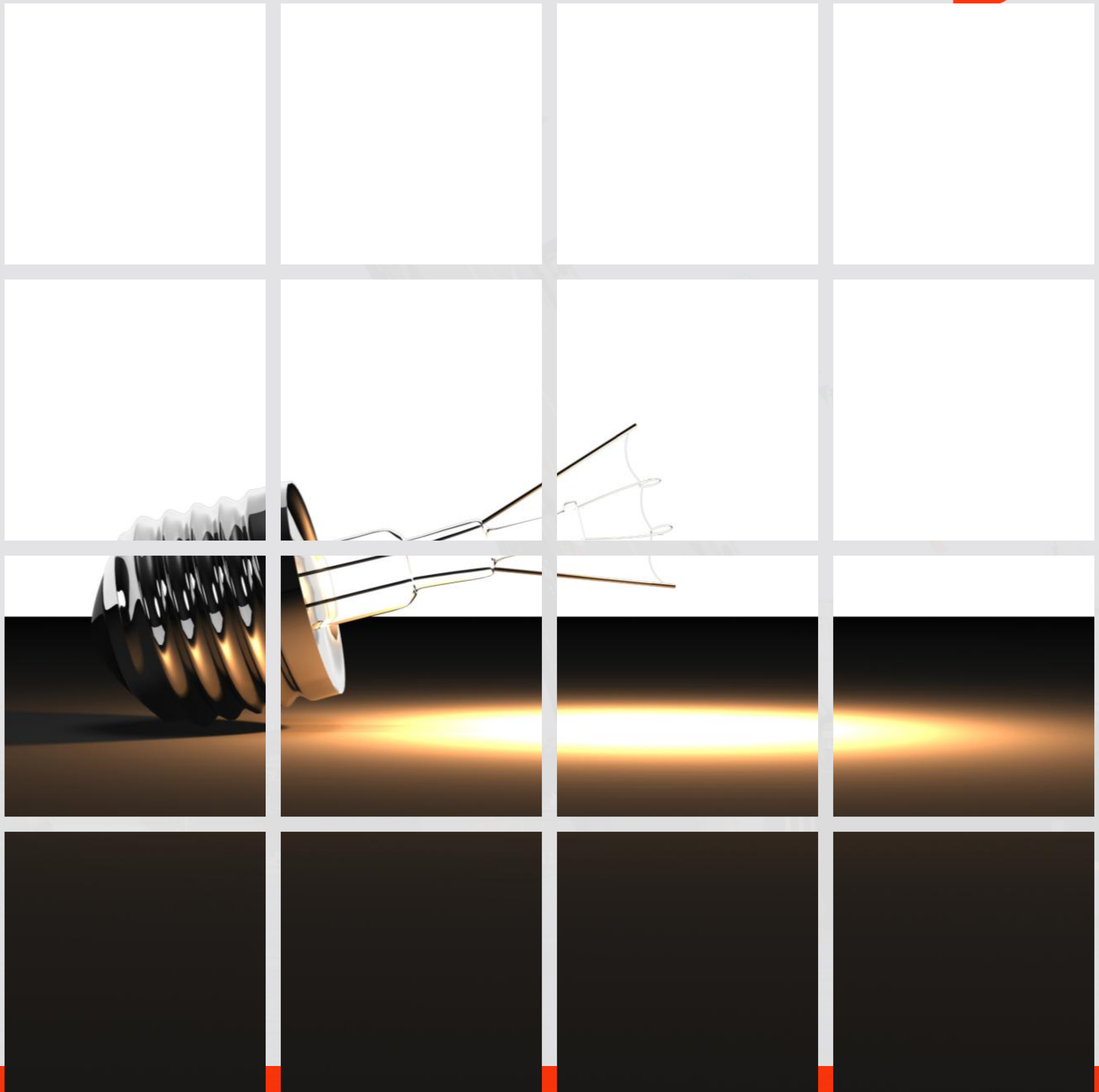
Building a PR agency from Ground Zero



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IMPORTANT
LESSONS

Starting a PR agency is a marathon, not a sprint

Drawbridge

Growth happens in the gap between security and ambition.

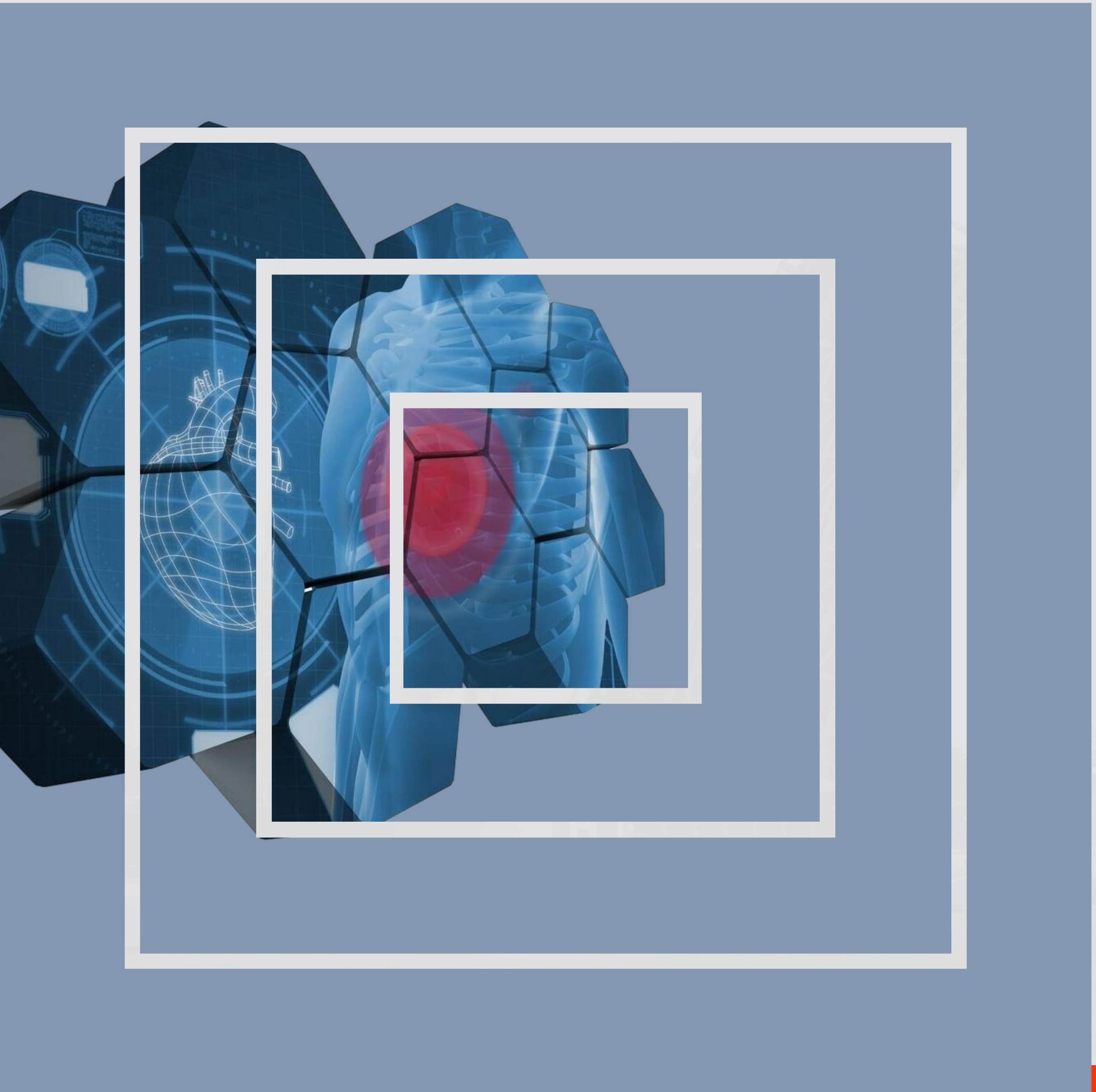
Drawbridge

Most PR professionals fail not because they are bad at PR, but because they are bad at being CEOs.

You have to acknowledge this shift in identity.

You are moving from being the "Craftsperson" to being the "Architect."

The transition from **subject matter expert** to **business owner** is the most difficult mental leap.



Your product is not PR;
your product is the **system** that produces PR.

1. The Three Hats Concept

Drawbridge

The technician (The Practitioner):

Does the work. Writes the press release, coordinates the event, handles the crisis, creates/supervises content direction etc

The Entrepreneur (The CEO)

Looks at the future. Asks, "Where is the next client coming from?" and "Is this business model sustainable?"

The Manager

Ensures the work is done on time and profitably. Manages the freelancers and the client's expectations.

If you spend 100% of your time being the Technician, you don't have a business; you have a high-stress job where you are the boss.

Moving your Hats

Frequently audit your last week of work.

Label every hour spent as **"T"** (Technician), **"M"** (Manager), or **"E"** (Entrepreneur).

Usually, at the beginning you may find yourself nearer 95% Technician at the beginning. Your goal is to build a system that gets your “**E**” closer to 40% within the first year.

SETTING THE STAGE

1. Defining Your Niche & Market Demand

A lot of times, professionals often fall into the trap of being "generalists" because we have broad experience. However, a new agency survives on specialization.

- **Proof of Demand:** Don't launch based on a gut feeling. Audit the market. If you can’t name five companies that would pay for your specific niche today, your niche is too narrow or non-existent.

- For a PR agency, your best marketing is your existing network. B2B is about trust, not virality.

2. Brand Positioning: Moving from "Me" to "We"

- For those branching out, the biggest hurdle is moving the brand away from your personal name to a corporate identity.
- **Positioning:** Define your "Why." In a B2B environment, clients don't buy PR services; they buy **outcomes** (reputation equity and trust, visibility, risk mitigation, crisis resilience, market positioning & competitive advantage, stakeholder alignment and influence, support for the sales funnel, etc).
- **B2B Marketing:** Your marketing approach shouldn't be as focused on being "loud“ as it should be on being **authoritative**. White papers, LinkedIn thought leadership, and speaking engagements trump flashy Instagram ads.

3. Team Structure & Financial Strategy

- You cannot scale if you are the only one who can write a press release or manage a client.

- **The Team Plan:** Consider The Virtual Agency Model. You don't need an office or 10 full-time staff. Build a reliable freelance network. This keeps overhead low and allows for specialized talent on a per-project basis.

- **The Finance Person:** This is non-negotiable. PR practitioners are often great with words but optimistic with math. You need someone to manage **burn rate**, **taxes**, and **accrual accounting**.

4. Operational Excellence: Rules & Culture

- **Client Engagement Rules:** Define your "Scope of Work" (SOW) strictly.

- **Workplace Culture:** Even if it’s just you and a virtual assistant, document your values. Culture is how work gets done when you aren't looking.

- **Compliance:** Ensure you are registered with relevant bodies NIPR and PRCAN and have your tax IDs and other government compliance documents in order

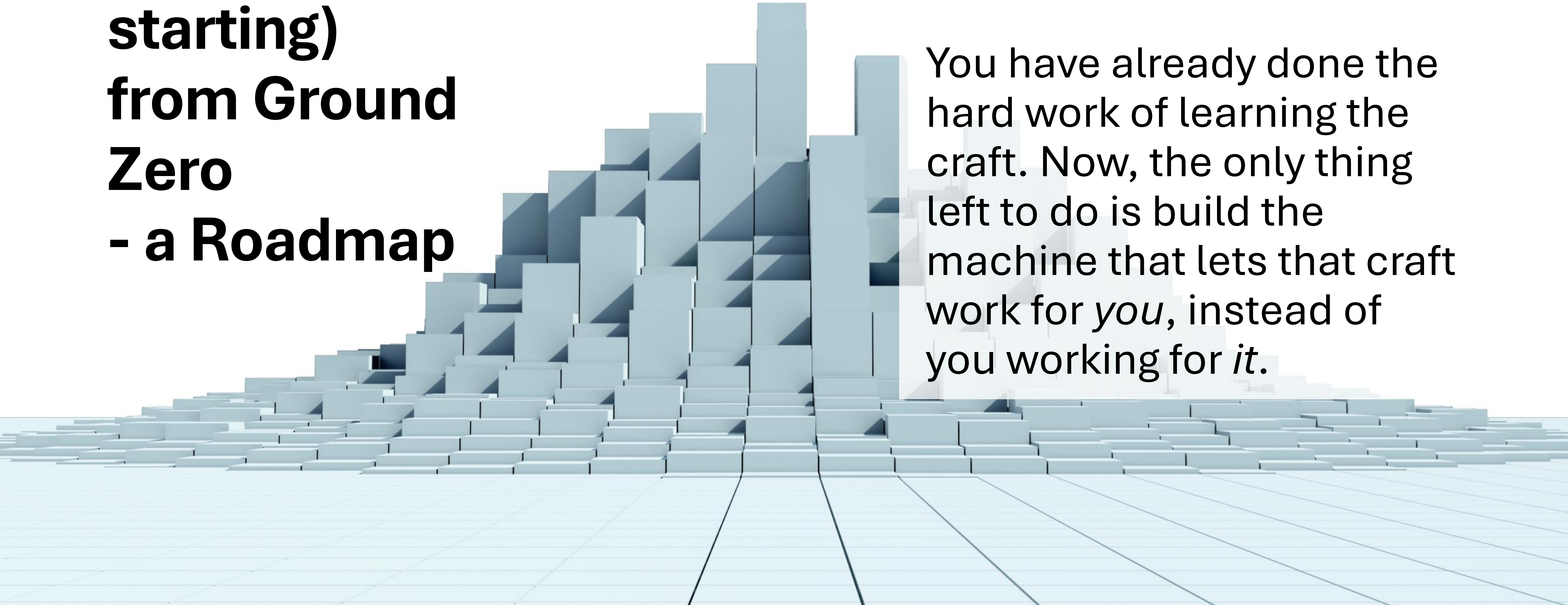
The "Must-Haves" vs. The "Absolute No's"

The Must-Haves	The Absolute No's
6 Months of Runway: Enough cash to cover personal and business expenses without a single client.	**Be careful of Friendship Discounts:** Charging less for friends kills your margins and devalues your brand early on.
Iron-Clad Contracts: Never start work without a signed agreement and a commencement advance.	**No "Yes-Man" Syndrome:** Don't take every client that knocks. A bad fit client will take 80% of your time for 20% of your revenue.
A CRM & Project Management Tool: Systems (like Asana or HubSpot) replace the memory you'll lose to stress.	**No Ghosting the government:** Ignoring regulatory filings or taxes, or other compliance requirements will shut you down faster than a lack of clients.
Professional Indemnity Insurance: To protect yourself against claims of professional negligence.	

Building (not starting) from Ground Zero - a Roadmap

You are not 'starting from zero.' You are starting from years of experience.

You have already done the hard work of learning the craft. Now, the only thing left to do is build the machine that lets that craft work for *you*, instead of you working for *it*.



Phase 1: Your first 30 Days

Goal: Transition from Professional to Business Entity.

The "Niche" Audit
Write down your top three sectors. Cross-reference them with your actual contact list. Where do you have the most "social capital"?

Service Menu
Create a one-page Rate Card or Service Menu. Don't be vague; define exactly what a Press Kit or Crisis Retainer includes

Legal & Compliance
Finalize business registration, tax IDs, and professional indemnity insurance.

The Financial Buffer
Set up a separate business bank account. Define your **"Minimum Viable Income"**—the absolute lowest amount you need to keep the lights on.

Phase 2: The Infrastructure (Days 31–60)

Goal: Build the systems that allow you to scale.

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Team Mapping
Identify your "Core Three" freelancers. You don't hire them yet; you just vet them.

B2B Launch
Update your LinkedIn profile to reflect your new status. Share three "Value Posts" that demonstrate your expertise without asking for a sale.

The Tech Stack
Select your CRM (for leads), Project Management tool (for tasks), and Accounting software.

Positioning statement
Draft your "Elevator Pitch." It shouldn't be "I do PR." It should be "I help [Target Audience] achieve [Result] through [Method]."

Phase 3: The Outreach (Days 61–90)

Goal: Secure the first (or next) Anchor Client.

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The Warm List Activation
Reach out to 20 former colleagues or contacts. Do not ask for a job; tell them you have launched and ask, *"Who do you know that is currently struggling with [Specific Problem]?"*

Proposal Template
Create a professional, branded proposal template. This ensures that when a lead comes in, you can respond within 24 hours.

Client Engagement Rules
Formalize your onboarding process. What happens in the first 48 hours after a client signs?

Review & Pivot
Look at the feedback from your outreach. If everyone is asking for a service you didn't list, consider if you need to pivot your niche

The Revenue Engine

In the first year, half of your CEO time must be dedicated to Business Development.

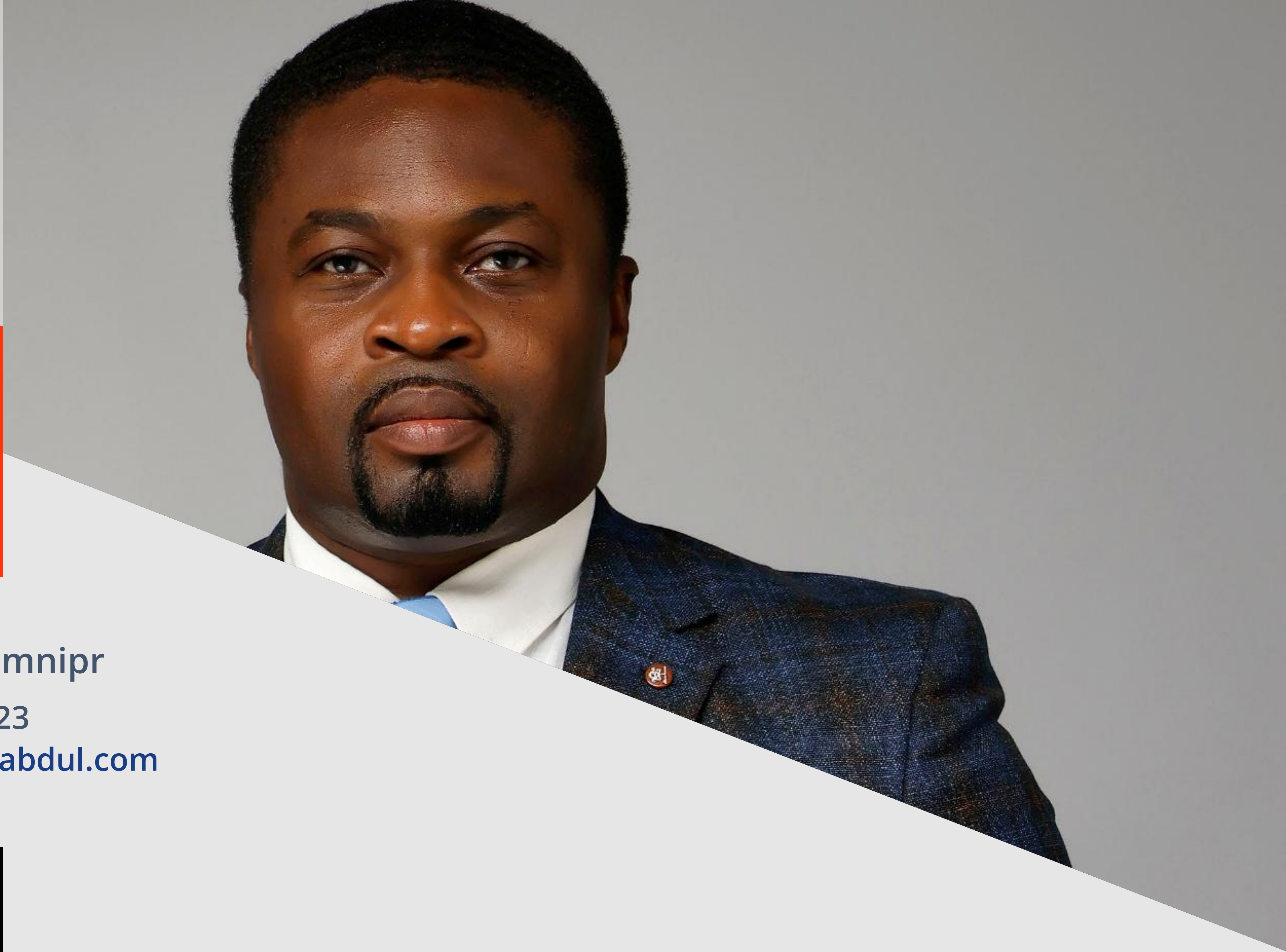
1 Pipeline Management
Not just "hoping" for referrals, but actively tracking leads.

2 Strategic Networking
Attending events where your *clients* are, not where other PR people are.

3 The Anchor Strategy
Working on securing one large, long-term retainer that covers the agency's overhead, allowing all other projects to be pure profit

Q & A

THANK YOU!



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