

Whitepaper insights from our webinar:

Breaking Silos. Winning Customers.

Yvonne Tindemans (Global Marketing & Digital Director) and **Ramon Kok** (International B2B Executive | Commercial Transformation Leader) give insights on *how to strengthen collaboration between Sales and Marketing and accelerate new customer growth.*

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FOREWORD



Ramon Kok, Gerben Willemsen

and Yvonne Tindemans

- Speakers at the Webinar -

In our recent webinar "**Breaking Silos. Winning Customers.**" Vesper Commercial Excellence and seasoned experts Yvonne Tindemans, and Ramon Kok shared practical insights on aligning Sales and Marketing to drive new customer acquisition.

The webinar revealed a clear pattern: most companies don't struggle because they lack effort or ambition, but because their commercial engine lacks alignment, focus, and systematic execution. Silos between functions, misaligned incentives, inconsistent processes, and overly complex tools create friction that undermines even the best growth strategies.

Gerben Willemsen, Managing Partner Vesper Commercial Excellence: *"New customer acquisition is not about more effort, it's about building an integrated system that turns investments into predictable growth."*

Yvonne Tindemans, Global Marketing and Digital Director: *"Without a clear strategic foundation, even the best execution wastes effort on the wrong opportunities."*

Ramon Kok, International B2B Executive and Commercial Transformation Leader: *"Culture and governance determine if your plans become reality; alignment, cadence, and accountability are non-negotiable."*

This whitepaper distills the webinar's key insights into a comprehensive framework for building a predictable new customer acquisition system. It addresses the five most common barriers commercial organizations face and provides a structured approach, complete with a maturity model, to help companies move from fragmented activity to scalable growth.

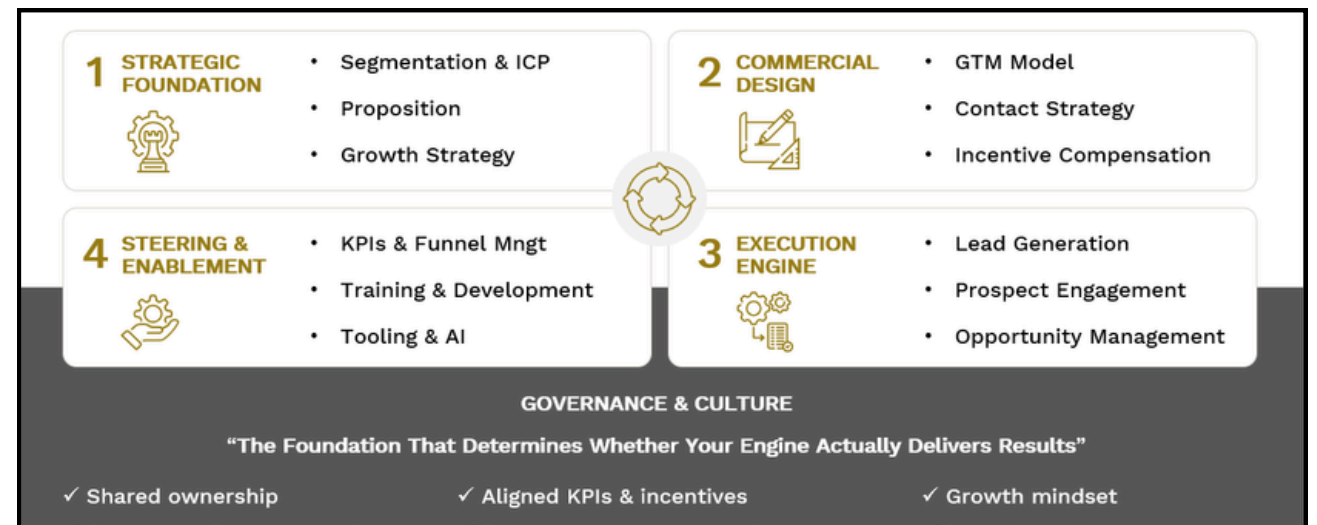
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today’s competitive B2B landscape, acquiring new customers is both more difficult and more important than ever. Despite significant investment in lead generation, sales training, and marketing technology, many companies still see inconsistent results. The issue is rarely effort, it’s a lack of alignment.

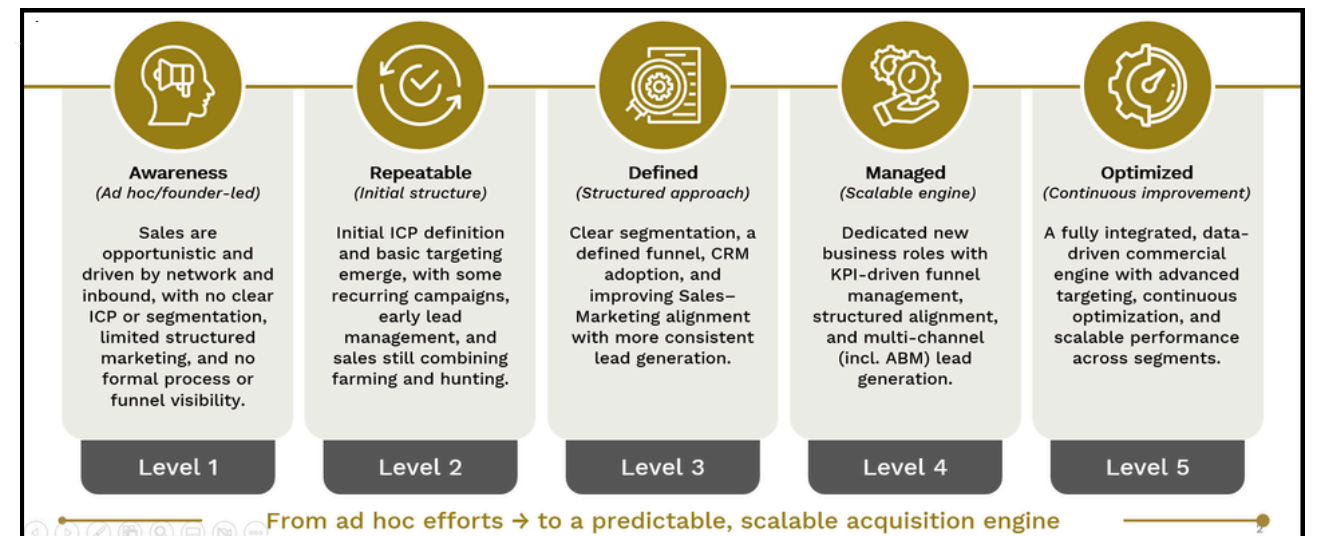
This whitepaper highlights five key challenges that hinder new business performance:

1. **Siloed ways of working:** Sales and Marketing optimize for different outcomes, creating fragmented customer experiences .
2. **KPI and measurement misalignment:** Teams measure success differently, making collaboration difficult and priorities unclear.
3. **Targeting and segmentation issues:** Companies either chase too broad an audience or lack clear criteria for prioritizing the best opportunities.
4. **Lead quality, definition, and follow-up:** Leads enter the funnel without consistent qualification, and follow-up varies by individual.
5. **Data and insights ineffectively used:** Organizations have information but fail to create a single source of truth or to use it systematically.

To address these challenges, Vesper introduces **the New Business System**, a comprehensive framework built around five interconnected dimensions.



The paper also presents a **New Business Maturity Model** with five progressive stages. This model helps organizations assess their current state and identify practical next steps without over-engineering their commercial setup.



The key insight is simple but powerful: *Sustainable new customer growth doesn't come from isolated initiatives or expensive technology. It comes from building a commercial system where every part reinforces the others, creating compounding improvements over time.*

1

INTRODUCTION TO NEW CUSTOMER ACQUISITION

New customer acquisition sits at the heart of commercial success. It determines whether a company can expand its revenue and client base, enter new markets, and realize sustainable growth. Yet despite its importance, many organizations treat it as a collection of disconnected activities rather than a coordinated commercial system.

Consider what typically happens. Marketing launches campaigns to generate leads. Sales follows up on some of them, prioritizing based on individual judgment. Opportunities move through the pipeline at different speeds, with varying levels of qualification. Leadership reviews monthly results and wonders why growth isn't more predictable. This fragmented approach creates a funnel that looks busy but delivers inconsistent outcomes.

The webinar made a critical observation: **companies don't struggle because they lack ambition or effort. They struggle because their commercial engine lacks systematic alignment.** When Sales and Marketing work toward different definitions of success, when processes vary by individual, and when data exists in silos, even strong market opportunities get lost in the gaps.

Effective new customer acquisition requires treating it as a shared commercial objective. This means Sales, Marketing, Service teams, Pricing, Digital, and even Supply Chain functions must coordinate around the same growth priorities. It also means recognizing that acquisition isn't just about "more leads", it's about the right leads, handled consistently, converting into revenue at predictable rates.

This systemic perspective separates high-performing acquisition engines from average ones. The most successful companies don't just work harder. They work smarter together, with clear roles, shared metrics, and processes that compound small daily improvements into significant growth over time



2

THE NEW “VESPER” BUSINESS SYSTEM

At the core of effective new customer acquisition lies an integrated system that translates commercial investments into predictable growth. This system consists of four interconnected building blocks:

1. Strategic Foundation

Defines where and how the organization will compete.

2. Commercial Design

Shapes how the organization is structured and incentivized to execute.

3. Execution Engine

Drives day-to-day commercial activities that convert opportunities into revenue.

4. Steering & Enablement

Ensures continuous performance management, capability development, and optimization.



Across these four elements lies a critical enabler: **Governance & Culture**; Which is the foundation that determines whether the system delivers results in practice.

2.1

GOVERNANCE & CULTURE: THE FOUNDATION

Effective new customer acquisition begins not with tactics or tools, but with the foundational layer of governance and culture. As Peter Drucker famously observed, "*Culture eats strategy for breakfast*," underscoring that even the most brilliant plans falter without the right organizational mindset and structure. Similarly, Tom Peters' saying, "*What gets measured gets done*," highlights the need for disciplined measurement, while Tom DeMarco reminds us that a team's true purpose is "*goal alignment*," not mere attainment. In practice, this foundation dictates **whether your company can execute at all**. Without it, fragmentation and sub-optimization undermine every effort.



The Core Problem: Silos and Fragmentation

Across organizations, Sales and Marketing often operate in silos, each pursuing domain-specific goals: marketing optimizes for long term vision, leads and campaigns, sales for short-term deals, supply chain for efficiency, pricing for margins, and e-commerce for conversions. This leads to conflicting priorities where no one owns the end-to-end process of new customer acquisition. The result? Wasted effort, inconsistent outcomes, and missed opportunities. Webinar participants confirmed this as the top challenge, with siloed ways of working preventing true acceleration.

Ramon Kok, with over 30 years in B2B leadership, emphasized that new acquisition must be a systematically shared and owned objective. It cannot be confined to Sales or Marketing. Key stakeholders like Customer Service, Operations and Supply Chain must align on the same "dot on the horizon."

Essential Elements of Strong Governance

To build this foundation, organizations need three interlocking elements:

Execution = Alignment × Cadence × Accountability.

ALIGNMENT

Everyone, from C-suite to front-line, must share consistent objectives and KPIs. Start with unified definitions: What qualifies as a "new customer"? (e.g., first order >€10k, excluding reactivations.) Connect the dots via reliable data and reporting, ensuring all domains pull from one source of truth.

CADENCE

Establish rhythms across time horizons: annual strategy setting, quarterly tactical adjustments, monthly reviews, and weekly alignments to address daily customer experiences. This keeps momentum without overwhelming teams.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Cascade goals using methodologies like OKRs (Objectives and Key Results), translating high-level targets into departmental and personal metrics. Link 20-40% of incentives to shared outcomes, such as pipeline quality or CLV, not just volume.

Data is the glue: Without it, debates erode trust. Invest in architecture that supports real-time insights, even if starting simple.

Dos and Don'ts for Implementation

Practical steps make the difference, here's what works, drawn from Vesper client experiences:

Do's 	 Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instill a true culture of alignment and collaboration• Set a clear set of objectives across all levels and starting at the top (OKR)• Implement a solid performance management process and shared KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treat it as an operational topic• Allow silos to persist with their own interpretations• Underestimate the power of a solid data framework

2.2

STRATEGIC FOUNDATION: FOCUS TO WIN

With governance and culture in place, the strategic foundation becomes the starting point for predictable growth. This pillar defines **who enters your pipeline, whether you can win, and how efficiently you grow**, yet it's often the weakest link, leading to full pipelines that don't convert. As Yvonne Tindemans noted in the webinar, *"A strategy on paper means little without consistent choices in execution"*. Without focus, efforts scatter across low-fit opportunities, optimizing for volume over revenue.



The Core Problem: Lack of Focus and Alignment

Many organizations claim strategic alignment: Sales and Marketing "agree" on sectors/personas, but reality diverges: Marketing activities and campaigns are too generic and lack a clear audience, Sales chases "million-euro RFPs" far outside the ICP (Ideal Customer Profile).

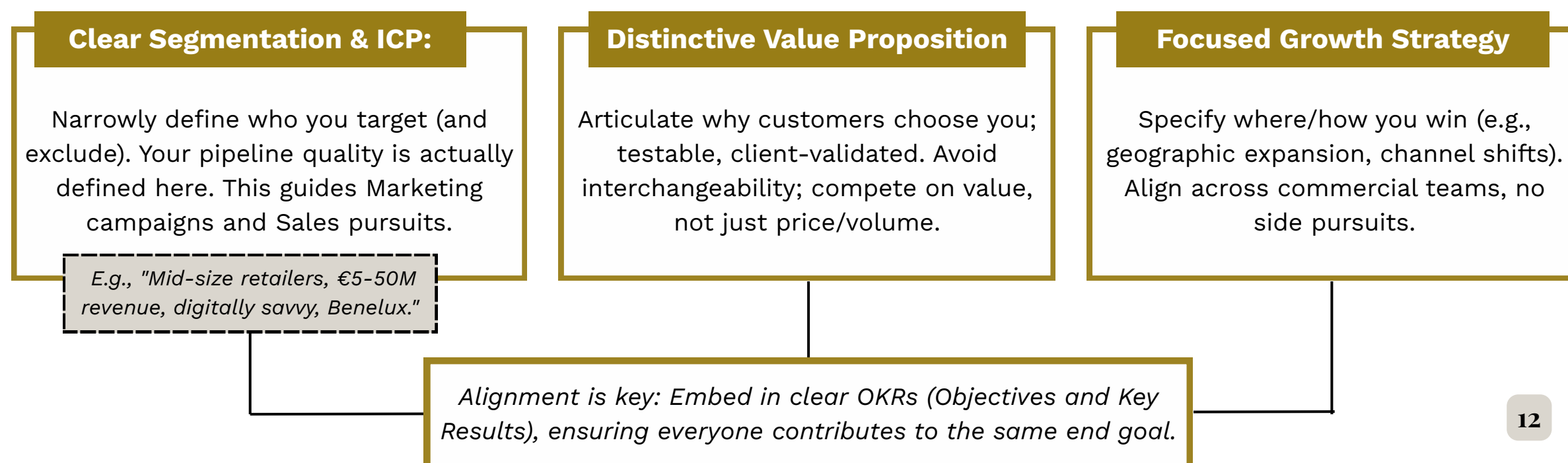
Weak foundations manifest as:

- *Pipeline mismatches*: Leads look plentiful but convert poorly.
- *Wrong metrics*: Lead volume trumps conversion/revenue.
- *Misdirected effort*: Time wasted on non-ideal customer segments.

Gerben Willemsen highlighted a simple test: ask 5-10 of your team members to describe your ICP and proposition. If you get varied answers, then your foundation needs work.



Essential Components of a Sharp Foundation

Vesper's strategic foundation centers three aligned elements, reviewed annually with quarterly tweaks:



Dos and Don'ts for Building Focus

From webinar insights and Vesper client implementations:

Do's 	 Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fix the foundation, before scaling execution.• Define a narrow and clear ICP• Build a distinctive proposition & test with clients• Make explicit choices• Alignment on choices within commercial team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let sales and marketing target different audiences• Use generic messaging• Confuse activity with strategy• Optimise for volume instead of quality

2.3

COMMERCIAL DESIGN: ORGANIZE TO SCALE

A robust strategic foundation demands matching commercial design; **how you structure roles, incentives, and go-to-market (GTM) to operationalize focus.** Without it, strategy remains theoretical; design choices dictate daily behavior.

"Silos optimize domains; design must optimize the whole."

- Ramon Kok, International B2B Executive and Commercial Transformation Leader



The Core Problem: Misaligned Structures and Incentives

Historically, functions pull apart: Marketing fixates on leads/campaigns, Sales on deals, others on silos like margin optimization or conversion. Revenue targets alone don't fix this, so interpretations vary. Remuneration often rewards volume, ignoring CLV (Customer Lifetime Value)/profitability. Endless debates rage: Hunters or farmers? One CCO or separate CSO/CMO? These discussions overcomplicate without the right context.

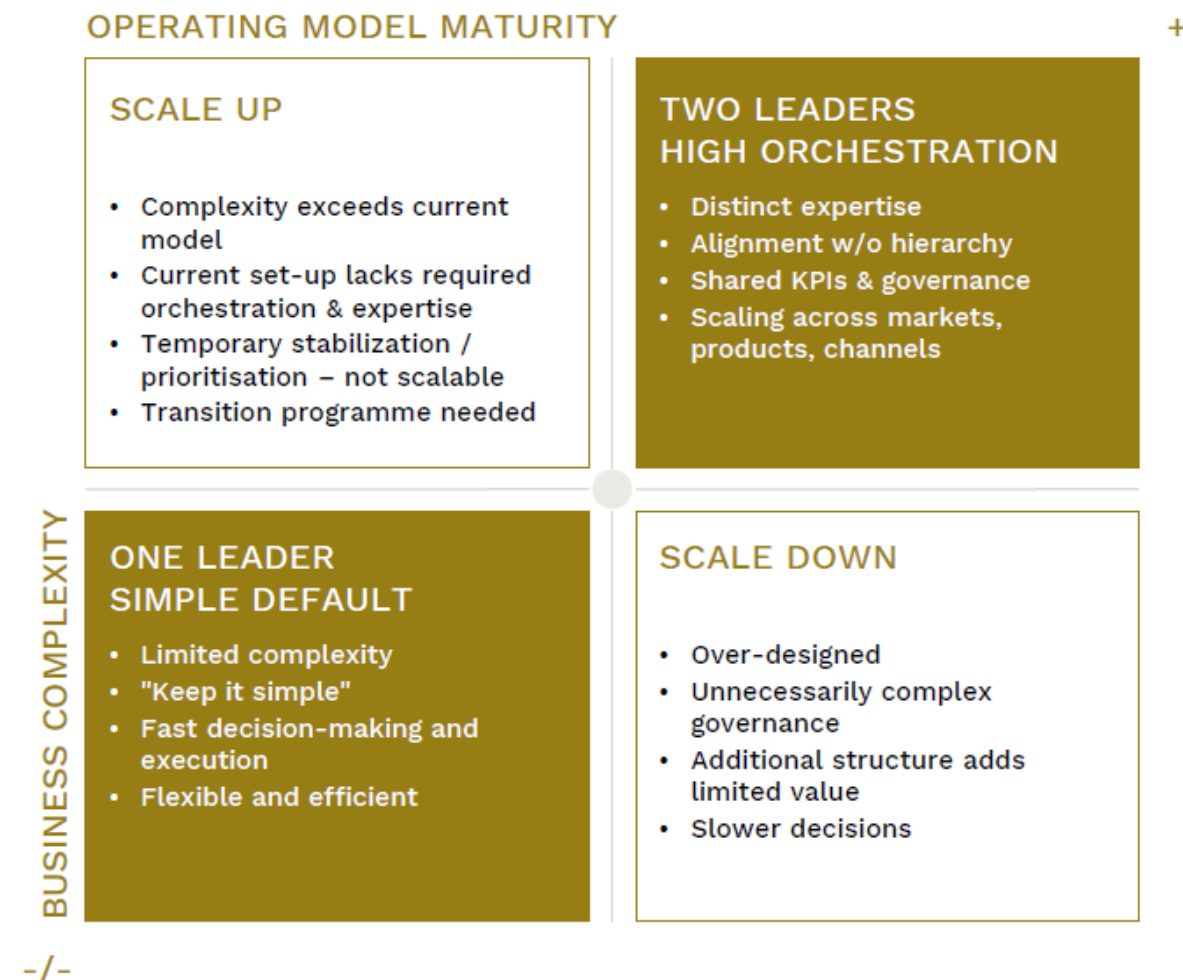
Key Design Decisions

Vesper guides clients with pragmatic choices:

1. **GTM Model & Organization:**

The right go-to-market (GTM) model depends on balancing business complexity with operating model maturity. Complexity is driven by factors such as products, customer segments, channels, sales motions, and geographical spread, while maturity depends on clear roles, shared KPIs, governance, and cross-functional coordination.

Organizations with limited complexity often benefit from a single commercial leader for speed and simplicity. As complexity increases, a setup with specialized leaders (e.g., CSO/CCO and CMO) supported by strong orchestration becomes more effective. The goal is to avoid both under-organization and excessive governance that slows execution.



2. **Hunter vs. Farmer Split:**

The decision to separate hunting and farming roles depends on where growth is expected to come from and how complex that growth is to achieve. Organizations should assess whether growth is driven by new customers, existing accounts, or geographical expansion, while considering customer complexity, buying processes, and commercial motions.

When new customer acquisition is a strategic priority or requires dedicated focus, hunting should not be treated as a secondary responsibility. Dedicated hunting capabilities are often needed to ensure focus, specialization, and scalable growth.

THE BROADER THE MARKET, THE MORE YOU NEED TO FOCUS.
THE MORE COMPLEX THE CUSTOMER, THE MORE YOU NEED TO SPECIALISE.

3. **Contact Strategy & Incentives:**

An effective commercial model requires a coordinated contact strategy across customer segments and buying stages, including clear choices on channels, touchpoints, sequencing, and frequency. Activities such as e-commerce, lead generation, ABM, customer marketing, and events should operate as one integrated commercial approach.

Sales and marketing alignment should be reinforced through shared KPIs, coordinated incentives, and clear governance. While incentive structures may differ by role, the underlying methodology and performance logic should remain aligned. Consistent data and shared views across the commercial cycle are essential to support collaboration and performance management.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is rapidly redefining competitive advantage, with direct implications. Companies must become AI-ready by strengthening transactional data, integrating ESG into decision-making, and adopting more dynamic, data-driven pricing. Competitive advantage will depend on developing “killer” products and choosing whether to build platforms or partner within ecosystems to scale.

Real-Life Example



Effective commercial design aligns customer segmentation with go-to-market execution. Customers typically fall into three groups. First, **Star customers** are high-value strategic accounts with deep relationships and significant growth potential. Second, **Evolving customers** have partial share-of-wallet but can be developed into strategic accounts through targeted expansion. Third, **Incidental customers** are transactional or low-value accounts managed primarily for efficiency and scalability.

For example, a fictional €500M B2B wholesaler found that its sales teams were spending nearly equal time on small transactional customers and high-potential strategic accounts. After redesigning its commercial model, the company introduced dedicated account managers for Star customers, focused growth plans for Evolving accounts, and shifted smaller Incidental customers toward inside sales and digital channels. Within 12 months, revenue from strategic accounts grew by 25%, sales teams reduced time spent on low-value activities, and pipeline predictability improved significantly.



Dos and Don'ts for Effective Design

* NCA = New Customer Acquisition

Do's 	 Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map/gap your NCA needs with your capabilities• Orchestrate your organisational set-up, expertise, focus and governance around your specific context• Be very clear in shared and interdependent objectives, performance measurement and incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Underestimate complexity of your business environment vs required capabilities – including ESG & AI• Accept non-granularity of your growth drivers• Ignore to what extent New Customer Acquisition requires a dedicated approach

2.4

EXECUTION ENGINE: CONSISTENT PROCESSES

The execution engine powers daily delivery, **where strategy and design meet reality through lead generation, prospect engagement, and opportunity management.** Inconsistency kills here: Same leads get varying follow-up; deals progress without qualification, making pipelines unpredictable.



The Core Problem: Ad-Hoc Execution

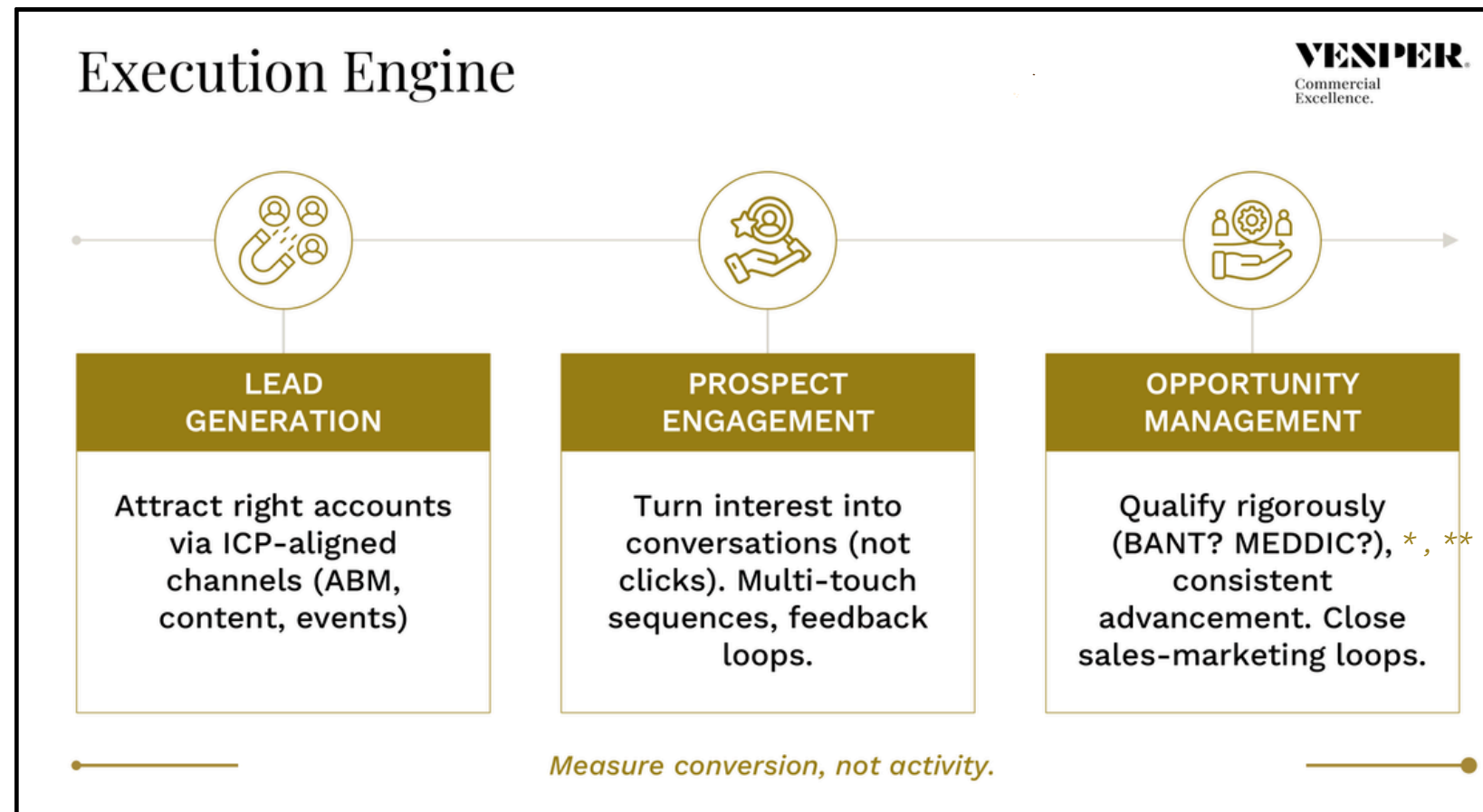
Execution breaks because a lack of consistency (*same strategy, different execution*):

- Leads handled differently (timings, sequences).
- Deals progress without a consistent approach (process)
- Outcomes depend on individual effort, not on a system
- What marketing promises doesn't match the sales conversation

Result: Same leads. Different follow-up. Different results.

Key Processes in the Engine

Standardize across three engines:





* **BANT**: A classic qualification framework focusing on Budget, Authority, Need, and Timeline.

** **MEDDIC**: A deeper enterprise qualification framework focusing on Metrics, Economic Buyer, Decision Criteria, Decision Process, Identify Pain, and Champion.

Dos and Don'ts for Predictable Execution

Practical steps make the difference, here's what works, drawn from Vesper client experience:

Do's 	 Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow up every leads in the same way and timeframe• Agree on what qualifies as a real opportunity• Handle similar situations in the same way• Close the loop: feedback from sales → marketing → CS• Measure conversion, not just activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let each salesperson decide their own follow-up• Move leads into pipeline without qualification• Change your message throughout the funnel• Optimise for activity instead of conversion

2.5

STEERING & ENABLEMENT: MEASURE AND MOBILIZE

Steering and enablement close the loop, turning the prior pillars into high performance through KPIs, rhythms, training, tooling, and AI.

As Ramon Kok puts it: *"Solidify what you have. Tools enable, but humans and cadence deliver."*



The Core Problem: Over-Reliance on Tools, Under-Delivery on Rhythms

Many organizations invest heavily in AI, CRM systems, and training programs while overlooking the fundamentals needed to make them effective. Without aligned data, shared insights, clear KPIs, and consistent performance management, commercial success often depends on individual effort rather than scalable systems, leading to inconsistent execution and unpredictable pipeline performance.





Key Convictions and Components

Vesper's approach: Practical, scalable enablers:

Enabling & Steering



VENPER
Commercial Excellence.

Key convictions

<p>Walk before you can run </p> <p>Solidify what you already have</p> <p>Tools are great – but they are not THE solution in itself</p> <p>Building "one single truth" is key > enable recording and dispersing the data that you have and need</p> <p>Create a data drivenness culture > the "5 Why's"</p>	<p>Mobilise Business Intelligence </p> <p>This can be a smart "wizz kid"/young talent</p> <p>Excel is also a tool – doesn't need to be "fancy" at first</p> <p>SFA / CRM can help for sure but...</p> <p>Your challenge is not unique: use what's available and don't customise</p>	<p>Test & Learn </p> <p>Identify where AI can support you – you need to embed AI skills</p> <p>Encourage everyone to experiment – but safely!</p> <p>Pilot apps or tools that can potentially benefit you at a larger scale</p>	<p>Build the right teams </p> <p>Right skills, competencies, passion and attitude</p> <p>Rally teams around the same mission, goals and targets</p> <p>Encourage failure; encourage success even more</p>	<p>Performance management </p> <p>Clear weekly/monthly/quarterly/annual cadence</p> <p>Methodologies can help (OKR)</p> <p>Speak the same language – one single truth</p>
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Dos and Don'ts for High Performance

Practical steps make the difference, here's what works, drawn from Vesper client experience:

Do's 	 Don't's
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up a permanent test and learn cycle• Facilitate and encourage people to become data driven and to sound-board• Celebrate successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create new things while not optimising and reinforcing what you have• Over-estimate what "tools" can do by themselves• Forget most understanding of your business comes from human analysis and dialogue

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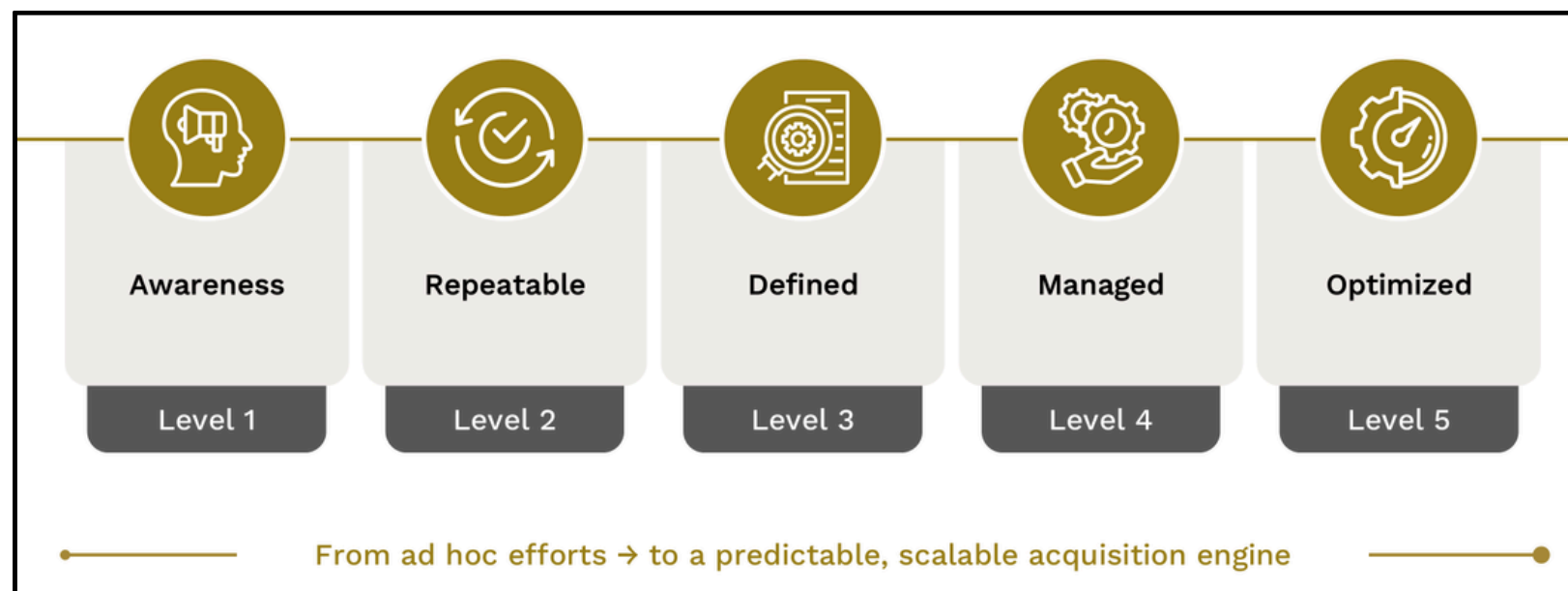
NEW BUSINESS MATURITY MODEL: FROM AD HOC TO OPTIMIZED

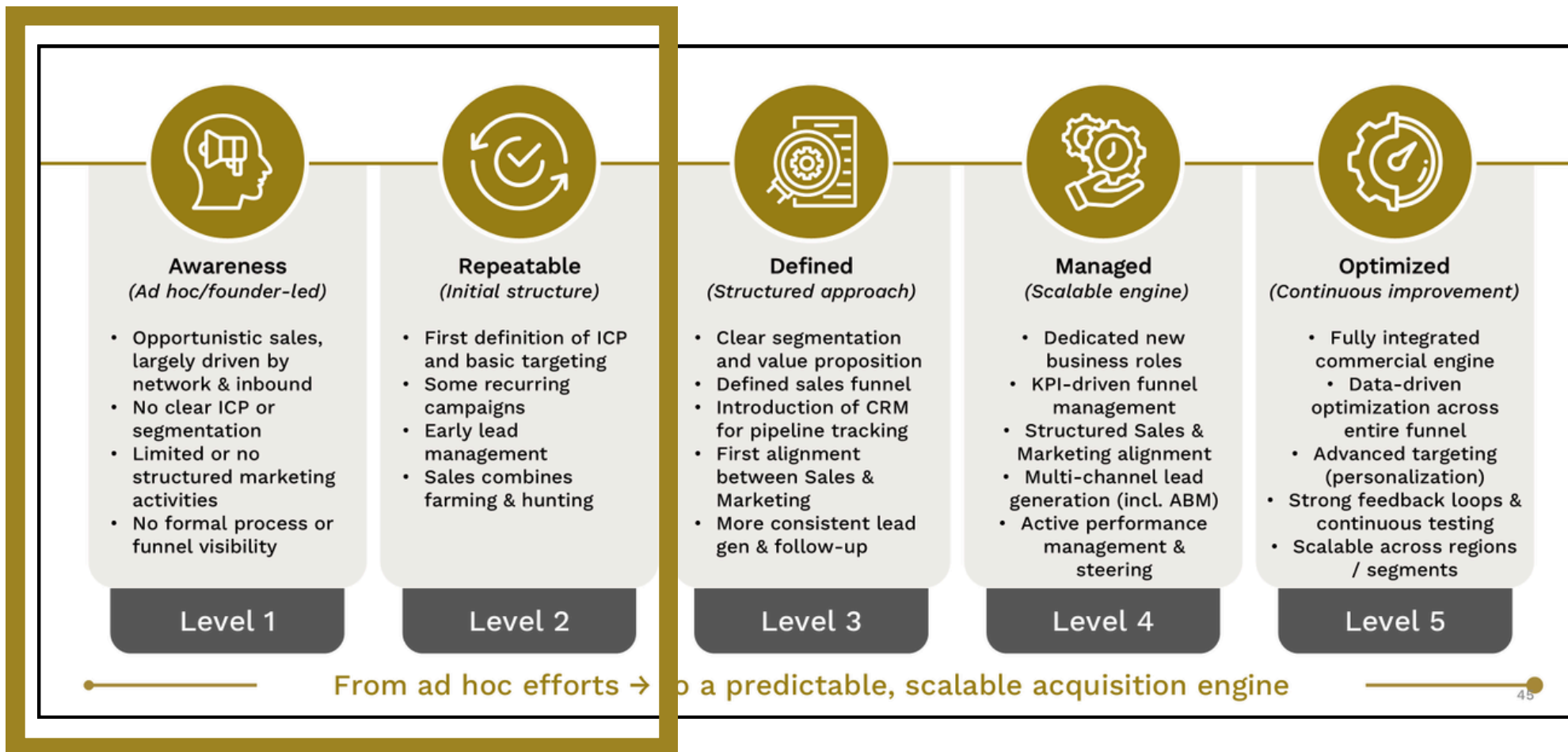
Transforming new customer acquisition requires a clear path; **Vesper's New Business Maturity Model outlines five progressive levels from fragmented efforts to a scalable, predictable engine.** Modeled after proven frameworks, it helps leaders diagnose the current state, prioritize gaps, and develop a roadmap for improvements and improved returns. Most B2B organizations operate at Level 2 (Repeatable) or 3 (Defined), where quick wins, like ICP discipline or KPI rhythms, can double pipeline quality.

Purpose and Value

This model isn't theoretical; it's a diagnostic tool rooted in Vesper's client transformations. It helps organizations assess their maturity across key commercial pillars, identify gaps, and prioritize improvement areas with the greatest impact. As maturity increases, organizations typically move from stabilizing performance and reducing inefficiencies to improving conversion, scalability, and commercial effectiveness. Regular reassessment also supports continuous progress and alignment with strategic priorities and OKRs.

The Maturity Levels:



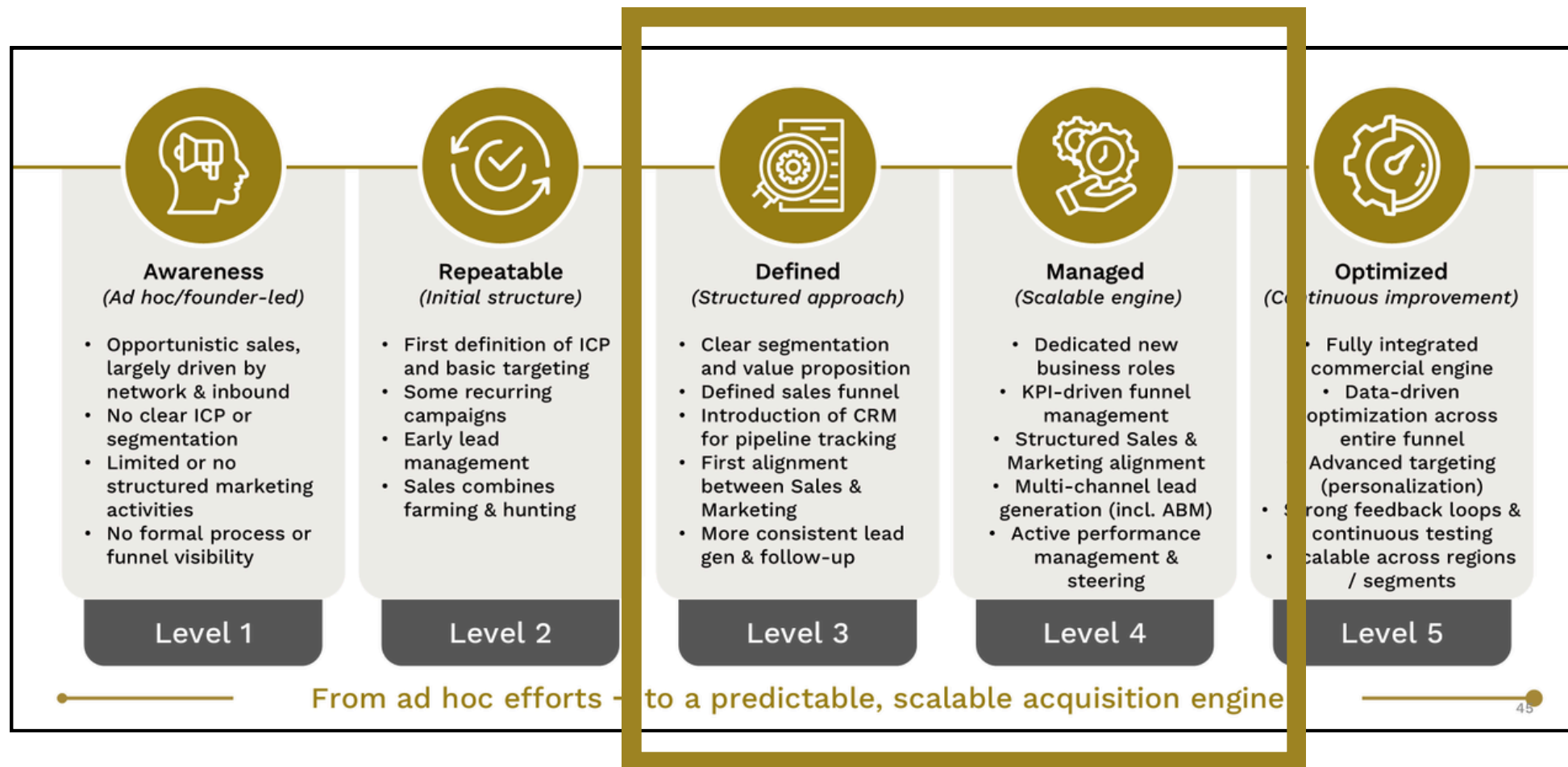


Level 1: Awareness (Ad hoc / founder-led)

- Characteristics: Opportunistic sales driven by personal networks and inbound inquiries. No formal ideal customer profile or segmentation. Limited or no structured marketing activity. No pipeline visibility or formal process.
- Typical profile: Companies below €25M revenue, fewer than 50 employees.
- Success metric: Landing first 10 referenceable customers.
- Tooling: Personal spreadsheets and email.

Level 2: Repeatable (Initial structure)

- New capabilities: First ideal customer profile definition with basic targeting. Recurring marketing campaigns (email, LinkedIn). Early lead management discipline using Excel. Sales teams handle both hunting and farming.
- Quick wins: 5-12% revenue uplift from basic consistency.
- Success metric: First repeatable campaign-to-close process.
- Tooling: Google Sheets + simple CRM (Pipedrive, HubSpot Free).

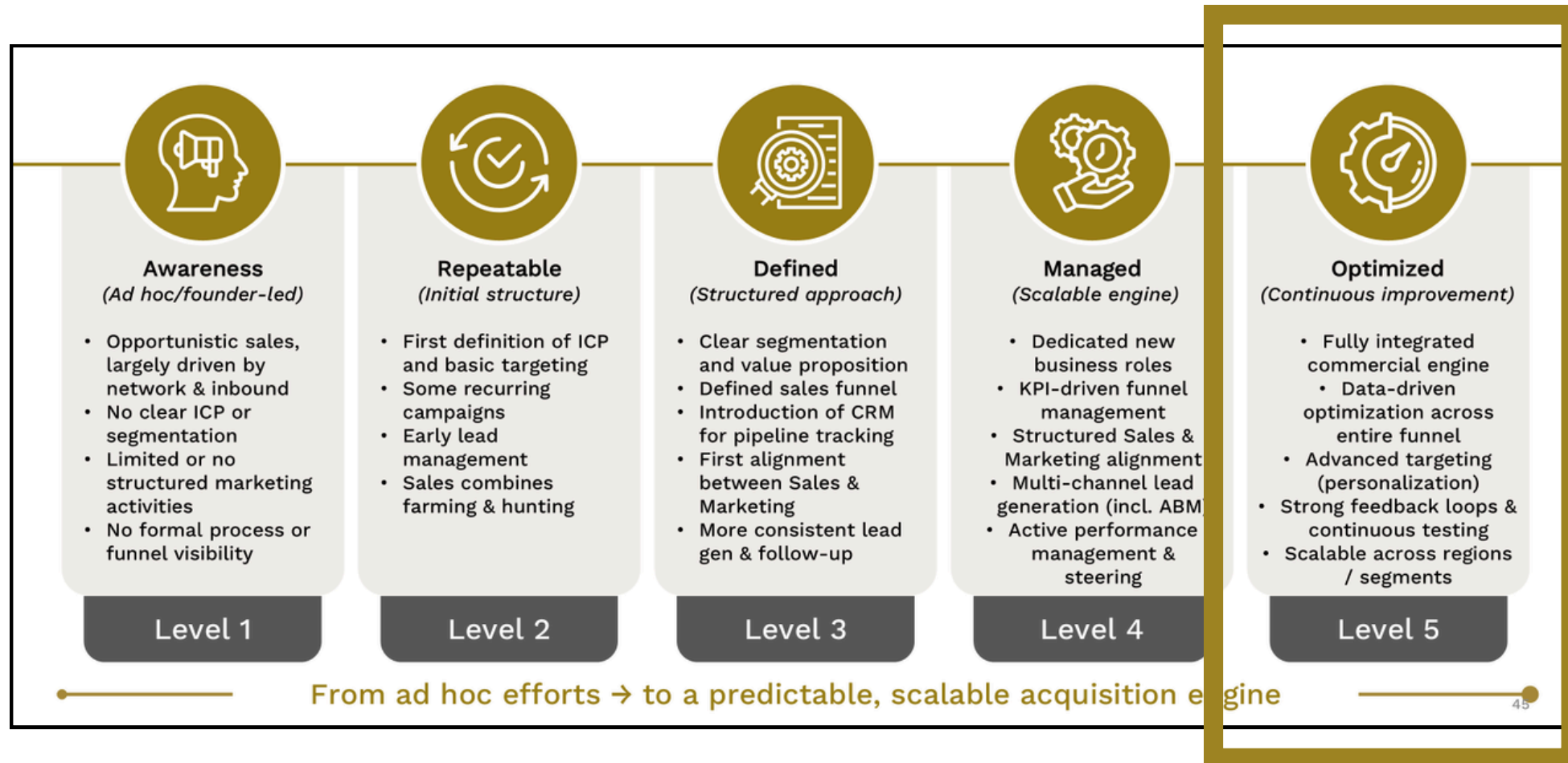


Level 3: Defined (Structured approach)

- New capabilities: Clear customer segmentation and differentiated value proposition. Defined sales funnel with stage-gate criteria. CRM implementation for pipeline visibility. Initial marketing-sales alignment on lead definitions.
- Infrastructure: Full CRM + basic marketing automation.
- Success metric: Pipeline predictability doubles through process discipline.

Level 4: Managed (Scalable engine)

- New capabilities: Dedicated new business development roles (hunters). KPI-driven funnel management across functions. Multi-channel lead generation including account-based marketing. Active weekly performance steering rhythms.
- Results: 15-25% new logo revenue growth becomes achievable.
- Success metric: Cross-market coordination with consistent conversion rates.



Level 5: Optimized (Continuous improvement)

- Marker capabilities: Fully integrated commercial engine across regions. Data-driven hyper-personalization at scale. Strong closed-loop feedback systems. AI-enabled prediction and orchestration.
- Outcome: Market share gains through predictable commercial scaling.

Real-World Application and Impact

Organizations systematically boost commercial performance by strengthening their underlying systems, driving measurable gains in efficiency, conversion, predictability, and scalability. For instance, a €1B wholesaler advanced from Level 2 to Level 4 maturity in 12 months by implementing shared governance, aligned OKRs, and a focused ICP, yielding a 40% increase in new revenue and a 50% improvement in forecast predictability. While early-stage companies secure quick wins through KPI management and regular commercial cadences, mature enterprises accelerate growth through specialized hunting, funnel optimization, and data-driven execution

4

CLOSING

New customer acquisition is not a Sales problem, a Marketing problem, or even a commercial leadership problem. It is a system problem that requires alignment across the entire organization. When governance, strategy, design, execution, and enablers work together, growth becomes more predictable and less dependent on individual heroics.

The New Business System and maturity model provide a practical roadmap for any organization ready to strengthen its acquisition engine. Start by assessing where you are today, then build the foundations that matter most for your current stage. Over time, those disciplined steps compound into a commercial capability that drives sustainable revenue growth.

Vesper Commercial Excellence helps organizations navigate this journey with tailored assessments, strategy development, and implementation support. The insights in this whitepaper are a starting point. The real transformation happens when companies apply them with focus and persistence.



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