

The Five-Star Fan Grid

Map who you are a five-star fan for, who you are not, and where a competitor wins. Then aim your marketing at the matches.

A five-star fan is not who leaves you a good review. It is the person or organization you were always going to be right for. This grid helps you get specific about who those fans are across the five things buyers actually weigh when they choose you, so your messaging and your channels point at the right matches and stop paying to reach the wrong ones.

Fill in one column at a time. The most useful column is often the middle one: naming who you are honestly NOT for is how you stop attracting them.

We are practicing what we preach. On page 2 we filled this grid out with HarborWay Foundations (HWF) as the example, so you can see it in action before you run your own.

THE GRID

What buyers weigh, and where you fit

WHAT BUYERS WEIGH	YOU where you are a five	NOT YOU who this isn't for	A COMPETITOR where they win
Can you solve it Is this the exact problem you solve best?			
Do you deliver Do you reliably produce what you promise?			
Do they trust you Does your track record inspire confidence?			
Do you get them Do you understand their world and pressures?			
What they receive Is the experience and output clearly worth it?			

IN ACTION

Here is ours, filled in

This is HarborWay Foundations (HWF) run through the same grid. Notice how naming who we are NOT for is as sharp as naming who we are. That is the point.

BUYERS WEIGH	YOU	NOT YOU	A COMPETITOR
Can you solve it	Mission-driven orgs whose strategy, story, and marketing are out of sync	Orgs that just need execution hands, not strategic clarity	A freelancer or agency hired only to produce deliverables
Do you deliver	A written operating guide leadership actually runs, not a deck on a shelf	Teams wanting a one-off campaign with no follow-through	Big-four consulting: thorough but expensive and slow
Do they trust you	Operators who have run this inside mission-driven institutions	Orgs that want a big-name logo over lived experience	A large firm with brand recognition but no mission fluency
Do you get them	Nonprofits, B Corps, social enterprises, impact investors, foundations	Purely commercial orgs with no mission dimension	A generalist shop that treats you like any other client
What they receive	Credibility, funding readiness, a clearer path, not just assets	Buyers shopping on lowest price per deliverable	Cheaper vendors selling volume over outcomes

HOW TO USE IT

Turn the grid into a marketing move

- 1 Start with YOU**
Write the specific situations where you are unbeatable. Be concrete.
Ours: we align strategy, funding, communications, and measurement for mission-driven orgs, so the whole thing compounds instead of drifting.
- 2 Then do NOT YOU**
Name who you are not for. This column saves you money, it tells you who to stop marketing to.
Ours: we are not for purely commercial orgs with no mission dimension.
- 3 Then A COMPETITOR**
Note where one real alternative legitimately wins. Where they beat you is not your battleground.
Ours: big-four consulting wins on brand size. We win on mission fluency, speed, and senior expertise priced for the budgets that actually need it.
- 4 Pull your message**
Your headline lives where you are strongest and a competitor is weakest. Pull it from your YOU column.
Ours: serious strategy built for mission-driven orgs, without the big-four price tag.
- 5 Aim your channels**
Put your brand where your fit already looks. Fit first, then channel.
Ours: we show up where mission-driven leaders and funders already gather.

Want a sharper read on your fit?

Take the free HWF Pulse Check for a fuller read on where your strategy is holding and where it is leaking. Or start a conversation. Sharpening fit is our work.

[HarborWayFoundations.com/PulseCheck](https://harborwayfoundations.com/PulseCheck)

TAKE THE PULSE CHECK

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START A CONVERSATION