**DSOUS**

AUTHORITY · INTELLIGENCE · INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL AUTHORITY DIAGNOSTIC™

# Illustrative Executive *Report.*

A structured assessment of where commercial authority is strong, absent or misaligned — and a clear, prioritised plan to close the gap between demonstrated capability and market perception.

**Prepared for** A specialist advisory firm

**Engagement** Entry Diagnostic

**Format** Private executive report

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE

01 · EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# The distance between capability and *recognition.*

This illustrative report demonstrates the structure and depth of a DSOUS Commercial Authority Diagnostic. It examines how an experienced, highly capable practice is perceived in its market — and identifies the specific, addressable reasons that perception lags behind genuine ability.

In this example, the subject demonstrates exceptional delivery capability and a strong record with existing clients. Yet its commercial authority — the degree to which the wider market recognises that capability before a first conversation — is materially weaker. The result is longer sales cycles, more time spent justifying value, and opportunities lost to less capable but more visible competitors.

### The core finding

Capability is not the constraint. Perception is. The market cannot easily see, verify or articulate what this practice does better than others.

### The commercial cost

Under-recognised authority lengthens sales cycles, compresses pricing power and leaves high-value opportunities to more visible competitors.

### The opportunity

The gap is structural, not reputational. It can be closed deliberately with positioning, proof and a small number of authority assets.

### The recommendation

A focused 90-day programme addressing positioning clarity, trust signals and a flagship authority asset — sequenced for early commercial effect.

HEADLINE METRICS

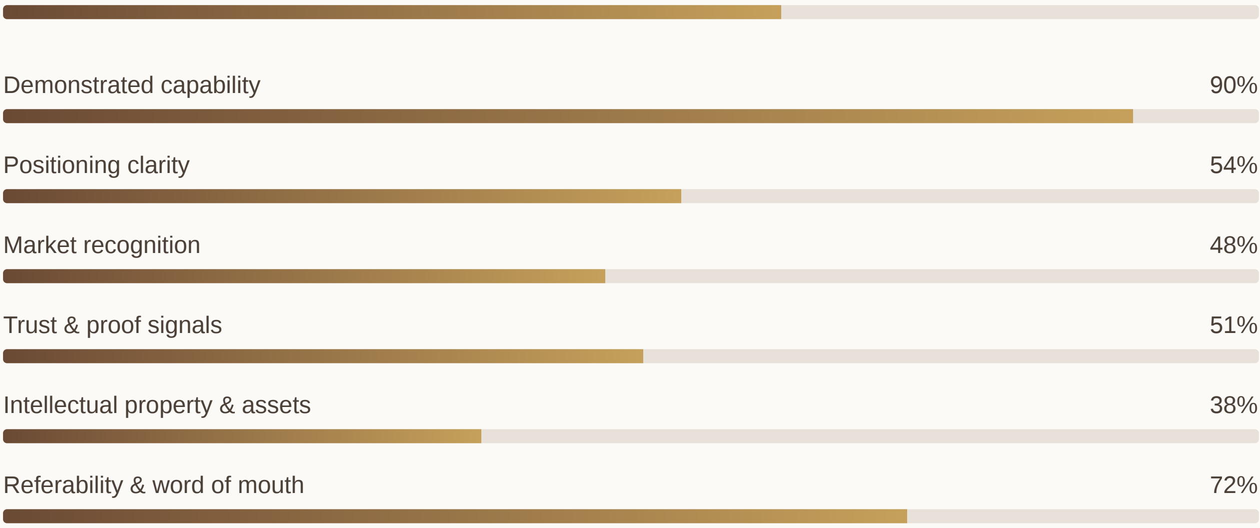
| 62/100 | 42pts | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| AUTHORITY SCORE | PERCEPTION GAP | PRIORITY ACTIONS |

02 · AUTHORITY SCORE

# A single, honest *measure.*

The Authority Score consolidates six weighted dimensions into one figure between 0 and 100. It is not a vanity metric — it is a diagnostic baseline that makes the perception gap visible and measurable, and against which progress can be tracked.

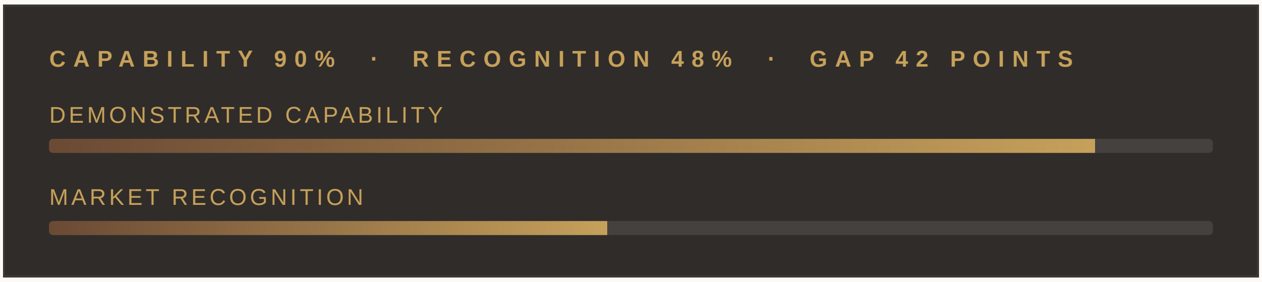
**62** / 100 · Established, under-recognised




**Reading the score.** Capability and referability are strong — clients who work with this practice value it highly. The drag sits in positioning clarity, market recognition and the absence of proprietary assets. These are precisely the dimensions that can be engineered deliberately.

# What you can do versus what the market *believes.*

The perception gap is the difference between demonstrated capability and the authority the market attributes before direct contact. A wide gap means the practice must repeatedly prove, in each sale, what a stronger reputation would have established in advance.




## Where the gap originates

- **Undifferentiated language.** The practice describes itself in terms its competitors could also use, so the market cannot identify what is distinct.
- **Invisible expertise.** Deep judgement is applied privately in client work but almost never externalised into visible, verifiable form.
- **Absent proof architecture.** Results are real but unstructured — there is no consistent way for a prospect to verify quality before engaging.
- **No flagship asset.** Nothing exists that a prospect can read, reference or share that demonstrates the depth of thinking in advance.

04 · POSITIONING ASSESSMENT

# Clear enough to be *chosen.*

Positioning determines whether the right clients recognise, quickly, that this practice is built for them. This section assesses clarity, differentiation and relevance to the highest-value audience.

### Current position

A capable generalist adviser competing on experience and relationship — a crowded space where price and availability dominate the decision.

### Available position

The definitive specialist for a specific, high-value problem — where expertise is the deciding factor and price sensitivity falls sharply.

### Audience clarity

Messaging currently speaks to several audiences at once, diluting resonance. A single primary audience would sharpen every signal.

### Differentiation

Genuine differentiators exist in method and judgement but are unnamed and unarticulated, so the market cannot weigh them.

**Assessment.** The raw material for a commanding position is present. The task is not reinvention but articulation — naming the specialism, choosing the primary audience, and stating the distinctive method plainly and consistently.

05 · TRUST-SIGNAL REVIEW

# The evidence a prospect finds *before* they call.

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Trust signals are the verifiable proofs a prospect encounters independently — before any conversation. Their strength determines how much authority is assumed at the outset, and how much must be earned during the sale.

Published thinking & frameworks — Weak

Structured case evidence — Developing

Third-party endorsement — Moderate

Professional presence & consistency — Developing

Client referability — Strong

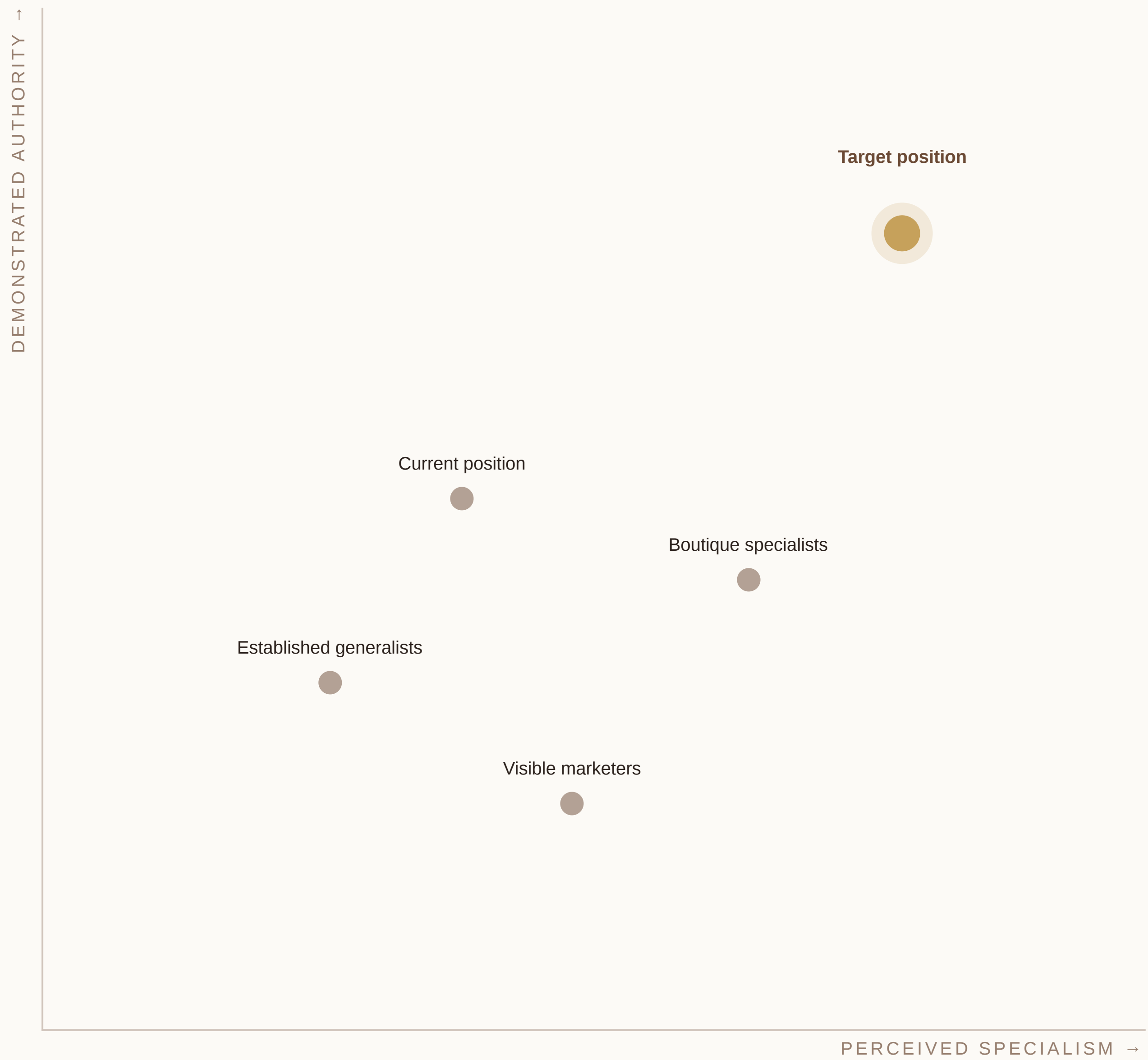
## Priority signal gaps

- **No externalised frameworks.** The practice's thinking is not yet captured in any form a prospect can read and assess.
- **Unstructured proof.** Strong outcomes exist but are anecdotal rather than presented as consistent, verifiable evidence.
- **Referral over-reliance.** Excellent word of mouth is not reinforced by independent signals, limiting reach beyond the existing network.

06 · COMPETITIVE-POSITIONING MAP

# Where authority is *won.*

Plotting perceived specialism against demonstrated authority reveals the uncontested ground. The strategic aim is to move decisively toward the upper right — high specialism, high authority — where competition is thin and pricing power is greatest.




**Interpretation.** The current position sits mid-field — credible but not distinctive. The target position is attainable within twelve months: it requires a named specialism, a flagship authority asset and structured proof, not a change in underlying capability.

07 · KEY COMMERCIAL RISKS

# The cost of leaving the gap *unaddressed.*

Each risk below follows directly from the perception gap. Left unaddressed, they compound: the longer authority lags capability, the more the market anchors on price and availability rather than expertise.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Extended sales cycles**<br>Value must be re-established in every conversation, slowing decisions and increasing cost of sale. | HIGH |
| **Compressed pricing power**<br>Without recognised authority, fees are benchmarked against generalists rather than specialists. | HIGH |
| **Opportunities lost to visibility**<br>More visible but less capable competitors are shortlisted first for high-value briefs. | HIGH |
| **Referral dependency**<br>Pipeline concentrates in a narrow network, limiting growth and increasing exposure to its fluctuations. | MEDIUM |
| **Key-person concentration**<br>Authority resides in individuals rather than in transferable, defensible assets owned by the practice. | MEDIUM |

# Deliberate steps to close the *gap*.

01 **Name and narrow the specialism**

Define a single, high-value problem the practice is demonstrably the best at solving, and lead every message with it. Clarity here compounds through every subsequent action.

02 **Externalise the method**

Convert the practice's private judgement into a named, visible framework — the single most powerful signal that expertise is real and structured.

03 **Build a flagship authority asset**

Produce one substantial, referenceable piece — a diagnostic, report or framework — that a prospect can read before contact and that demonstrates depth in advance.

04 **Structure the proof**

Reframe existing results into consistent, verifiable evidence that can be encountered independently and referenced in every conversation.

05 **Convert authority into assets**

Package the specialism into intellectual property the practice owns — reducing key-person dependency and creating value beyond billable hours.

# Where to begin for early *effect.*

Of the recommendations, three actions deliver disproportionate early impact. They are sequenced so that each makes the next easier and compounds toward the target position.

### Priority 1 · Positioning statement

Agree the named specialism, primary audience and distinctive method. Everything downstream depends on this clarity. **Effort: low · Impact: high**

### Priority 2 · Flagship authority asset

Commission one substantial asset that externalises the method and demonstrates depth before contact. **Effort: medium · Impact: high**

### Priority 3 · Proof architecture

Restructure existing outcomes into consistent, verifiable evidence deployed across every touchpoint. **Effort: medium · Impact: medium-high**

10 · 90-DAY AUTHORITY ROADMAP

# A sequenced first *quarter.*

DAYS 1–30 · CLARITY

## Position & foundation

Finalise the positioning statement, named specialism and primary audience. Audit and align existing touchpoints to the sharpened message. Agree the flagship asset concept.

DAYS 31–60 · PROOF

## Asset & evidence

Develop the flagship authority asset and externalise the core framework. Restructure two to three engagements into verifiable proof. Begin consistent professional presence.

DAYS 61–90 · MOMENTUM

## Publish & convert

Publish the flagship asset and deploy proof across the sales process. Introduce the framework into conversations. Establish a simple rhythm for sustaining visible authority.

**Expected effect.** Within one quarter the practice moves from implicit to demonstrated authority: prospects arrive better informed, conversations start further along, and the basis of competition shifts from price toward expertise.

11 · NEXT STEP

# See the same rigour applied to *your practice.*

This report is illustrative. A Commercial Authority Diagnostic produces a document like this built entirely around your firm, your market and your goals — a private, structured assessment with a clear 90-day roadmap.

- **A confidential 30-minute fit conversation** to understand your practice and whether the diagnostic is right for you.
- **A tailored assessment** of positioning, authority gaps and trust signals specific to your market.
- **A prioritised 90-day roadmap** to make your expertise commercially visible.

BOOK A 30-MINUTE FIT CONVERSATION

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