Betts

Leadership Compensation Guide 2026/27

The *AI-Native* GTM LEADER

AI-NATIVE DOESN’T MEAN YOU NEED TO CODE

The biggest transition for leaders moving from the SaaS era into the AI era isn't learning how to code. It's learning how to rethink the organization and finding the technical people who can help you build it.

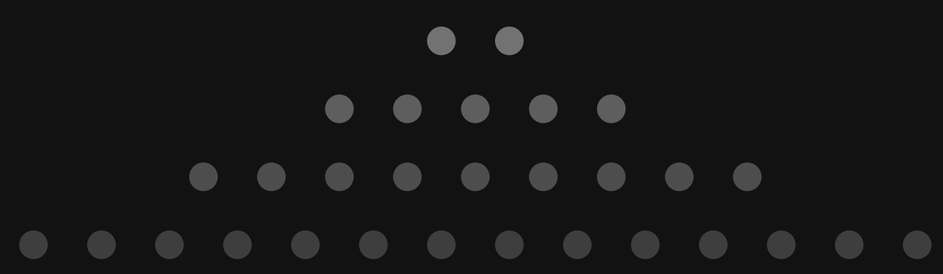
For the last decade, great GTM leaders learned how to scale through people. More pipeline meant more SDRs. More revenue meant more AEs. More customers meant more CSMs. More marketing output meant more content, demand generation, and operations headcount.

What an AI-Native Leader Is and Isn't

The AI-native leader looks at every part of their organization and asks: if we were building this function from scratch today, would we build it the same way?

AI-NATIVE IS NOT

Scaling through more people



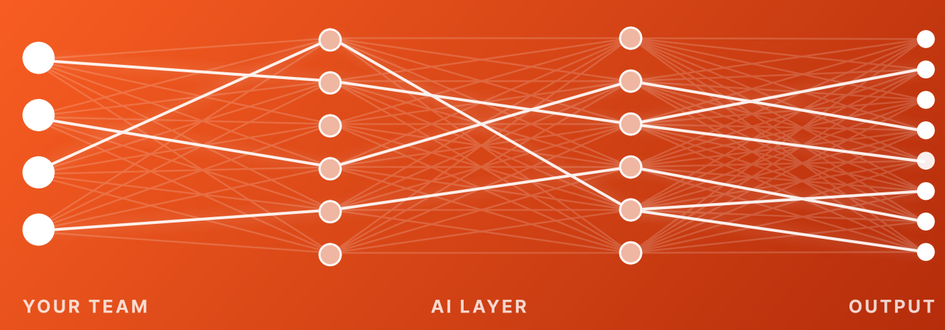
More pipeline meant more SDRs. More revenue meant more AEs. More customers meant more CSMs.

- ~~Writing the code~~
- ~~Chasing small efficiencies~~
- ~~Collecting AI tools~~

Headcount scales with output.

AI-NATIVE IS

Scaling through leverage



The same outcome, rebuilt around what AI makes possible.

- Directing the build
- Redesigning the org
- Knowing where AI stops

Output scales without headcount.

AI breaks many of those assumptions.

But that doesn't mean the CRO needs to become an engineer. The Sales leader doesn't need to code an agent. The CMO doesn't need to build the company's data infrastructure. The CS leader doesn't need to personally integrate product usage data with customer health scores. They need the technical support system that can.

That may be a great RevOps leader. A GTM Engineer. Marketing Ops. Data. Product. Engineering. Or increasingly, a small combination of those capabilities. The leader's responsibility is to deeply understand the work, identify where AI can create leverage, and work with technical builders who can turn those ideas into systems.

THE DISTINCTION

You need to rethink the org.

You don’t need to code the org.

EVERYONE IS USING AI.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE EVERYONE AI-NATIVE.

AI has quickly become one of the most overused labels in technology.

Every executive uses ChatGPT. Every company has AI in its strategy. Every GTM leader is experimenting with agents, automations, meeting summaries, research tools, and AI-generated content.

USING AI

ChatGPT | Agents | Automations | Meeting summaries | Research tools | AI-generated content | Copilots | Dashboards

≠

BEING

AI-NATIVE

That's not what we mean by an AI-native GTM leader.

Being AI-native isn't about how many AI tools a leader uses. It's not about replacing every employee with an agent. And it's not about generating more emails, content, or activity at a lower cost.

An AI-native leader fundamentally rethinks how the work gets done. They start with the outcome, not with the existing organization.

WHAT THE AI USER ASKS

How can AI make my 30-person team more productive?

Starts with the organization that already exists.

WHAT THE AI-NATIVE LEADER ASKS

If we were building this GTM organization from scratch today, how would people and AI work together to achieve the outcome?

Starts with the outcome.

That means challenging assumptions that have defined GTM organizations for decades:

TODAY'S DEFAULT		THE AI-NATIVE QUESTION
Another hire	or	Automate the work
A CSM for every customer	or	Humans only at the moments that matter
More content	or	Better ideas and better distribution
Another management layer	or	The leader back in the biggest deals
Five hours researching accounts	or	Intelligence delivered before the meeting

The AI-native leader isn't inserting AI into an old operating model. They're redesigning the operating model around what AI makes possible.

And importantly, they know where AI doesn't belong.
Relationships. Judgment. Taste. Leadership. Negotiation. Trust. Creativity.
The objective isn't maximum automation. It's maximum leverage.

THE RETURN OF THE PLAYER-COACH

AI is putting leaders back on the field.

For years, career progression in GTM meant getting progressively further away from execution. The best salesperson became a manager. The manager became a Director. The Director became a VP. Eventually, leadership became largely about managing the people who managed the work.

That model is reversing. AI can increasingly handle the work around the work:

USED TO EAT THEIR TIME →

THE WORK AROUND THE WORK

Research · Call prep · Meeting notes · CRM updates · Reporting
Forecast preparation · Analysis · First drafts · Follow-up

↓

AI HANDLES IT

Off the leader's plate

↓

FREES THEM FOR →

THE HIGHEST-VALUE WORK, AGAIN

- Build relationships
- Sell
- Develop the team

SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE THE LEADER?

~~ELIMINATED~~ → **FREED**

That doesn't eliminate the leader. It frees the leader to do the highest-value work again.

SELL TODAY

Not "I used to be a great seller." This is what the leader is actually doing.

- ✓ Join the strategic deal
- ✓ Open the executive relationship
- ✓ Run discovery
- ✓ Help shape the solution
- ✓ Coach the rep in real time
- ✓ Negotiate
- ✓ Close

Especially at Seed and Series A, the leader who immediately needs layers underneath them is increasingly the wrong profile. Everyone carries the bag.

DOESN'T SIMPLY ASK
How many AEs do we need?

→

THEY ASK
How much can each great AE produce?

A Sales leader should also be able to materially impact the company's biggest deals.
AI handles more of the selling infrastructure. People sell.

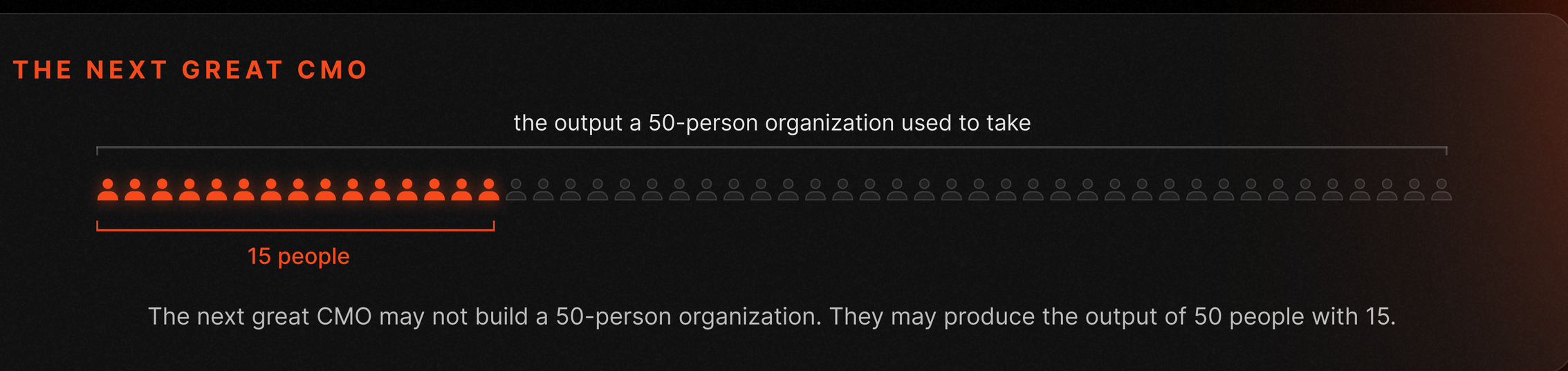
Marketing: LEADERS NEED TO MARKET

Marketing may be experiencing this change faster than any other GTM function.

AI can generate content, creative variations, research, emails, campaign briefs, reports, and analysis at extraordinary speed. That makes production less scarce. Knowing what is worth producing becomes more valuable.

The modern Marketing leader needs to personally understand the customer, develop positioning, recognize great creative, create a point of view, understand distribution, and know where pipeline actually comes from.

The leader doesn't need to personally write every blog post. But they better know what the company should be saying. The Marketing leader has to decide what's worth saying.



And distribution itself is changing. For nearly two decades, Marketing leaders learned how to win Google. Now buyers increasingly ask AI systems which companies and products they should consider. The question moves from "How do we rank #1?" to "How do we become the answer?"

SEO expands into AEO, proprietary data, third-party authority, communities, creators, partnerships, earned media, and brand. The old Marketing organization optimized for production capacity. The AI-native Marketing organization optimizes for ideas, experimentation, and distribution.

THE LEADERSHIP PREMIUM IS CHANGING

If leadership is changing, the way it is valued has to change with it. Yesterday the premium sat with team size, big company logos, management experience, and years of experience.

Today it sits with the ability to execute, stage experience, AI fluency, customer proximity, revenue efficiency, and the ability to build.

The premium is shifting from leaders who manage the work to leaders who can still do the work.

AUTOMATE THE WORK AROUND THE WORK

AI-native doesn't mean automate everything.

Great GTM leaders don't need to personally build every agent or workflow.

They need to understand the work deeply enough to know **what should be automated, what requires technical support, and what should remain human.**

LEADER + AI

- Meeting summaries
- Account research
- Call preparation
- First drafts
- Pipeline analysis
- Competitive research
- Forecast preparation
- Customer synthesis
- Content repurposing
- Internal reporting

REVOPS / GTM ENGINEERING BUILDS

- Data architecture
- Signal infrastructure
- Account scoring
- CRM orchestration
- Routing & enrichment
- Prospecting systems
- AI agents
- Lifecycle automation
- Attribution
- Cross-system workflows

HUMAN ADVANTAGE

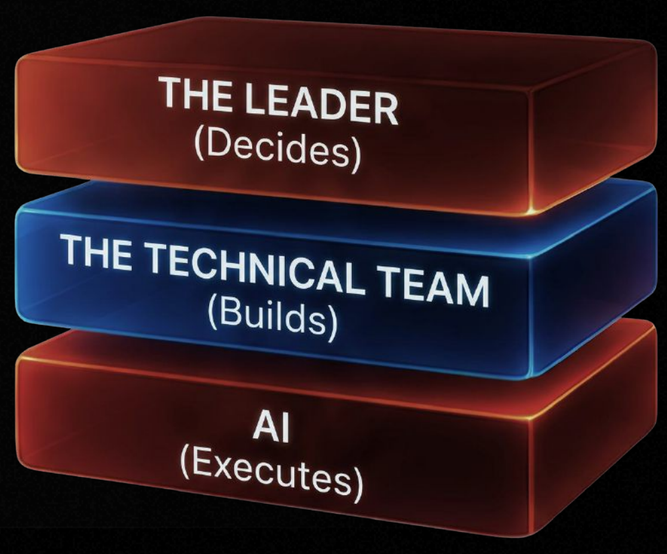
- Discovery
- Executive selling
- Negotiation
- Deal strategy
- Coaching
- Positioning
- Creative direction
- Strategic renewals
- Relationships
- Judgment

THE LEADER DECIDES. THE TECHNICAL TEAM BUILDS. AI EXECUTES.

RevOps owns the operating system.
Process · Forecasting · CRM · Data · Territories · Compensation · Reporting

GTM Engineering builds the automation layer.
Agents · Workflows · Signals · Enrichment · Integrations · Automation

GTM Leadership decides where leverage matters.
Strategy · Customers · People · Priorities · Judgment · Revenue



This may be one of the most important new capabilities of the AI-native GTM leader:

Knowing enough about technology to know what's possible without believing they need to build it themselves.

Before approving another hire, they ask:
Why does a person need to do this?

Before approving another automation:
Why shouldn't a person do this?

AI can research the CEO.
It can't build a relationship with the CEO.

AI can identify a customer at risk.
It can't rebuild trust with an angry customer.

AI can generate 100 positioning ideas.
It can't reliably decide which one will define a category.

The objective isn't maximum automation. It's maximum leverage.

4: CUSTOMER SUCCESS: REINVENT THE COVERAGE MODEL

Customer Success requires an entirely different rethink.

HISTORICALLY:

More Customers = More CSMs.

An AI-native CS leader challenges that assumption.

Routine questions, onboarding tasks, education, adoption nudges, health monitoring, meeting preparation, QBR creation, and risk detection can increasingly be automated.

The question is no longer:
How many customers can one CSM cover?

→

It's:
Which customer moments actually require a human?

AUTOMATED / AGENTIC

Routine Questions | Education | Adoption | Basic Onboarding | Monitoring

↓

AI-ASSISTED

Onboarding | Health Reviews | Renewal Preparation | Expansion Identification

↓

HUMAN-LED

Executive Relationships | Complex Implementations | Expansion | Escalations | Strategic Accounts

AI should increasingly identify the problem or opportunity.

People should intervene when human involvement changes the outcome.

That transforms CS from a linear service organization into an intelligent customer coverage system.

Service → Intelligence → Growth

5: THE AI-NATIVE LEADERSHIP PREMIUM

If leadership is changing, compensation eventually has to change with it

HISTORICALLY:

GTM executive compensation has largely been benchmarked around:

- ✓ Title
- ✓ Company Size
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Function
- ✓ Experience

Those factors still matter.
But they're increasingly incomplete.

SAME TITLE. VERY DIFFERENT OUTCOMES.

Two leaders with the same title can create dramatically different organizational economics.

Sales Leader

One Sales leader scales by continually adding headcount. Another creates an AI-enabled organization where every seller produces significantly more.

Marketing Leader

One Marketing leader builds a 50-person organization. Another creates comparable output with a fraction of the team.

CS Leader

One CS leader adds CSMs as ARR grows. Another redesigns customer coverage so technology handles routine engagement and exceptional people focus on the moments that influence retention and expansion.

Those leaders aren't creating the same leverage.

And increasingly, they shouldn't be valued the same way.

FROM AI USER → AI-NATIVE LEADER

AI USER
Uses AI to make their own work faster.

↓

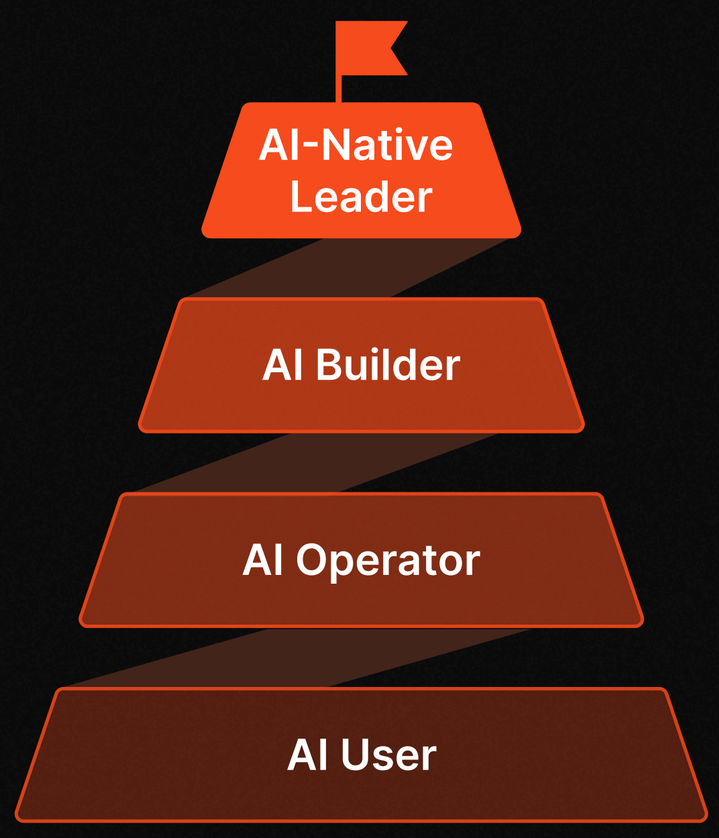
AI OPERATOR
Redesigns individual and team workflows around AI.

↓

AI BUILDER
Identifies high-leverage opportunities and partners with technical teams to turn them into systems.

↓

AI-NATIVE LEADER
Starts with the outcome and redesigns the organization around the optimal combination of people + AI.



They don't ask:
How can AI improve my organization?

→

They ask:
Knowing what AI can do today, how should I build this organization?

THE NEW GTM LEADERSHIP TEAM

And that brings us back to perhaps the biggest lesson for leaders making the transition from SaaS to AI:

You don't need to become an engineer.
You need engineers around you.

The best GTM leaders won't personally build every agent, integration, workflow, or data pipeline.

Their job is to know the customer, understand the work, set the strategy, identify where technology can create leverage, and determine where people still matter most.

Then they need to surround themselves with the right technical support:

- RevOps
- GTM Engineering
- Marketing Ops
- Data
- Product
- Engineering

The AI-native leader brings the business judgment. → **The technical team turns that judgment into infrastructure.** → **AI provides the leverage.**

And exceptional people execute where humans still matter most.

Rethink the organization.

Don't try to code it yourself.

That's the distinction between simply being a leader who uses AI and becoming an **AI-native GTM leader.**

And it leads to the central question of this year's compensation guide:

What is an AI-native GTM leader actually worth?

Because the next generation of great GTM leaders won't be defined by how many people report to them.

They'll be defined by how much their people and the systems around them can accomplish.

COMP TABLES

The 2026/27 target compensation ranges for GTM leadership, benchmarked by role and level.

All figures are pulled from live market data via CompEngine. They reflect what it takes to hire for each role in today's market, not what incumbents are currently earning or the premium needed to pull someone out of a seat. Individual offers will vary with scope, location, and how competitive a search is.

VPS

VP of Sales

You may notice VP base salaries at Series C and D are flat or lower than at Series A and B. This reflects how leadership roles change as companies scale. At Series B, a VP often owns an entire function end to end. By Series D and beyond, efficient pre-IPO companies tend to have several VPs within the same function, each running a region, segment, or team, with narrower scope than an early-stage VP who runs the whole org. Base pay follows scope, so later stage doesn't automatically mean higher base. This is also why Director/Head of level pay can overlap with or exceed VP pay at later stages.

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$205,000	$225,000	$220,000	$215,000	$215,000
Median	$210,000	$235,000	$230,000	$225,000	$225,000
75%	$215,000	$245,000	$240,000	$240,000	$240,000
Bonus	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**
25%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

VP of Marketing

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$245,000	$260,000	$245,000	$270,000	$240,000
Median	$265,000	$265,000	$265,000	$290,000	$270,000
75%	$285,000	$275,000	$285,000	$310,000	$300,000
Bonus	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**
25%	10%	25%	10%	10%	10%
Median	25%	25%	20%	20%	20%
75%	25%	25%	30%	30%	30%

VP of Customer Success

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	Not Enough Data	$220,000	220,000	$250,000	$215,000
Median	Not Enough Data	$230,000	$225,000	$260,000	$230,000
75%	Not Enough Data	$240,000	$235,000	$270,000	$245,000
Bonus	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**
25%	Not Enough Data	20%	20%	20%	20%
Median	Not Enough Data	26%	24%	35%	35%
75%	Not Enough Data	30%	30%	45%	45%

VP of Revenue Operations

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000
Median	$230,000	$230,000	$230,000	$230,000	$230,000
75%	$260,000	$260,000	$260,000	$260,000	$260,000
Bonus	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**
25%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Median	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
75%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

Director/Head of Level

Director/Head of Sales

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$180,000	$190,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000
Median	$190,000	$195,000	$225,000	$250,000	$250,000
75%	$200,000	$205,000	$250,000	$275,000	$275,000
Bonus	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**	**Bonus**
25%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Director/Head of Marketing

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$180,000	$185,000	$190,000	$225,000	$205,000
Median	$200,000	$215,000	$225,000	$240,000	$240,000
75%	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$260,000
Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus
25%	10%	15%	20%	20%	20%
Median	20%	30%	30%	30%	30%
75%	30%	35%	40%	40%	40%

Director/Head of CS

Base	Seed	Series A	Series B	Series C	Series D
25%	$175,000	$185,000	$190,000	$200,000	$200,000
Median	$185,000	$200,000	$215,000	$225,000	$225,000
75%	$200,000	$225,000	$240,000	$250,000	$250,000
Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus	Bonus
25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Median	10%	10%	15%	15%	15%
75%	15%	25%	25%	25%	25%

Others Fractional

Fractional in Tech	Hourly	Target/Hr	3 Months Retainers
Fractional CEO	Not Enough Data	Not Enough Data	Not Enough Data
Fractional CFO	$175-450	$300	$24K-54K
Fractional COO	$150-300	$200	$24K-54K
Fractional Head of Marketing	$200-450	$250	$15K-60K
Fractional Head of Sales	$200-450	Not enough Data	$30K-60K
Fractional Head of People	$200-500	Not Enough Data	$24K-48K

Advisors

	Early Stage	Later Stage
	Seed- Series B	Series C - Series E
Equity	0.05%-0.25%	Under 0.05%
Vesting	2 Years, 3-month cliff	2 Years, 3-month cliff
Retainer	Typically equity only	Cash or cash + equity blend
Number of Meetings	Monthly (FAST standard tier)	Monthly (FAST standard tier)

Technical GTM Leadership

Enterprise Leadership	Technical Base | Variable	Disruptive Base | Variable	SaaS Base | Variable	Services Base | Variable
Director/Head of Enterprise	$225K / $225K	$200K / $200K	$180K / $180K	$180K / $180K

Experience	Technical Base | Variable	Disruptive Base | Variable	SaaS Base | Variable	Services Base | Variable
SE 8+	$215K / $75K	$185K / $55K	$175K / $50K	$175K / $50K
FDE 8+	$220-280K / $30-60K	$220-280K / $30-60K	$220-280K / $30-60K	$220-280K / $30-60K

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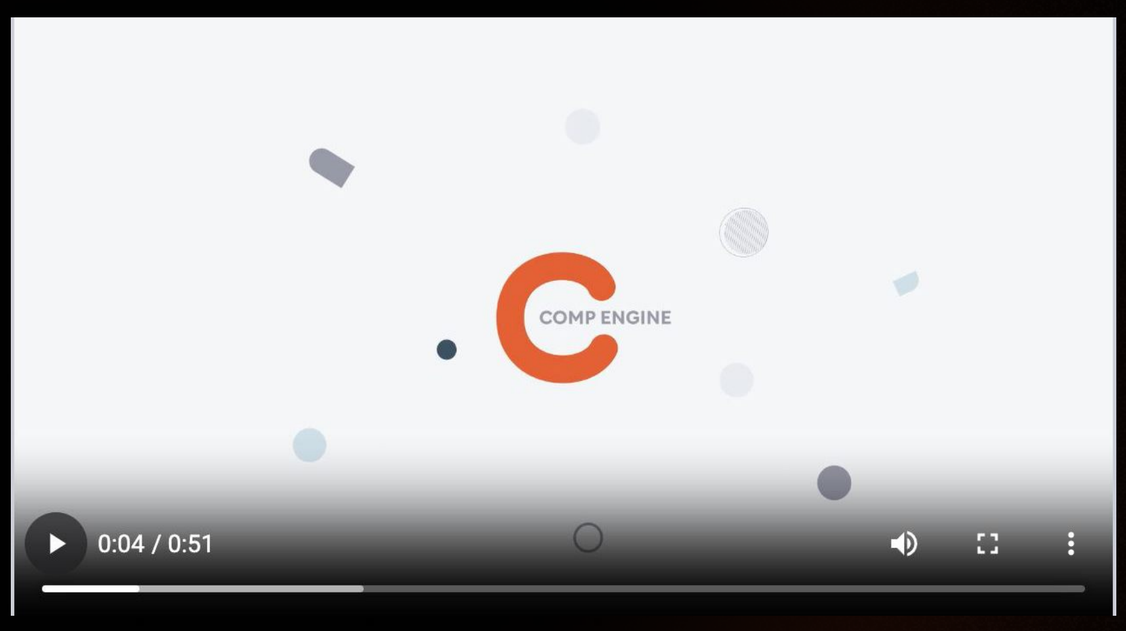

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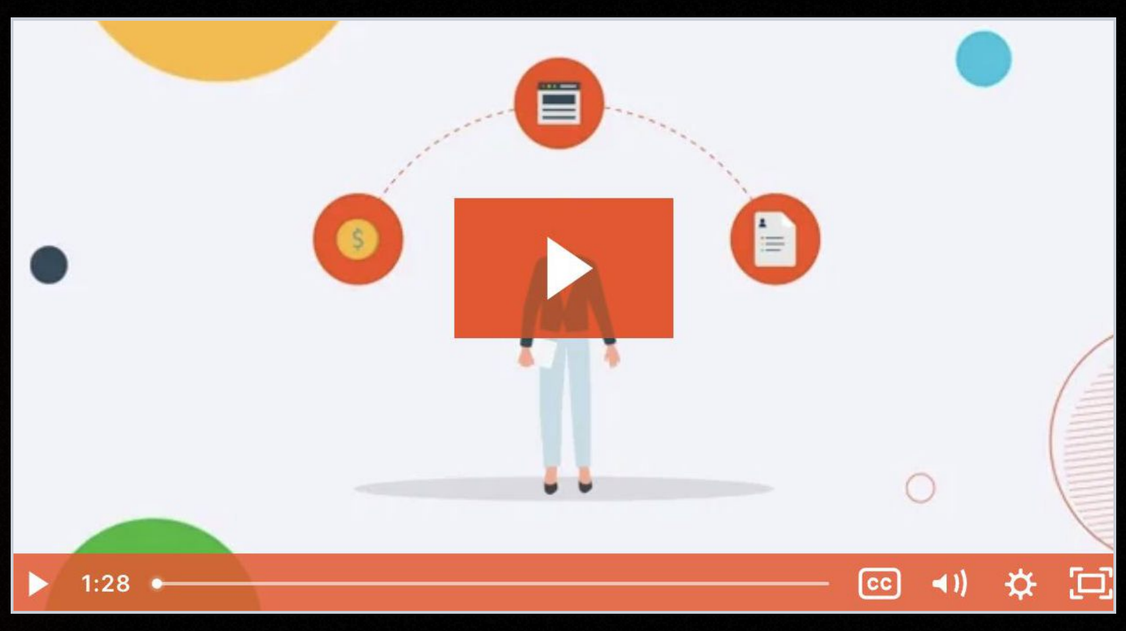

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