

# **Clayworks of Art - Current Challenges, Experiments & Strategic Questions**

## **Primary Challenge: Zero Client Conversion**

### **The Paradox**

**High Activity, Zero Results:** - Thousands of outreach messages sent  
- Zero positive responses leading to clients - Massive effort investment with no return - Clear execution but fundamentally broken approach

### **Root Cause Analysis**

**What We Know Doesn't Work:** 1. Generic RevOps consultant positioning 2. Asking discovery questions without demonstrating expertise 3. Demographic-based targeting (ICP profiles) 4. "Can I help you with X?" style outreach 5. Consultant-speak without technical specificity

**Why It Doesn't Work:** - Indistinguishable from 100 other consultants  
- No demonstration of expertise before asking - No specific problem identification - Fails to create information asymmetry - Doesn't address buyer skepticism

**The Diagnosis:** Not an effort problem - a messaging and positioning problem. Working harder at broken approach won't fix it. Need fundamental strategic shift.

### **Current Strategic Response**

**Major Pivot in Progress:** - FROM: "RevOps Consultant" → TO: "GTM Engineer" - FROM: Generic outreach → TO: Evidence-based prospecting - FROM: Asking questions → TO: Showing specific problems - FROM: Selling deliverables → TO: Selling velocity/transformation - FROM: Demographic targeting → TO: Pain-hunting methodology

**Implementation Status:** - Strategic framework: ✓ Defined - Messaging templates: ⚡ In development - Prospecting systems: ⚡ Building in Clay - Evidence gathering: ⚡ Manual process being automated - Market validation: ✗ Not yet tested at scale

## **Active Experiments**

### **Experiment 1: Failed Hire Hunt**

**Hypothesis:** Companies with failed hiring attempts for GTM/RevOps roles have:  
- Validated pain (tried to hire for it)  
- Allocated budget (job posting = money approved)  
- Urgency (role still open = problem still hurting)  
- Reduced resistance (already looking externally)

**Test Design:** 1. Build Clay workflow monitoring job postings >60 days 2. Identify companies with reposted or abandoned searches 3. Craft PVPs based on hiring pattern analysis 4. Send evidence-based outreach referencing failed search 5. Measure response and conversion rates

**Success Criteria:** - Response rate >10% (vs. previous 0%) - Qualified conversation rate >20% of responses - At least 1 conversation converts to paid engagement - Learn what messaging resonates vs. falls flat

**Current Status:** - Clay workflow: In development - Job posting monitoring: Manual testing - Message templates: Drafted, not sent at scale - Expected launch: This week

**Key Question:** Does failed hiring attempt signal strong enough pain to overcome consultant skepticism?

## Experiment 2: Agency Refugee Targeting

**Hypothesis:** Companies burned by lead gen agencies are: - Skeptical of outcome promises (good for methodology positioning) - Frustrated with dependency models (good for independence messaging) - Aware they need different approach (open to velocity framing) - Have budget (already paying agencies)

**Test Design:** 1. Scrape G2 reviews mentioning lead gen vendors negatively 2. Find LinkedIn posts complaining about agency results 3. Identify companies ending agency relationships 4. Craft “agency trap” positioning messages 5. Emphasize methodology transfer vs. outcome promises

**Success Criteria:** - Find 50+ qualified “agency refugee” prospects - Response rate >15% (higher than generic outreach) - Messaging resonance around “not another agency promise” - At least 1 conversion to audit or sprint

**Current Status:** - G2 review scraping: Testing data quality - LinkedIn complaint mining: Manual discovery - Message framework: Developed - Outreach execution: Not yet started

**Key Question:** Is “agency refugee” pain point strong enough driver, or too niche?

## Experiment 3: Tool Buyer Who Can’t Ship

**Hypothesis:** Companies that bought Clay/automation tools but show low campaign velocity: - Have capability gap, not budget gap - Recognize they need expertise (bought tools, couldn’t execute) - May be frustrated with slow progress - Open to “teach you to drive” positioning

**Test Design:** 1. Identify companies with Clay subscriptions (if data accessible) 2. Track LinkedIn posts about “trying to learn” tools 3. Monitor job postings for “Clay expert” or similar 4. Cross-reference with campaign velocity signals 5. Position as “velocity camp” not “I’ll do it for you”

**Success Criteria:** - Identify 30+ “tool rich, capability poor” prospects - “Lamborghini/drive stick” messaging resonates - Response rate validates hypothesis - Converts to 30-day sprint engagement

**Current Status:** - Clay usage data: Limited accessibility (partnership needed?) - LinkedIn signal monitoring: Manual process - Message testing: Framework ready - Scaling approach: Unclear without better data

**Key Question:** Can we identify these prospects reliably enough to make this scalable?

## Experiment 4: LinkedIn Frustration Mining

**Hypothesis:** People publicly complaining about GTM problems are: - Experiencing active pain (not theoretical) - Potentially in buying window (frustrated enough to post) - More receptive to solutions (already thinking about problem) - Lower cold outreach resistance (engaged on topic)

**Test Design:** 1. Use PhantomBuster to scrape engagement on GTM pain posts 2. Identify comments expressing specific frustrations 3. Analyze patterns in complaints (attribution, velocity, alignment) 4. Craft PVPs addressing exact complaint mentioned 5. Reach out with "saw your comment" permission

**Success Criteria:** - Build list of 100+ frustrated prospects - Higher response rate than cold outreach - Conversation quality better (pain already expressed) - Validate which pain points have most urgency

**Current Status:** - PhantomBuster setup: Ready to deploy - Target post identification: Manual curation - Message personalization: Framework exists - Systematic execution: Not yet started

**Key Question:** Does public complaint signal enough pain to drive buying decision?

## Experiment 5: Velocity Messaging Testing

**Hypothesis:** "Velocity/transformation" positioning resonates better than "deliverables" positioning because: - Buyers skeptical of outcome promises - Companies desperate to move faster - Methodology transfer more valuable than dependency - Differentiated from commodity competition

**Test Design:** 1. Create content variations: - Version A: Traditional deliverables ("I'll build your attribution") - Version B: Velocity framing ("I'll teach you to ship weekly") 2. Test on LinkedIn posts 3. Measure engagement patterns 4. Test in outreach messages 5. Track which version generates conversations

**Success Criteria:** - Velocity messaging gets 2x engagement vs. deliverables - Conversations from velocity messaging are higher quality - Prospects understand positioning without confusion - Differentiation clear in market response

**Current Status:** - Message variations: Drafted - LinkedIn testing: Inconsistent posting frequency - Engagement tracking: Informal - Outreach A/B testing: Not yet systematic

**Key Question:** Does "velocity" mean something valuable to buyers, or is it too abstract?

## Current Bottlenecks & Constraints

### 1. Time/Focus Constraints

**Dual-Track Reality:** - Part-time 1up.ai role: ~20 hours/week - Job searching/interviewing: ~10 hours/week - Consultancy building: ~15 hours/week - Total capacity: ~45 hours/week

**Impact:** - Split focus reduces momentum - Can't go all-in on any single track - Opportunity cost in every direction - Risk of doing multiple things poorly

**Mitigation Strategies:** - Time-box job search activities - Systematic consultancy building (not sporadic) - Accept reduced velocity vs. full-time commitment - Focus on highest-leverage activities only

## 2. Client Acquisition Expertise Gap

**The Paradox:** - Expert at GTM systems - Novice at selling GTM systems services - Can execute for clients brilliantly - Can't acquire clients effectively

**Specific Gaps:** - Evidence-based prospecting (methodology understood, execution lacking) - PVP creation (framework clear, implementation inconsistent) - Message testing (need systematic approach, currently ad-hoc) - Conversion optimization (limited pipeline to optimize)

**Learning Strategy:** - Study Jordan Crawford methodology deeply - Practice PVP creation systematically - Document what works/doesn't - Iterate based on actual market feedback

## 3. Content Consistency

**Current State:** - LinkedIn posting: Sporadic (not 3x/week target) - Long-form content: Nonexistent - Authority building: Inconsistent - Engagement: Reactive, not proactive

**Root Causes:** - No content system/calendar - Perfectionism blocking shipping - Time constraints (other priorities) - Unclear ROI from content

**Resolution Path:** - Accept "good enough" content - Batch creation approach - Focus on pain-point specificity over polish - Track engagement to justify effort

## 4. Case Study Gap

**The Problem:** - No completed client transformations - Can't show before/after results - Credibility relies on resume, not outcomes - Testimonials from employment, not consulting

**Chicken-Egg:** - Need clients to get case studies - Need case studies to get clients - How to break cycle?

**Potential Solutions:** 1. Offer discounted first engagement for testimonial rights 2. Document 1up.ai work as case study (with permission) 3. Create "hypothetical transformation" content showing methodology 4. Use audit engagements as mini-case studies 5. Partner with someone who has clients, provide delivery expertise

## 5. Service Delivery Systemization

**Current State:** - Frameworks exist conceptually - Not operationalized in repeatable playbooks - No templates/checklists for consistency - Each engagement would be custom

**Risks:** - Can't scale without systems - Quality inconsistency - Time inefficiency - Difficult to price accurately

**Systematization Needed:** - Client onboarding process - Sprint day-by-day playbook - Documentation templates - Handoff procedures - Success measurement frameworks

## Strategic Questions Under Investigation

### Business Model Questions

**Q1: Is 30-day sprint the right engagement model?** - **Pro:** Lower risk, faster proof, cleaner exit, differentiated - **Con:** May seem too short, limits depth, harder to sell premium price - **Testing:** Need client feedback on appeal of time-bounded model - **Alternative:** 90-day transformation with 30-day checkpoints?

**Q2: Should pricing be one-time or retainer?** - **Current:** Mix of both (audit one-time, fractional retainer) - **Velocity model:** Suggests one-time sprint fee - **Economics:** Retainer provides MRR stability - **Testing:** Which pricing model generates more yes decisions?

**Q3: Maximum client count - 7 or different number?** - **Jordan's rule:** Maximum 7 to maintain quality - **Economics:** 7 clients @ \$4K = \$28K/month (exceeds \$10K target) - **Capacity:** Can 7 sprints be delivered simultaneously with quality? - **Testing:** Find actual capacity through experience

**Q4: Should engagement be remote or in-person?** - **Current:** Assuming fully remote - **Alternative:** In-person sprint weeks for premium positioning? - **Economics:** Travel costs vs. price premium - **Testing:** Survey market interest in in-person option

### Market Positioning Questions

**Q5: Is "GTM Engineer" clear enough identity?** - **Hypothesis:** More differentiated than "RevOps Consultant" - **Risk:** Market may not know what GTM Engineer means - **Alternative:** "Revenue Systems Engineer"? "GTM Architect"? - **Testing:** Track comprehension in conversations

**Q6: Does velocity messaging resonate?** - **Hypothesis:** Buyers desperate to move faster - **Risk:** Too abstract, not concrete enough - **Alternative:** Focus on specific pain (attribution, alignment)? - **Testing:** Content engagement, outreach response rates

**Q7: Should positioning be horizontal or vertical?** - **Current:** Horizontal (any B2B SaaS) - **Rationale:** Need clients, any vertical acceptable - **Future:** May specialize based on where methodology fits best - **Testing:** Track which verticals respond better

**Q8: Premium or accessible pricing?** - **Current:** Middle positioning (\$3K-\$5K/month) - **Alternative:** Premium (\$8K-\$12K/month) or accessible (\$2K-\$3K)? - **Consideration:** Price signals quality but also creates barrier - **Testing:** Market feedback on price points

### Go-To-Market Questions

**Q9: Which prospecting tactic will work best?** - **Options:** Failed Hire Hunt, Agency Refugee, Tool Buyer, Frustration Mining - **Current:** Testing all simultaneously - **Future:** Focus on highest-converting approach - **Testing:** 90-day period measuring each tactic's performance

**Q10: Is content marketing worth the effort?** - **Investment:** 3-5 hours/week for consistent LinkedIn posting - **Opportunity cost:** Could be spent on direct outreach - **Long-term:** Authority building compounds - **Testing:** Track inbound inquiries from content

**Q11: Should referral partnerships be priority?** - **Pro:** Warmer leads, credibility transfer, scalable channel - **Con:** Takes time to build, not immediate revenue - **Current:** Low priority (focus on direct acquisition first) - **Future:** May become primary channel with case studies

**Q12: Geographic expansion worth considering?** - **Current:** North America focus - **Alternative:** English-speaking international markets - **Consideration:** Time zones, payment processing, cultural fit - **Testing:** Only if North American pipeline saturated

## Execution Questions

**Q13: What's the right balance between consultancy and job search?** - **Current:** Dual-track strategy - **Tradeoff:** Split focus vs. financial stability - **Hypothesis:** W2 role provides bridge to full-time consultancy - **Decision point:** If job offer comes, take it or double down on consultancy?

**Q14: When to exit dual-track strategy?** - **Option A:** When consultancy hits \$10K MRR (original goal) - **Option B:** When consultancy hits \$15K MRR (safety margin) - **Option C:** Never exit (keep W2 for stability, consultancy as side business) - **Consideration:** Risk tolerance, growth ambitions, lifestyle preferences

**Q15: Should first clients be discounted for case studies?** - **Pro:** Easier to close, get testimonials/results quickly - **Con:** Sets low price anchor, attracts wrong clients - **Alternative:** Full price but enhanced deliverables/access - **Testing:** Market feedback on pricing objections

**Q16: How to validate methodology before scaling?** - **Option A:** Perfect it with first 3 clients, then scale - **Option B:** Document and iterate while scaling - **Option C:** Never truly "done" - continuous improvement - **Current thinking:** Option B (ship, learn, improve)

## Hypotheses Requiring Validation

### Market Hypotheses

**H1: Growth-stage SaaS companies have acute GTM velocity pain** - **Evidence for:** Jordan Crawford's methodology success, market trends - **Evidence against:** No direct validation yet in Clayworks outreach - **Test:** Response rates to velocity-focused messaging - **Timeframe:** 90 days of systematic outreach

**H2: Failed hiring attempts signal strong buying intent** - **Logic:** Validated pain + budget + urgency - **Risk:** May have moved on to other solutions - **Test:** Failed Hire Hunt experiment - **Timeframe:** 60 days of targeted outreach

**H3: Buyers prefer methodology transfer over ongoing dependency** - **Logic:** CFOs hate ongoing consultant costs - **Risk:** May want "done for you" not "teach me" - **Test:** Positioning emphasis in conversations - **Timeframe:** First 10 sales conversations

**H4: 30-day sprint is appealing vs. 6-month engagements -**  
**Logic:** Lower risk, faster proof, cleaner exit - **Risk:** May seem too short for real transformation - **Test:** Close rate with sprint positioning  
- **Timeframe:** First 20 prospects pitched

**H5: "GTM Engineer" identity resonates better than "RevOps Consultant" -**  
**Logic:** Technical + strategic vs. generic consultant -  
**Risk:** Market confusion about what it means - **Test:** Comprehension and interest in conversations - **Timeframe:** 90 days of consistent identity use

## Competitive Hypotheses

**H6: Velocity positioning differentiates from commodity competition -**  
**Logic:** Everyone sells deliverables, nobody sells velocity - **Risk:** Too abstract to be compelling - **Test:** Head-to-head comparison in outreach - **Timeframe:** A/B test over 30 days

**H7: Evidence-based prospecting outperforms generic outreach -**  
**Logic:** Specific problem demonstration builds trust faster - **Risk:** Takes more time per prospect - **Test:** Response rates: evidence-based vs. generic - **Timeframe:** 100 messages each approach

**H8: Technical identity attracts better clients than generalist positioning -**  
**Logic:** Technical buyers appreciate systems thinking -  
**Risk:** May alienate non-technical buyers - **Test:** Client quality from technical vs. general messaging - **Timeframe:** First 10 client conversations

## Service Delivery Hypotheses

**H9: 30 days is sufficient for transformation -**  
**Logic:** Focused sprints create step-wise change - **Risk:** Too short for meaningful results - **Test:** First client transformation outcomes - **Timeframe:** First engagement completion

**H10: Clients can maintain velocity after sprint ends -**  
**Logic:** Methodology transfer creates independence - **Risk:** May need ongoing support despite training - **Test:** Client performance 60-90 days post-engagement - **Timeframe:** First client + 90 days

**H11: Maximum 7 clients maintains quality -**  
**Logic:** Jordan's business model constraint - **Risk:** May be able to handle more or need fewer - **Test:** Quality metrics at different client counts - **Timeframe:** After reaching 4+ clients

## Open Strategic Decisions

### Decision 1: Consultancy vs. W2 Employment Priority

**Context:** - Dual-track currently: building consultancy + pursuing GTM Engineer roles - Upcoming Redwood Software interview - Zero consultancy revenue currently - 1up.ai providing baseline income

**Options:** A. **Full Commitment to Consultancy** - Exit job search entirely - All energy to client acquisition - Higher risk, higher potential upside - Need financial runway

B. **Accept W2 Role if Offered** - Financial stability - Build expertise and case studies - Consultancy in reduced capacity - 1-year bridge strategy

C. **Continue Dual-Track Indefinitely** - Hedge both bets - Split focus acceptable - Lower risk, slower progress - May never fully commit

**Decision Factors:** - Financial stability needs - Risk tolerance - Growth ambitions - Market validation of consultancy model

**Timeline:** Must decide if Redwood (or other) offer comes

## Decision 2: Service Portfolio Focus

**Context:** - Currently offering 3 services (Audit, RevOps in a Box, Fractional) - May be too broad for early stage - Jordan's model suggests focused sprint offering

**Options:** A. **Single Flagship Offer (30-Day Sprint)** - All focus on one transformation model - Clearer positioning - Easier to systematize - May miss some opportunities

B. **Tiered Offerings (Current Model)** - Entry point (Audit) → Core service (Sprint) → Ongoing (Retainer) - More flexibility - Harder to position clearly - Resource spread thinner

C. **Problem-Specific Offerings** - Attribution Sprint - Velocity Sprint - Alignment Sprint - Very specific, easier to sell - More offerings to manage

**Decision Factors:** - What prospects actually want to buy - Delivery capacity constraints - Positioning clarity - Market feedback

**Timeline:** Decide after first 20 sales conversations

## Decision 3: Geographic/Vertical Specialization

**Context:** - Currently horizontal (any B2B SaaS) and North America focused - May benefit from specialization eventually - Too early to narrow without data?

**Options:** A. **Stay Horizontal Indefinitely** - Maximum market size - Slower authority building - Harder to differentiate - More case study variety

B. **Specialize After Pattern Emerges** - Let first 10 clients reveal pattern - Then focus on that vertical/segment - Data-driven specialization - May take 12-18 months

C. **Choose Vertical Now** - Faster authority in niche - Easier to create targeted content - Risk of choosing wrong vertical - Smaller market

**Decision Factors:** - Where methodology fits best (vertical SaaS per Jordan?) - Which industries respond to outreach - Personal interest/expertise - Market size and economics

**Timeline:** Revisit after 5-10 clients

## Decision 4: Pricing Model Finalization

**Context:** - Current pricing feels uncertain - Mix of one-time and retainer unclear - Velocity positioning may support different pricing

**Options:** A. **One-Time Sprint Fee (\$5K-\$8K)** - Aligns with 30-day transformation - Clear value exchange - No recurring revenue - Requires constant new client acquisition

B. **Sprint + Optional Retainer** - \$5K sprint + \$2K/month ongoing optional - Flexibility for clients - Recurring revenue potential - More complex to position

C. **Pure Retainer Model (\$4K-\$6K/month)** - Predictable MRR - Easier financial planning - May not align with sprint model - Harder to sell vs. one-time

**Decision Factors:** - What prospects prefer to buy - Cash flow management needs - Scalability considerations - Competitive positioning

**Timeline:** Test in first 10 sales conversations

## Decision 5: Content Strategy Priority

**Context:** - Current content inconsistent - Unclear ROI from LinkedIn posting - Time-constrained with dual-track strategy

**Options:** A. **Prioritize Content (3x/week minimum)** - Long-term authority building - Inbound lead generation - Compounds over time - Requires consistent time investment

B. **Minimize Content, Maximize Outbound** - All energy to direct prospecting - Faster feedback loops - No long-term asset building - May miss authority benefits

C. **Hybrid: Strategic Content Only** - Post only when have something valuable to say - Quality over quantity - Lower time commitment - May not achieve visibility

**Decision Factors:** - Actual content ROI (inbound inquiries) - Time availability with current constraints - Market feedback on content value - Personal sustainability

**Timeline:** 90-day test period to measure impact

## Critical Success Factors

### What Must Go Right for \$10K MRR Goal

1. **Messaging Breakthrough** - Evidence-based prospecting must outperform generic - Velocity positioning must resonate with buyers - PVPs must generate conversations - **Without this:** Dead in water regardless of effort

2. **First Client Success** - Must deliver transformation in 30 days - Client must achieve velocity improvement - Must generate strong testimonial - **Without this:** Can't prove methodology works

3. **Conversion Rate Improvement** - Must achieve >10% response rate (from 0%) - Must convert >20% of conversations to paid - Must achieve >25% close rate on proposals - **Without this:** Can't reach volume needed for \$10K

4. **Consistent Execution** - Must maintain prospecting volume weekly - Must ship content consistently for authority - Must systematize delivery for quality - **Without this:** Sporadic results, no momentum

5. **Market Validation** - Velocity messaging must attract right clients - 30-day sprint must be compelling offer - GTM Engineer identity must be clear - **Without this:** Positioning doesn't work

### What Could Kill the Business

**1. Messaging Failure** - Velocity positioning doesn't resonate - Evidence-based prospecting too time-intensive - Market doesn't understand GTM Engineer identity - **Result:** Can't differentiate from competition

**2. Delivery Failure** - Can't deliver transformation in 30 days - Clients don't achieve velocity improvement - Methodology transfer doesn't work - **Result:** No case studies, no referrals, no credibility

**3. Economic Shift** - SaaS market downturn reduces budgets - Consulting spend cut in recession - Competition races to bottom on price - **Result:** Market disappears or becomes unprofitable

**4. Personal Sustainability** - Dual-track creates burnout - Constant rejection damages confidence - Financial pressure forces rushed decisions - **Result:** Give up before breakthrough

**5. W2 Opportunity Distraction** - Great job offer creates tempting exit - Split focus prevents consultancy momentum - Never fully commit to either path - **Result:** Mediocre outcomes on both tracks

## Next 90 Days: Critical Path

### Week 1-2: Launch Evidence-Based Prospecting

- Complete Failed Hire Hunt Clay workflow
- Build initial prospect list (50+ companies)
- Craft evidence-based outreach templates
- Launch first wave of 50 personalized messages
- Track response rates and learnings

### Week 3-4: Test Velocity Messaging

- Create velocity-focused LinkedIn content (6 posts)
- A/B test deliverables vs. velocity messaging
- Measure engagement and comprehension
- Document which framing resonates
- Iterate messaging based on feedback

### Week 5-8: Multi-Tactic Prospecting Sprint

- Deploy Agency Refugee targeting
- Launch LinkedIn Frustration Mining
- Test Tool Buyer identification
- Send 200+ evidence-based messages
- Generate 10+ qualified conversations

### Week 9-10: First Engagement Push

- Convert conversations to audit/sprint sales
- Refine pricing and positioning based on objections
- Close first paid engagement (audit minimum)
- Begin delivery with documentation mindset
- Set up success measurement

### Week 11-12: Learn and Iterate

- Analyze what's working vs. not
- Double down on highest-converting tactic
- Systematize successful approaches
- Document early case study material
- Plan next 90 days based on learning

## **Success Criteria for 90 Days**

- **Minimum:** 1 paid engagement (audit or sprint) closed
- **Target:** 2-3 paid engagements totaling >\$5K revenue
- **Stretch:** 1 client on retainer or sprint completed with testimonial
- **Learning:** Clear data on which tactics/messaging works

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**Status:** Active experimentation phase **Last Updated:** December 2025

**Next Review:** After first client engagement begins