



# Escaping the Commodity Gap

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If a buyer can't clearly see what makes you different, they do the only rational thing: they compare you on price. Not because your price is wrong — but because you gave them nothing better to compare.

The Commodity Trap happens when your positioning becomes a category.

- “We’re a marketing agency.”
- “We do operations consulting.”
- “We help with finance.”

That’s not a position. It’s a label. And labels get compared.

To break out, you only need to fix three things:

1. The specificity of the problem you solve
2. Your point of view
3. How your sales conversation feels to buy from

## The Commodity Trap self-audit

Answer these quickly. If you hesitate, that’s the problem.

**Can a buyer tell what you do in 5 seconds?**

Yes / No

**Can they tell why you're different in 5 seconds?**

Yes / No

**Could your homepage headline be swapped with a competitor's and still make sense?**

Yes / No

**Do your proposals look structurally identical to competitors' proposals?**

Yes / No

**Do you win deals mainly when you're the cheapest option?**

Yes / No

If you answered "Yes" to any of the middle three, you're being commoditised even if your service is excellent.

## Shift 1: Get painfully specific about the problem you solve

Most businesses describe what they do. Winning businesses describe the specific problem they solve better than anyone else.

**Category:**

"We're a fractional COO."

**Position:**

"We install a weekly operating cadence that stops delivery chaos and frees 10+ hours a week for the owner within 30 days."

**Use this framework:**

We help [specific customer] who are stuck with [specific problem] achieve [specific outcome] by [specific mechanism] within [timeframe].

**Fill yours in:**

We help \_\_\_\_\_ who are stuck with \_\_\_\_\_ achieve \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ within \_\_\_\_\_.

**Now tighten the "problem" until it's undeniable. You're aiming for:**

A buyer reads it and thinks: "That's exactly what's happening to me."

**Problem specificity checklist:**

- It describes a real situation, not a vague desire
- It includes a measurable outcome or observable change
- It excludes people who aren't a fit
- It makes comparison difficult because it's precise

## Shift 2: Create a clear point of view

If you agree with everyone else in your space about how the work should be done, you'll sound like everyone else. And you'll get priced like everyone else.

**A point of view is a simple belief:**

What most people think is true: \_\_\_\_\_

What you believe instead: \_\_\_\_\_

Why the conventional approach fails: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do instead: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use these starters:**

Most people try \_\_\_\_\_, but it fails because \_\_\_\_\_.

The real lever is \_\_\_\_\_.

If you do \_\_\_\_\_ first, everything else gets easier.

Your POV doesn't need to be controversial. It just needs to be yours, and it needs to change how the buyer thinks.

**A good POV does two things:**

- It attracts the right buyers because they agree with you
- It repels the wrong buyers, which protects your time and margins

### Shift 3: Make your sales process feel different to buy from

Two businesses can offer the same service at the same price and one still wins because the buying experience signals competence.

Most service business owners wing sales. That makes buyers feel uncertainty. Uncertainty creates price-shopping.

Your goal is to lead the buyer through a clear journey.

Install this 5-part sales structure:

1. **Set the frame**  
“This call is to see if we can help. If it's not a fit, I'll tell you quickly.”
2. **Diagnose the real problem**  
“What's happening now?”  
“What's it costing you in time, money, stress?”  
“What have you tried?”
3. **Establish decision criteria**  
“When you choose a partner for this, what matters most?”  
“What does 'a win' look like?”
4. **Introduce your POV**  
“Most people do X. Here's why it fails. Here's what works instead.”
5. **Offer a clear next step**  
A decision call, a diagnostic, or a start plan — not “I'll send a proposal and see what you think.”

**Make the buyer feel:**

“This is structured. These people have done this before. They'll lead me.”

## Rewrite your positioning in 10 minutes

**Take your current homepage headline and rewrite it using this format:**

We help [ICP] solve [specific problem] so they can [specific outcome], without [common frustration].

**Fill it in:**

We help \_\_\_\_\_ solve \_\_\_\_\_ so they can \_\_\_\_\_,  
without \_\_\_\_\_.

**Now add a “not for” line to force differentiation:**

This is not for \_\_\_\_\_.

It's for \_\_\_\_\_.