



# Fast Forward™ Assessment Services

## Venture Planning and Troubleshooting

**G**rowth is a perennial challenge for new technology companies. Fail to grow, and questions about strategy and execution soon emerge.

Finding the cause is often difficult because there is much that early-stage companies don't and can't know—about the market, customers, and even what they will buy. It's the rule rather than the exception, and if startup success rates are any indication, good methods for planning and troubleshooting emerging businesses are rare.

### Shortcomings of Conventional Methods

Many startup management issues stem from the conventional, "go-to-market" planning process—the strategy-centric, top-down method used to plan, execute, and troubleshoot most early-stage businesses.

**Planning.** Despite the popularity of this strategic approach, it's often a poor choice for planning businesses in formative markets, because unlike companies in established markets, startups face many more unknowns. Strategic planning approaches frequently introduce problems in formative market environments because you can't plan what you don't know.

Complicating matters further, when go-to-market plans don't go as expected, managers often make ad hoc adjustments to execution — making it difficult to determine whether performance shortfalls are due to strategy or execution.

**Troubleshooting.** Like planning, a strategic process is also used to diagnose startups when they fail to perform as expected.

Using a linear, "outside-in" approach, diagnosis starts with market analysis and moves methodically into strategy, execution and customers. The main drawback to the technique: the scarce information of early markets complicates the process and requires time-consuming data gathering and analyses to justify conclusions.

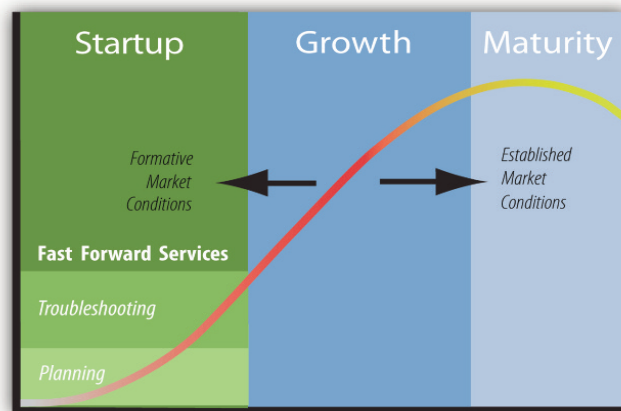
Unable to afford the time or expense of this approach, companies often resort to problem-by-problem correction of positioning, demand generation, messaging, etc. Although this ad hoc method can produce

results, it may fix only symptoms of the underlying growth problem. Considerable trial and error may be needed to find an answer, consuming scarce resources in the process.

### A Better Alternative

To address these issues, we've devised a decidedly better way to diagnose and plan early-stage companies: we plan and diagnose businesses from the inside out. Starting with innovation adoption by the customer, we systematically evaluate how well the company promotes the process, and whether its strategy furthers these aims. By focusing on the adoption process rather than strategy and assumptions, we get to the

### Business Development Phase



Startups need different approaches for planning and management than established companies because under formative conditions, much less is known or predictable about the market environment.

## Service Brief

heart of growth issues quickly. We also use structured methods and automated tools to speed up the process. And because value proposition is closely tied to adoption, the method quickly yields insights on customers and innovation use, execution effectiveness, and potential opportunities.

Built from extensive operating experience and backed by cutting-edge research on innovation business management, the Fast Forward planning and diagnosis methods are faster, more systematic, and more practical than conventional alternatives. A typical planning or troubleshooting effort takes just three weeks.

### Fast Forward Methods and Tools

Fast Forward Assessment Services provide a systematic, execution-focused approach for early planning and troubleshooting of emergent companies. More than a methodology, we use diagnostic and simulation tools to quantitatively evaluate a company's initial plans and key assumptions prior to market entry. Once a company enters a market, we employ similar methodology and tools to troubleshoot the business should its performance fall short of expectations.

**Diagnostic Methods and Tools.** Fast Forward methods and tools transform revenue planning and troubleshooting from a job of educated guesswork into quantitative analysis by systematically analyzing and modeling company execution. This approach not only provides

projection of the expected revenue range and risk levels, but it also speeds up the assessment process.

**Complementary Services.** Because Fast Forward analyses are performed inside-out, starting with adoption, they complement rather than supplant existing planning and management processes. For major funding decisions or strategic re-direction initiatives, Fast Forward services offer a fast, cost-effective, "second opinion" for critical decisions.

The objective: to provide you with a reliable and systematic basis on which to plan and guide your planning and troubleshooting decisions.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Fast Forward Services

#### Planning

- **Rapid Assessment.** Evaluates business potential and risks based on execution plans and critical assumptions..
- **Venture Planning.** Creates a discovery-driven, development plan for the venture using reverse P&L planning, analysis of critical assumptions, and simulation analysis of operating plans and expected revenues.

#### Troubleshooting

- **Diagnostic Assessment.** Evaluates and validates business and business potential based on execution assessment, sales, customer and financial data, interviews, and simulation analysis of current operations.

Deliverables include evaluation of go-to-market effectiveness, projected revenues and likelihood of attainment, recommended improvements, and revenue impact of the improvements.

# Service Brief

## Venture Planning Services

Designed to aid ventures before market entry, Fast Forward Planning services evaluate initial go-to-market plans and then identify and establish key development checkpoints to keep the business on track as customers are engaged.

Services available for the market entry phase of venture development include:

**Rapid Assessment.** This service gives investors and management teams a quick, objective appraisal of plans, critical assumptions, and execution risks before the company enters the market or receives its initial funding. Starting with a reverse profit-and-loss statement, we test the feasibility of the company's go-to-market plans and assumptions by working backwards from planned profits to required revenue levels. From this, we identify critical business assumptions and evaluate the relative risk of each. This includes a joint consultant-team review of sales and marketing plans, jobs the innovation is expected to perform, and the disruptive potential of the innovation. Deliverables include a written summary of findings about the company's plans, critical assumptions, and risks of their attainment.

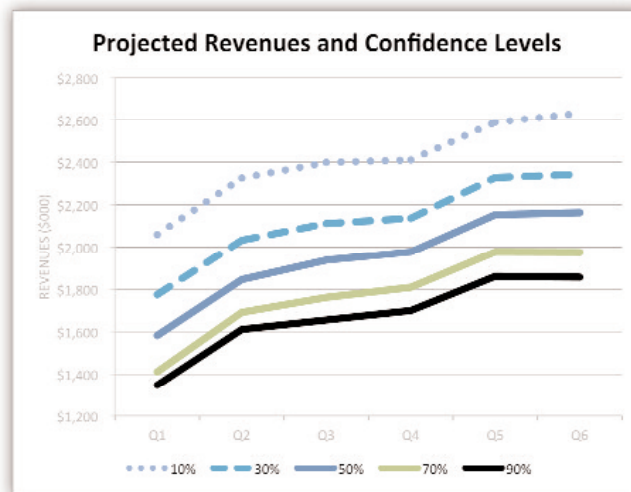
**Venture Planning.** Fast Forward Venture Planning services assist newly funded companies with their initial market development planning. Starting with a reverse profit-and-loss statement, we test the feasibility of the company's go-to-market plans and assumptions by working backwards from planned profits to required revenue levels. From this, we identify critical business assumptions and perform a detailed risk analysis for each. This includes a systematic evaluation of sales and marketing plans, jobs the innovation will perform, and how disruptive the innovation promises to be. Based on this information, we then perform a simulation analysis of the company's initial operat-

ing plan and evaluate the risk of the overall go-to-market plan. Deliverables include a checkpoint event plan, projected revenue range and likelihood of attainment, and a written summary of findings about the go-to-market plan and its risks.

**Progress Monitoring.** At the company's option, we will participate in key business reviews to evaluate market development progress. Depending on company preferences, this will include an evaluation of current results against the checkpoint event plan, update of initial simulation analysis,

critical assumption analysis and checkpoint plan. Findings are summarized in a formal presentation to the company.

**Training.** At the company's option, we will provide a half-day briefing for executives and managers on the theory, principles and application of the Fast Forward Services. An additional one-day, interactive workshop is available to train sales, marketing and technical managers on the use of emergent planning and execution techniques to achieve faster adoption and business growth.



## Service Brief

### Troubleshooting Service

Fast Forward Troubleshooting Service provides diagnostic assistance to companies faced with growth and sustainability issues. Starting with the innovation adoption process, we use a formal, 23-point execution scorecard to evaluate company effectiveness starting with adoption, from the inside out. This evaluation also includes customer and staff interviews, survey of collateral and selected competitors, execution diagnosis, and review of customer and financial data.

Based on the company's operating plan and operating history, we then perform a simulation analysis of sales and marketing operations using several thousand "what-if" variations of execution effectiveness. From this, we project the range of expected revenues and likelihood of achieving them. The analysis is then repeated using recommended improvements to provide a before-and-after comparison of revenues and comparative benefits of implementing each recommended change.

Services available for troubleshooting assistance include:

**Diagnostic Assessment.** This service systematically evaluates marketing, sales, and product execution effectiveness. The evaluation includes customer and staff interviews, survey of collateral and selected competitors, a 23-point execution assessment, and review of customer and financial data. The evaluation focuses on jobs the innovation performs, value delivered by the innovation, company effectiveness at communicating value and building credibility, and how well the

organization communicates and makes decisions. To assess current execution effectiveness and risk, we perform an eight-quarter simulation analysis of current operating plans based on actual execution levels and operating data. The analysis is repeated using recommendations to provide a before-and-after comparison of expected results. Deliverables include key findings, assumptions, and recommendations that are documented in a written report and presentation to the company.

**Progress Monitoring.** At the company's option, we will participate in key business reviews to evaluate market development progress. For each review, we compare current results to the Fast Forward Assessment, and update revenue simulation results based on the company's execution improvement. Findings from this comparison are summarized in a formal presentation to the company.

**Training.** At the company's option, we will provide a half-day briefing for executives and managers on the theory, principles and application of the Fast Forward Services.

At the company's option, a one-day, interactive workshop is also available to train sales, marketing and technical managers on the use of emergent planning and execution techniques to achieve faster adoption and business growth.

### About 1st Wave Marketing™

The 1st Wave Marketing Group provides business consulting services to early-stage technology ventures. Services include venture planning, troubleshooting, strategy development, and implementation assistance.

**For additional information, we invite you to visit our website at [www.1stwavemktg.com](http://www.1stwavemktg.com) or call us at 408-292-2834**

