LIVE SESSION · 45 MINUTES

From 70 to 9: Rebuilding the Agency.

Why the next great agencies will be built like SaaS companies — the rebuild has already started.

— Simon Penson · Founder, Scaled

WHO

I live in both worlds.

SaaS investor. Agency operator. NED on both sides of the table. **I know which side wins** — because I'm helping build it.

01 Built & sold a 350-person agency to IPG.

02 Co-founder, Haatch — 180+ B2B SaaS investments.

03 NED across SaaS and agency; works with PE on acquisitions.

GET IN TOUCH

Simon Penson

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Every agency leader I meet asks the same question.

→ Not whether AI matters. Where do we actually start?

Most have already started. Badly.

→ Subscriptions everywhere. Structure nowhere.

You do not have a tool problem. You have a roadmap problem.

So today: two roadmaps and a method.

→ One for how you work. One for what you sell. And the loops that ship both.

70 to 9.

→ What happens when you follow the roadmap.

We mapped every keystroke inside a US agency.

Every task. Every handoff. Every hour. For months.

70

people in the content operation when we started

9

people producing the same output today

That is not a forecast. It already happened.

And it did not start with tools. Or layoffs.

→ It started with a roadmap.

BUILD

What's working, what isn't

01 Working: one service line rebuilt end to end, then copied

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02 Working: senior people freed to sell, think and review

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03 Not working: tool subscriptions with no process change behind them

04 Not working: pilots that never reach the P&L

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What founders are actually changing

01 Delivery: work rebuilt around loops, not job descriptions

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02 Pricing: moving off the hour before clients force it

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01	Delivery: work rebuilt around loops, not job descriptions
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03	Team shape: fewer people, more senior, each with leverage

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What founders are actually changing

01	Delivery: work rebuilt around loops, not job descriptions
02	Pricing: moving off the hour before clients force it
03	Team shape: fewer people, more senior, each with leverage
04	Ownership: turning delivery IP into an asset they own

ACT III

Roadmap one: how you work.

→ Borrowing the discipline SaaS never works without.

SaaS businesses never build on instinct.

→ Every feature earns its place on a roadmap.

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How a product roadmap works

01 Score every idea for impact

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02 Score it again for effort and complexity

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03 Rank the backlog — highest return first

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04 Ship, measure, reprioritise, repeat

PRODUCT ROADMAP

What a good roadmap looks like

Horizons, not dates. Impact, not activity.

Now

QUICK WINS · 0–30 DAYS

EFFORT CUT
Automate status reporting

HANDOFF FIX
Consolidate briefing intake

QUALITY GATE
Standardise QA checklist

Next

STRATEGIC BUILDS · 30–90 DAYS

VALUE ADD
Self-service client dashboard

LOOP BUILD
First delivery loop productised

REVENUE
Pricing model pilot

Later

BETS · 90+ DAYS

EXPERIMENT
AI-assisted proposal engine

PRODUCT
New packaged service line

Ranked by impact × complexity. Re-sorted every cycle.

Agencies never needed one. Capacity was just headcount.

→ That era is over.

So we built BluPrint.

→ Product roadmap discipline, applied to agency work.

BUILD

How BluPrint works

01 Map every task moving through the business, lane by lane

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04 Rank by ROI into a build roadmap

The scoring lens: value or effort.

→ Value work is what the client is buying. Effort work is everything wrapped around it.

60%+

of audited hours were effort, not value

AI DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

BluPrint

TOTAL OPPORTUNITIES	QUICK WINS	STRATEGIC BUILDS	BUSINESS LANES
14	5	4	6

AVG IMPACT	AVG COMPLEXITY	EXPERIMENTS	DEPRIORITISED
71	44	3	2

This is the diagnostic output: a ranked roadmap, not a tool list.

70 to 9 was this roadmap, executed.

→ Quick wins first. They funded belief in the strategic builds.

Roadmap two: what you sell.

→ The external opportunity most agencies are ignoring.

Cutting cost is only half the opportunity.

→ The other half is what you take to market.

£1:£6

for every £1 spent on software, £6 is spent on services

Everyone says AI lets software capture all £7.

→ They are wrong about who.

You are already sitting on the IP.

→ Every process you have refined across a hundred clients is a product waiting to be named.

VALUE LADDER

What clients pay for, over time.

DESTINATION

01
Hours
Sold by the day, capped by headcount.

02
Deliverables
Packaged, but margins compress.

03
Expertise
Premium, but trapped in people.

04
Product
Encoded expertise that compounds.

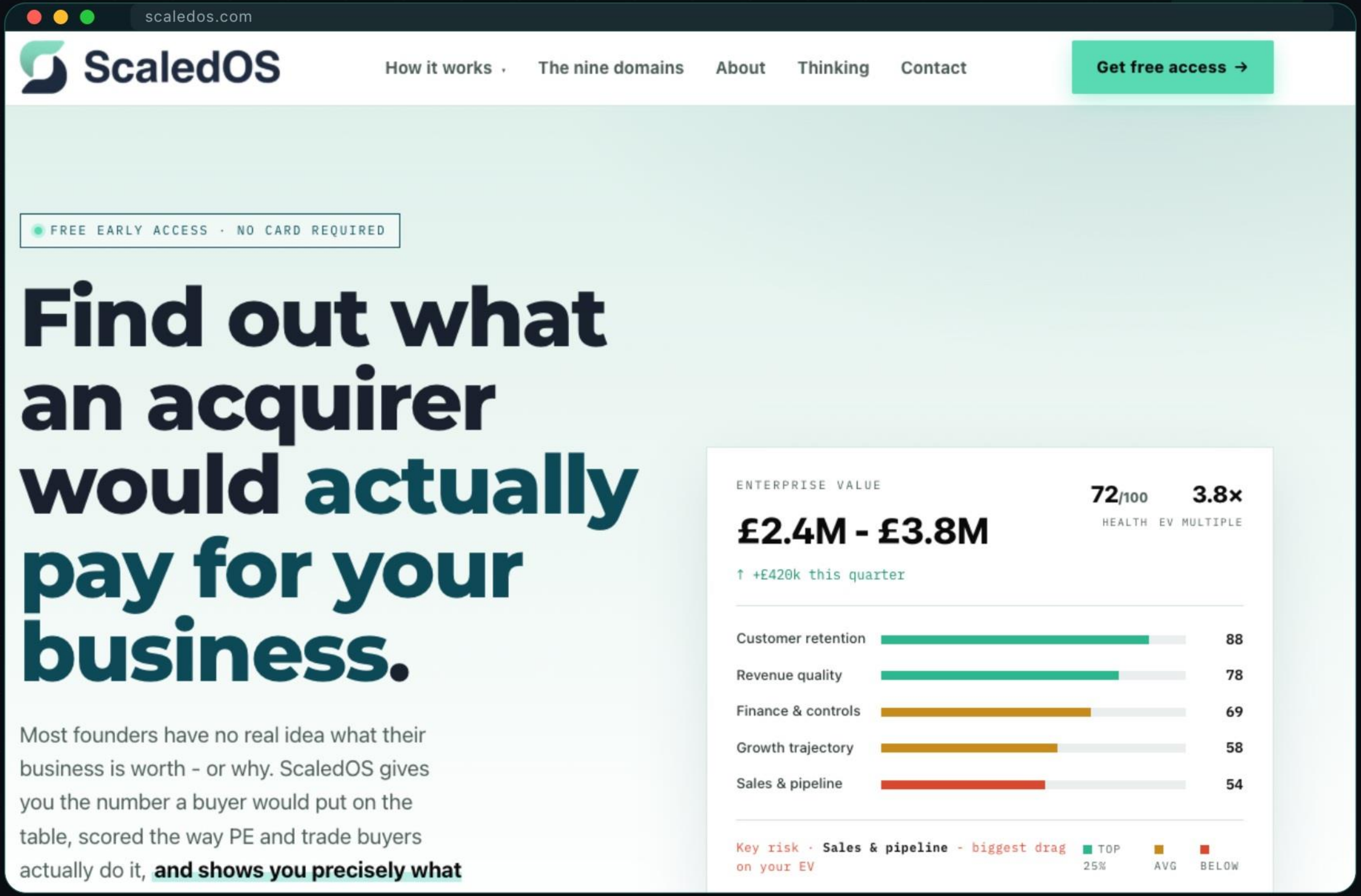
Case study: we ran the same scoring on ourselves.

→ What Scaled sold by the hour became what Scaled ships as software.

PRODUCT

ScaledOS.

Enterprise value scoring and benchmarking for B2B founders — the diagnostic, productised.



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How we thought about it

01 Listed every piece of expertise we sold by the hour

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02 Scored each for market size and buildability — the same impact × complexity lens

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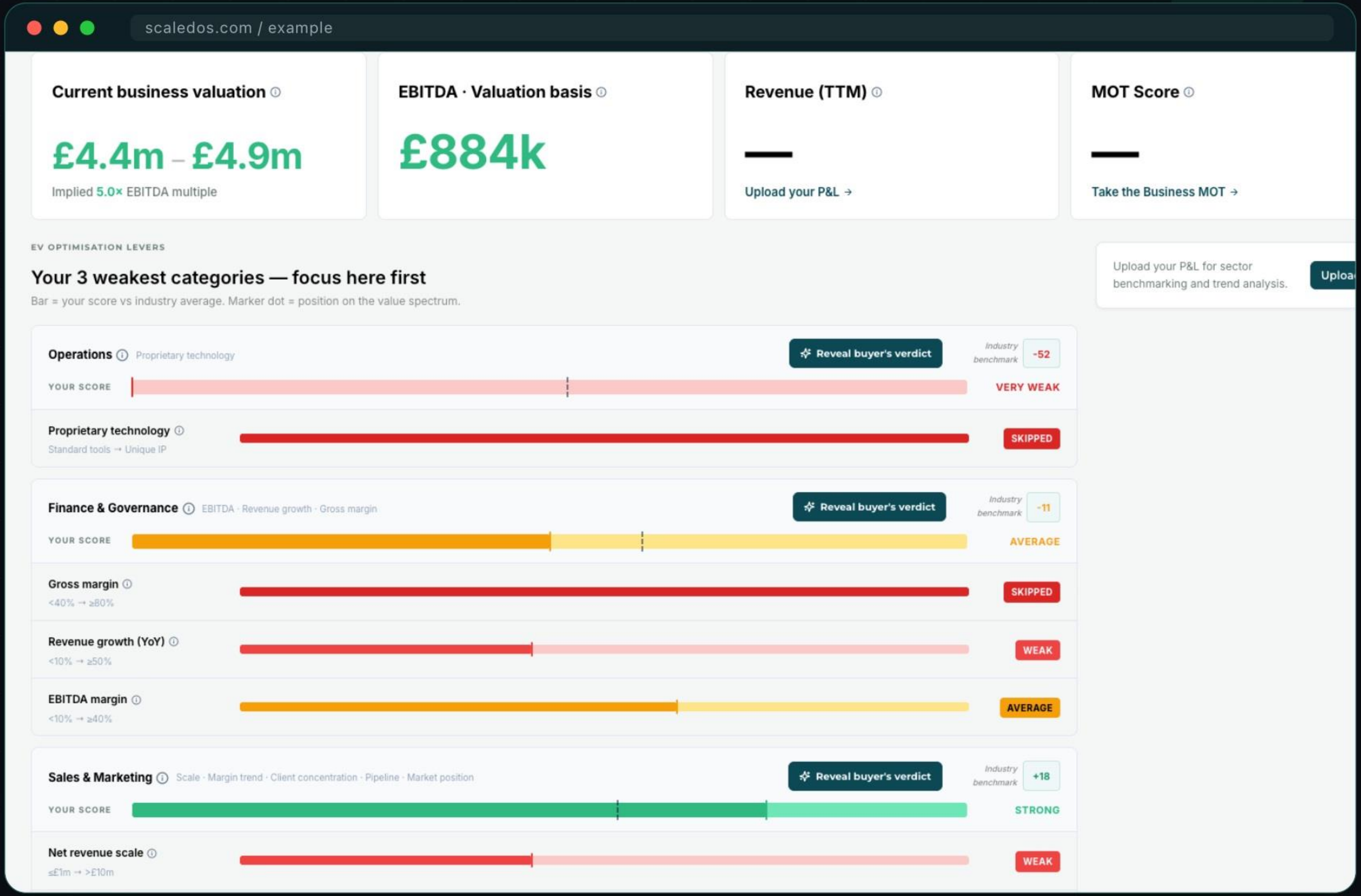
03 Productised the winner: enterprise value scoring

04 Shipped it free, so every user makes the product smarter

PRODUCT

Here is an agency that used it last week.

Real diagnostic output from a £4-5m agency business — not Scaled, an example client.



Two roadmaps. One page.

→ Internal cuts cost. External creates enterprise value. Winners run both.

Loops are the future.

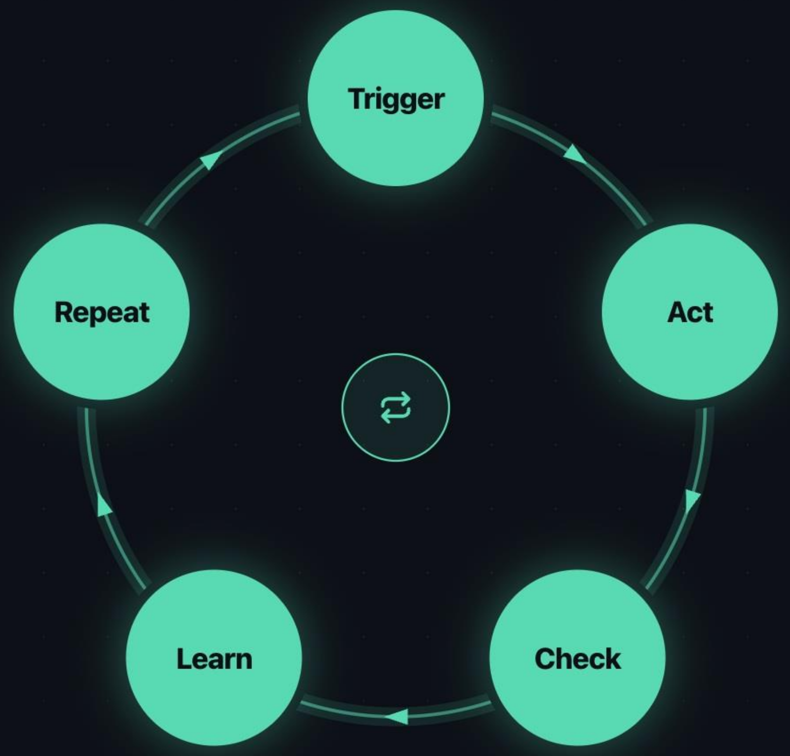
→ The delivery mechanism for both roadmaps.

A loop is the smallest repeatable unit of work that produces value.

→ Brief in, asset out. Data in, insight out. Enquiry in, proposal out.

LOOP DIAGRAM

A loop is a machine that gets smarter.



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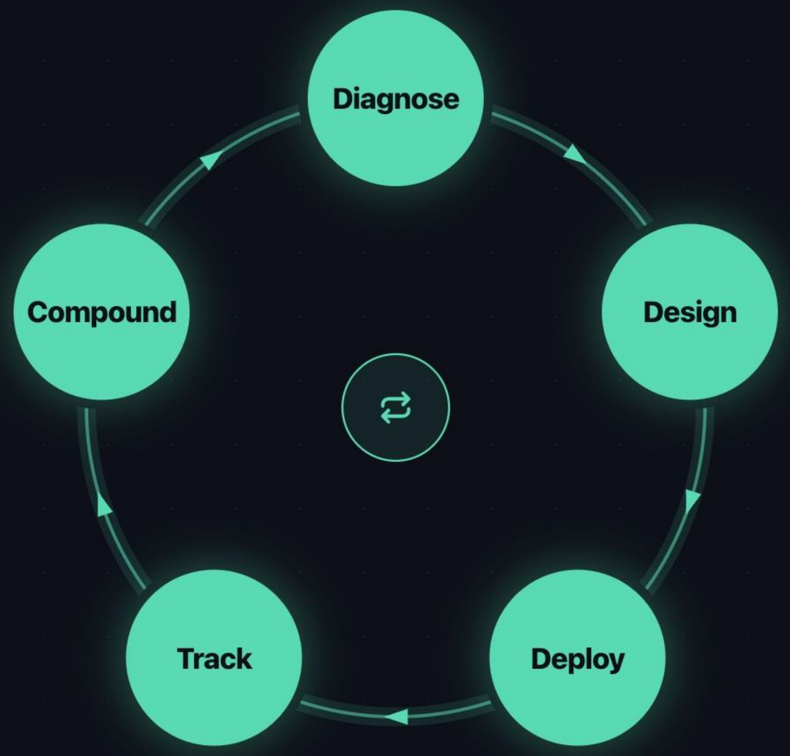
LOOP DIAGRAM

Loops are built in a loop.



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You do not need an AI team. You need a pod of two.

→ Your best operator, who knows how the work really gets done — and a loop builder.

BUILD

There are two types of loops

01 A loop around a specific set of outputs

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There are two types of loops

01 A loop around a specific set of outputs

02 A loop built specifically for a client problem

Loops compound. Headcount does not.

→ Every engineered loop adds capacity without adding payroll.

Do not build seven loops. Build one.

→ Fully closed, measured and live — before you start the next.

The 9-person operation is a library of loops.

→ Loop by loop, service line by service line — until the whole business ran on them.

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What the 9-person org actually looks like

01 Roles that survive: the ones closest to the client and the judgement

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03 The loop owner: one person accountable for one loop's output, quality and cost

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What the 9-person org actually looks like

01	Roles that survive: the ones closest to the client and the judgement
02	Roles that merge: coordination, production and QA collapse into loop ownership
03	The loop owner: one person accountable for one loop's output, quality and cost
04	The reviewer: a human quality gate on every loop, never the bottleneck

Roadmaps decide. Loops deliver.

Your first 90 days.

→ The step-by-step. Start Monday.

STEP

01

Weeks 1–2 — Map one service line. Every task, every handoff, every hour.

STEP

02

Week 3 — Score it. Impact × complexity. Value or effort.

STEP

03

Week 4 — Rank it. Your first roadmap. Quick wins first.

STEP

04

Weeks 5–8 — Build loop one. Pod of two. Diagnose to Compound.

STEP

05

Weeks 9–12 — Measure the delta. Reprioritise. Go again.

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In parallel: start roadmap two

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In parallel: start roadmap two

- 01 List every piece of expertise clients pay you for
- 02 Find the process you have refined across the most clients
- 03 Score it like a SaaS founder would — market size × buildability
- 04 Name it. That is your first product.

— QUESTION

Five questions to take back

01	Which service line carries the most effort work

— QUESTION

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01 Which service line carries the most effort work

02 What share of our output is judgement, not production

— QUESTION

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— QUESTION

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Five questions to take back

01	Which service line carries the most effort work
02	What share of our output is judgement, not production
03	What would we sell if we could not sell hours
04	Who owns loop one, and by when
05	What is the one process we could name and sell

— QUESTION

One decision to make early: where does the dividend go?

Price, margin or reinvestment. Choose — or the market chooses for you.

Get this right, and buyers reprice you.

→ Agencies selling hours trade on EBITDA. Businesses running loops and products trade like software.

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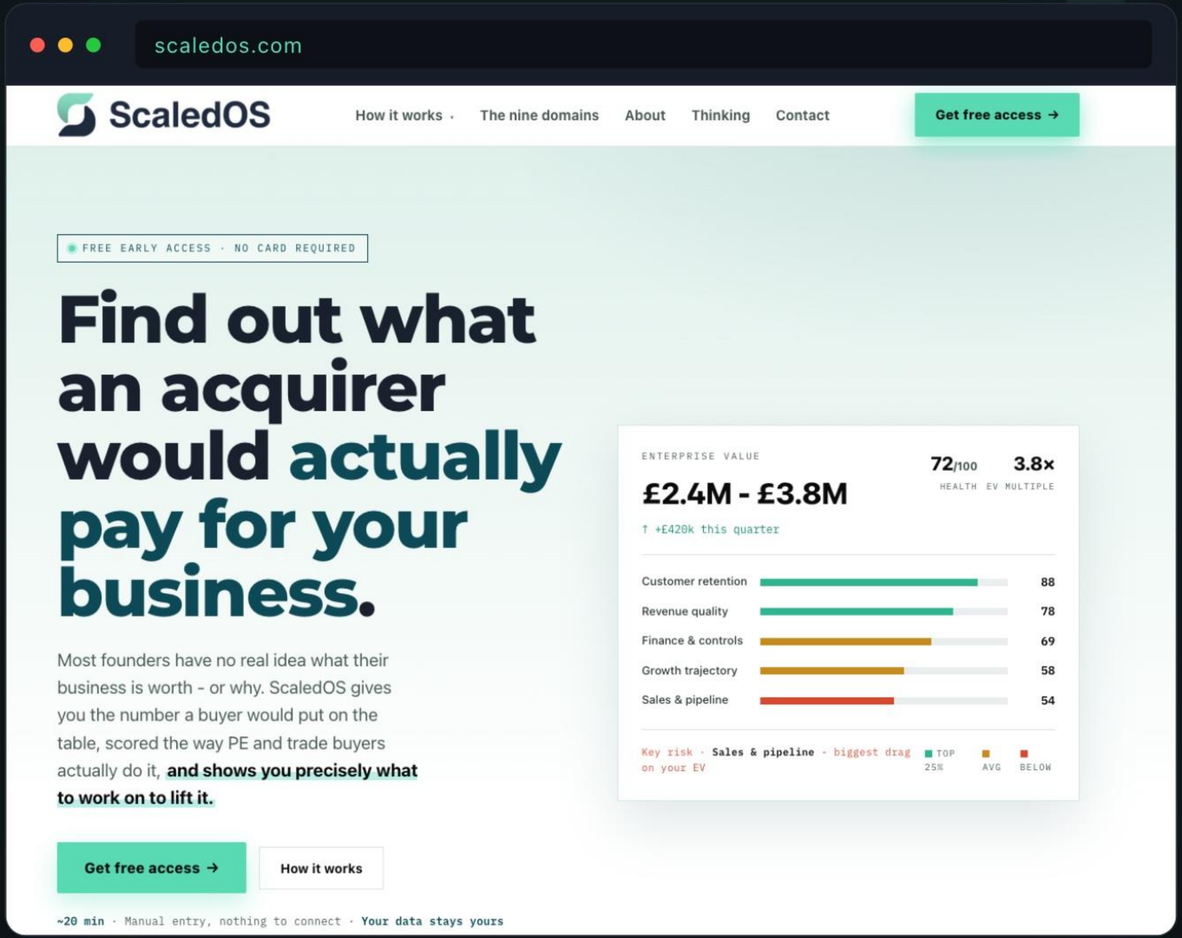

AND ONE MORE

The loop-engineered agency field guide.

SCALED.CO.UK/LOOP

Nobody has all the answers. But standing still is a decision too.

AND THAT'S A WRAP

Thank you.

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