BOARDROOM BRIEF

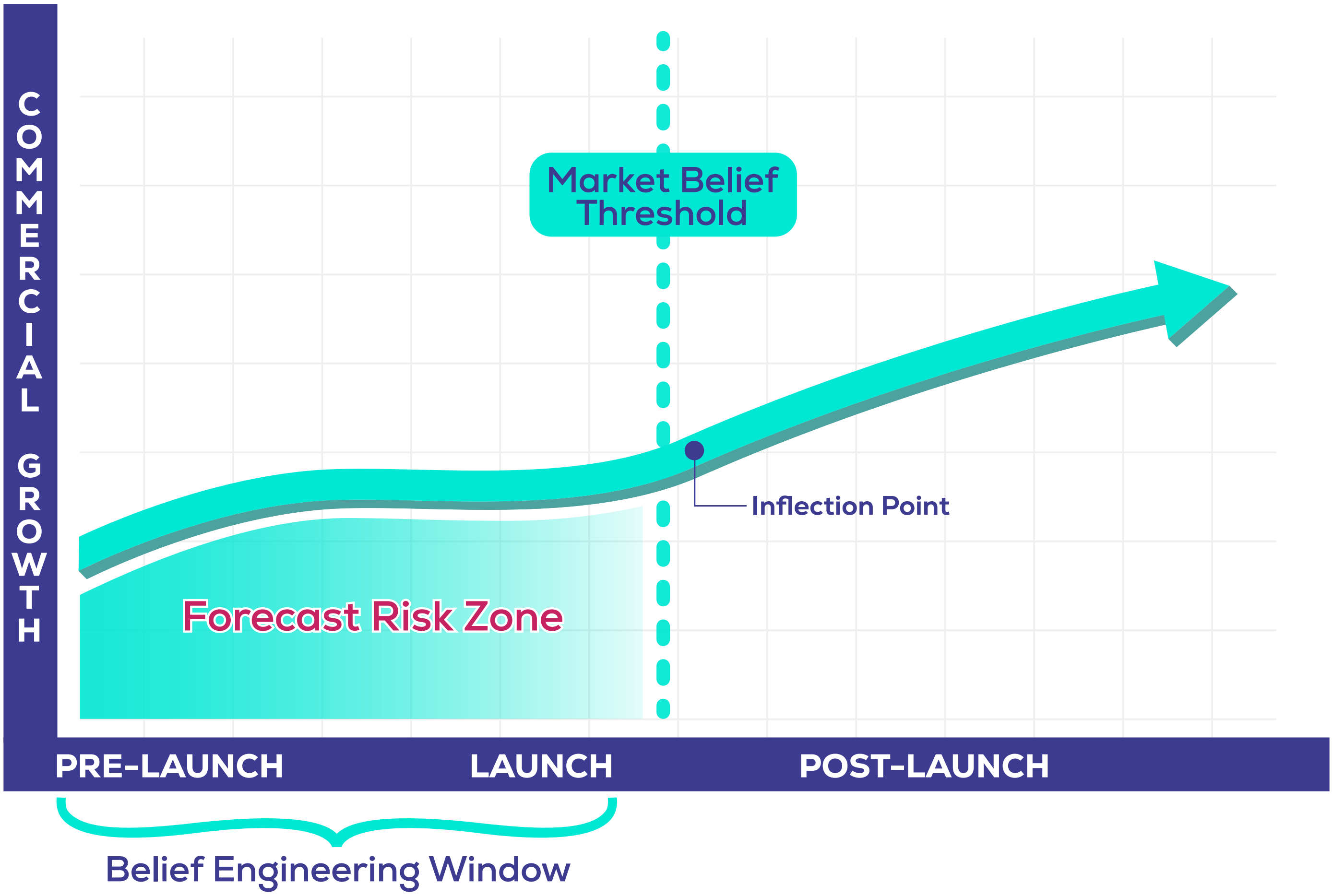
You Don't Wait for Market Readiness. You Build It.

Every leadership team has an explanation for slow adoption, all built on the same assumption: the market isn't ready.

But readiness isn't something the market hands you. It's the consequence of changing how the market thinks.

You can wait for resistance to fade (it won't). Instead, engineer the conditions that make it fail and create the commercial inflection point you need.

Commercial Growth Framework



Key Takeaways

1

The market isn't unwilling. It's unaddressed. Slow adoption isn't a verdict on your product. It's evidence the market hasn't been given a compelling reason to abandon the current standard of care.

2

Markets don't change because time passes. They change when they reach a different conclusion. Readiness isn't something to wait for. It's the consequence of companies changing what clinicians believe, value, and ultimately decide.

3

Commercial success is designed long before launch. The companies that outperform don't simply launch into a ready market. They deliberately create the conditions that make abandoning the current standard feel like the right decision before commercial execution begins.

Cologuard

CASE STUDY

Cologuard: When the "Worse" Test Won the Market

Colorectal cancer screening already had a gold standard—and a settled logic to back it up: The better test wins.

Colonoscopy earned that position. It detects polyps, removes them during the same procedure, and identifies roughly 95% of advanced lesions.

When Exact Sciences introduced Cologuard in 2014, its stool-DNA test detected only about 42% of those same lesions and couldn't remove anything it found. By every measure of diagnostic accuracy, the question was settled.

Exact didn't try to contest it. Because accuracy was never the barrier.

Tens of millions of eligible Americans weren't getting screened at all—not because they questioned the accuracy of colonoscopy, but because they avoided it.

The referral. The scheduling. The prep the day before. The sedation that costs a day off work and a driver to get home.

For patients who kept deferring a colonoscopy, the most accurate screening test in medicine was the one they never book.

Colonoscopy remained the best test for patients who showed up. Exact built for the patients who didn't.

So it changed the question. Not colonoscopy versus Cologuard, but screening versus no screening. Once that became the decision, Cologuard stopped competing against the best test. It started competing against doing nothing. It changed what the market measured as success. The outcome that mattered was never polyps found. It was people screened.

Then Exact did what commercial growth requires. It didn't wait for the market to come around. It built the conditions that moved it across the Market Belief Threshold: primary-care education, payer engagement, guideline advocacy, and a direct-to-consumer campaign that made the test a household name. By the time the accuracy debate had run its course, Exact had already changed what the debate was about.

Exact didn't win the accuracy argument. It refused to have it.

The results followed the reframe. Cologuard has now been used more than 20 million times. National guidelines now recognize it, and colorectal cancer screening rates increased.

Exact didn't wait for market readiness. It created it.

Lesson: Markets don't become ready because enough time passes. They become ready because enough people decide the old way no longer makes sense. The companies that outperform don't wait for that moment. They create it—long before commercial execution begins.

Change what the market values, and you change what it's ready to adopt.

Discussion Questions

Use these prompts to pressure-test your next commercialization strategy.

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Where in our commercial plan are we assuming the market will become ready on its own—and what would it take to create that readiness instead?

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When adoption slows, are we treating it as rejection—or asking what reason to change we've failed to create?

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What is the market actually choosing between today—and should we redefine that choice?

Most leaders approach market readiness as a fact to measure.

The best leaders recognize it is a consequence to create.

A stalled market isn't a closed door.

It's usually a market that hasn't reached a different conclusion yet.

Identify which stakeholder beliefs, market behaviors, and adoption barriers must change before commercial execution begins to scale.

Request a Pivotal Commercial Design Review (PCDR)

Grey Matter Marketing
Do what matters.