

# From Contingency to Outcomes? A Marketing Guide for Recruitment Leaders Ready to Evolve

How to Position and Market SoW  
Services / Without Losing Your  
Recruitment Edge

Created with insights from experts  
across the worlds of recruitment and  
tech-led SoW delivery.

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By Black Slate

The operational insights in this guide come from expert interviews. Black Slate's role is to help you align your brand, messaging, and marketing with evolving services, not to advise on SoW delivery itself.

Black Slate



## What this guide **is**

A marketing and brand guide to help recruitment leaders position and communicate their SoW services effectively.

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Practical advice on messaging, brand identity, and go-to-market campaigns.

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Insights from experts to help you align your commercial story with client expectations.



## What this guide **is not**

It is not an operations manual for building or managing SoW delivery frameworks.

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We do not provide legal, contractual, or compliance advice on SoW model creation.

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Any operational references included are purely to help align brand and marketing language to the service type.

# Introduction – Setting the Foundation

## Statement of Work: A Guide for Recruitment Leaders

The recruitment industry is shifting. Clients want more than a shortlist of candidates; they want measurable outcomes, specialist expertise, and partners who share risk as well as reward.

When a Program Manager, CTO, or business leader decides how to deliver a project, they're rarely choosing between "you" and "no one."

They're weighing you against:

A large, expensive tech consultancy.

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A handful of independent contractors.

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Another recruitment agency claiming to do SoW.

### Contributors

Kristian Martin, Sales Director, Tangent

Patrick Waites, Managing Director, Coltech

Tony Hall, Managing Director, CopperCloud Data Centre Consultancy

This guide is about helping you win in that reality. We'll focus on the commercial story, not just the contractual detail:

How to define an SoW offer that stands out against each of those competitor types.

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How to communicate its value in plain language clients actually buy into.

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How to market it without confusing your existing audience.

You don't have to reinvent your brand to offer SoW, but you do have to show up differently in the market. That shift starts here.

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Clients aren't just looking for delivery anymore; they're looking for partners who are equally committed to achieving the agreed outcomes.

Kristian Martin, Sales Director, Tangent

Later in this guide: Why SoW is gaining traction now, and how to map your agency's maturity through three phases.

# Why SoW Matters Now

<b>The traditional recruitment model is under pressure:</b>	Access to talent is easier today with the likes of LinkedIn.
	Clients want clear deliverables and fixed costs.
	Economic uncertainty is driving demand for low-risk, high-accountability partnerships.
<b>At the same time, your competitors are shaping buyer expectations:</b>	Consultancies sell certainty (but with high overheads).
	Contractors sell flexibility; but create delivery risk - delivery risk that can be managed if done correctly
	Other agencies sell familiarity (but often lack delivery proof).

Your SoW should sell confidence; proving you can combine the quality of a consultancy, the agility of contractors, and the trust of an agency partner, without their drawbacks.

Rather than billing for time or headcount, you define outcomes, agree a commercial framework, and take ownership of delivery. Even as priorities shift, this model shows clients you're built for value and accountability, not volume supply.

Done well, SoW elevates your market position, builds deeper client partnerships, and protects your brand when rates come under pressure.

**“** When you can articulate your SoW as a safer, faster alternative to the consultancy route, you stop competing on price.  
**”** Patrick Waites, Managing Director, Coltech

# Defining Your SoW Offer

## Why demand is growing

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Most SoWs aren't set in stone, the goals evolve, and milestones move as the project changes. The point is to agree how you'll deliver value together, not to make everything conditional on a fixed spec from day one.

Tony Hall, Managing Director, CopperCloud

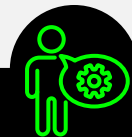
## The Three Phases of the 'Outcome' Evolution

As agencies build outcome-based services, their brand maturity often develops through three broad phases. Recognising where you are helps you shape how the market perceives you — and plan how to move up the value curve.



### Phase 1 / Capability Messaging

You're still selling skills and specialisms, but starting to hint at delivery project ownership. The brand narrative begins to shift from roles to results.



### Phase 2 / Solution Framing

You're defining deliverables and using outcome language in marketing. Case studies highlight problem-solution stories rather than individual placements.



### Phase 3 / Value Partnership

You're seen as a trusted delivery partner, measured by results, not headcount. This is where SoW models naturally sit, with your brand looking and sounding more like a consultancy. Messaging focuses on proof, value, and shared success with clients.

# Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Moving into outcome-based services can lift your positioning and margins — but only if your brand and message evolve with it. These are the traps that hold agencies back:

## Over-selling certainty

Don't market outcomes as fixed promises. Strong brands show they understand how projects evolve — and demonstrate the flexibility to adapt and still deliver.

## Lacking clarity in your offer

Don't lead only with the SoW label — lead with the value behind it. SoW is one way to frame accountability and delivery, but clients buy outcomes they can visualise: problems solved, milestones achieved, and measurable results.

## Ignoring the brand shift

You're no longer competing with recruiters; you're competing with consultancies. If your visual identity and messaging still feel transactional, you'll lose the narrative before you start.

## Creating a message-delivery gap

Strong marketing means nothing if the story falls apart in conversation. Your messaging must flow consistently from your website to sales calls and pitch to meetings.

## Overlooking credibility cues

Proof sells faster than promises. Case studies, testimonials, and delivery narratives build confidence long before procurement steps in.



Clients want to believe you can deliver what you promise; so give them proof early, before the competition does.

Kristian Martin, Sales Director, Tangent



Buyers are **52%** more likely to shortlist a provider who can share relevant case studies at the first meeting.

(Hinge Research, 2024)

# The Marketing Shift

If the pitfalls on the previous page are about gaps in sales and brand alignment, this page is about how to close them.

Selling SoW isn't just about adding a new service line; it's about shifting your market identity. The moment you start selling outcomes instead of people, your marketing language, visual identity, and sales conversations all need to evolve together.

Think of it like this:

Recruitment-led messaging focuses on capability: "We have the best network of X specialists."

SoW-led messaging focuses on results: "We supply and manage the specialist teams needed to deliver your project phases on time and to the agreed standards."

And here's where the competitive spine comes in:

Consultancies already talk about results: but you can position yourself as faster, leaner, and more agile.

Contractor teams offer flexibility: but you offer a single accountable partner.

Other agencies sell familiarity: you sell proof of delivery and measurable value.

Your sales consultants are fluent in SoW language and confident handling project-related questions.

The shift works best when:

Your case studies demonstrate outcomes rather than placements.

Your website and marketing assets frame you as a delivery partner from the first impression.

When the brand story and the sales conversation match, you remove friction in the buying process, and that's when SoW starts opening doors to earlier, bigger, and more strategic client opportunities.

# Framing Your SoW for the Market

Once your messaging shifts to outcomes, the next step is deciding how your SoW will show up in the market. This is about clarity and memorability; making it easy for decision-makers to see where you fit in their world and why they should call you first.

## ASK YOURSELF

**Will you limit yourself to smaller, lower-risk packages of work, or will you position for larger, more strategic engagements?**

Small packages are faster to sell and deliver but may cap growth.

Larger workstreams take longer to win but deepen client commitment.

Rapid-response teams in critical project phases.

**What type of SoW do you want to be known for?**

Specialists in compliance-heavy or regulated programmes.

Niche technical builds that few others can staff effectively.

Launch as a distinct service line with its own marketing assets, messaging, and possibly a sub-brand; especially if you're moving into SoW for the first time.

**How will you position it in your service mix?**

If the offer gains traction, consider spinning it into a stand-alone brand to target new buyer audiences and command a higher-value market position.

Position as a flagship offer, a premium tier for selected clients, or a stepping stone to deeper partnerships but make sure it's clearly defined from day one.

# Case Study: Tangent Consulting Services

Tangent had the delivery capability. What they needed was the brand clarity and marketing strategy to match.

As Tangent expanded from recruitment into tech project delivery, Black Slate helped them launch a dedicated consultancy sub-brand — Tangent Consulting Services (TCS) — to give them credibility in a new commercial space.

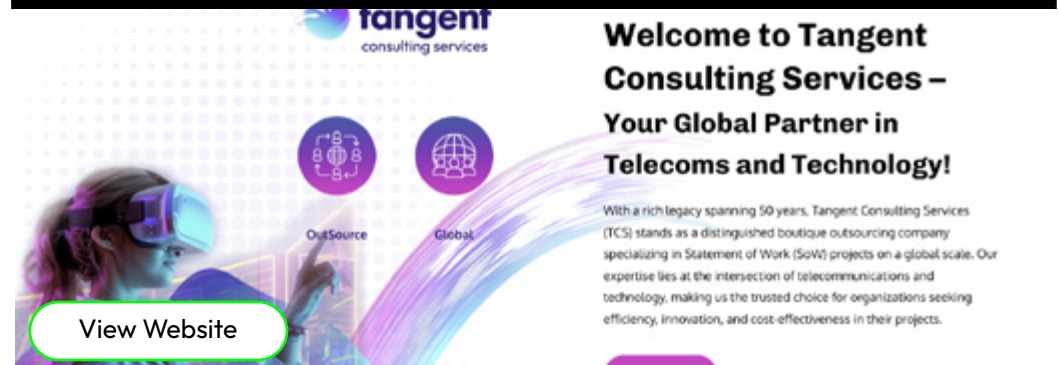
## What We Did

- Brand identity and sub-brand design – Logo, colour system, tone of voice, and core narrative.
- Website design and content – Streamlined microsite explaining SoW, delivery capability, and consulting services.
- Marketing assets – Case study templates, infographics, and a visual language to show capability, not just talk about it.
- Messaging strategy – Shifted the story from CVs to outcomes, with IR35-compliant models and collaborative delivery language.

## The Impact

- Tangent now wins project work in direct competition with boutique consultancies.
- Their SoW offering is supported by a clear narrative, defined service structure, and proven delivery case studies.
- They can confidently engage commercial decision-makers — not just HR — with a proposition that resonates.

### Campaign Assets: Sub-brand website, LinkedIn videos and case studies



# Ready to Evolve Your Brand?

Whether you're shifting to SoW, building a consulting offer, or simply want to raise your agency's game, we can help you build the brand, message, and marketing presence to match.

Black Slate can support with:

Developing your SoW sub-brand and identity

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Defining clear service models and marketing messages

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Creating high-impact content: pitch decks, explainer assets, case studies

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Elevating your team's visibility and sector presence

Let's Talk

Book a call or email us directly

[james@black-slate.co.uk](mailto:james@black-slate.co.uk)

"An effective SoW offer helps you stand out from competitors, cut through HR gatekeeping, and navigate IR35 with confidence."

