to-market has historically been treated as a launch discipline. The product or service is developed. The proposition is shaped. Marketing creates the campaign. Sales is briefed. Leads are generated. Pipeline is reviewed. Success is judged through activity, conversion and revenue.

That model has not disappeared. It still describes how many organisations plan and report commercial activity. But it no longer describes how B2B markets actually behave.

The problem is not that organisations have forgotten how to launch. It is that the environment around launch has changed.

Buyers are more informed before they engage. Buying groups are larger, more cautious and harder to read. Procurement, finance, technical, operational and user stakeholders can all shape the decision long before a supplier sees a formal opportunity. Much of the real work — research, comparison, peer validation and internal consensus-building — now happens before a campaign goes live or a sales conversation begins.

By the time visible engagement appears (a lead, a meeting, or a response to outreach), the buying group may already have formed a view of the problem, the likely suppliers and the risks involved. The sales conversation may no longer be the start of the process. It may be the point at which the buyer begins validating or challenging a view they have already developed.

This shift is not only a technology story. AI is accelerating it by making research faster and content production cheaper. But the deeper change is that B2B buyers now have more ways to form an opinion before they speak to suppliers — and more reasons to be cautious before they commit.

Budgets are under scrutiny. Risk is more visible. Decisions require stronger internal justification. Senior leaders want clearer evidence of value. Users want confidence that the solution will work in practice. Delivery teams want to know whether implementation will create friction.

This means go-to-market can no longer be judged only by whether the organisation has created enough activity. More campaigns, more content and more outreach do not automatically create more market confidence.

The question has changed.

It is no longer simply:

Are we ready to launch?

It is:

Do we understand the market well enough, and have we created enough trust, evidence and alignment for buyers to believe us?

From supplier activity to market confidence

Traditional GTM often begins with the supplier's internal view: What have we built? Who do we want to sell it to? What campaign will we run? How many leads do we need?

Modern GTM must begin much closer to the customer's reality: What is changing in the customer's world? Who is involved in the decision? What problem do they already recognise? What proof do they need before they act? Where are they forming opinions before they speak to us? Can our teams describe the same value promise? What will we learn after launch, and who will act on that learning?

This is a different operating model. It moves go-to-market away from a linear handover between functions and towards a shared commercial system. Product, proposition, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success all have a role to play. If they are not aligned, the buyer feels the inconsistency.

Marketing may promise simplicity while delivery knows implementation is complex. Sales may hear objections that never reach product. Product may build around internal assumptions rather than live market evidence. Customer success may inherit adoption problems that should have been anticipated before launch.

This is why modern GTM needs more than a launch plan. It needs a shared commercial truth.

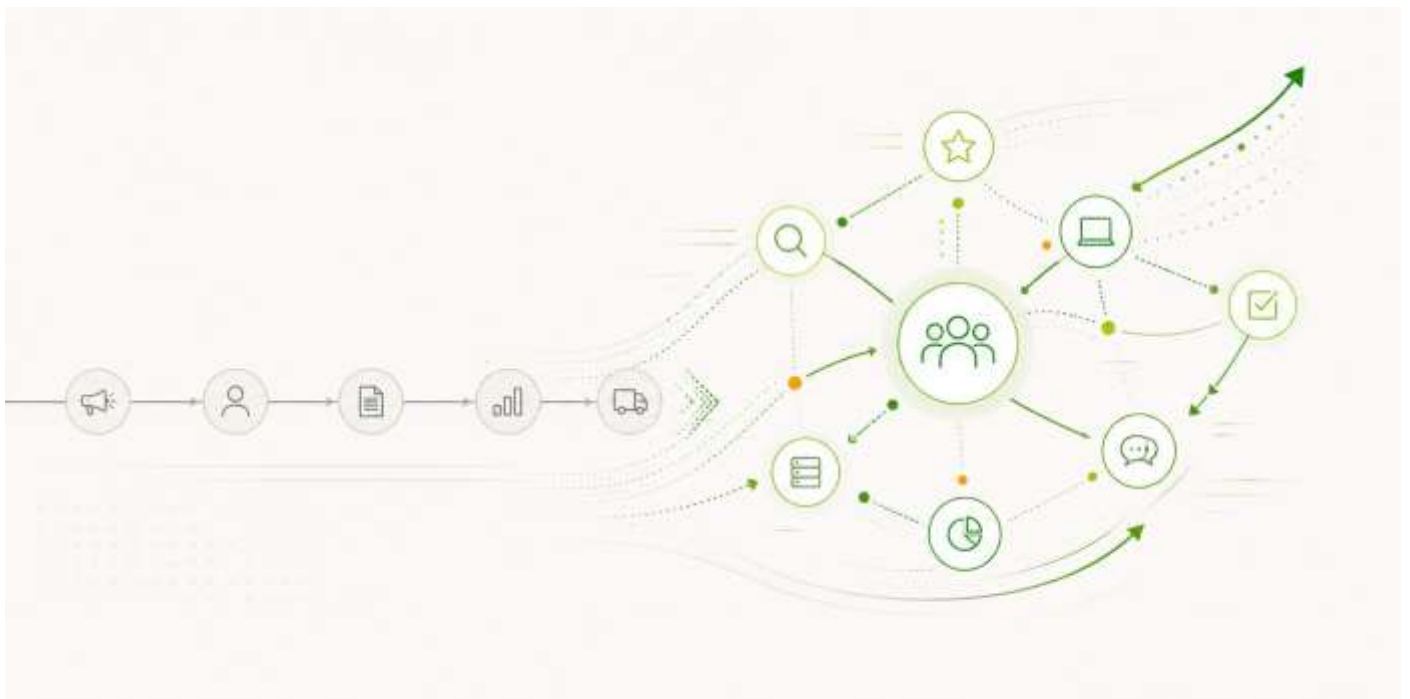
The leadership issue

For CEOs, founders, commercial directors and functional leaders, the challenge is not simply to modernise marketing or improve sales enablement. Those things matter, but they are only part of the system.

The bigger leadership challenge is to ensure the organisation is not launching into a market it believes exists while customers are experiencing something different.

That requires better customer reality, stronger evidence, clearer proposition discipline, joined-up execution and faster learning from the market. It also requires restraint. In a world where technology makes it easier to produce more, leaders need to be more selective about what deserves to be produced, promoted and scaled.

Modern B2B go-to-market is therefore no longer just about how an organisation launches. It is about how well it earns market confidence.





2. The End of the Linear Launch

The traditional go-to-market model was built around a neat internal sequence. Product builds. Marketing positions. Sales sells. Delivery delivers. Customer success picks up what happens next.

It is a simple model. It is also reassuring, because it makes launch look controllable. Each function has a place. Each stage has a handover. Each metric has an owner. In theory, the organisation moves from product readiness to campaign activity, from leads to pipeline, and from pipeline to revenue.

The difficulty is that modern B2B markets rarely move that neatly.

The buyer does not wait for the supplier's launch sequence. The buying group may already be researching the problem, comparing suppliers, reading reviews, asking peers, checking technical implications, or building an early view of risk before a campaign goes live. By the time the supplier sees visible engagement, the buyer may already have formed a shortlist.

That does not mean campaigns, sales handovers and pipeline reporting are irrelevant. They still matter. But they are no longer enough to describe the full go-to-market reality. The old model assumes that launch creates the market conversation. Increasingly, launch joins a conversation that is already happening.

Why the old handover model breaks down

The linear model creates several problems for modern B2B organisations.

First, it encourages internal sequencing when the market requires shared learning. Product teams may complete development before proposition language has been properly tested with buyers. Marketing may create campaigns before sales has fully surfaced live objections. Sales may be briefed after key assumptions have already hardened. Customer success may only become involved once adoption risk has already been baked into the sale.

Second, it creates functional success measures that can look healthy in isolation but weak in combination. Marketing can report strong engagement. Sales can question lead quality. Product can point to roadmap delivery. Customer success can identify onboarding friction. Leadership can see activity across all of it without seeing whether the organisation is actually building confidence in the market.

Third, it treats sales feedback and customer adoption as downstream outcomes rather than upstream intelligence. In a more adaptive model, objections, lost-deal patterns and early adoption signals are not simply post-launch commentary. They are part of the evidence base that should shape the next version of the proposition, messaging and enablement.

This is where many B2B launches drift. The organisation may be busy. The campaign may be live. The sales deck may be polished. The dashboard may show movement. But underneath that activity, the commercial system may still be carrying weak assumptions.

Linear launch logic hides weak assumptions

A linear launch model often asks whether each function has completed its task:

- Is the product ready?
- Is the campaign ready?
- Is the sales team briefed?
- Is the launch date confirmed?
- Are the assets approved?

Those are useful questions, but they are not enough.

Modern GTM needs to ask harder questions:

- Do customers recognise the problem in the same way we do?
- Have we tested whether the proposition matters now?
- Do we understand the full buying group?
- What evidence does a cautious buyer need before they will act?
- Can sales, marketing, product and delivery explain the value promise consistently?
- What objections are we already hearing?
- What will adoption require after the deal is signed?
- How quickly will market learning change what we do next?

These questions test the quality of the commercial thinking, not just the completion of launch tasks.

From handover to loop

The old GTM model often looked like this:

Build → Brief → Campaign → Generate leads → Hand over to sales → Report pipeline

The new model needs to work more like this:

Sense the market → Test the proposition → Build evidence → Align teams → Launch with learning built in → Capture market response → Adapt

That is not a softer model. It is a more disciplined one. It requires clearer ownership, stronger evidence and more honest cross-functional conversations. It also requires leaders to accept that launch is not the end of strategy. It is the point at which the market begins to test whether the strategy was true.

In complex B2B environments, where decisions are rarely made by one person in one moment, a linear model struggles. A buying group may include senior leaders, budget holders, operational teams, technical evaluators, procurement and informal influencers. Some will care about strategic value. Some will care about risk. Some will care about ease of adoption. A linear launch model treats the buyer journey as something the supplier can manage through clean stages. In reality, modern GTM is often about creating confidence across multiple people, channels and moments — many of which the supplier cannot fully see.

The role of launch has changed

Launch used to be the moment an organisation announced something to the market. Now, it is better understood as a structured learning point. It is the moment when assumptions meet evidence. It shows whether the market recognises the problem, whether the proposition is clear, whether the proof is strong

enough, whether sales can carry the story, whether delivery can support the promise, and whether customers can adopt the solution in practice.

That changes how leaders should think about readiness. A launch is not ready simply because the assets are finished. It is ready when the organisation has enough confidence in market reality, enough evidence to support the proposition, enough alignment across functions, and enough feedback mechanisms to learn quickly once the offer is live.

This is why modern GTM cannot be left to one function. The handover model creates separation. The loop model creates shared responsibility.

The leadership implication

For senior leaders, the end of the linear launch does not mean more process for its own sake. It means better questions earlier.

Before committing fully to market activity, leaders should ask:

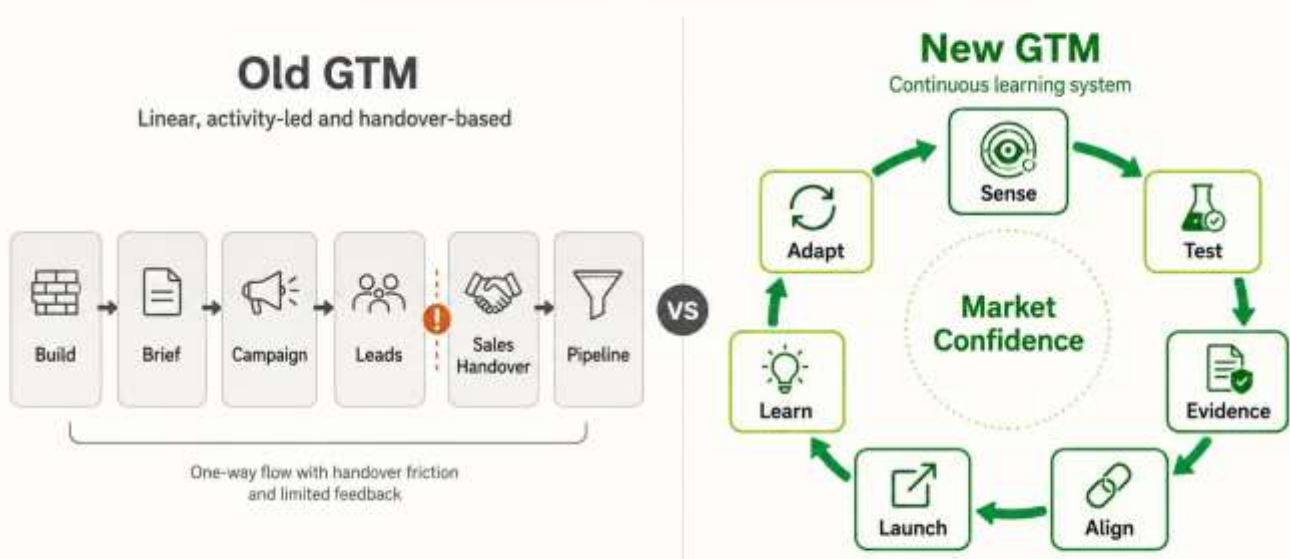
- What have we learned from customers, prospects, lost deals and frontline teams?
- Where are we still relying on internal belief rather than external evidence?
- Which parts of the buying group are we under-serving?
- What proof will buyers need before they trust the proposition?
- Where could delivery or adoption fail to match the promise?
- What will we measure after launch that will help us improve the next cycle?

Those questions move GTM away from internal activity and towards market confidence.

The old model asked whether the organisation was ready to launch. The modern model asks whether the organisation is ready to learn, prove, align and adapt.

That is a much higher standard. It is also a more useful one.

Old GTM vs New GTM



➔ The shift is from launch activity to market confidence.



3. Buyer Behaviour Has Moved Upstream

The modern B2B buyer is not waiting for the supplier to start the conversation.

By the time a prospect appears in a CRM, books a meeting, or responds to a campaign, a significant part of the buying process may already have happened. According to Gartner (2025), 61% of B2B buyers now prefer a rep-free buying experience. Research from 6sense and Forrester consistently shows that 70–80% of the B2B buying journey is completed before a supplier is contacted.

This is one of the most important changes in modern go-to-market.

The visible buyer journey is only part of the real buyer journey. For suppliers, this creates an uncomfortable truth: the first formal sales conversation may not be the beginning of the buyer's thinking. It may be the point at which the buyer starts testing, validating or challenging a view they have already formed.

That changes the role of go-to-market. It can no longer be designed only around creating visible demand. It also has to shape confidence before demand becomes visible.

The buyer is doing more work before sales arrives

B2B buyers have more information available to them than ever before. They can compare suppliers without speaking to them. They can read customer reviews, watch product videos, check social proof, consult peers, examine technical documentation and form a view of credibility long before a supplier knows they are active.

This does not mean buyers no longer value sales conversations. In complex decisions, human interaction still matters. Buyers still need reassurance, expert challenge, commercial clarity and help navigating internal consensus, but the role of sales changes when the buyer arrives already informed. The sales conversation becomes less about basic information delivery and more about confidence-building. The buyer is more likely to be asking:

- Can we trust this supplier?
- Is this claim credible?
- Does this fit our situation?
- What risk are we taking on?
- How hard will this be to implement?
- Who else needs to believe this internally?
- What evidence supports the value case?

Those are not campaign questions. They are confidence questions.

Buying groups are larger and harder to read

B2B buying is rarely shaped by one person. The formal decision-maker may still matter, but they are only part of the picture. Buying groups have also grown significantly in size and complexity. The average B2B buying group now involves 10–13 stakeholders, according to recent research from 6sense and Gartner

Each group member may see the same proposition through a different lens. A CEO may care about strategic value. A finance lead may care about cost and risk. An operations leader may care about disruption. A technical evaluator may care about integration and security. Procurement may care about terms and resilience.

If go-to-market messaging is written for only one idealised buyer, it will miss the reality of how consensus is built. Modern GTM needs to understand not just who the target buyer is, but who shapes the decision, who blocks it, who validates it and who carries the risk. The person who signs the contract may not be the person who shaped the shortlist, the questions or the belief system behind the decision.

The buying group is changing generationally

Millennials are now established managers and commercial leaders. Gen Z is entering buying groups as researchers, technical evaluators and emerging influencers. They may not hold final budget authority, but they can influence which suppliers are considered, which claims are trusted and which questions are asked.

Buyers who are more comfortable with digital research, peer comparison and independent validation are less likely to accept generic supplier claims at face value. They expect clarity. They expect evidence. They expect useful content before they engage. For suppliers, this is not a call to chase youth trends. It is a call to understand how influence now moves inside the buying group.

Trust is formed before the supplier conversation

The implication is clear: trust is being built, weakened or lost before a supplier has direct control of the conversation. A buyer may form a view from case studies, LinkedIn posts, customer reviews, technical guides, peer recommendations, analyst reports, AI-generated summaries or a supplier's absence from the places where the buyer is looking. Some of that can be measured. Much of it cannot.

That is why modern GTM cannot rely only on visible engagement metrics. Website visits, form fills and campaign clicks still matter, but they do not capture the full reality of buyer confidence. They show where a buyer touched the supplier's system. They do not always show where the buyer formed their view.

This is particularly important in markets where risk or implementation effort is high. Buyers are not only looking for the best message. They are looking for confidence that the supplier understands the problem, can deliver the promise and will not create avoidable friction after the sale. Recent research shows that buyers are three times more likely to trust peer reviews and customer evidence than vendor-created content. That requires proof before persuasion.

The hidden work of internal consensus

One of the reasons upstream buying matters is that much of the real decision-making happens inside the customer organisation, away from the supplier's view.

A supplier may see a meeting booked, a form completed, a proposal requested or a CRM opportunity created. Internally, however, the customer may already have been through several rounds of discussion. The problem may have been debated. The budget may have been questioned. A preferred direction may have been informally shaped. Risks may have been raised by operations, finance, IT, procurement or end users. Someone may already have asked whether the organisation really needs to change at all. This is where many suppliers misread the buying journey.

They treat the visible enquiry as the start of the process, when it may actually be the result of an internal confidence-building exercise that has been running for weeks or months. By the time the supplier enters the conversation, the buyer may not be asking for basic education. They may be looking for confirmation, challenge, reassurance or evidence that helps them move the decision through the organisation.

That changes the purpose of go-to-market content and sales enablement.

Good GTM should help the buyer carry the argument internally. It should give them language they can use with colleagues, evidence they can share with sceptics, and clarity that helps them explain why the issue matters now. It should help the operational stakeholder understand implementation, the finance stakeholder understand value, the technical stakeholder understand risk, and the senior sponsor understand strategic fit.

This is not just about producing more content. It is about producing material that survives internal scrutiny.

A polished message may attract attention, but a useful argument travels further. A strong case study may reassure a sponsor, but a practical implementation guide may be what helps an operational lead believe the change is achievable. A product feature list may explain capability, but a clear problem narrative may help the buyer align colleagues around the need to act.

Modern GTM therefore needs to think beyond the first conversion point. It needs to ask what happens after the buyer reads, watches, downloads or discusses something.

Does it help them explain the problem better or challenge internal assumptions?

Does it help them compare options more intelligently or reduce perceived risk?

This is where buyer enablement becomes more than a marketing term. It becomes a practical discipline for supporting internal decision-making. The supplier cannot control the customer's internal conversations. But it can influence the quality of those conversations by making the right evidence, language and reassurance available earlier. That is the upstream opportunity.

Modern GTM is not simply about reaching buyers before competitors do. It is about helping buyers build enough internal confidence to act.

The implication for go-to-market

If buyer behaviour has moved upstream, GTM must move upstream too.

Modern GTM needs to help buyers understand the problem, recognise why it matters now, compare options intelligently, build internal consensus, identify risk and trust the supplier's claims — often before a sales conversation begins. This changes the role of each function:

- Marketing has to create confidence, not just attention.
- Sales has to validate, challenge and reassure, not just convert.
- Product has to understand market reality, not just roadmap delivery.
- Customer success has to shape adoption readiness, not just react after the sale.
- Leadership has to ensure the whole system is aligned around the buyer's real decision journey.

The supplier's preferred funnel is no longer enough. The real question is whether the organisation understands how the buying group forms confidence before the supplier is invited in.

What this means for leaders

For CEOs, founders and commercial leaders, upstream buying creates a strategic risk. An organisation can believe it is early in the sales process when the buyer is already late in the decision process. It can believe it is competing on product when the buyer is actually judging trust. It can believe it needs more leads when it really needs stronger evidence and better market presence before the lead appears.

That is why modern GTM has to be built around market confidence, not just visible activity.

The buyer has moved upstream. The buying group has become more complex. Influence is spreading across roles and channels. Trust is being formed before the first meeting.

The organisations that adapt will not simply chase buyers harder. They will understand them earlier, support them better and give them stronger reasons to believe.



4. Trust Has Become Harder to Earn

Modern B2B buyers do not only need information. They need confidence.

Information is now abundant. Buyers can access product pages, whitepapers, comparison guides, reviews, analyst commentary, social posts, webinars and AI summaries within minutes. The challenge is no longer whether a buyer can find enough material. The challenge is whether they can trust what they find.

For B2B suppliers, that changes the job. It is not enough to be visible, produce more, or sound polished. The harder commercial task is to help buyers believe that the supplier understands their problem, can support their decision, can deliver what is promised, and can reduce rather than increase the risk of change. That is why trust has moved from being a brand outcome to a go-to-market requirement.

The market is noisier than the buyer can process

B2B buyers are surrounded by supplier claims. Every category has its language. Every product has its value proposition. Much of it may be well intentioned, but from the buyer's side it quickly becomes difficult to separate substance from repetition.

This is especially true when the buying group is cautious, time-poor and under pressure to justify spend. The buyer is rarely asking, "Which supplier has the best words?" They are asking, "Which supplier can I trust enough to take forward internally?"

Generic messaging struggles in that environment. A supplier claim may be technically true but commercially weak. It may describe capability without proving relevance. It may sound impressive without helping the buyer understand risk, adoption, cost or internal fit.

Trust is not built by confident language alone. It is built when the buyer can see that the supplier understands the real situation, has evidence for its claims, and can explain clearly what will happen after the sale.

AI has accelerated this trust challenge

AI has made it easier than ever to produce go-to-market activity at speed and scale. Campaign ideas, email sequences, blog drafts, landing pages, comparison content and launch collateral can now be generated rapidly. However, speed and volume are not the same as credibility. AI has made GTM activity easier to produce, but not easier to trust. Despite the significant increase in content volume, only a small percentage of buyers rate vendor content as highly influential in their decisions. Buyers are becoming more selective about what they trust.

This does not mean organisations should avoid AI. Used well, it can help teams research faster, synthesise customer insight, develop first drafts and improve enablement. The real issue is judgement. If AI is used to support thinking, evidence and clarity, it strengthens GTM. If it is used to flood the market with polished but thin material, it weakens trust. The buyer does not need more supplier-shaped noise. They need better help making a decision.

Human judgement becomes more valuable

As AI increases the volume of plausible content, human judgement becomes more important, not less.

When everyone can produce more content, content production itself becomes less differentiating. What matters more is the quality of the thinking behind it.

Buyers are becoming increasingly alert to content that feels generic, recycled or overly polished. They are looking for signs that a supplier has done the hard work:

- Specific understanding of their actual situation
- Evidence that claims are grounded in reality
- Practical examples rather than generic assertions
- Clear trade-offs and implementation implications
- Credible, relevant proof points
- Useful guidance before the sales conversation begins

This is where weaker GTM will be exposed. Buyers are increasingly alert to content that feels generic or overly polished. Research shows they are significantly more likely to trust peer reviews and third-party evidence than vendor-created material. A supplier can use AI to write a confident proposition, but AI cannot make that proposition true. It can generate a case study structure, but it cannot create actual customer evidence. It can summarise a market, but it cannot replace the commercial judgement required to decide where the organisation should compete and what it can credibly deliver.

AI does not remove the need for human authority. It raises the standard for it.

Buyers need proof before persuasion

In a trust-constrained market, proof has to move earlier in the buying journey.

Traditional GTM often treated proof as something used later in the sales process — a case study after interest was established, a reference after qualification, or implementation detail after commercial intent was clear.

That sequence is becoming less reliable. Because buyers are researching earlier and forming views before they engage suppliers, they need confidence-building evidence *before* they formally enter the sales process.

This might include clear problem framing, relevant case studies, implementation guidance, credible comparison content, customer reviews, technical documentation, or adoption support — material the buying group can use internally to build their own case.

This is not about overwhelming buyers with more assets. It is about giving them the right evidence at the right point in their decision-making.

Trust is cross-functional

Trust is often treated as a marketing or brand issue. In modern GTM, that view is too narrow. Marketing can help create trust through clarity and useful evidence. Sales can strengthen trust through expertise and honest challenge. Product can support trust by grounding the proposition in real customer problems. Delivery can support trust by making implementation reality visible. Customer success can support trust by showing how value will actually be achieved.

If these functions are not aligned, trust breaks down. The campaign may promise simplicity while the sales conversation introduces complexity. The sales deck may promise outcomes while the product demo focuses on features. Buyers feel these inconsistencies — even if they cannot name them as GTM misalignment.

Trust is therefore not created by tone of voice alone. It is created by organisational coherence.

The leadership implication

For leaders, the question is not simply whether the organisation is producing enough content or running enough campaigns.

The better question is whether the GTM system is increasing buyer confidence.

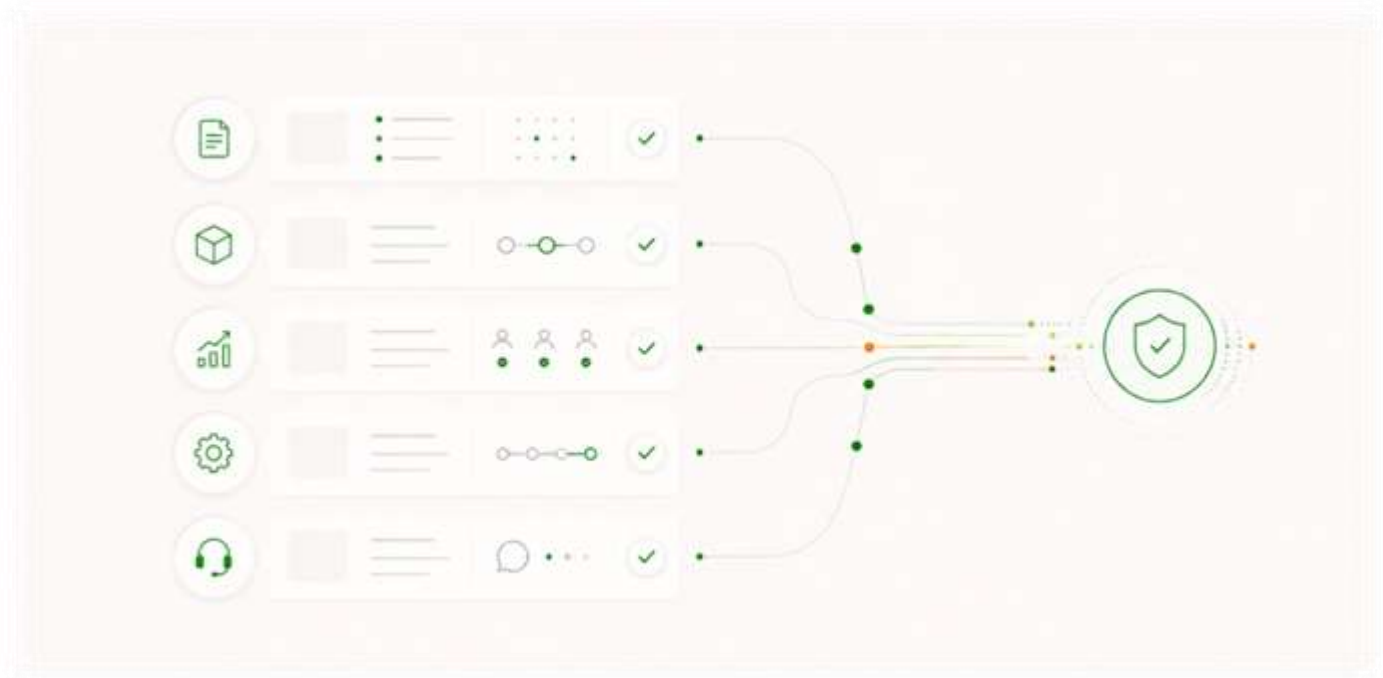
That requires leaders to ask:

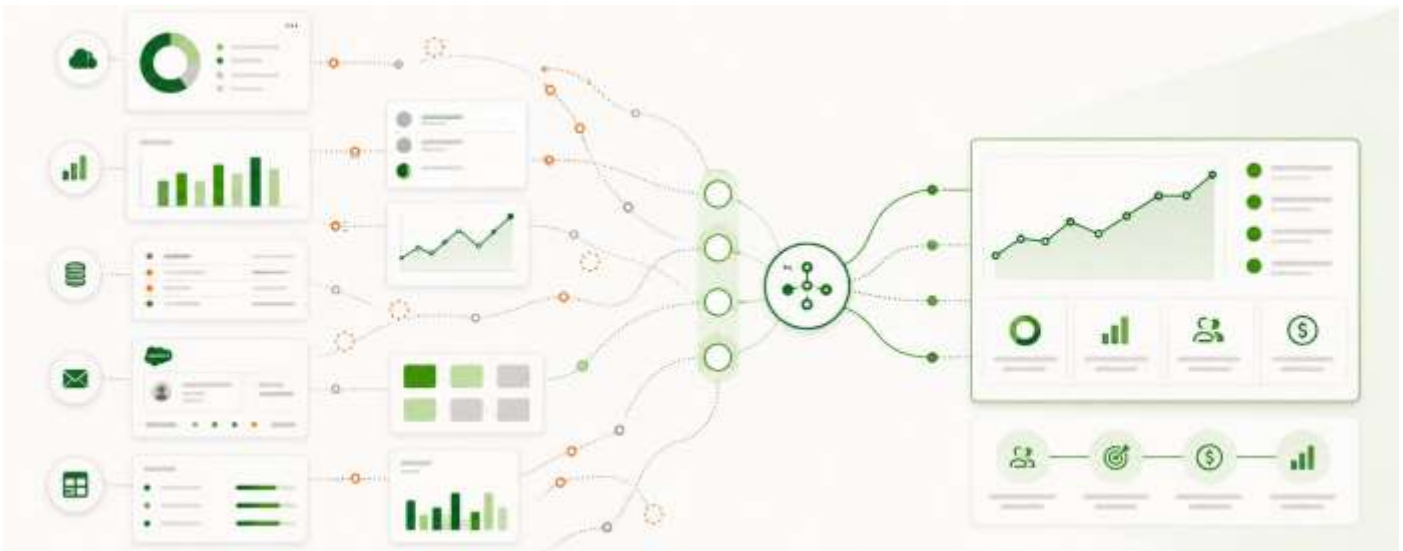
- Are our claims specific enough to be credible?
- What evidence supports the promises we are making?
- Can buyers understand our value without speaking to sales?
- Does our content help the buying group make progress?
- Are we using AI to improve clarity, or simply to increase volume?
- Do sales, marketing, product and delivery describe the value promise in the same way?
- Are we honest about implementation, adoption and fit?

These questions matter because trust is now a commercial asset. It affects whether buyers engage, whether they progress, whether they include a supplier on the shortlist, and whether they believe the promise will survive delivery.

The organisations that win will not simply be those that shout louder or produce faster. They will be those that make it easier for buyers to believe, validate and act.

In modern B2B go-to-market, trust is not a soft outcome. It is part of the operating model.





5. Technology Has Fragmented the GTM System

Most B2B organisations are not short of technology. They have CRM systems, marketing automation platforms, website analytics, sales enablement tools, customer success systems, product usage data, reporting dashboards, account intelligence and a growing number of AI tools.

In theory, this should make go-to-market clearer. The organisation should know who it is targeting, which accounts are engaging, what buyers care about, what sales is hearing, what customers are adopting and where friction exists.

In practice, the opposite often happens. More tools create more data. More data creates more reports. More reports create more interpretations. Fragmented data is now a widespread challenge. According to recent research, 67% of B2B organisations cite fragmented data as a major barrier to effective commercial decision-making. Unless the organisation has a shared commercial rhythm, technology can multiply local versions of the truth rather than create one joined-up view of the market.

That is one of the biggest hidden risks in modern GTM.

The organisation may believe it has visibility because it has dashboards. But visibility is not the same as clarity.

More data does not mean more truth

Technology can improve GTM execution, but only when the organisation agrees what the data means.

A marketing team may report strong engagement because campaign interaction is high. Sales may challenge the quality of those same leads because conversations are weak. Product may see feature interest but not understand the commercial objections around adoption. Customer success may see onboarding friction that never reaches proposition or sales enablement. Leadership may see a dashboard that simplifies all of this into a few encouraging trends.

Each function may be telling the truth from where it stands. The problem is that the organisation does not have one shared commercial truth.

That matters because modern GTM depends on cross-functional confidence. If marketing, sales, product, delivery and customer success are using different definitions, systems and success measures, the buyer experiences the consequences. The promise may not match the qualification. The sales story may not match the implementation reality. The product roadmap may not reflect buyer objections.

Technology does not solve these problems by existing. It solves them only when it helps the organisation make better shared decisions.

The GTM stack can create functional silos

The irony of modern GTM technology is that tools designed to improve performance can also reinforce separation.

Marketing automation can optimise engagement without proving sales relevance. CRM can track opportunity stages without capturing the real quality of buyer confidence. Product analytics can show usage without explaining commercial meaning. Customer success platforms can flag adoption issues after the original promise has already been made.

This is not a technology failure. It is an operating model failure. The tools are often doing what they were bought to do. The issue is that each tool serves a local purpose, while modern GTM requires a joined-up view.

A campaign does not succeed because marketing reports activity. It succeeds when the right buyers understand the right problem, believe the evidence, engage with confidence, adopt the solution and create value after purchase. No single platform owns that full story.

Activity reporting can hide commercial uncertainty

One of the most common risks in fragmented GTM systems is that activity becomes a substitute for understanding.

The organisation can report emails sent, page views, form fills, campaign engagement, sales meetings booked, pipeline created, demos completed and proposals issued. Those measures matter, but they do not answer the deeper questions:

- Does the buyer understand why this matters now?
- Is the proposition clear enough to survive internal scrutiny?
- Which stakeholders are engaged, and which are missing?
- What objections keep recurring?
- Where does buyer confidence increase or weaken?
- Does the sales story match delivery reality?
- What are customers struggling to adopt after launch?

A dashboard can show movement without showing meaning. That distinction is critical. Modern GTM cannot simply be measured by whether activity is happening. It has to be measured by whether the organisation is becoming clearer, faster and more trusted in the market.

RevOps is useful, but not a magic answer

Revenue Operations has emerged partly because organisations recognise the need to connect marketing, sales and customer success more effectively.

At its best, RevOps can help create shared definitions, cleaner data, stronger handovers, better visibility and more disciplined commercial rhythms. It can reduce friction between functions and help leaders see the revenue system as a whole.

But RevOps should not be reduced to another structural label or technology programme. The deeper issue is not simply whether an organisation has a RevOps function. It is whether the business has a disciplined way of turning market evidence into better commercial decisions.

If RevOps becomes only a reporting layer, it may tidy the dashboard without improving the underlying reality. If it becomes a genuine commercial operating discipline, it can help connect campaign evidence, sales insight, buyer objections, customer success signals and leadership decisions into one system.

That is the standard modern GTM now requires.

AI raises the stakes for data discipline

AI makes this more urgent. As AI becomes embedded in sales tools, CRM workflows, marketing platforms and customer insight processes, the quality of the underlying data matters even more. Poor data does not become better because AI is applied to it. Weak definitions do not become clearer because they are summarised more quickly.

If the GTM system is messy, AI may make the mess faster.

This is why data discipline is not a back-office issue. It is a commercial trust issue. Leaders need confidence that the organisation knows what it means by an opportunity, a qualified lead, an active buying group, a stalled deal, an adoption risk and a customer success issue. Without that shared language, technology will continue to produce reports that look useful but do not create enough confidence to act.

The leadership implication

For senior leaders, the question is no longer simply: **Do we have the right GTM tools?**

The better question is: **Do our tools help us form one shared view of customer reality, buyer confidence and commercial progress?**

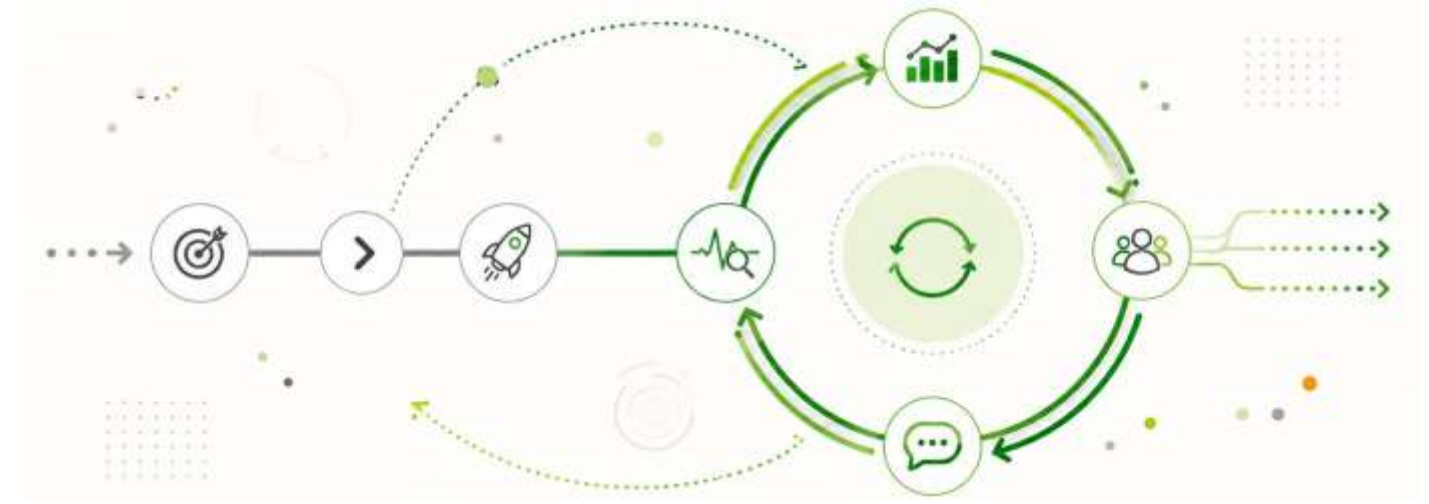
That requires leaders to examine how insight moves across the organisation:

- Are sales objections visible to marketing and product?
- Are campaign insights tested against sales conversations?
- Are customer success signals used to improve future launch planning?
- Are product usage patterns connected to proposition and positioning?
- Are leadership dashboards showing confidence and risk, or only activity?
- Are teams using the same definitions of quality, readiness and success?

These questions matter because fragmented GTM systems create fragmented customer experience. The buyer does not care which tool owns which part of the journey. They experience the supplier as one organisation. If the internal system is disconnected, the external promise becomes harder to trust.

Technology should make GTM clearer. Too often, it simply makes fragmentation more visible.

The next stage of modern go-to-market is not about adding more tools to create more activity. It is about building the discipline to turn data, evidence and customer insight into one shared commercial truth.



6. Product Launch Is Now a Learning System

A product launch used to be treated as a moment. There was a launch date, a campaign plan, a set of approved messages, a sales briefing and a dashboard to watch once the activity went live.

That still has a place. Launches need coordination. Teams need deadlines. Markets need signals. Sales teams need enablement. Customers and prospects need to know what has changed.

But in modern B2B markets, the launch date is not the finish line. It is the point at which the market starts testing the organisation's assumptions.

Buyers test whether the proposition is relevant. Sales tests whether the story survives real conversations. Customer success tests whether adoption is realistic. Delivery tests whether the promise can be fulfilled without creating friction. Product tests whether the market problem was understood properly. Leadership tests whether the commercial case was built on evidence or optimism.

That is why launch should no longer be treated as a single event. It should be treated as a learning system.

Launch starts before launch

A good launch begins before anything is formally announced.

It begins when the organisation tests whether the market problem is real, whether the buying group recognises it, whether the proposition matters now and whether the evidence is strong enough to support action.

Too often, organisations treat pre-launch activity as internal preparation. The product is finalised, the campaign is prepared, the sales material is created and the launch date is protected. Customer evidence may be gathered, but only once the main assumptions are already fixed.

That creates risk. If the proposition has not been tested with real buyers, the launch may simply amplify an internal assumption. If sales has not been involved early enough, common objections may only appear after the campaign is live. If delivery and customer success are not involved before launch, the organisation may sell a promise that is harder to implement than expected.

Modern GTM needs learning before scale. This does not mean slowing everything down. It means building small, useful feedback loops before the organisation commits fully to market activity. That might include testing the proposition with existing customers, reviewing sales objections, involving customer success in readiness planning, or validating whether the target buying group understands the value in the same way the supplier does.

The purpose is not to remove uncertainty. It is to reduce avoidable ignorance.

Sales feedback is market evidence

Sales teams are often closest to the moment where proposition meets reality.

They hear the confusion, hesitation, objections, comparisons and risk concerns that rarely appear in campaign reports. They know which claims land and which ones need too much explanation. They hear when buyers are interested but unconvinced, or when a value message is too vague.

In a linear GTM model, this feedback can be treated as downstream commentary. In a learning system, it becomes market evidence.

Repeated objections are not just sales problems. They are signals about proposition clarity, buyer confidence, product fit, commercial model, evidence quality or implementation concern. The same applies to win/loss insight. A lost deal is not simply a failed opportunity. It is a source of information.

Modern GTM needs a rhythm for turning that evidence into action.

Customer success should not arrive after the promise

Customer success is often treated as a post-sale function. The deal is won, the customer is handed over, onboarding begins and adoption becomes someone else's responsibility.

That may be operationally convenient, but it is commercially dangerous.

If customer success only enters after the sale, the organisation misses one of the most important sources of launch intelligence: what it actually takes for the customer to realise value.

In B2B markets, especially where products or services are complex, adoption is not automatic. Customers need to understand what success looks like, what needs to change, what effort is required and how value will be measured. If that thinking is not present during GTM planning, the launch may create interest without creating readiness.

Customer success should therefore help shape onboarding assumptions, time-to-value expectations, customer education needs, implementation risks and the definition of a successful customer outcome.

This changes the role of launch. A successful launch is not only one that creates demand. It is one that creates the conditions for adoption.

Adoption is part of GTM performance

Many launch reports focus heavily on early activity: how many people engaged, how many leads were created, how much pipeline was influenced.

Those measures matter, but they are incomplete.

If the product or service sells but customers struggle to adopt it, the GTM system has not fully succeeded. The organisation may have sold the value without explaining the work required to achieve it. It may have underplayed complexity. It may have failed to equip the right stakeholders.

Modern GTM must therefore connect launch activity to post-launch reality. That means measuring not just whether the market responded, but whether the customer progressed. Did the right customers buy? Did they understand what success required? Did early value appear where the sales story said it would?

These are not only operational questions. They are GTM questions.

Learning has to move back upstream

A launch becomes a learning system only when feedback travels back into the organisation.

Market response should improve the proposition. Sales objections should improve enablement. Customer adoption should improve onboarding and messaging. Delivery friction should improve qualification and expectation-setting. Product usage should improve roadmap choices. Customer success insight should improve future GTM planning.

Without that loop, the organisation repeats avoidable mistakes. It runs another campaign with similar messaging. Sales handles the same objections. Delivery solves the same friction. Customer success absorbs the same adoption problems.

The problem is not that no one is learning. The problem is that learning is trapped in functions.

Marketing learns from engagement. Sales learns from conversations. Product learns from usage. Customer success learns from onboarding. But unless those learnings are connected, the organisation does not learn as a whole.

That is the difference between activity and intelligence.

The leadership implication

For senior leaders, the key question is not whether the launch happened. It is whether the launch made the organisation smarter.

A modern launch should leave the organisation with clearer insight into which customer problems are most urgent, which buying group members matter most, which evidence builds confidence, which objections reveal real risk, which claims need refining, which customers are the right fit, and which adoption issues need to be addressed earlier.

This is why GTM can no longer be managed as a one-way movement from product to market. It has to operate as a loop from market back into product, proposition, sales, delivery and customer success.

Launch is still an important moment. But the value of that moment is not only what it announces. It is what it reveals. Modern product launch is no longer just about entering the market. It is about building a system that can learn from the market quickly enough to improve what happens next.





7. The MARKET Model

The previous sections have described a clear shift. B2B go-to-market is no longer a simple movement from product readiness to campaign activity, sales handover and pipeline reporting. Buyer behaviour has moved upstream. Trust has become harder to earn. Technology has created more visibility but not always more clarity. Product launch has become a learning system rather than a single market event. This creates a practical leadership challenge: if the old linear model is no longer enough, what replaces it?

Oak Consult's answer is the **MARKET Model** — a practical framework for modern B2B go-to-market strategy and execution. It is designed to help leaders test whether their organisation is building **market confidence** or simply producing activity. The model has six connected elements:

- **M** – Market Reality
- **A** – Audience and Buying Group
- **R** – Relevance and Proposition
- **K** – Knowledge, Evidence and Trust
- **E** – Execution Alignment
- **T** – Traction and Adoption



These elements should not be treated as a rigid sequence. Modern GTM is not a straight line. It is a loop.

Market reality shapes the audience. Audience understanding shapes the proposition. Proposition clarity defines the evidence required. Evidence must be carried consistently through execution. Execution creates traction. Traction and adoption reveal what the organisation needs to learn next. That learning then feeds back into market reality.

This is why the MARKET Model should be understood as a **continuous operating loop**, not a one-off launch checklist.

Why MARKET is a loop

A linear GTM model assumes that the organisation can move cleanly from one stage to the next: research, position, campaign, sell, deliver, review. That may be useful for planning activity, but it does not reflect the reality of modern B2B markets.

Buyers are forming views before supplier engagement. Buying groups are changing internally. Technology is creating new information flows. AI is accelerating both research and content production. Adoption signals are becoming part of commercial truth. Sales objections, customer success insight and product usage data all have the potential to improve the next go-to-market cycle.

The organisation therefore needs a model that can learn. A circular model reflects that reality. It recognises that GTM is never really finished. Every campaign, launch, sales conversation, customer onboarding, objection and lost deal can improve the organisation's understanding of the market.

The question is whether the organisation has the discipline to act on that learning. The MARKET Model gives leaders a way to hold that discipline together.

The six elements

M – Market Reality

Market Reality means understanding what is actually changing in the customer's world — not simply what the organisation wants to sell.

Diagnostic question

What do we know about the customer's current reality that we did not know six months ago?

What good looks like

The organisation can explain the customer's current pressures, priorities, risks and buying triggers using evidence rather than assumption. It understands not only who could buy, but who has a reason to buy now. It can distinguish between a theoretical market and an active market.

Practical signal

A leadership team preparing a launch does not begin with the question, "What campaign shall we run?" It begins with, "What has changed in the customer's world that makes this proposition necessary, credible and timely?"

A – Audience and Buying Group

Audience and Buying Group means understanding who is involved in the decision, what each stakeholder cares about and how confidence is built across the account.

Diagnostic question

Do we understand the full buying group, or are we still writing for one idealised decision-maker?

What good looks like

The organisation understands the different concerns inside the buying group. It can explain what each major stakeholder needs to believe before the opportunity can progress. Messaging, evidence and sales enablement are designed for the group, not just the lead contact.

Practical signal

A proposition originally written for a commercial director is strengthened to address the finance lead's need for payback evidence, the operations lead's concern about disruption, the technical evaluator's integration questions and the user group's adoption expectations.

R – Relevance and Proposition

Relevance and Proposition means being able to explain why the offer matters now, what problem it solves and what value it creates.

Diagnostic question

Can we explain clearly why this proposition matters now, not just what it does?

What good looks like

The proposition connects to a recognised customer pressure, a measurable outcome or a problem the buyer already understands. It avoids vague claims and generic value language. It is specific enough to be useful and honest enough to be trusted.

Practical signal

Instead of leading with features or internal capability, the organisation frames the proposition around a specific business issue: reducing avoidable manual effort, lowering operational risk, accelerating decision-making or strengthening adoption.

K – Knowledge, Evidence and Trust

Knowledge, Evidence and Trust means giving buyers the proof, insight and reassurance they need before they engage, believe or act.

Diagnostic question

What would a cautious buyer need to believe before they were willing to act?

What good looks like

The GTM system provides practical evidence, relevant examples, clear claims and useful insight that help buyers build confidence. The organisation does not rely on generic reassurance. It gives the buying group material they can use internally. The evidence is easy to find, easy to understand and consistent with the sales conversation and delivery reality.

Practical signal

The organisation creates evidence-led content, customer examples, implementation guidance, comparison material and risk-reduction messages that help the buyer build an internal case before formal sales engagement.

E – Execution Alignment

Execution Alignment means ensuring product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success are working from the same commercial truth.

Diagnostic question

Would product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success describe the proposition, buyer problem and success measures in the same way?

What good looks like

Teams share one version of the customer problem, value promise, evidence base, sales story, delivery reality and success measures. Customer insight moves across functions rather than staying trapped in local systems. Sales objections shape messaging. Delivery reality shapes qualification. Customer success insight shapes launch readiness.

Practical signal

Sales objections are reviewed with marketing, product and delivery before the next campaign phase. Messaging is adjusted, enablement is improved and delivery risks are clarified before activity is scaled.

T – Traction and Adoption

Traction and Adoption means understanding what happens after launch and using market response to improve the next GTM cycle.

Diagnostic question

What are we learning from market response, sales conversations, objections, onboarding and early adoption?

What good looks like

Launch learning flows back into proposition, product, sales enablement, marketing content, delivery readiness and customer success. The organisation measures not only activity, but quality of response, buyer confidence, customer fit and repeated friction. Post-launch evidence is used to improve the next launch, not simply report on the last one.

Practical signal

Early adoption data reveals where customers struggle to activate value. The organisation uses that insight to improve onboarding, clarify messaging, strengthen sales qualification and refine future launch planning.

How the model works in practice

The MARKET Model is deliberately simple, but it should not be treated lightly. Its value comes from forcing better commercial questions earlier and connecting evidence across the full GTM system.

Before launch, it helps leaders test whether the organisation understands the market, buying group, proposition and proof requirements clearly enough. During launch, it helps teams stay aligned around the same commercial truth. After launch, it helps the organisation turn market response, sales feedback, delivery friction and adoption signals into learning.

How the model could be used

A business might use the MARKET Model as:

- A pre-launch readiness check
- A proposition review framework
- A sales and marketing alignment tool
- A board-level GTM diagnostic
- A post-launch learning review
- A way to connect product, marketing, sales and customer success around one commercial truth

The power of the model is not in the acronym itself. It is in the discipline behind it.

The MARKET Model and market confidence

The central argument of this whitepaper is that B2B go-to-market has shifted from launch activity to market confidence.

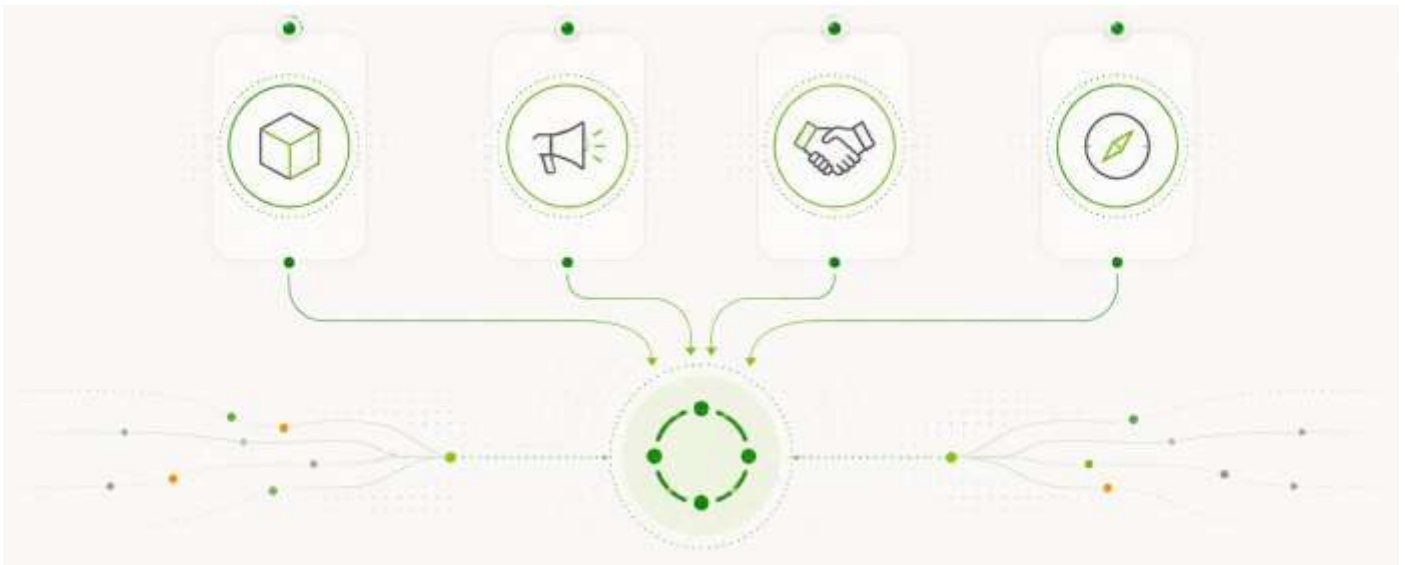
The MARKET Model gives leaders a way to test that confidence:

- **Market Reality** asks whether the organisation understands the customer's world.
- **Audience and Buying Group** asks whether it understands who really shapes the decision.
- **Relevance and Proposition** asks whether the offer matters now.
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust** asks whether the buyer has enough proof to believe.
- **Execution Alignment** asks whether the organisation can carry one coherent commercial truth.
- **Traction and Adoption** asks whether the market response and customer reality are improving the next cycle.

If one element is weak, the whole GTM system becomes less reliable. A strong proposition aimed at the wrong buying group will struggle. Strong evidence carried inconsistently by sales and delivery will struggle. A successful sale without adoption will struggle.

Modern GTM is not about making every function busier. It is about making every function more connected to the same market reality.

The test is not whether every team has completed its launch tasks. The test is whether every team is helping the buyer believe, decide, adopt and succeed.



8. What This Means for Functional Leaders

Modern go-to-market cannot be owned by one function alone. Marketing may lead campaign activity. Sales may lead commercial conversations. Product may shape the roadmap. Customer success may own adoption. Delivery may turn promise into reality. Leadership may set the commercial ambition.

But the buyer does not experience those functions separately. The buyer experiences one supplier.

That is why modern GTM has to be treated as a joined-up commercial system. Each function has a different role, but all functions need to work from the same understanding of the customer, the same value promise, the same evidence base and the same view of what success should look like.

The MARKET Model gives leaders a shared language for that work.

What Modern GTM Means for Functional Leaders

How modern go-to-market changes the role of senior commercial leaders

	 Product and Proposition	 Marketing	 Sales	 CEOs and Commercial Leaders
 Main responsibility	Connect value to customer reality.	Build buyer confidence before sales engagement.	Validate, de-risk and carry market truth back into the organisation.	Hold GTM together as a commercial system.
 Common failure mode	Building from roadmap logic rather than market evidence.	Optimising for visibility, volume or lead capture alone.	Selling as if buyers are starting from zero.	Managing functions separately through local metrics.
 New GTM requirement	Test relevance before scale.	Create useful, evidence-led buyer enablement.	Support the full buying group with evidence and challenge.	Create shared accountability for market confidence.
 Key leadership question	Can we explain why this matters now in language the customer would recognise?	Does our marketing help buyers believe, understand and act?	Are we helping buyers justify the decision internally?	Are we managing GTM as a system or a set of activities?

Product and Proposition Leaders

The job is no longer simply to define what has been built. It is to prove why it matters, who it matters to and what customer reality it connects with. A strong product does not automatically create a strong market position. Customers do not buy the internal logic of the roadmap. They buy relevance, confidence and the belief that the product or service will help them make progress against something that matters.

Product and proposition leaders therefore need to stay closer to market evidence than traditional operating models often allow. They need to understand what is changing in the customer's world, which problems are becoming urgent, which buying group members influence the decision, what language customers use to describe the problem, and what evidence supports the proposition.

The risk for product and proposition teams is internal confidence. A product can be well built, strategically logical and technically strong, but still fail to connect if the proposition is not grounded in the customer's current reality.

Key question Can we explain why this matters now in language the customer would recognise?

Leadership implication Product and proposition leaders should be involved throughout the GTM loop, not only at the beginning. Sales objections, adoption patterns, delivery friction and customer success insight should feed back into proposition refinement and future roadmap decisions.

A strong product is not enough if the market cannot see why it matters now.

Marketing Leaders

The shift is from attention to confidence. Awareness, campaigns, content and demand generation still matter. But in a market where buyers research earlier, involve more stakeholders and encounter more supplier noise, marketing cannot be measured only by visibility or volume. The more important question is whether marketing helps the buyer make progress.

Modern B2B marketing needs to support the buying group before it is visible. It needs to help buyers understand the problem, compare options, trust the supplier's claims, build internal consensus and feel confident enough to engage.

This requires a different standard of content and communication. Generic thought leadership is not enough. Polished campaign messaging is not enough. Marketing has to create material that is specific, useful, evidence-led and grounded in real customer problems.

Key question Does our marketing help the buying group believe, understand and act, or does it mainly create more supplier noise?

Leadership implication Marketing leaders should measure buyer confidence as well as campaign activity. That means paying attention to the quality of engagement, the usefulness of evidence, the consistency of messaging with sales and delivery, and whether target buyers can understand the value before speaking to a representative.

Modern B2B marketing is not only about being seen. It is about being believed.

Sales Leaders

The role is changing from information delivery to confidence-building. In many B2B markets, buyers arrive better informed than before. They may have read the content, compared suppliers, spoken to peers and built an internal view of the problem before speaking to sales. That does not make sales less important. It makes good sales more important.

The sales conversation becomes the place where assumptions are tested, risk is explored, confidence is built and the buying group is helped to move from interest to commitment.

Sales leaders therefore need to equip teams for a more demanding role. Representatives need to understand the full buying group, not just the lead contact. They need to know what evidence matters to different stakeholders. They need to challenge generic assumptions, validate buyer thinking and bring market insight back into the organisation.

Sales feedback also needs to be treated as commercial evidence. Repeated objections, stalled opportunities and lost deals should not remain trapped in sales notes. They should inform proposition, marketing, product and delivery.

Key question Are we helping buyers validate, de-risk and justify the decision, or are we still selling as though they are starting from zero?

Leadership implication Sales leaders should create a stronger feedback loop between frontline conversations and the rest of the GTM system. Buyer objections should shape messaging. Lost-deal insight should shape proposition. Sales confidence should be treated as a leading indicator of GTM readiness.

Sales is no longer just the end of the GTM process. It is one of the most important sources of market truth.

CEOs and Commercial Leaders

The shift is from departmental performance to commercial system health. This is the level at which modern GTM either works or fragments.

A leadership team can ask each function to improve its own metrics: more leads, better conversion, stronger pipeline, faster delivery, improved retention. Those goals may all be valid. But if they are not connected, the organisation may optimise locally while weakening the overall customer and commercial experience.

Marketing may optimise for engagement. Sales may optimise for near-term opportunities. Product may optimise for roadmap delivery. Customer success may optimise for retention. Each function may improve its own scorecard while the buyer still experiences confusion, inconsistency or weak evidence.

The role of leadership is to prevent that fragmentation. Senior leaders need to ensure that GTM is treated as a shared operating system, not as a sequence of functional handovers. That requires common definitions, shared evidence, clear accountability and a regular rhythm for reviewing what the market is teaching the organisation.

Key question Are we managing GTM as a joined-up commercial system, or as a set of functional activities?

Leadership implication CEOs and commercial leaders should use the MARKET Model as a board-level and leadership-level diagnostic. It can test whether growth activity is supported by enough customer reality, buyer understanding, proposition clarity, evidence, execution alignment and adoption learning. The leadership challenge is not simply to launch more effectively. It is to build an organisation that learns from the market faster than its assumptions harden.

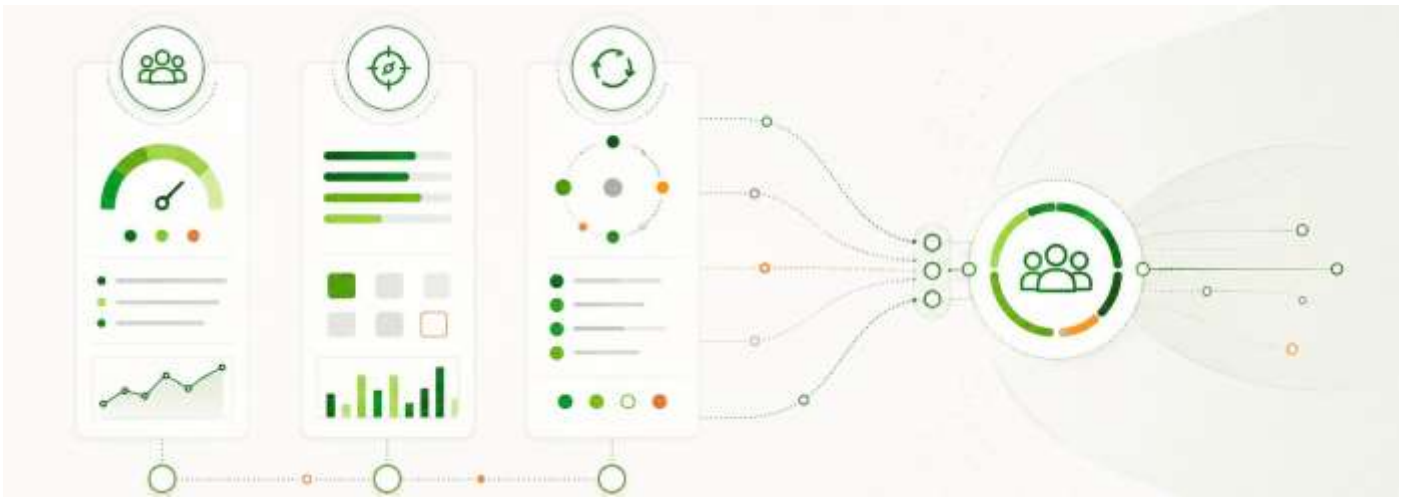
The shared responsibility

Each function has a different role in modern GTM, but the responsibility is shared.

- Product and proposition leaders need to connect value to customer reality.
- Marketing leaders need to build confidence before sales engagement.
- Sales leaders need to validate, de-risk and feed market truth back into the organisation.
- Customer success and delivery leaders need to make adoption and implementation reality visible earlier.
- CEOs and commercial leaders need to hold the whole system together.

When those responsibilities are disconnected, GTM becomes activity-led. When they are connected, GTM becomes confidence-led.

That is the real shift. Modern go-to-market is not about making every function do more. It is about helping every function contribute to the same market confidence.



9. Measurement and Shared Accountability

Modern go-to-market needs better measurement, not just more measurement.

Most B2B organisations already measure a great deal. They track activity, engagement, pipeline, conversion, revenue, retention and customer outcomes. They produce dashboards, board packs, campaign reports and performance reviews.

The issue is not the absence of metrics. The issue is whether those metrics tell leaders what they need to know.

A traditional GTM dashboard may show that activity is happening. It may show how many leads were generated, how many meetings were booked, how much pipeline was created and how much revenue was forecast.

Those measures still matter. They should not be abandoned. But they are incomplete. They do not always show whether buyers understand the proposition, whether the buying group has confidence, whether teams are aligned around the same commercial truth, or whether launch learning is improving the next cycle.

Modern GTM should not only be measured by what it produces. It should be measured by whether it is making the organisation clearer, faster and more trusted in the market.

The limits of activity-based measurement

Activity-based measurement is useful because it is visible. A campaign goes live. Engagement can be counted. Leads can be scored. Meetings can be tracked. Pipeline can be reported. Revenue can be attributed.

That visibility is helpful, but it can also create false confidence.

A campaign can create engagement without creating buyer confidence. A lead can enter the CRM after the buying group has already formed a view. A meeting can happen because the buyer is validating a preferred option. A deal can close even though adoption risk has not been properly understood.

Activity shows movement. It does not always show meaning.

This is why leaders need to look beyond the surface of GTM performance. The better question is not simply, “How much activity did we create?” It is, “What is this activity telling us about market confidence?”

Modern GTM Measurement Framework

A practical scorecard for measuring confidence, alignment and learning



These categories do not replace traditional metrics. They add context to them. Lead volume, pipeline value and revenue still matter, but they need to be interpreted alongside indicators that show whether the organisation is building confidence, working coherently and learning from the market.

Buyer Confidence Signals These help leaders understand whether the market believes, understands and values the proposition. Useful signals may include:

- Quality of buyer conversations
- Repeat engagement from target accounts
- Stakeholder breadth within active opportunities
- Use of buyer enablement material and proof points
- Strength and patterns of objections
- Speed from first meaningful signal to qualified opportunity
- Direct requests for evidence, demos, trials or references
- Presence of senior, financial, operational and technical stakeholders in the process

The purpose of these signals is to help leaders understand whether the organisation is helping buyers move from interest to confidence.

Execution Alignment Signals These help leaders understand whether the organisation is working from one commercial truth. Useful signals may include:

- Consistency of proposition language across product, marketing, sales and delivery
- Sales confidence in the proposition and evidence base
- Alignment between marketing claims and delivery capability
- Quality and completeness of CRM data
- Shared definitions of lead quality, opportunity stage and customer fit
- Frequency and usefulness of cross-functional GTM reviews
- Sales enablement usage and feedback
- Customer success and delivery input before launch

These measures help leaders see whether the organisation is coordinated or simply busy.

Learning and Adaptation Signals These help leaders understand whether the organisation is improving through market contact. Useful signals may include:

- Post-launch feedback captured and acted on
- Early adoption indicators and time-to-value
- Onboarding friction points
- Win/loss patterns converted into action
- Proposition or messaging changes made from market evidence
- Reduction in repeated objections or confusion
- Speed at which market learning changes future GTM activity

These signals show whether the organisation is becoming smarter through GTM activity.

Shared accountability matters

Measurement only works if accountability is shared.

If marketing is measured only on lead volume, it will optimise for lead volume. If sales is measured only on short-term conversion, it may reject useful early-stage insight. If product is measured only on roadmap delivery, it may underweight market evidence. If customer success is measured only after the sale, it may be excluded from the decisions that shape adoption risk.

Modern GTM requires a different kind of accountability. Each function still needs its own measures, but there also need to be shared measures that reflect the health of the whole commercial system.

For example:

- Marketing and sales should share accountability for quality of buyer engagement.
- Product and marketing should share accountability for proposition clarity.
- Sales and delivery should share accountability for expectation-setting and fit.
- Customer success and product should share accountability for adoption insight.
- Leadership should own the operating rhythm that turns market evidence into decisions.

The buyer does not care which team owns which metric. They care whether the supplier understands them, supports them and delivers what was promised.

Using the MARKET Model as a measurement lens

The MARKET Model can be used as a simple measurement lens. For each element, leaders can ask what evidence they have:

- **Market Reality** — Do we have evidence of what has changed in the customer's world, or are we relying on old assumptions?
- **Audience and Buying Group** — Do we know who is shaping the decision, or are we still measuring only the visible contact?
- **Relevance and Proposition** — Can buyers explain why this matters now, or are we relying on internal language?
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust** — Do we know which evidence builds buyer confidence, or are we simply producing more content?
- **Execution Alignment** — Do teams share the same definitions, story and success measures, or are they reporting separately?
- **Traction and Adoption** — Are we learning from market response and customer adoption, or only reporting launch activity?

These questions help move measurement from activity reporting to commercial understanding.

The leadership implication

For senior leaders, measurement should do more than describe the past. It should improve the next decision.

A useful GTM measurement system helps leaders see where buyer confidence is building, where the buying group is unconvinced, where the proposition is unclear, where evidence is missing, where functions are misaligned, where the promise may not match delivery reality, and where the next GTM cycle needs to change.

That is the purpose of measurement in modern go-to-market.

Not more reporting for its own sake. Not dashboards that create comfort. Not attribution models that hide uncertainty behind false precision.

The purpose is to help the organisation become clearer, faster and more trusted in the market.

A modern GTM dashboard should therefore answer a harder question than, “What did we do?”

It should help answer: **“What are we learning, and what are we changing because of it?”**

Using the MARKET Model as a Measurement Lens

For each element, ask what evidence you have.



The value at stake: why MARKET is a commercial issue

The value of modern go-to-market discipline is not only found in better campaigns. It is found in reduced waste, stronger conversion, faster learning, clearer adoption and better use of commercial effort.

When GTM is weak, the cost is often hidden. It does not always appear as one obvious failure. It shows up as slower sales cycles, repeated objections, late-stage deal loss, wasted content production, poor handovers, weak adoption, discounting pressure and leadership time spent reconciling different versions of the truth.

For a C-suite team, the commercial question is not simply whether the organisation is active in market. It is whether that activity is creating enough confidence to justify the cost of the GTM system behind it.

A practical value-at-stake review should look across six areas:

Commercial risk area	Where value is commonly lost	Leadership question
Weak market reality	Campaigns are built around old assumptions or internal ambition rather than current customer pressure.	How much GTM spend is being committed before we have tested whether the market problem is urgent and recognised?
Poor buying group understanding	The visible contact is supported, but hidden influencers, blockers and validators are missed.	How often do opportunities stall because the full decision group has not been identified or enabled?
Weak proposition confidence	Buyers understand the offer but do not believe the value case strongly enough to act.	How much pipeline is slowed, discounted or lost because the proposition lacks credible proof?
Fragmented execution	Product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success carry different versions of the same story.	How much effort is wasted because teams optimise locally rather than around one commercial truth?
Adoption friction	Customers buy the promise but struggle to realise value quickly enough after purchase.	How much revenue, retention or expansion is put at risk because adoption was not built into GTM planning?
Slow learning cycles	The same objections, campaign weaknesses and launch issues repeat because market learning stays trapped in functions.	How quickly does evidence from the market change the next campaign, sales story, product decision or customer success plan?

The numbers will vary by organisation, but the pattern is consistent. Even small improvements in conversion, sales-cycle efficiency, adoption, retention or cross-functional productivity can create significant value when applied across a full GTM system.

A leadership team does not need a perfect financial model to begin. It needs a disciplined way to ask where value is being lost today.

For example:

- If sales cycles are lengthening, is the issue demand, buyer confidence, proposition clarity or buying group complexity?
- If campaigns are generating engagement but not progress, is the content creating attention without internal buyer enablement?
- If win rates are under pressure, are buyers rejecting the product, the evidence, the risk profile or the supplier's credibility?
- If early customers are slow to adopt, was the launch designed around purchase or value realisation?
- If teams are producing more but learning slowly, where is insight being trapped?

This is the commercial value of the MARKET Model. It gives leaders a structured way to connect GTM activity to the places where confidence, conversion, adoption and learning are either created or lost.

The purpose is not to over-engineer measurement. It is to make value leakage visible enough for leaders to act.



10. Barriers to Change

The logic of modern go-to-market is not difficult to understand. Most leaders would agree that customer reality matters, that buying groups are more complex, that trust is harder to earn, that technology can fragment commercial truth, and that launch learning should feed back into the next cycle.

The difficulty is not usually agreement. The difficulty is changing how the organisation works.

Many B2B organisations are still structured, measured and managed around functional activity. Marketing runs campaigns. Sales owns opportunities. Product owns the roadmap. Delivery owns implementation. Customer success owns adoption. Each function may be competent and working hard, but modern GTM fails when functional effort does not become shared commercial confidence.

That is why the shift from launch activity to market confidence is harder than it first appears.

Common blockers

Functional silos Marketing, sales, product, delivery and customer success often operate with different goals, different systems and different views of the customer. A campaign may be judged successful because it creates engagement, even if sales finds the conversations weak. Sales may prioritise opportunities that are easiest to close, even if they create delivery or adoption risk later. When functions operate separately, the buyer experiences the joins.

Incentives that reward the wrong behaviour People respond to what they are asked to deliver. If marketing is rewarded for lead volume, it will optimise for lead volume. If sales is rewarded only for short-term conversion, it may avoid feeding back harder market truths. If product is rewarded mainly for roadmap delivery, it may underweight proposition evidence. The result is that teams optimise locally, even when the overall commercial system suffers.

Weak data discipline Modern GTM depends on insight moving across the organisation. That becomes difficult when systems are incomplete, definitions are inconsistent or data is not trusted. Poor data quality does not only make reporting harder. It makes decision-making less confident. If leaders do not trust the data, they fall back on opinion. If teams use different definitions, they argue about interpretation.

Leadership overconfidence in internal assumptions This can happen in any organisation, especially when teams are proud of what they have built. Internal confidence is not the same as market confidence. The market may not see the problem as urgent. The buying group may care about different risks. The proposition may use language the customer would not use. This is why modern GTM needs disciplined challenge before scale.

Campaign deadlines overriding learning GTM teams often work to fixed deadlines. That is understandable, but deadlines become dangerous when they override market learning. If a launch date is protected at all costs, teams may ignore signals that should change the approach. Sales concerns may be treated as resistance. Early customer feedback may be acknowledged but not acted on because the launch machine is already moving.

AI increasing output without improving judgement AI can make weak GTM look more productive. A team can create more content, more campaign variants and more messaging options than before. That can be useful, but it can also create the illusion of progress. If the underlying proposition is weak, AI can make it sound better. If the evidence is thin, AI can make the argument feel more complete. The danger is using AI to scale uncertainty rather than to improve judgement.

Learning trapped in functions Sales learns from objections. Marketing learns from engagement. Product learns from usage. Customer success learns from onboarding. But unless that learning is connected, the organisation repeats mistakes. The same objections appear in sales calls. The same adoption problems appear after launch. The organisation is not short of learning. It is short of a rhythm for turning learning into action.

How the MARKET Model helps

The MARKET Model directly challenges the main barriers to modern GTM:

- It challenges internal assumption by starting with **Market Reality**.
- It challenges single-persona thinking by examining **Audience and Buying Group**.
- It challenges vague positioning through **Relevance and Proposition**.
- It challenges generic claims through **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust**.
- It challenges functional silos through **Execution Alignment**.
- It challenges launch-as-event thinking through **Traction and Adoption**.

Used properly, the model forces the organisation to connect market evidence, buyer understanding, proposition clarity, trust-building, execution alignment and post-launch learning into one operating rhythm.

It does not replace sales, marketing, product, delivery or customer success discipline. It makes those disciplines work from the same commercial truth.

The leadership implication

The shift to modern GTM is not mainly a tooling project. It is a leadership discipline.

It requires leaders to decide what kind of commercial system they want to build. One that produces more activity, or one that builds more confidence. One that reports local performance, or one that learns across functions. One that launches based on internal readiness, or one that tests market reality before and after launch.

The barriers are real. Silos, incentives, data quality, overconfidence, deadlines, AI misuse and trapped learning will not disappear because a model is introduced. But they can be managed if leaders create the right rhythm.

That rhythm should ask, repeatedly:

- What is the market telling us?
- What are buyers struggling to believe?
- Where are our teams misaligned?
- What evidence do we need?
- What are we learning after launch?
- What must change before the next cycle?

Modern GTM is not blocked by a lack of activity. It is blocked when organisations lack the discipline to turn evidence into shared commercial action.



11. How MARKET Holds Up Under Pressure

The MARKET Model should not only work in stable conditions. Its real test is whether it helps leaders make better decisions when the market becomes harder to read.

Modern GTM does not operate in a controlled environment. Budget freezes, procurement tightening, competitor pressure, AI content saturation, delivery constraints and economic uncertainty can all change how buyers behave. In those conditions, activity-led GTM becomes even riskier. Teams often respond by increasing outreach, producing more content, adding pressure to sales or chasing short-term pipeline.

That may create movement, but not necessarily confidence.

The value of MARKET is that it gives leaders a way to stress-test GTM decisions before pressure turns into waste.

Scenario 1: Budget freeze or spending caution

When budgets tighten, buyers do not simply stop thinking. They become more selective about what deserves attention, investment and internal risk.

In this environment, **Market Reality** and **Relevance and Proposition** become critical. The organisation must prove that the problem is urgent enough to survive scrutiny. Generic value messages become weaker. Clear problem framing, quantified risk, practical evidence and implementation realism become more important.

The leadership question becomes:

Are we helping buyers justify action in a cautious environment, or are we still presenting the offer as if budgets are freely available?

Scenario 2: Procurement tightening and wider governance

When procurement, finance, compliance or risk functions become more involved, the buying group expands and the decision process becomes more formal.

This puts pressure on **Audience and Buying Group** and **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust**. A supplier may have a strong champion but still lose momentum if the wider organisation lacks confidence. The GTM system must support not only the sponsor, but also the sceptics, validators and risk owners around them.

The leadership question becomes:

Have we equipped the full buying group with the evidence they need, or are we relying too heavily on one visible contact?

Scenario 3: Competitor acceleration

When competitors move quickly, the temptation is to respond with more volume: faster campaigns, more messaging, more sales activity and more content.

That may be necessary, but speed without clarity can weaken the market position. In this scenario, **Execution Alignment** matters. Product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success need one version of the truth, otherwise the organisation may move quickly in different directions.

The leadership question becomes:

Are we increasing speed with discipline, or creating faster inconsistency?

Scenario 4: AI content saturation

As AI makes content easier to produce, buyers will face more comparison material, more automated outreach, more summaries and more supplier-shaped noise.

This increases the importance of **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust**. The organisations that win will not simply produce more. They will provide clearer proof, better judgement, more useful buyer enablement and stronger evidence of delivery reality.

The leadership question becomes:

Are we using AI to improve buyer confidence, or simply to add to the noise buyers already distrust?

Scenario 5: Delivery or adoption capacity pressure

A launch can create demand that the organisation is not ready to fulfil. When delivery capacity is tight, onboarding is stretched, or customer success teams are under pressure, GTM must be tied more closely to adoption reality.

This is where **Traction and Adoption** becomes essential. The organisation must measure not only whether the market responds, but whether the customer can realise value after purchase.

The leadership question becomes:

Are we creating demand that the business can support, or creating adoption risk that will damage trust later?

What scenario sensitivity changes

Scenario sensitivity does not make GTM slower. It makes it more intelligent.

In stable conditions, MARKET helps teams plan and align. Under pressure, it helps leaders decide where to focus, what to pause, what to strengthen and what evidence is needed before scaling activity.

The six elements become a stress-test:

- **Market Reality:** Has the customer's world changed again?
- **Audience and Buying Group:** Who has entered the decision because risk has increased?
- **Relevance and Proposition:** Is the value case strong enough for current conditions?
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust:** What proof is needed now?
- **Execution Alignment:** Are teams still working from one truth under pressure?
- **Traction and Adoption:** What is the market teaching us, and are we acting on it quickly enough?

The point is simple. MARKET is not only a launch model. It is a leadership model for keeping GTM credible when conditions change.



12. Board-Level Questions for GTM Leaders

Modern go-to-market deserves board-level attention. That does not mean boards should manage campaign plans or approve every message. It means senior leaders should understand whether the organisation's GTM system is strong enough to create market confidence.

This matters because GTM now connects several strategic risks at once: whether the organisation understands current customer reality, whether it can reach and influence the real buying group, whether its proposition is relevant and credible, whether buyers have enough evidence to trust the promise, whether teams are aligned, whether launch learning is improving future decisions, and whether revenue confidence is being built on evidence or assumption.

A board that only reviews lagging revenue, pipeline and campaign activity may be looking too late. The better role for senior leaders is to test whether the organisation has the right commercial conditions for GTM success. The following questions are designed as a practical checklist.

Market Reality

- What has changed in the customer's world since we first built this proposition?
- What do we know now that we did not know six months ago?
- Which customer pressures, risks or priorities make this proposition relevant now?
- Are we targeting a theoretical market, or an active market with a current reason to buy?
- Where are we relying on internal belief rather than external evidence?
- Would customers describe the problem in the same way we do?

Audience and Buying Group

- Are we supporting the real buying group, or only the person we wish made the decision?
- Who influences the shortlist before formal engagement?
- Which stakeholders need confidence before this can progress?
- Do we understand the commercial, operational, technical, financial, user and procurement concerns?
- Are we accounting for generational shifts in how research, comparison and validation happen?
- Which important stakeholders are missing from our current engagement?

Relevance and Proposition

- Can we explain why this matters now?
- Is the proposition connected to a recognised customer pressure or measurable business outcome?
- Is the value promise specific enough to be credible?
- Are we explaining the customer's problem in their language or ours?
- Are we clear about who this offer is for and where it is not a fit?
- Could a buyer use our proposition internally to justify action?

Knowledge, Evidence and Trust

- What proof would a cautious buyer need before they believed us?
- What evidence do we provide before the sales conversation begins?
- Are our claims specific, useful and credible, or polished but generic?
- Which evidence matters to each stakeholder in the buying group?
- Are we using AI to improve clarity and usefulness, or simply to increase output?
- Can buyers validate our promise through examples, references, documentation, trials, implementation guidance or customer proof?

Execution Alignment

- Can sales, marketing, product, delivery and customer success explain the same value promise?
- Do teams use the same definitions of lead quality, opportunity stage, customer fit and success?
- Are customer objections being shared and acted on across functions?
- Does our delivery reality match our GTM promise?
- Are campaign claims, sales conversations, implementation planning and onboarding expectations aligned?
- Where does the buyer experience inconsistency?

Traction and Adoption

- What are we learning after launch?
- Are we measuring adoption as well as activity?
- What are early customers struggling to understand, use or adopt?
- Which objections or points of confusion keep recurring?
- Who owns acting on market response, sales feedback and adoption insight?
- How quickly does learning flow back into proposition, product, sales enablement, marketing and delivery?
- What will we change before the next campaign, launch or sales cycle?

Leadership-Level Synthesis

Alongside the MARKET questions, leaders should ask three broader questions about the health of the GTM system:

1. **Are we measuring activity, or market confidence?** Traditional metrics remain useful, but they need to be interpreted carefully. Leads, engagement, meetings, pipeline and revenue tell part of the story. They do not always show whether buyers understand, trust and believe the proposition. A stronger GTM dashboard should help leaders see whether buyer confidence is increasing, whether the right stakeholders are engaged, whether the evidence base is working, whether teams are aligned, and whether adoption is confirming or challenging the promise.
2. **Are we becoming clearer, faster and more trusted?** Modern GTM should make the organisation sharper over time. If each launch creates activity but not learning, the system is weak. If repeated objections keep appearing, the organisation is not listening properly. If customer success keeps solving the same adoption problems, learning is not moving upstream. If marketing, sales and product keep interpreting the market differently, the operating rhythm needs attention. The board should not only ask, “Did the campaign work?” It should ask, “What did the market teach us, and what changed because of it?”
3. **Is GTM treated as a campaign responsibility or a commercial system?** If GTM is treated mainly as marketing activity, the organisation will underplay proposition, sales confidence, delivery readiness and adoption. If it is treated mainly as sales execution, the organisation will underplay upstream buyer confidence and market education. If it is treated mainly as product launch, the organisation may underplay the buying group, evidence and post-sale value. Modern GTM is a commercial system. The board’s role is to make sure that system is coherent.

Using the checklist

Board-Level GTM Checklist

A practical **MARKET**-based diagnostic for senior leaders



<p>1  Market Reality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What has changed in the customer's world?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are we targeting an active market or a theoretical one?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where are we relying on assumption?</p>	<p>2  Audience and Buying Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Who really shapes the decision?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Which stakeholders need confidence?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are we supporting the full buying group?</p>	<p>3  Relevance and Proposition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can we explain why this matters now?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Would the customer describe the problem this way?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the value promise specific enough?</p>
<p>4  Knowledge, Evidence and Trust</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What proof would a cautious buyer need?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is evidence available before the sales conversation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are our claims credible or generic?</p>	<p>5  Execution Alignment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can teams explain the same value promise?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does delivery reality match GTM messaging?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are objections shared and acted on?</p>	<p>6  Traction and Adoption</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What are we learning after launch?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are we measuring adoption as well as activity?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What will change before the next cycle?</p>

 **The board's role is to test whether the organisation is ready to earn market confidence.**

This checklist can be used before a major launch, during a proposition review, after a missed revenue target, or as part of a quarterly commercial governance rhythm.

It does not need to become a heavy process. Its value lies in creating better leadership conversations. A practical review might ask:

- Which MARKET element is strongest?
- Which element is weakest?
- Where are we relying on assumption?
- Where does the buyer lack confidence?
- Which function sees the problem most clearly?
- What decision needs to change now?

The point is not to create another reporting burden. The point is to help leaders test whether GTM activity is being converted into market confidence.

Closing thought

The board's role is not to approve the launch plan and wait for the numbers. It is to test whether the organisation is ready to earn market confidence.

That requires more than a campaign calendar, a sales forecast or a product roadmap. It requires a shared view of customer reality, buyer confidence, proposition strength, evidence, execution alignment and post-launch learning.

Those are now board-level GTM questions.



13. Conclusion: From Launch Activity to Market Confidence

B2B go-to-market has changed.

The old model was built around a more controllable idea of launch. The organisation developed the product, created the proposition, built the campaign, briefed sales, generated leads, reported pipeline and measured commercial progress.

That model still has familiar parts. Organisations still need product readiness, proposition clarity, campaigns, sales enablement, pipeline management and revenue discipline. But those things are no longer enough on their own.

Modern B2B buyers are more informed before they engage. Buying groups are larger, more cautious and more difficult to read. Trust is harder to earn in a market full of content, claims and AI-supported comparison. Technology has created more data, but not always one shared commercial truth. Launch has become less of a single event and more of a learning system that stretches from market understanding through to adoption and customer value.

This is the shift at the heart of this paper.



Go-to-market is moving from launch activity to market confidence.

Activity is not the same as confidence

Activity is visible. Campaigns can be launched. Leads can be counted. Meetings can be booked. Sales materials can be produced. Dashboards can be updated. Pipeline can be reviewed. Reports can be shared.

Those things matter. But they do not always show whether the organisation is building buyer confidence.

A business can generate activity while still misunderstanding the market. It can produce content while still failing to create trust. It can brief sales while still carrying a weak proposition. It can report pipeline while still missing key members of the buying group. It can close deals while still creating avoidable adoption risk.

That is why modern GTM needs a higher standard.

The question is not simply, “Did we launch?” The better question is, “Did we help the market believe, decide, adopt and succeed?”

The MARKET Model as a practical response

The MARKET Model provides a practical way to apply that higher standard. It helps leaders test whether their GTM system is built around customer reality, buyer confidence and shared execution — or whether it is mainly producing activity.

The six elements are deliberately simple:

- **Market Reality** asks whether the organisation understands what is actually changing in the customer’s world.
- **Audience and Buying Group** asks whether it understands who really shapes the decision.
- **Relevance and Proposition** asks whether the offer matters now, in language the buyer recognises.
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust** asks whether the buying group has enough proof to believe.
- **Execution Alignment** asks whether product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success are working from one commercial truth.
- **Traction and Adoption** asks whether market response and customer reality are improving the next cycle.

Used well, the model creates better conversations before launch, during launch and after launch. It gives CEOs, founders, commercial leaders and functional teams a shared language for reviewing whether the organisation is ready to earn market confidence.

The real leadership challenge

The hardest part of modern GTM is not producing more.

Technology has made it easier to produce more campaigns, more content, more messages and more reports. AI will accelerate that further. But more output does not automatically create more trust.

The real leadership challenge is judgement.

What does the market actually need? Which customers are ready to buy? Who really shapes the decision? What proof matters? Which claims are credible? Where are we underplaying risk? Where are teams misaligned? What are customers struggling to adopt? What are we learning, and what are we changing because of it?

These are not just marketing questions. They are commercial leadership questions. They require organisations to slow down in the right places, ask better questions earlier, and act faster on what the market is teaching them.

The organisations that will win

The organisations that adapt best will not simply be those that launch louder.

They will be the organisations that listen better before launch, prove more clearly during the buying journey, and learn more honestly after the sale. They will understand that buyers are not only looking for products or services. They are looking for confidence that the supplier understands their world, can support their decision, can deliver the promise, and can help them create value after purchase.

They will not rely on generic claims when evidence is needed. They will not treat sales objections as isolated deal issues when they are really market signals. They will not leave customer success to repair adoption problems that should have been considered before launch. They will not confuse dashboards with commercial truth. They will not use AI simply to create more noise.

They will build GTM systems that connect customer reality, proposition clarity, useful evidence, aligned execution and continuous learning.

That is the new standard.

Final thought

Modern B2B go-to-market is no longer just about entering the market.

It is about earning the right to be trusted in it.

In a market shaped by upstream buyers, larger buying groups, generational change, digital comparison, technology fragmentation, AI-supported research and greater commercial caution, the winners will be those who can turn activity into confidence — not once, not only at launch, but continuously.

The future of B2B go-to-market belongs to organisations that can understand the market more clearly, prove value more credibly, align internally more honestly, and learn from customer reality faster than their assumptions harden.



Oak Consult – How we can help

Oak Consult helps B2B organisations strengthen go-to-market strategy and execution by connecting customer reality, proposition clarity, commercial evidence and joined-up delivery.

If your organisation is preparing to launch, reposition or scale a product or service, the next step is not simply to ask whether the campaign is ready. It is to test whether the GTM system is ready.

Oak Consult recommends a focused **MARKET Review**: a short leadership diagnostic across the six MARKET elements to identify where buyer confidence, evidence, alignment or adoption risk may weaken commercial performance.

A MARKET Review helps leadership teams answer six practical questions:

- **Market Reality:** Where are we relying on assumption rather than live customer evidence?
- **Audience and Buying Group:** Which decision-makers, influencers, validators or blockers are under-supported?
- **Relevance and Proposition:** Can buyers clearly explain why this matters now?
- **Knowledge, Evidence and Trust:** Which claims need stronger proof before buyers will believe them?
- **Execution Alignment:** Where are product, marketing, sales, delivery and customer success working from different versions of the truth?
- **Traction and Adoption:** What will we learn after launch, and who is accountable for acting on it?

The output should be clear enough for a leadership team to use immediately:

- the strongest areas of market confidence;
- the biggest evidence gaps;
- the most important buying group risks;
- the cross-functional alignment issues that need attention;
- the adoption and learning signals that should shape the next cycle.

If those answers are unclear, the issue is not just campaign readiness. It is market confidence.

The question is no longer simply whether your organisation can launch.

The question is whether your market confidence is strong enough to support it.

References and Section Sources

The following sources informed the evidence base for this whitepaper. They have been selected to support the paper's major themes: changing B2B buyer behaviour, buying group complexity, trust and evidence, AI-enabled GTM activity, fragmented commercial systems, product launch feedback loops, adoption, and modern GTM measurement. The appendix is designed as a practical source map rather than an academic bibliography.

Section 1: Why Go-To-Market Has Changed

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Section 2: The End of the Linear Launch

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Section 3: Buyer Behaviour Has Moved Upstream

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Source	Publisher / Author	Year
User Feedback in Continuous Software Engineering: Revealing the State-of-Practice	Anastasiia Tkalich et al. / arXiv	2024
Unveiling the Life Cycle of User Feedback: Best Practices from Software Practitioners	Ze Shi Li et al. / arXiv	2023
A Machine Learning and Empirical Bayesian Approach for Predictive Buying in B2B E-commerce	Tuhin Subhra De, Pranjal Singh, Alok Patel / arXiv	2024
Sales Channel Optimization via Simulations Based on Observational Data with Delayed Rewards: A Case Study at LinkedIn	Diana M. Negoescu et al. / arXiv	2022

Section 7: The MARKET Model

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
Gartner Sales Survey Finds 61% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Buying Experience	Gartner	2025
B2B Advertising: Joint Dynamic Scoring of Account and Users	Atanu R. Sinha et al. / arXiv	2022
Fragmented data is causing businesses huge issues, especially when it comes to AI	TechRadar, reporting HubSpot research	2025
User Feedback in Continuous Software Engineering: Revealing the State-of-Practice	Anastasiia Tkalich et al. / arXiv	2024
Human Bias in the Face of AI: The Role of Human Judgement in AI Generated Text Evaluation	Tiffany Zhu et al. / arXiv	2024

Section 8: What This Means for Functional Leaders

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
The Truth About B2B Sales And Marketing Alignment	Forrester / John Arnold	2024
The RevOps frameworks that drive growth and alignment	Highspot / Brie Tobin	2026
User Feedback in Continuous Software Engineering: Revealing the State-of-Practice	Anastasiia Tkalich et al. / arXiv	2024
Gartner Sales Survey Finds 61% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Buying Experience	Gartner	2025

Section 9: Measurement and Shared Accountability

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
Sales Research Agent and Sales Research Bench	Deepanjan Bhol / arXiv	2025
CRMarena: Understanding the Capacity of LLM Agents to Perform Professional CRM Tasks in Realistic Environments	Kung-Hsiang Huang et al. / arXiv	2024
Fragmented data is causing businesses huge issues, especially when it comes to AI	TechRadar, reporting HubSpot research	2025
VALOR: Value-Aware Revenue Uplift Modeling with Treatment-Gated Representation for B2B Sales	Vamshi Guduguntla, Kavin Soni, Debanshu Das / arXiv	2026
The RevOps frameworks that drive growth and alignment	Highspot / Brie Tobin	2026

Section 10: Barriers to Change

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
The Truth About B2B Sales And Marketing Alignment	Forrester / John Arnold	2024
Fragmented data is causing businesses huge issues, especially when it comes to AI	TechRadar, reporting HubSpot research	2025
Data Readiness for AI: A 360-Degree Survey	Kaveen Hiniduma, Suren Byna, Jean Luca Bez / arXiv	2024
Unveiling the Life Cycle of User Feedback: Best Practices from Software Practitioners	Ze Shi Li et al. / arXiv	2023
Human Bias in the Face of AI: The Role of Human Judgement in AI Generated Text Evaluation	Tiffany Zhu et al. / arXiv	2024

Section 12: Board-Level Questions for GTM Leaders

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
Gartner Sales Survey Finds 61% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Buying Experience	Gartner	2025
B2B Advertising: Joint Dynamic Scoring of Account and Users	Atanu R. Sinha et al. / arXiv	2022
Fragmented data is causing businesses huge issues, especially when it comes to AI	TechRadar, reporting HubSpot research	2025
User Feedback in Continuous Software Engineering: Revealing the State-of-Practice	Anastasiia Tkalich et al. / arXiv	2024
Sales Research Agent and Sales Research Bench	Deepanjan Bhol / arXiv	2025

Section 13: Conclusion

Source	Publisher / Author	Year
Gartner Sales Survey Finds 61% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Buying Experience	Gartner	2025
Global firms use AI at Indian hubs to bring more ad work in-house	Reuters	2026
Fragmented data is causing businesses huge issues, especially when it comes to AI	TechRadar, reporting HubSpot research	2025
User Feedback in Continuous Software Engineering: Revealing the State-of-Practice	Anastasiia Tkalich et al. / arXiv	2024