CRITICAL STANDARD | Why Critical Standard vs. a Traditional Marketing Agency

For growth-stage companies between $15M and $50M in revenue.

Most growing companies have worked with an agency. Many have been disappointed. This document explains how the Critical Standard model is structurally different - and why that difference produces better, lasting outcomes.

	Typical marketing agency Activity-based. External.	Critical Standard Outcome-based. Embedded.
Engagement model		
Role in your business	External vendor, assigned deliverables, works outside your org.	**Embedded partner. Works inside your business alongside your team.**
Capacity for your account	One of dozens of clients. Attention shifts to larger accounts.	**A small number of clients at a time. Your business gets real focus.**
Who does the work	Account manager up front, specialists behind the scenes.	**Senior strategists work directly on your account from day one.**
Contract model	Monthly retainer for ongoing services, often auto-renewing.	**Engagement starts at $20,000 with a defined scope and deliverable.**
Strategy and outputs		
What they deliver	Campaigns, content, ads, and reports - activity-based outputs.	**A documented growth strategy and action plan your team can run.**
Who owns the strategy	The agency. It lives in their systems and leaves when you do.	**You. The plan is built to be executed by your internal team.**
Your existing team	Often runs parallel to or competitive with internal marketing staff.	**Built around your team. We strengthen what you already have.**
Sales involvement	Minimal. Most agencies do not engage with sales directly.	**Central. Sales and marketing alignment is a core deliverable.**
Measurement and accountability		
How success is defined	Impressions, clicks, engagement rates, and MQL volume.	**Pipeline, closed-won revenue, and lead-to-deal conversion rate.**
Attribution	Often self-reported. The agency measures its own performance.	**Independent audit of your full data. We find and fix the gaps.**
Reporting	Monthly PDF decks showing campaign-level activity.	**A live dashboard both sales and marketing trust and use.**
Accountability	Scope-based. Deliverables produced = contract fulfilled.	**Outcome-based. We are accountable to the revenue metrics.**
Fit for companies between $15M and $50M		

 Engagements start at $20,000. Misalignment costs multiples of that every quarter.

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What improves permanently	Replaces internal capability rather than building it.	**Develops your team so the improvement outlasts the engagement.**
End of engagement	Strategy and knowledge leave with them when the retainer ends.	**You receive a documented plan, trained team, clean reporting.**
Best suited for	Companies needing production volume or channel execution.	**Companies needing clarity on what is broken and a plan to fix it.**

Agencies are built to produce work. Critical Standard is built to produce results.

Gartner and Forrester research finds that sales and marketing misalignment costs B2B companies 10-38% of annual revenue per year. For a $25M company, that is up to $9.5M leaving the table every year. If no one in your organization can clearly explain which marketing activity drove last quarter's closed business, that is where we start.

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