

PRACTITIONER-LED IMPLEMENTATION · DUBAI, UAE

SGC TECH AI — RESEARCH-LED OUTBOUND MASTER PLAYBOOK

One honest system: lead with real research, qualify through a genuine benchmark survey, pivot only by permission, and close on numbers the prospect builds with you. Merges the strategy, the tactical discipline, and a rebuilt, fully-defensible negotiation core.

Version 1.0 (Honest Edition) · Supersedes the 3 source drafts · Governed by one rule: the research must be real



THE ONE RULE THAT GOVERNS EVERYTHING: THE RESEARCH MUST BE REAL

This entire system works *only* because the benchmark genuinely exists and is genuinely published to every participant — fit or not. That is what separates a research-led strategy from a bait-and-switch. The test for every line in this document: **"If the prospect later saw exactly what we were doing, would they feel respected or tricked?"** If respected, proceed. If tricked, the line is cut. We never call it "not a sales call" while secretly scoring budget; we say it's research with an optional, opt-in advisory conversation afterward — and we mean it. In a market as small and talkative as the UAE, trust compounds faster than any tactic.

PART 1 — THE STRATEGY & THE WHITE SPACE

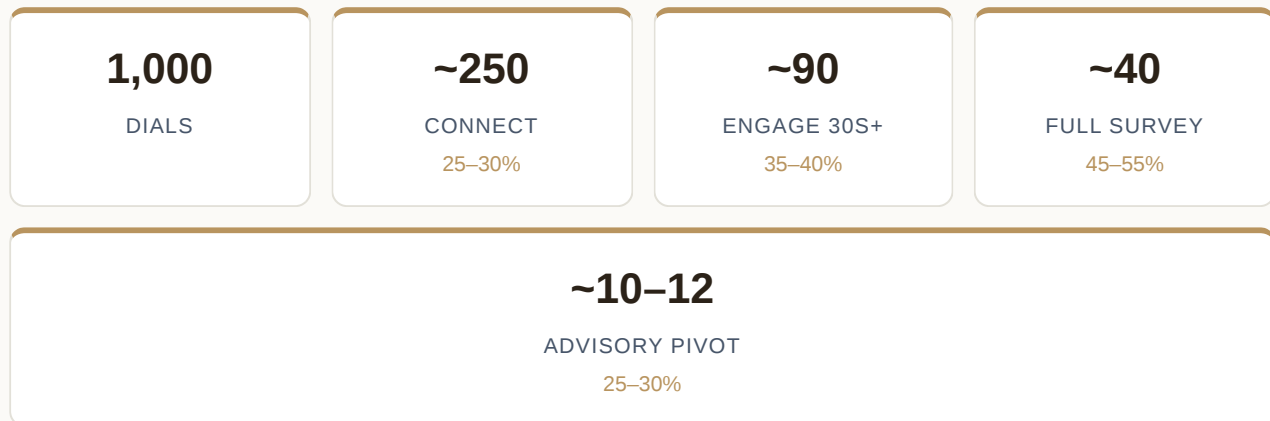
Goal: Understand why research-led beats cold-pitching in the UAE mid-market

The big consultancies (Microsoft, Gartner, PwC) own the **enterprise** AI story. Nobody owns the **UAE mid-market** (roughly AED 50M–500M revenue) story. That gap is the white space. By publishing "*The UAE Mid-Market AI & Automation Index 2026*" we build genuine authority, earn warm conversations instead of cold ones, and create a publishable asset that powers 18 months of content — while every survey honestly doubles as qualification.

Why it beats cold-pitching:

Competitors send cold emails at ~1.5% reply rates. A real research request converts far better because it offers value first (a report), respects the prospect's expertise (their opinion matters), and earns the right to a later, permission-based advisory conversation. The pitch is never the opening — it's an opt-in afterward.

The realistic funnel (per 1,000 dials)



The three operating laws (from the Extraction doctrine — kept, made honest)

Law	What it means
I. Close on the call you have	If the signal is hot, pivot to the advisory conversation <i>inside</i> the same call — every "let's reschedule" leaks ~40-50%. The only acceptable second call is when a missing decision-maker forces it, and even then <i>you join their internal call</i> , not the reverse.
II. Never end empty-handed	Every conversation over 30 seconds must bank at least one of seven value units (see Part 5). "Nothing logged" is the only true failure.
III. Read the signal by minute 5	Front-load the five highest-signal questions. By the end of Q5 you know hot / warm / cold and deploy the rest of the call accordingly — not on a fixed script.

PART 2 — TARGET UNIVERSE & THE SURVEY ASSET

Goal: Define exactly who we survey and the report we genuinely publish

Qualifying filters

Filter	Criteria
Revenue	AED 50M – 500M
Headcount	50 – 500 employees
Tenure	Operating ≥ 3 years in the UAE
Sectors	Trading & distribution · manufacturing & light industrial · logistics & freight · professional services · retail chains (8–50 outlets) · healthcare groups · construction & real-estate services
Reachable DM	Owner, CEO, COO, CTO, or GM identifiable

Source list (target: 300 companies → 100 completed surveys)

Dubai Chamber of Commerce directory (filter by revenue band) · Dubai SME 100 list · free-zone directories (DMCC, JAFZA, DAFZA, Dubai South) · LinkedIn Sales Navigator (UAE, 50–500 staff, ops/tech titles) · industry associations (Manufacturers Association, NAFL logistics) · property portals for the real-estate tier. A 33% participation rate is realistic for credible research outreach.

VERIFY EXTERNAL STATS BEFORE PUBLISHING. Any headline figure used externally (e.g. UAE AI-adoption rankings) must be precisely attributed to a citable, current source. Do not repeat a stat in the report or on a call unless you can show where it came from.

PART 3 — THE CALL: OPEN → 5 SIGNAL QUESTIONS → FORK

Goal: Earn the next 30 seconds, then read hot/warm/cold by minute 5

3.1 — The Open (first 30 seconds)

YOU · DECISION-MAKER DIRECT

"Hi [Name], this is [Your Name] from SGC Tech in Dubai. I'll be upfront about why I'm calling — we're publishing an industry benchmark, *The UAE Mid-Market AI & Automation Index 2026*, surveying operators in your revenue band on how they're actually investing in technology. I'm not selling anything on this call, and participants get the full report before it's public. It's five quick questions, about eight minutes. Are you the right voice on technology and operations decisions, or is that someone else?"

The final question is a soft authority check disguised as courtesy. "Yes, that's me" = qualification #1 banked. "Someone else" = a named referral, which is still a win.

YOU · GATEKEEPER VERSION

"Good morning — this is [Your Name] from SGC Tech. We're running a UAE mid-market technology benchmark and including a range of operators in the survey. Who's the best person internally on technology and operations — would that be the CEO, the COO, or someone like an IT/finance lead?"

Multiple-choice is easier to answer than an open question, and it extracts a named referral even if the call ends here.

3.2 — The 5 Signal Questions (ask in this exact order)

These five come FIRST — before rapport or demographics. If they hang up after Q3, you still captured the three highest-value signals. The remaining "report-building" questions (Part 4) come only if the signal warrants the runway.

1 PAIN · OPEN

"What's the single biggest operational time-drain in your business today — the thing your team complains about most?"

Open question. Their first answer is the truth. Write it word-for-word — it's your wedge for the whole call.

EXTRACT: pain wedge + their exact language

2 PAIN · QUANTIFY

"Roughly how many hours per week — across the team — gets eaten by that? Best guess is fine."

"Best guess is fine" removes defensiveness. Their number is the ONLY basis you'll ever use for cost — never your own invented figure. Under ~10 hrs/wk = low priority; over ~30 = hot.

EXTRACT: self-reported hours (your only ROI input)

3 TRIGGER · TIMELINE

"In the next 6 months — is there a specific change, project, or pressure pushing you to fix this, or is it more of a 'someday' thing?"

Forces a binary: active or passive. Active prospects close far more often. "Someday" = content recipient, not pipeline.

EXTRACT: buying timeline · urgency

4 AUTHORITY · BUDGET

"When something like this gets greenlit at [Company], is that your call, or are there others in the room? And roughly what range gets signed off without escalation — under AED 100K, 100–500K, above?"

Two questions disguised as one — conversational, so it works. Reveals authority AND budget bracket without asking either bluntly.

EXTRACT: decision committee · budget tier

5 PRIOR ATTEMPT · DISAPPOINTMENT

"Have you tried anything to solve [their Q1 pain] already? What worked, what didn't?"

Surfaces competitor footprints, prior burns, and disappointment. A disappointed prospect with budget and a trigger is the hottest possible lead.

EXTRACT: competitive intel · disappointment

3.3 — The Fork (decide by minute 5–6)

HOT — Pivot now

Big pain + 20+ hrs/wk + active trigger + authority + budget + prior disappointment.

→ Offer the advisory pivot inside this call (Part 4A).

WARM — Complete & bridge

Real pain but missing trigger OR authority OR budget.

→ Finish the report questions, lock a future-trigger permission (Part 4B).

COLD — Extract & leave clean

No pain, or no budget/authority, or "someday."

→ **Finish the survey for data, deliver the report, end warmly (Part 4C).**

PART 4 — THE THREE BRANCHES

Goal: Deploy the rest of the call based on the signal, not a fixed script

4A — HOT: the permission-based pivot

YOU · PIVOT MOVE (CONTROL-TRANSFER, NOT A PITCH)

"[Name], can I pause the survey for a second? What you just described — [reflect their exact Q1 pain] eating around [Q2 hours], with [Q3 trigger] coming up — is close to what we've helped other [their-sector] operators work through. I can keep going through the survey, or I can spend the next ten minutes walking you through what those firms did and what it cost them. Your call — which is more useful to you right now?"

You reflect their words (they feel heard), reference peers (honest social proof — only name firms you genuinely worked with, anonymised if needed), and hand them control. Those who choose to finish the survey are signalling "not yet" — respect it; they convert later.

Minute	Move
0–2	Mirror the pain deeper: "So the real cost isn't the hours — it's [downstream consequence]. Fair?"
2–5	One peer case as a story: "[Similar-size firm], same pain, did [X]. Here's what changed — and roughly what it cost." (Only real, defensible examples.)
5–7	Specific recommendation, fixed scope, honest range: "The right starting move for you looks like [scope], roughly [price range], roughly [timeline]."
7–9	Handle the live objection in their language (Part 6).
9–10	Close the next concrete action (below).

YOU · CLOSE-THE-CALL (THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE "SECOND CALL")

"Two things before we wrap. One — I'll send a one-page scope by end of day tomorrow. Two — is there anyone who needs to be in the room when you review it: a partner, CFO, COO? If so, let's get them on the next call so I can answer their questions directly — saves you having to defend numbers I gave you."

You join their internal conversation rather than asking for a fresh meeting — much harder to ghost, and genuinely more useful to them.

4B — WARM: complete the report questions, then bridge

Run the remaining report questions (Part 4, list below), then:

YOU · BRIDGE MOVE (FUTURE-PACED, OPT-IN)

"Thanks — genuinely useful. Two things before we wrap. One, you're on the early-access list for the report. Two, you mentioned [their trigger or barrier] — when that lands, would you want me to flag what we've seen work for it? Not a pitch — just the pattern. Yes or no, both are fine."

A specific future trigger + explicit permission = a warm call banked for when their fiscal cycle, hire, or renewal fires.

4C — COLD: extract & leave clean

YOU · CLEAN EXIT (AFTER COMPLETING THE SURVEY)

"[Name], thank you — exactly the kind of input that makes this benchmark useful. I'll send the report when it publishes, early access, no charge. Quick last thing — who else in your network or sector should we be talking to for this? Even one name helps. And if anything changes in the next year, my line's open. Have a great day."

Three units from a "no": report opt-in (12 months of inbox access), a referral, and an open future door. That's converting un-closable time into compounding assets — not failure.

PART 5 — REPORT QUESTIONS & THE 7 EXTRACTION UNITS

Goal: Complete the genuine dataset; never hang up empty-handed

The 7 remaining report questions (warm/cold runway only)

#	Question	Doubles as
6	"What systems run that today — ERP, CRM, custom, or mostly Excel and WhatsApp?"	Tech maturity / green-field signal
7	"Tried any AI tools in the past year? Actual result vs. expected?"	Killer report finding + disappointment
8	"Annual tech spend range — under 100K, 100–500K, 500K–1M, above?"	Budget tier (scoring)
9	"Biggest barrier to moving faster — cost, finding the right partner, internal capacity?"	Pre-handles the objection
10	"Which UAE companies do tech exceptionally well? Why?"	Aspirational anchor / influence map
11	"Magic wand — one operational fix, what would it be?"	Wedge confirmation
12	"Anyone in your network who should be in this benchmark? Quick intro if so."	Referral extractor (compounding pipeline)

Before you hang up — bank ≥ 1 of these 7

1 • Pipeline

Active trigger + budget + authority + permission + concrete next step.

2 • Referral

Person + company + ideally an intro.

3 • Datapoint

≥ 5 of 12 answered — feeds the real report.

4 • Competitive intel

What they use, tried, and what disappointed.

5 • Report permission

Opt-in = honest inbox access for 12+ months.

6 • Future trigger

A specific event that justifies a warm re-engagement later.

7 • Clean disqualification

Confirmed "not a fit, here's why" — saves future dial-time. This IS value.

The only real failure: ending a 5+ minute conversation with no CRM entry — no datapoint, no permission, no referral, no trigger, no clean disqualification. Given only ~4% of dials reach a real conversation, wasting one is throwing money in the harbour.

PART 6 — THE NEGOTIATION CORE (rebuilt & defensible)

Goal: Genuinely ethical objection handling — every number built live, never invented

REBUILT FROM THE GROUND UP. The old "Ethical Negotiation" draft contained a fabricated ~AED/\$792K-per-year loss, pre-baked ROI tables, artificial "decide by Friday" deadlines, and a "never let them discuss alone" line. All removed. Real ethics means: build cost figures from the prospect's own numbers as a range, never manufacture a return, and never pressure. The persuasion is precision, not coercion.

How we talk about cost — live, from their numbers

YOU · THE HONEST COST REFLECTION

"Let me do the math *with* you, not at you. You said about [Q2 hours] a week go into [Q1 pain]. Over a month that's roughly [hours × ~4.3]. If a loaded staff cost is around AED [rate — and tell me if that's high or low for you], that's about AED [result] a month. Does that range feel right, or am I being too conservative?"

BUILT FROM THE PROSPECT'S OWN INPUTS (example):

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Hours/week on the pain (their Q2)    20
× ~4.3 weeks                          ≈ 86 hrs/month
× loaded cost/hr (offered as Q)    AED 60
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≈ AED 5,000/month → ~AED 60,000/year (a RANGE they confirm)
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Why this is bulletproof:

Every input is theirs. The rate is a question, not a claim. You present a range, never a precise "you're losing AED X." There is nothing to catch you on because you invented nothing — and a prospect cannot argue with their own numbers.

The objection bank (answer in their language; never defensive)

OBJECTION 1 "What's this really about? Are you selling something?"

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
Suspicion about the angle.	"Fair to ask. We're a tech firm — we work with UAE mid-market operators, and the benchmark is genuinely real; you get it regardless. If, after these questions, I see something we've specifically helped similar firms with, I'll mention it — and you can say yes, no, or 'just send the report.' That's it. Want to keep going?" <i>Defensible: Names the commercial angle honestly, contains it, returns control. Never denies it's a business.</i>

OBJECTION 2 "I'm in a meeting / not a good time."

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
Timing brush-off.	"Completely understand — that's exactly why I'll be quick. Two options: I can take five questions now in about six minutes, or we book eight minutes tomorrow before noon. Either way you're in the benchmark and get the report. Which is easier?" <i>Defensible: Two real options, both honest. No fake "10 hours recovered" promise (that line was cut from the old draft).</i>

OBJECTION 3 "Just send me the info / an email."

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
Deflect to email.	"Happy to. One honest thing — the benchmark only includes operators we actually speak with, so emailed answers don't make it in. Could I take just the five questions now, six minutes, and email you everything after? If it's not worth it, stop me at any point." <i>Defensible: The "only included if we speak" point is a real methodology rule, not manufactured FOMO. Give them a stop-valve.</i>

OBJECTION 4 "We're not interested in tech vendors."

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
Blanket no.	"Noted — and honestly that's a useful datapoint for the report itself. Just for the benchmark: what's the main reason — a bad past experience, internal capacity, or just not a priority right now? Helps us cover the real picture, not the marketing version." <i>Defensible: Accepts the no, reframes it as a genuine research contribution. The answer may be the report's headline finding.</i>

OBJECTION 5 "We already have a system / partner."

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
<p>Existing relationship.</p>	<p>"That's good — and useful for the benchmark. One question: if you could change one thing about how it works today, what would it be? That's the gap chart everyone wants to see. We usually extend what works rather than rip it out."</p> <hr/> <p>Defensible: <i>Doesn't attack the incumbent; asks for the gap. Matches our real "we don't rip out what works / Rescue Audit" positioning.</i></p>

OBJECTION 6 "It's too expensive." (in the advisory pivot)

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
<p>Price pushback.</p>	<p>"Let me put it against the number <i>you</i> gave me. You said roughly [their hours] a week on [their pain] — we worked that to about AED [their range] a year. The Growth build is about AED 52,000 in year one. I won't promise it erases all of that — what you actually reclaim depends on adoption, which we'd track together. But that's the comparison worth weighing. Want to start smaller with a paid Rescue Audit that credits back, or go straight to the build?"</p> <hr/> <p>Defensible: <i>Compares their own confirmed range to our published price. No invented ROI %, no "can you afford NOT to?" coercion. Offers a lower-risk path.</i></p>

OBJECTION 7 "I need to think about it / check with my partner."

THEY SAY	YOU REPLY
<p>Stall / consult.</p>	<p>"Of course. So I help rather than chase — what's the one thing that needs more thought: whether we can deliver, whether the team will adopt it, the cost, or the timing? Whatever it is, I'd rather address it honestly now. And if it's a partner decision, I'm glad to prepare a one-page summary or join the conversation so they can ask me directly — only if that's useful to you."</p> <hr/> <p>Defensible: <i>Surfaces the real objection; OFFERS to join (their choice). The old coercive "never let them discuss alone" rule is deleted.</i></p>

THEY SAY

Firm rejection.

YOU REPLY

"Done — you're off, and I apologise for the interruption. One respectful question only if you don't mind: was it the topic, the timing, or calls in general? Helps me not waste your time again. Either way, thank you."

Rule: *Honour it instantly, log DNC, never sneak back. One diagnostic question costs them nothing and protects the brand.*

PART 7 — SCORING, HANDOFF & PIPELINE HYGIENE

Goal: Route every completed survey to the right lane — honestly

The 100-point scoring model

Signal	Source	Max pts
Budget tier — AED 500K+ annual tech spend	Q8	25
Authority — speaker in the decision committee	Q4/Q7	20
Active trigger — change planned in 6–12 mo	Q3/Q9	15
Quantified pain — 15+ hrs/wk	Q2/Q4	15
Permission — yes to advisory	Q12	10
Disappointment — prior AI under-delivered	Q7	10
Momentum — rising investment posture	Q2	5

Tier	Score	Action
A	75–100	Hot — all signals aligned. Advisory within 5 days, founder/senior involved.
B	50–74	Warm — missing 1–2 signals. Advisory within 14 days + structured nurture.
C	25–49	Long-tail. Report + quarterly check-in.
D	0–24	Wrong fit. Report only, no follow-up.

The integrity rule:

Tier C and D STILL get the report. That's the promise that makes the whole system honest — and they become content distributors, future referrers, and re-engageable leads when their situation changes.

The 48-hour bridge email (Tier A/B)

SUBJECT: FOLLOWING UP ON OUR BENCHMARK CONVERSATION

"Hi [Name] — thanks again for the [X] minutes; your point on [specific thing they said] is exactly the kind of perspective that makes the benchmark useful.

Three quick things: (1) You're confirmed on the early-access list — the report drops [date]. (2) You mentioned [their pain] and roughly [their hours]/week on it; we've seen a specific pattern with a few other [sector] firms — I've attached a one-page brief on what they did and the outcome. (3) If a 20-minute walkthrough next week is useful, here's my calendar: [link]. If not, no worries — the report's

still coming.

— [Your Name]"

References their words, delivers value before asking for time, gives an easy out. Typical conversion to advisory: 40–60% for Tier A/B.

Pipeline hygiene

Rule
Every completed survey = a CRM record with all 12 answers in custom fields.
Tier A gets founder/senior involvement — never juniors.
No response after 3 touches → drop to Tier C quarterly nurture (never hound).
Track conversion at each stage: survey → advisory → pilot → contract.
Every closed deal triggers a "how did you hear about us" debrief to refine the next wave.

PART 8 — PRINT-AND-PIN ONE-PAGER

Goal: The only sheet on the desk during a live dial

The live-call flow

Time	Phase	Do
0:00–0:30	OPEN	Name · real benchmark · 5 Qs / 8 min · "not selling, you get the report" · authority check
0:30–5:00	5 SIGNAL Qs	Pain → Hours → Trigger → Authority+Budget → Prior attempt
5:00	FORK	Hot / Warm / Cold — decide now
5:00–15:00	BRANCH	Pivot (opt-in) · Complete+Bridge · Extract+Exit
Close	EXTRACT	Bank ≥ 1 of 7 units before hanging up

The 5 questions — memorise in order

1. PAIN — "Biggest operational time-drain your team complains about most?"
2. QUANTIFY — "Roughly how many hours/week across the team? Best guess is fine."
3. TRIGGER — "Next 6 months — specific pressure to fix it, or 'someday'?"
4. AUTHORITY+BUDGET — "Your call or others'? What range gets greenlit without escalation?"
5. PRIOR — "Tried anything already? What worked, what didn't?"

Before you hang up — checklist

- Logged their exact pain language (Q1)
- Logged hours/week number (Q2) — your ONLY cost input
- Logged trigger or "someday" (Q3)
- Logged authority + budget tier (Q4)
- Banked ≥ 1 of: pipeline / referral / permission / future trigger / clean disqualification
- They left the call feeling respected — would take the next call

The non-negotiables

Always	Never
Tell the truth: it's real research + an optional, opt-in advisory.	Say "not a sales call" while secretly scoring — the report must be real.
Build cost from THEIR hours, as a range they confirm.	Quote an invented loss figure or a fixed ROI %.
Offer to join their internal call (their choice).	"Never let them decide alone" / artificial deadlines.
Send the report to every participant, every tier.	Withhold the report from non-fits — that breaks the whole promise.
Honour DNC instantly; log it.	Argue, push, or re-dial after a firm no.

Close on the call you have · Never leave empty-handed · Read the signal by minute 5 · And only ever use numbers the prospect gave you.

Research-Led Outbound Master Playbook v1.0 (Honest Edition) · SGC Tech AI, Dubai
Built on one principle: trust compounds faster than tactics. The research is
real.