

Know your customers before you invest in growth

BY CHRIS C. WELCH ■ 3 OCTOBER 2026 ■ 2 MIN READ ■ CHRIS@CHRISWELCH-GTM.COM

Before investing in a new website, more outreach or a bigger sales effort, I want to understand who the business can help and why those customers would choose it.

An Ideal Customer Profile, or ICP, describes a good customer fit. Segmentation groups customers whose needs or buying decisions differ. Both help us decide where to focus and what each group needs to hear.

01

Start with the outcome you want

Growth means different things to different owners. You might want more repeat business, better margins or less dependence on your own involvement. You may be building towards a future sale or a change in how you spend your time.

We work backwards from that goal. The customers you pursue should help you build the business you want to run.

Then we ask whether the value works for the customer too. What problem do you solve? What matters to them? Can you deliver it on terms that work for both sides? If they are buying for someone else, that person's experience belongs in the discussion as well.

02

Bring together what you already know

Much of the starting information is already in the business. I look at:

- Customers who return, those you lost and work that proved difficult.
- What buyers ask, who makes the decision and why they choose you.
- The time, cost and capacity needed to deliver well.

- The alternatives customers consider and how they find suppliers.
- The owner's priorities and work the business wants to avoid.

A questionnaire and conversations help fill the gaps. We bring the information together, examine where it disagrees and decide which questions need checking.

The owner's ambition, today's capabilities and evidence from customers may tell different stories. Those differences help us see what needs to change or be tested.

03

Use the same understanding everywhere

These early choices shape your message, website, target list and sales conversations. They also shape which enquiries you pursue and what your team prepares to deliver.

That is why I begin with the foundations. A mistaken assumption about your customer can travel through everything built on top of it.

The useful result is a shared view of who fits, why they fit, what matters to them and what we still need to learn. From there, we can agree the priorities and put them into a practical plan.

We start with enough information to act, then improve that understanding through real conversations. The foundation stays useful because it stays connected to the customer.

Discuss the business you want to build.