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The B2B Trust Architecture

A scorecard for building B2B credibility that buyers can verify



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WHY TRUST HAS TO BE BUILT, NOT CLAIMED

Buyers decide before they call

Most B2B buying groups have already ranked their preferred vendors by the time they reach out. In one 2025 study of B2B buyers, 94% of buying groups had ranked a favorite before first contact. Whatever buyers find on their own is your pitch.

That makes credibility a pre-sales asset. It has to be in place, visible and checkable long before your team gets a meeting. AI-generated content can fill a calendar quickly, but volume gives a buyer nothing to verify. A trust architecture does.

How to use this scorecard

Score each statement from a buyer's point of view. Ask what a stranger could find, check and confirm without talking to you. Be honest. A generous score only hides the gaps buyers will find anyway.

0 = not in place
1 = partly in place or inconsistent
2 = fully in place and easy to verify

The four components

A trust architecture is the set of proof a buyer can check before they ever talk to you. It has four parts. Each one answers a question buyers are already asking.

01

Verified people

Who is actually behind this content, and can I confirm they know what they're talking about?

02

Visible leadership

Do this company's leaders have a point of view I can follow and agree with?

03

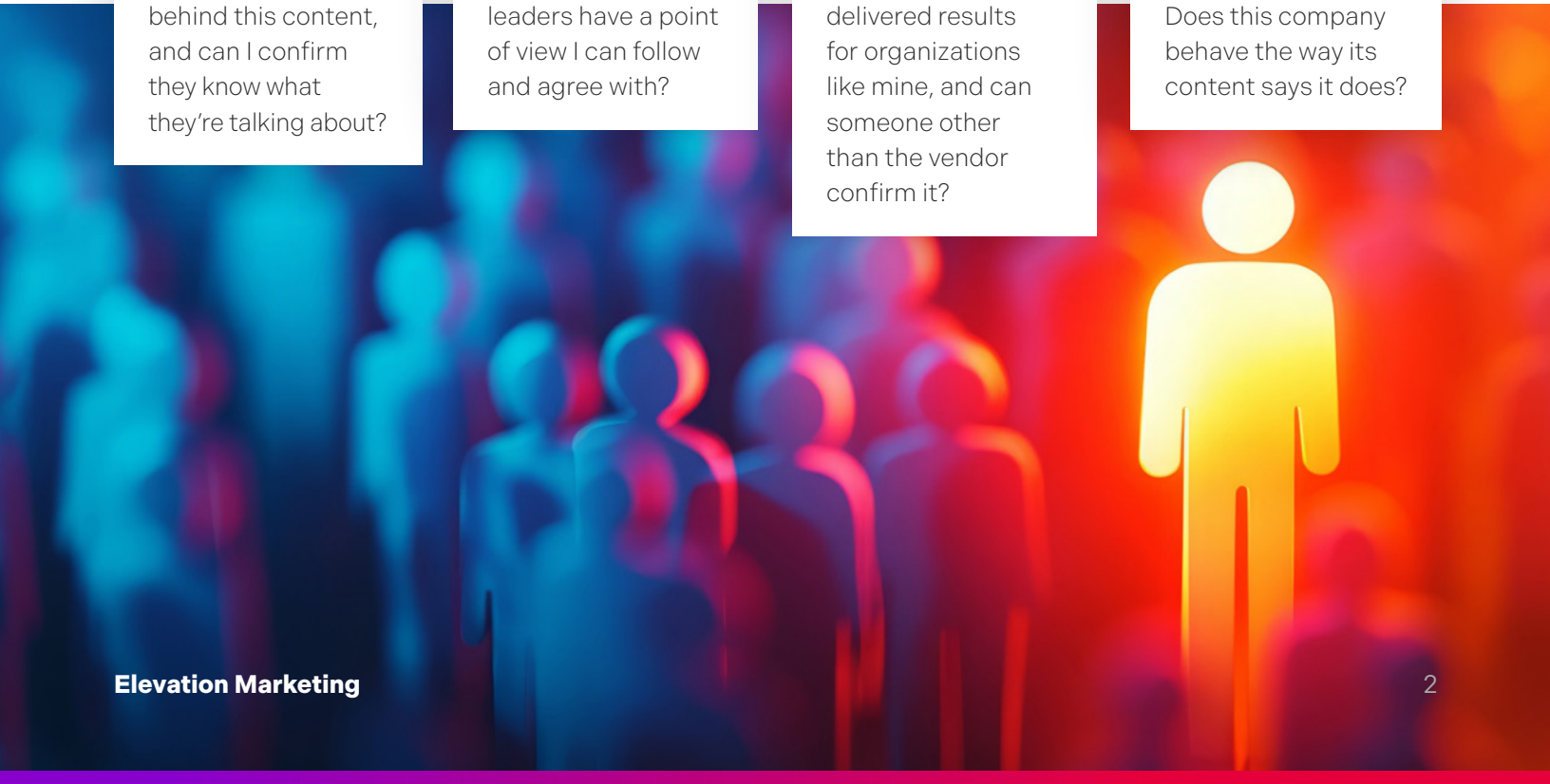
Proven outcomes

Has this company delivered results for organizations like mine, and can someone other than the vendor confirm it?

04

Consistent company signals

Does this company behave the way its content says it does?



THE SCORECARD

Score your trust architecture

	#	Statement	0	1	2
VERIFIED PEOPLE	1	Every published article carries a named author with a bio page.			
	2	Author bios link to verified professional profiles with matching credentials.			
	3	Our content includes claims only our team could make, such as proprietary data or firsthand experience.			
	4	We disclose how AI assists our content and who reviews it before publishing.			
		TOTAL (OUT OF 8)			
VISIBLE LEADERSHIP	1	At least one executive publishes a consistent point of view on LinkedIn.			
	2	Each executive's content covers a distinct area tied to their real expertise.			
	3	Executive content starts with the executive's own thinking, captured in conversation.			
	4	A buyer could describe what our leaders believe after reading a few of their posts.			
		TOTAL (OUT OF 8)			
PROVEN OUTCOMES	1	We publish case studies with named clients and specific, measurable results.			
	2	Prospects can speak with client references on request.			
	3	We have current third-party validation, such as reviews, awards or analyst mentions.			
	4	Our results show up where buyers and AI search tools look, beyond our own website.			
		TOTAL (OUT OF 8)			

THE SCORECARD

Score your trust architecture

	#	Statement	0	1	2
CONSISTENT COMPANY SIGNALS	1	Our public actions, including hiring, leadership changes and announcements, match what our content says.			
	2	Employer review sites reflect the culture we describe.			
	3	Our website, sales materials and proposals tell the same story.			
	4	Procurement-ready materials (team bios, certifications and references) are easy to find.			
		TOTAL (OUT OF 8)			

Read your results

Total score: ___ / 32

26–32

Strong foundation.

Buyers can verify who you are and what you've delivered. Focus on keeping proof current.

17–25

Developing.

You have real proof, but gaps are likely costing you shortlist spots. Fix the lowest-scoring component first.

0–16

Needs attention.

Buyers researching on their own probably can't find enough to rank you. Start with proven outcomes.

For each component, a subtotal of **7 or 8 is strong, 4 to 6 is developing** and **3 or below is a priority.**

Where to invest first

If you're rarely shortlisted.
Start with proven outcomes. Buyers and AI search tools both lean on third-party validation when they build a shortlist.

If you're shortlisted but lose on fit.
Start with visible leadership and verified people. Buyers can see that you deliver. They aren't yet convinced you think the way they do.

If deals stall late.
Check consistent company signals. Something buyers find late in the process is likely contradicting what your content promised.

Four steps to build it

1. **Audit.** Use this scorecard to see what a buyer can verify today.
2. **Prioritize.** Fix the weakest component closest to the shortlist decision.
3. **Assign.** Give each component an owner and a source of proof, from subject matter experts to account teams and clients.
4. **Maintain.** Proof goes stale. Refresh case studies, bylines and references on a regular schedule.



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Want a second set of eyes on your score?

Your score is a starting point. The next step is understanding which credibility gaps matter most to your buyers and where improvements will make the greatest difference.

Elevation can help you evaluate your results, prioritize opportunities and develop a practical plan to make your expertise, leadership and proven outcomes easier for buyers to verify.

Next step

Elevation Marketing helps B2B companies build credibility buyers can verify, from expert bylines to case studies to executive voice programs.

Read the full framework at
elevationb2b.com/blog/trust-architecture-framework

Talk with Elevation Marketing
elevationb2b.com/contact-us/

