

10 QUESTIONS THAT REVEAL WHETHER YOUR GTM LEADER CANDIDATE ACTUALLY GETS IT

For founders hiring revenue leadership — and the investors advising them

🕒 7 minutes | 📄 Use in your next interview

Before you interview anyone, answer this:

Are you hiring someone to run an existing revenue engine, or to build one?



If your GTM motion already works and you need someone to scale it — a traditional CRO might be fine.

But if you're still figuring out your motion, pricing, ICP, or how product and sales connect — you don't need someone who inherits systems. You need someone who architects them.

These 10 questions will reveal which type of leader you're actually talking to.



SYSTEMS THINKING

Q1: “Walk me through how you’d diagnose why pipeline isn’t converting.”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Jumps to tactics (“More SDR activity”)	Maps the full loop: lead quality, ICP fit, handoffs, pricing, product gaps
Blames one team	Diagnoses the system before proposing fixes



💡 **PRO TIP:** Systems thinkers diagnose before they prescribe. Silo thinkers optimize their corner.

Q2: “How do you think about the relationship between product and revenue?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
“Product builds, we sell”	“Pricing is a product. Activation is a product. Retention loops are a product.”
Treats product as separate	Sees product decisions as revenue architecture

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL OWNERSHIP

Q3: “Which functions have you directly owned — not influenced, *owned*?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
One domain only	Multiple: sales + ops + pricing + data
“I partnered closely with...”	“I was accountable for...”



💡 **PRO TIP:** “Partnered with” often means “attended meetings with.”


Q4: “Tell me about a time you had to rebuild a GTM motion, not just optimize one.”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Incremental improvements	Architectural decisions: changed ICP, restructured team, rewired handoffs, repriced
“We improved conversion 15%”	“We redesigned the system because the old one couldn’t scale”



TECHNICAL FLUENCY

Q5: “How do you think about RevOps infrastructure and automation?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
“That’s an ops/IT thing”	“I spec the architecture; ops implements it”
Tool-focused (“We use Salesforce”)	Talks data flow, handoff automation, instrumentation



 **PRO TIP:** Leaders who can’t spec their own systems will always be bottlenecked by whoever can.


Q6: “What’s your relationship with data — do you build dashboards or just read them?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
“I have a team for that”	“I know what to measure and why — I can spec it even if I don’t build it”
Vanity metrics (MQLs, activity)	Leading indicators tied to revenue outcomes



FINANCIAL RIGOR

Q7: “How do you model the relationship between sales capacity and unit economics?”



 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Blank stare / “Finance handles that”	Describes capacity models, CAC payback, rep productivity curves
“We hire when we need pipeline”	“Hiring is capital allocation - here’s how I model it”

 **PRO TIP:** If they can’t talk CAC/LTV and capacity in the same breath, they’ll burn money scaling the wrong motion.

Q8: “Tell me how you’d present a GTM plan to a board.”



 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Pipeline targets and headcount asks	Unit economics, efficiency trends, capacity constraints, scenarios
“Here’s what we’ll hit”	“Here’s the system, here’s the leverage, here’s what we’re betting on”


Q9: “What would you instrument first in a new GTM role?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Activity metrics (calls, emails)	Conversion by stage, time-in-stage, leading indicators of retention
“Whatever isn’t tracked”	“What tells us if the system is healthy before revenue shows it”

PHILOSOPHY

Q10: “What’s your operating philosophy in one sentence?”

 RED FLAG	 GREEN FLAG
Platitudes (“Customer first”)	A real maxim they’ve earned
Can’t articulate one	Clear mental model that explains their decisions

 **PRO TIP:** Leaders without a philosophy will default to whatever playbook they inherited.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS

If your best candidates struggled with half these questions, it’s not their fault.

Traditional CROs, VPs of Sales, and Heads of Growth are trained to optimize one part of the machine — not architect the whole system.

You might not need a bigger title. You might need a different kind of leader.

What would change if your GTM leader could speak product, marketing, sales, ops, devops, *and* finance — fluently?

LET’S FIND OUT →

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