WHERE VALUE LIVES

Chapter 1 Companion Resource

VALUE RECOGNITION DIAGNOSTIC

Test what your customer actually values - and separate evidence from assumption.

"The five inches between the customer's ears is the only place where quality and value exist."

Fred Mills, Where Value Lives

Use this diagnostic with one real strategic account. The purpose is not to prove that your offer is valuable. It is to identify what the customer recognises as valuable, what evidence supports that belief, and where your account team is still relying on assumption.

Fred Mills, FCIM, MBA

1. Supplier Claims vs Customer Evidence

List the main ways your organisation says it creates value for this customer. Then force each claim through an evidence test.

What we say creates value	Evidence the customer recognises it	Who recognises it?	Evidence strength 1-5

Evidence check

• What has the customer actually said or done that demonstrates recognition of this value?

• Would the customer use the same language that we use?

• Are we confusing product features, supplier effort or internal pride with customer-recognised value?

2. The Context Test

Value changes with context. Choose up to three important sources of value and examine the circumstances that could change the customer's judgement.

Claimed source of value	When would this become MORE valuable?	When would this become LESS valuable?	What customer circumstances determine its value?

Context prompts

Consider: urgency, risk, budget pressure, timing, regulation, internal politics, strategic priorities, implementation difficulty, career consequences and competing initiatives.

What has changed recently in the customer's world?

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3. The Five-Inches Test

Rate each statement from 1 (not true) to 5 (consistently true). Be demanding.

Statement	Score 1-5
We can explain value using the customer's language rather than ours.	
We know which customer stakeholders recognise our value.	
We have evidence rather than assumptions.	
We understand what the customer is trying to achieve.	
We understand what the customer is trying to avoid.	
We know which risks influence the customer's judgement.	
We understand what would make our value increase or decrease.	
Our customer could explain our value internally without our help.	

Interpretation: Do not treat the score as a scientific benchmark. Use low-scoring statements to expose where the account team needs better customer evidence.

4. The One-Account Challenge

Complete this for one real account - preferably one important enough that weak assumptions could become expensive.

We believe they value:

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We believe this because:

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The people who recognise this are:

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The evidence is:

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What we are merely assuming is:

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The next question we need to ask the customer is:

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Final challenge

If the customer were sitting beside you, which statement in this diagnostic would you be least comfortable defending?

Your next action

Write one specific action you will take to replace an assumption with customer evidence.

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Companion resource for Chapter 1 of Where Value Lives

Fred Mills | Mills Consultancy