

probe on what problems or pain the client might be experiencing. That might be sales trending downward or new competitors emerging. I try to probe for big problems where the stakes are high, because those are the ones my client needs help with most, the ones they value solving. Too many service providers focus on small problems, but the client is less likely to take action on those and their work is less likely to have a big impact.

“To establish Point B, I’ll ask questions about their goals. Goals themselves create problems because if the goals aren’t met, the client will experience a loss. So the client’s problem is either something they are experiencing currently or something they will experience if they don’t get to Point B. The value I create for the client lies in closing the gap between A and B and solving the problem.

“You gain an immense amount of clarity by establishing the A and B points, but many service providers don’t do it. That’s why I said my solution would likely be different from the one you would design. Without crystal clear alignment, you risk designing something that doesn’t have as much value for the client as it could.”