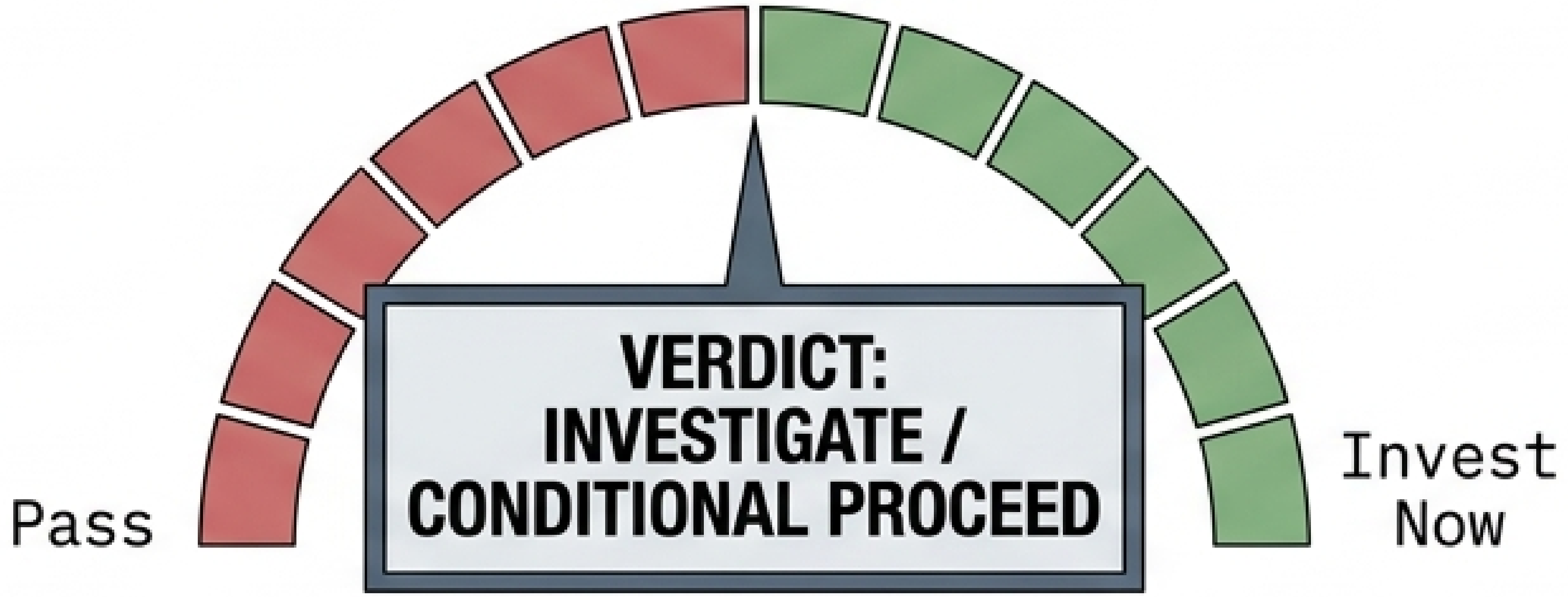
Ascenta HR: JLMSTR 6Ts Evaluation

Internal Investment Readiness & Diligence White Paper

TARGET: Pre-Seed
ASK: $600k
STAGE: Pre-Revenue
SECTOR: HCM Tech

Ascenta has a proof problem, not a premise problem.

Strong Founder + Credible Vision + Attractive Economics − Customer Evidence = **Too early to underwrite confidently.**

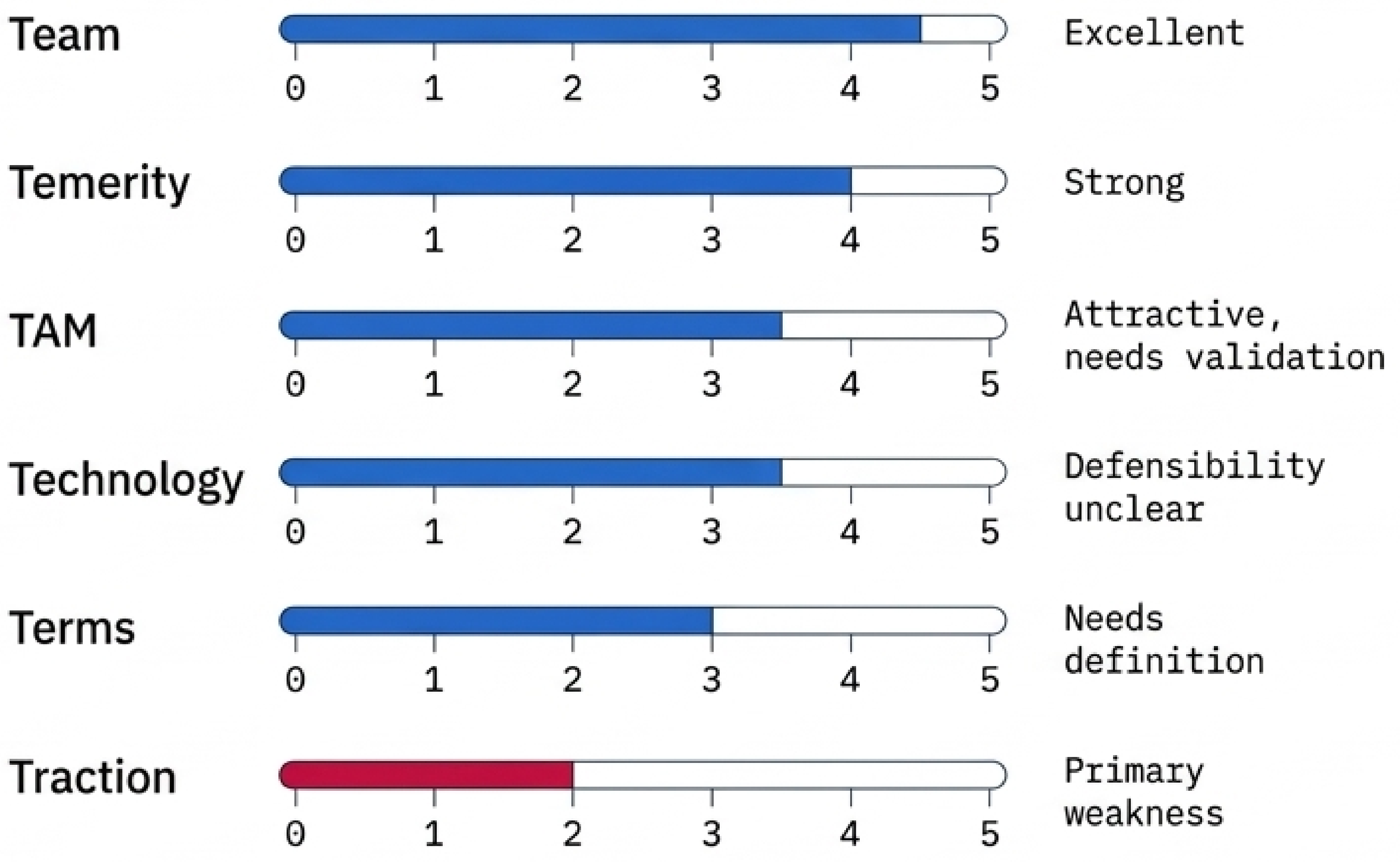


Ascenta does not have a Team, TAM, or Temerity problem. It has a proof problem.

JLMSTR overall readiness score indicates a conditional proceed.

OVERALL JLMSTR SCORE

20.5 / 30 | 68% Readiness



35%

65%

Dialectic diligence framework: Truth First, Red Team, Steelman

Truth First

Baseline reality. What is actually working right now and validated by current facts.

Red Team

Skeptical critique. The unproven assumptions, execution risks, and missing evidence.

Steelman

The strongest possible framing. How to reposition the current weakness into an investable strength.

Unusually strong founder-market fit paired with an ambitious vision.

Team (4.5/5)

Andrea Stone has lived the problem (senior HR leadership, SHRM credentials, 800+ employees). Genuine founder-market fit.

Cap table risk. Too many people listed as team. Who is full-time vs advisory?

Make Andrea the unmistakable center of gravity. Move others to an Advisors bucket.

Temerity (4.0/5)

Bold philosophical position: Turn HCM from a System of Record to a System of Guidance.

Vision is too broad. Risk of building 8 startups disguised as one.

Use Culture Gym as the primary wedge to earn the right to build the broader vision.

A compelling product architecture targeting a highly specific revenue model.

Truth: Coherent architecture targeting an underserved SMB market.

Product Architecture

- Strategy Studio
- Leadership Library
- Culture Gym (Teach -> Apply -> Quiz -> Reflect -> Track)

$58.7B TAM

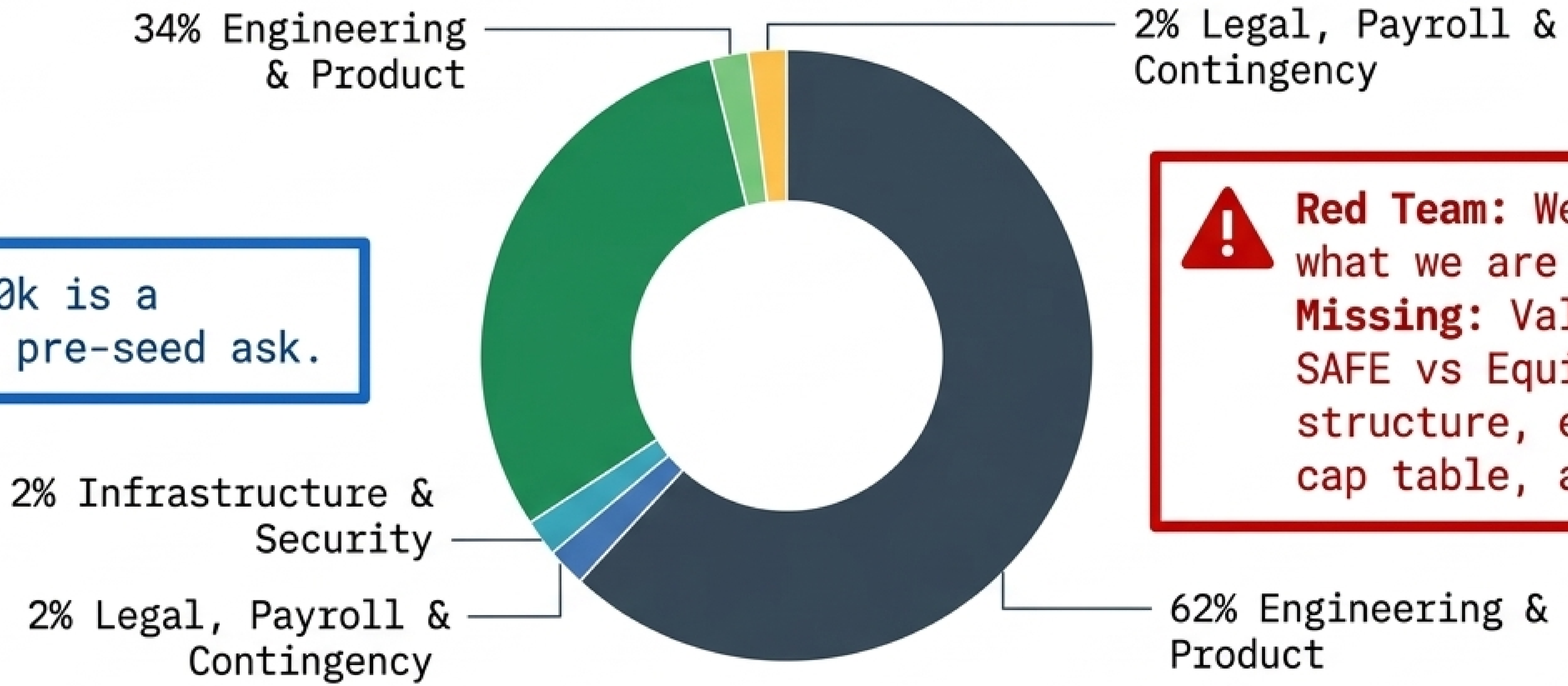
100,000 serviceable SMB firms

Target: 500 firms

Steelman: Ignore the $58.7B. Capturing just 500 of the 100k SMBs at target pricing = $13.5M ARR. The tech moat is longitudinal organizational context, not raw AI.

Red Team: AI Guided lacks a defined moat. Is it proprietary AI or just an LLM wrapper? Market sizing risks becoming category arithmetic.

The $600k ask is believable but lacks critical financing mechanics.



Truth: $600k is a believable pre-seed ask.

Red Team: We don't know what we are buying. **Missing:** Valuation/cap, SAFE vs Equity structure, existing cap table, and runway.

Steelman Reframe: Shift the narrative from funding engineering to funding de-risking. The $600k must buy the journey from founder-funded MVP to validated product-market fit.

Traction is the fatal flaw blocking immediate investment.

The Hypothesis

Step 1: SMBs pay $200/mo for Culture Gym

↓

Step 2: Subsequently convert to $15 PEPM full platform

↓

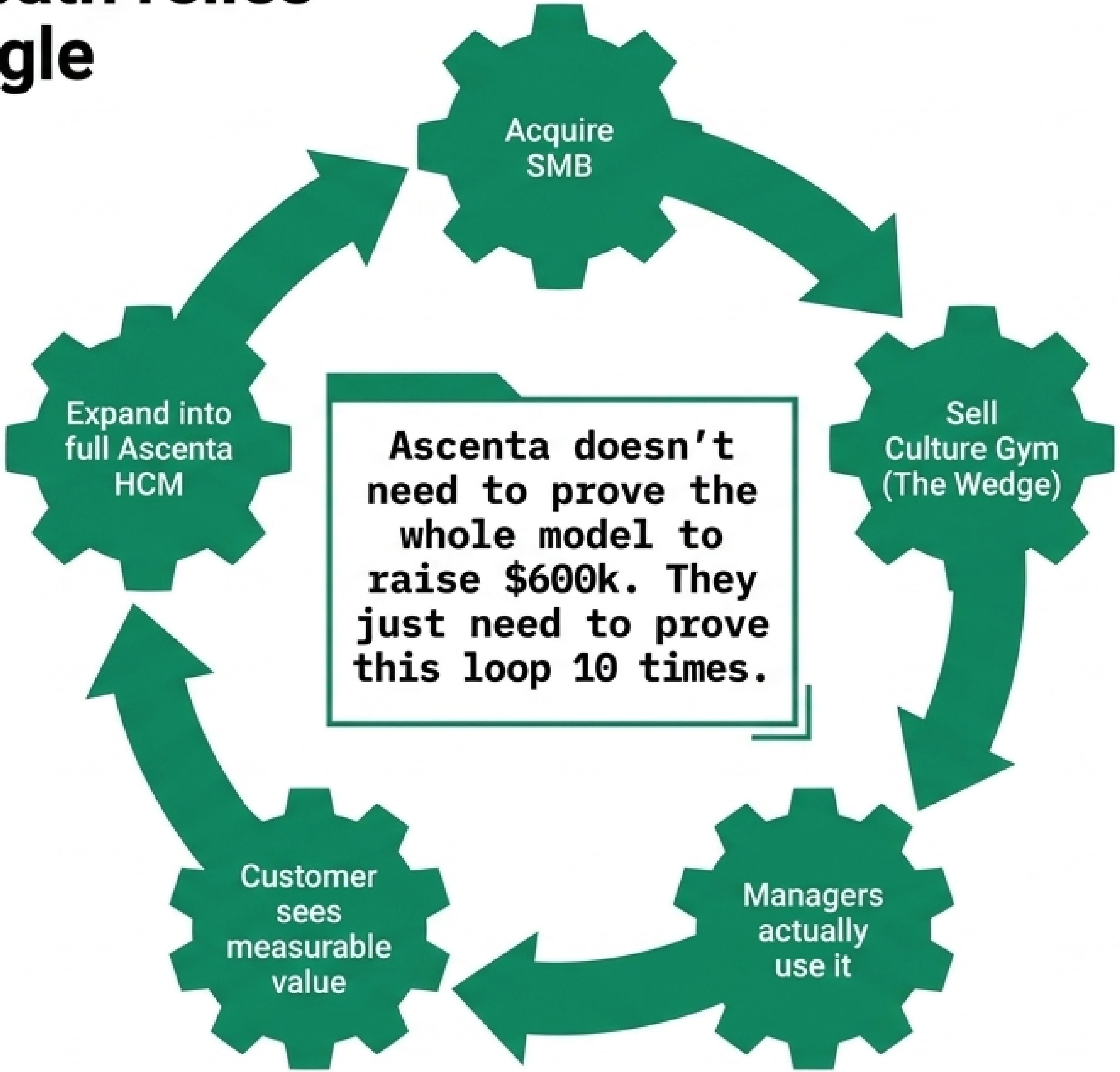
Step 3: 80% gross margin

↓

Step 4: $13.5M ARR

The Reality

The investable path relies on proving a single economic loop.



Ascenta doesn't need to prove the whole model to raise $600k. They just need to prove this loop 10 times.

Specific milestones required to clear the JLMSTR investment gate.

Target goal: Move score from 20.5 to the investable 24-26 range

Metric	Target
Paying Culture Gym Customers	10+
Culture Gym Monthly Price	$200
Weekly Active Manager Usage	>60%
60/90-Day Retention	>80%
Full-Platform Pilot Commitments	3 to 5

Tech Proof
Clear proprietary data advantage / security definition.

Terms Clarity
Defined financing instrument, cap table, and runway.

Prioritized founder interrogation dashboard targets critical assumptions

1	[TRACTION]	**Who has actually paid, or committed to pay, $200/month?**
2	[TRACTION]	**What evidence proves Culture Gym converts to the $15 PEPM platform?** *(The entire financial model depends on this pathway).*
3	[TECH]	**What proprietary asset exists after 100 customers that ADP/Rippling can't copy?** *(Testing for a genuine data flywheel).*
4	[TERMS]	**Exactly what measurable milestone does the $600k buy?**
5	[TEMERITY]	**What assumption, if wrong, kills the company?**

“Andrea, you’ve spent your career inside this problem. What do you know about managing people that the founders of Riping, BambooHR, Paylocity, and ADP fundamentally don’t understand?”

Diligence Objective: Uncover the proprietary insight around which the entire company should be built.