



COMMERCIALISATION

Technical Validation Is Not Commercial Validation

A technology can work brilliantly and still have no repeatable route to revenue.



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KNOW FIRST. THEN ACT.

This Narrow Insight is designed to help technical founders separate commercial signal from noise and identify what is worth repeating.

Technical proof answers a different question

Technical validation proves that a product, platform or scientific approach can do what it is supposed to do. In a technical business, that proof matters enormously. It may come from research results, prototypes, laboratory performance, benchmark data, successful trials, patents, regulatory progress or a working deployment.

But commercial validation answers a different set of questions. Who has a problem urgent enough to act? Who owns that problem? Who controls budget? What outcome matters enough to justify change? How does a buying decision happen? And, critically, does the same pattern appear more than once?

A company can be technically validated and commercially uncertain at the same time. That is not a contradiction. It is a normal stage in the journey from invention to repeatable business.

Positive conversations are not the same as buying intent

Technical founders often receive encouraging feedback because the technology is genuinely interesting. Researchers may want to explore it. Innovation teams may want to understand it. Potential partners may see strategic value. Investors may recognise the scale of the opportunity.

All of that is useful evidence, but it is not the same as buying intent. A good meeting, an enthusiastic response or a request for another conversation can feel commercially significant without actually moving the company closer to revenue.

The important distinction is between interest and intent. Intent starts to show up when a prospect has a defined problem, a reason to act, a credible route to budget, a decision process and a next step that they are prepared to own.

Interest is useful. Intent is commercial evidence.

The commercial job is to find repeatability

The goal is not to dismiss early interest. It is to identify the patterns inside it. Which problem is strongest? Which buyer feels it most acutely? Which use case creates urgency? What evidence makes the proposition credible? What moves an opportunity forward, and what repeatedly causes it to stall?

This is where commercial validation begins to emerge. One customer can be an exception. A pilot can be useful but bespoke. A partnership can create credibility without proving a scalable sales motion. Repeatability comes from seeing the same commercial logic appear across multiple opportunities.

That does not mean every customer has to look identical. It means the business can explain, with evidence, why certain opportunities progress and why others do not.

What to look for

Start with the evidence already available. Look at the customers, pilots and opportunities that have progressed furthest. Compare them with the ones that stalled or disappeared. Review who first engaged, who eventually became involved, what problem was being solved, what changed the urgency and what happened immediately before meaningful progress.

Then look for contradictions. The stated ICP may not match the companies actually progressing. The proposition on the website may not be the language that lands in sales conversations. A large pipeline may contain relatively little genuine buying intent.

Those gaps are not failures. They are information. They show where the commercial model needs to become clearer.

The question to answer

Technical validation asks: does it work?

Commercial validation asks: can we repeatedly identify, win and serve customers who value it enough to buy?

Until both are understood, scaling activity can simply scale uncertainty. Know what the evidence is telling you first. Then decide what to build around it.

WHERE NARROW FITS

If the technology is progressing faster than the commercial model, Focus is designed to establish what is actually happening, where the friction sits and what should be prioritised next.

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