ABCI MARKETING LAB

# ABCI Readers Guide to The Pumpkin Plan

## Plant Smart, Prune Ruthlessly!

Focus on the clients, work, and relationships with the strongest potential

**Book discussion | October 27, 2026 | 10:00 AM Central**



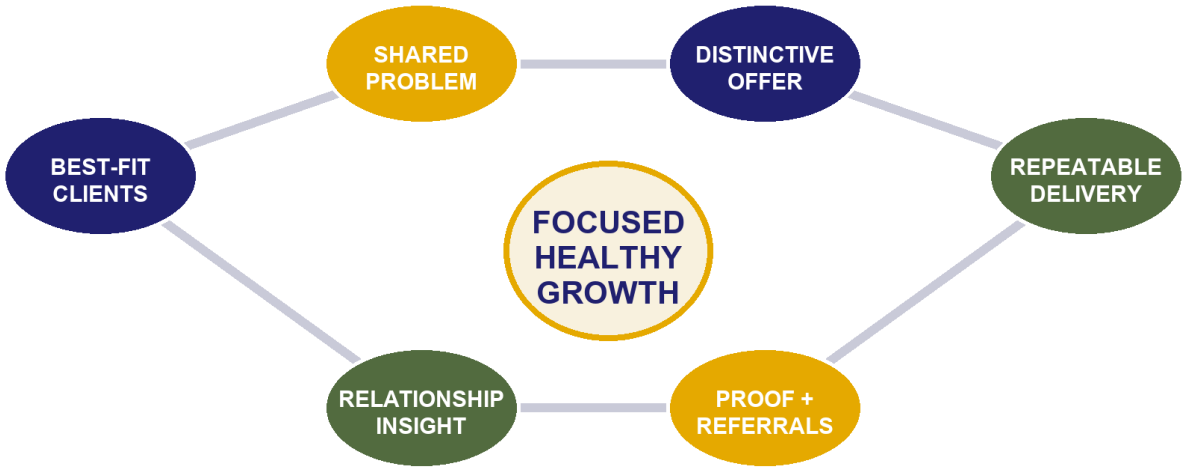
**Purpose.** Use this guide to turn the book's central ideas into one clear business decision. You do not need to implement every technique. Look for one offer to strengthen, one activity to reduce, and one practical action to test.

**Central question.** Where should we concentrate our limited time, attention, and expertise to create more value for our clients and a stronger business?

ORIENTATION

# How to Use This Guide

This guide is organized by themes rather than chapters, so it works with print, ebook, and audiobook editions. Keep it nearby as you read and record examples from your own business.




A focused growth cycle begins with suitable clients and turns what you learn through delivery into better offers, stronger proof, and more relevant relationships.

## Use Three Reading Marks

| PROTECT | IMPROVE | REDUCE |
|---|---|---|
| A client, capability, or habit worth preserving. | An offer, process, or relationship worth strengthening. | A distraction, mismatch, or cost that needs attention. |

Do not force an immediate decision. Capture patterns first; evaluate them with financial, operational, and relationship context.

READER PREPARATION

# Before You Read

Make a quick inventory before the book changes how you describe your business. Approximate answers are useful; confidential client names are not required.

**The clients that produce the best results for both parties are**

_____

**The work that remains profitable after delivery effort is considered is**

_____

**The services that demonstrate our most valuable expertise are**

_____

**The client relationships most likely to lead to repeat work or useful introductions are**

_____

**The activities we continue mostly from habit are**

_____

## Quick Client Inventory

| CLIENT OR TYPE | WHY THE FIT IS STRONG | VALUE WE CREATE | QUESTION TO EXAMINE |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

CLIENT FOCUS

# Define Your Best Clients Carefully

A large client is not automatically a strong-fit client. Consider the full relationship, including the effort required to deliver well and the value the work creates for both parties.

**A strong client relationship creates value on more than one dimension.**




Score each dimension separately. Revenue alone can hide delivery effort, poor fit, or concentration risk.

## Client Fit Scorecard

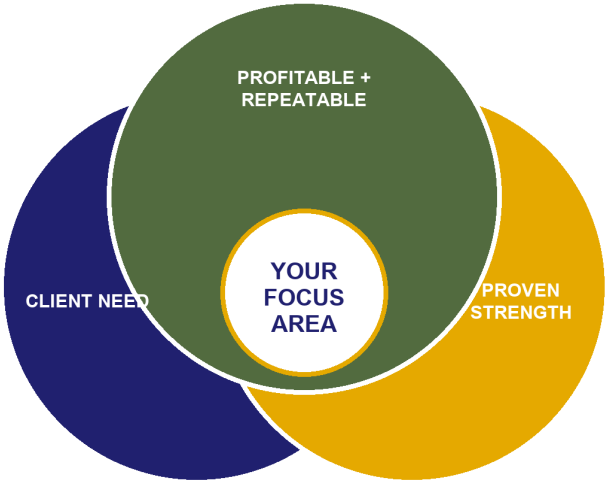
| CLIENT | CONTRIBUTION | STRATEGIC FIT | WORKING RELATIONSHIP | REPEAT POTENTIAL | REFERRAL RELEVANCE | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Score each dimension from 1 to 5. Use the total as a conversation starter, not an automatic verdict. Review margin, concentration risk, commitments, and context before acting.

MARKET AND OFFER FOCUS

# Find the Valuable Pattern

Look across strong client relationships for a shared problem, mission, or operating condition. In aviation, the pattern may involve specialized expertise, scheduling, reliability, risk reduction, regulatory complexity, or access to a particular market.




A useful focus area sits where an important client need overlaps with proven capability and work the business can deliver profitably and repeatedly.

**The important problem our strongest clients share is**

_____

**The part of our approach that is especially valuable or difficult to replace is**

_____

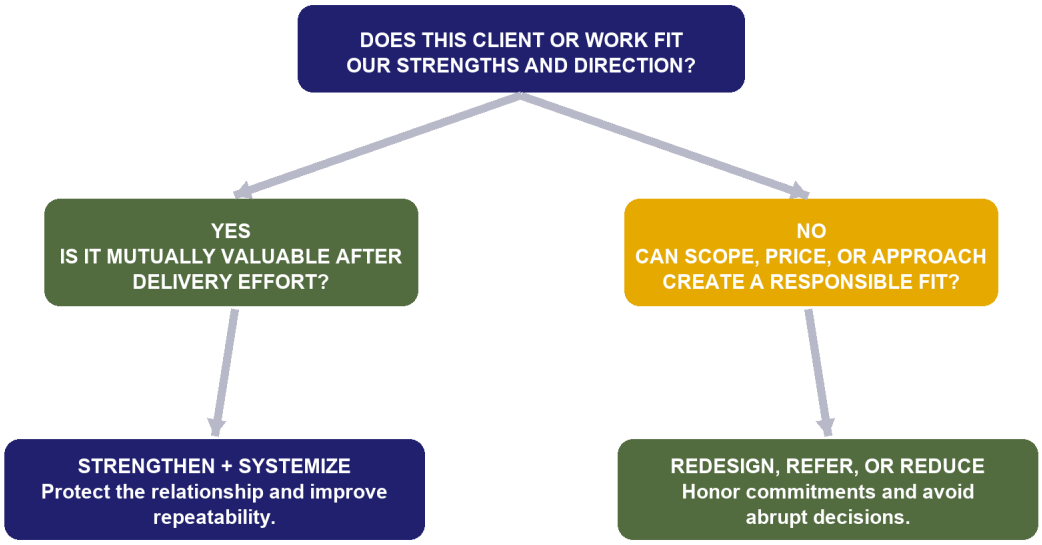
**The offer we should make easier to understand, buy, and deliver is**

_____

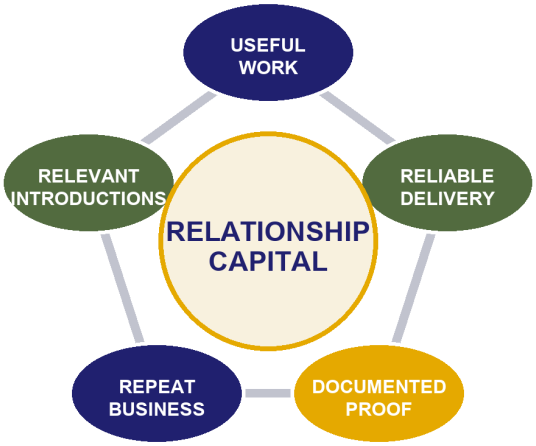
RESPONSIBLE FOCUS

# Prune Thoughtfully

Focus is not permission to make abrupt decisions. Protect existing commitments, evaluate the economics accurately, and avoid becoming dependent on one customer. Pruning can mean redesigning scope, improving price, referring unsuitable work, reducing customization, or discontinuing an ineffective activity.




## Build Relationship Capital




Useful work and reliable delivery create proof, repeat business, and appropriate introductions. Each new conversation produces insight that can improve the next offer.

OCTOBER DISCUSSION

# Prepare for the Discussion

Bring observations, not perfect answers. General descriptions are sufficient when client details are confidential.

## Bring These Five Items

- A rough ranking of your strongest clients.
- One example of avoidable delivery effort.
- One opportunity to serve a strong client better.
- One suitable prospect whose decision has been delayed.
- One marketing or business-development activity you may need to reduce.

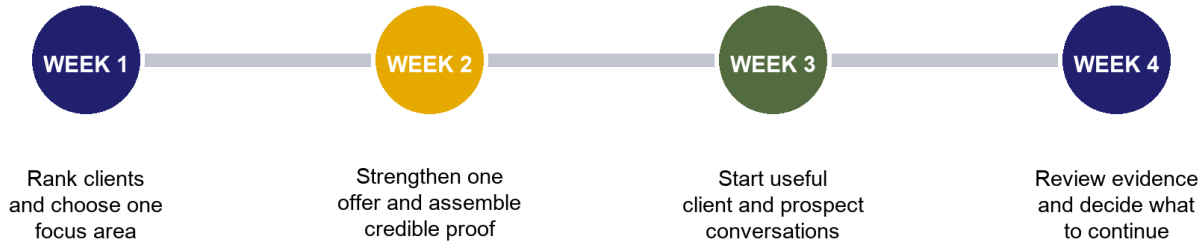
## Discussion Questions

1. How should we define a best client in our business?
2. Which delivery costs or demands are easy to overlook?
3. What traits do our strongest clients share?
4. What recurring problem are we especially qualified to solve?
5. Where have we said yes to work that distracts from our strengths?
6. Which offer deserves concentrated improvement?
7. What should we reduce, redesign, reprice, or stop?
8. How can we focus without depending on one customer?
9. What customer result could become credible proof?
10. What is one decision from the book we are prepared to test?

**Session outcome: choose one offer to strengthen, one activity to reduce, and one action to begin within seven days.**

APPLICATION

# Run a Thirty Day Test




**The clients we are best positioned to serve are**

**The important problem they share is**

**The offer we will strengthen is**

**The activity, service, or distraction we will reduce is**

**The client or prospect conversation we will initiate is**

**The evidence we will review after thirty days is**

## Evidence to Review

**Qualified conversations | Repeat work | Introductions | Approved proof | Stage movement | Delivery effort | Margin | Client feedback**

**Closing thought.** Focus is not simply a decision about whom to exclude. It is a commitment to understand suitable clients more deeply, serve them more effectively, and build the business around work that creates value for everyone involved.

Reading reference: Mike Michalowicz, The Pumpkin Plan. ABCI application notes adapted from the October 2026 Marketing Lab executive brief. Official book resources: mikemichalowicz.com/pumpkin-plan