

THE FRACTIONAL CMO HIRING SCORECARD FOR STARTUPS

Hire for the stage you are in, hand over the system, keep the irreversible bets, and score every candidate the same way. Companion to [Fractional CMO for Startups: When to Hire, What It Costs and How to Choose](#).

01 / What a fractional CMO owns at each stage

Stage	Typical situation	What the fractional CMO owns	What to measure
Seed	The founder sells every deal, the pitch shifts from call to call, the site is thin and there is no analytics baseline	Positioning and one consistent pitch, technical site health, the analytics baseline, an AI-run content engine and the launch plan	Indexed pages, search impressions, clicks beyond the homepage, demos that end with a dated next step, trial signups
Series A	Demand repeats from one or two channels, the first marketers are joining, and the CEO still approves everything	A weekly KPI system with named owners, the first two or three hires, the SEO, AEO and content engine, and new demand channels	Weekly demo requests, MQLs, AI-sourced sessions, pipeline by source
Series B	A team of several, more channels and segments, and a board asking where pipeline comes from	Attribution and the pipeline dashboard, coaching the team, ABM and PR, and writing the full-time CMO role	Pipeline by channel, marketing-sourced win rate, and how many decisions still wait on the fractional leader

02 / Hand over

- ☐ The weekly KPI report and the funnel definitions behind it
- ☐ Channel priorities and the marketing budget, inside an envelope you agree
- ☐ Content, SEO, AEO and the website
- ☐ Email, events and launch plans
- ☐ Direction of any agency or freelancer
- ☐ The hiring loop for marketing roles, with you in the final interview

03 / Keep

- ☐ The category bet and the product roadmap
- ☐ Pricing, after hearing what buyers say on calls
- ☐ Founder-led sales on the deals that define the company
- ☐ The final yes on brand and on every hire
- ☐ Investor and board relationships

04 / How to scope the engagement

- **Fit call.** Thirty minutes on goals, numbers and whether the fit is real.
- **Discovery.** An audit of funnel, content, stack and team, using the AI Discovery Workshop from The Agentive AI Marketing Leader Playbook.
- **A 90-day plan.** Three priorities, named owners and the numbers it will be judged on.
- **Weekly muster.** What failed, what improved and what anyone said, ending in at most three adjustments.

- **Daily muster.** Achieved, pending and blocked, from every person.
- **Day-90 review.** Renew on the artifacts produced, never on hours logged.

05 / The hiring scorecard

Question to ask	A strong answer	A red flag
What number moved at your last startup engagement?	Names the metric, the before and after, and the time window	Lists activities and campaigns with no numbers
What could you not claim there?	Names an attribution gap plainly and what would close it	Every result is described as revenue
What will exist at day 90 that does not exist today?	A baseline, a weekly KPI report, a knowledge base, a live workflow and a hiring plan	A strategy document or a brand deck
How many days a week will we get, and what happens in a launch week?	A stated weekly commitment and a clear rule for crunch weeks	As needed, with nothing in writing
Who does the execution?	A mix of team, agency and AI workflows, each with an owner inside the company	Everything flows to the candidate's own agency
Show me an AI workflow you run today.	Walks through one live workflow, its quality gates and where a person approves	Only names tools, or says AI writes everything
What happens to the systems when you leave?	Runbooks, company-owned accounts and a named internal owner for each workflow	Assets live in the candidate's accounts or tools
Which of our sales calls would you listen to first?	Asks for recordings and the CRM before forming a view	Starts with a logo refresh or a site redesign
What do you need from me each week?	A short review slot, clear decision rights and fast answers on pricing and hires	Nothing, or approval of every post
When should we replace you with a full-time CMO?	Names the signals and offers to write the role	Avoids the question

06 / Worksheet: score the candidates

Question	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
What number moved at your last startup engagement?			
What could you not claim there?			
What will exist at day 90 that does not exist today?			
How many days a week will we get, and what happens in a launch week?			
Who does the execution?			
Show me an AI workflow you run today.			
What happens to the systems when you leave?			
Which of our sales calls would you listen to first?			
What do you need from me each week?			
When should we replace you with a full-time CMO?			

07 / **Worksheet: the Founder Hours Test**

Log every marketing hour and decision from last week. If marketing took a day or more and most decisions did not need you, you are ready for a leader.

Marketing decision or task last week	Hours	Only a founder could decide? (Y/N)