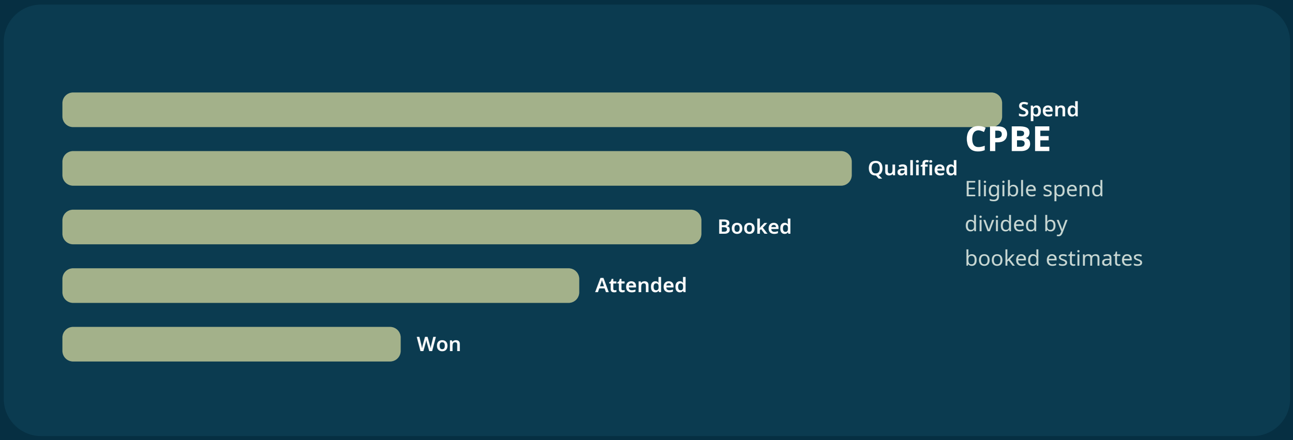
VORTOX LAB WHITEPAPER

Cost Per Booked Estimate

A pricing model for landscapers that reads marketing spend against margin per crew hour instead of raw lead volume.



Built for landscaping and green-industry companies running crews, estimates, contracts, and seasonal demand.

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HOW TO USE THIS PAPER

Read the constraint before the channel

Cost per booked estimate is eligible marketing cost divided by estimates placed on the calendar. It is more useful than cost per lead because it forces the report to account for qualification, response, routing, and the sales team's capacity.

EVIDENCE NOTE

This paper is an operating framework. It does not claim an unpublished client dataset or client result. Worked examples and diagrams are illustrative until replaced with your verified data.

Built for

Owners who know the phone is ringing but cannot tell what one qualified, attended estimate actually costs.

Three decisions this paper should change

Cheap leads become expensive when half never book.

A full estimate calendar can still lose money on small, scattered jobs.

Ad spend, management fees, landing-page work, and call handling must be separated before the number means anything.

THE OPERATING PROBLEM

More activity does not fix the wrong constraint

Cost per booked estimate is eligible marketing cost divided by estimates placed on the calendar. It is more useful than cost per lead because it forces the report to account for qualification, response, routing, and the sales team's capacity.

01	Cheap leads become expensive when half never book.
02	A full estimate calendar can still lose money on small, scattered jobs.
03	Ad spend, management fees, landing-page work, and call handling must be separated before the number means anything.

OWNER TEST

Can you name the point where a new enquiry becomes booked work, profitable crew time, and retained revenue? If not, the report stops too early.

DIAGNOSTIC

Find the weak layer before changing spend

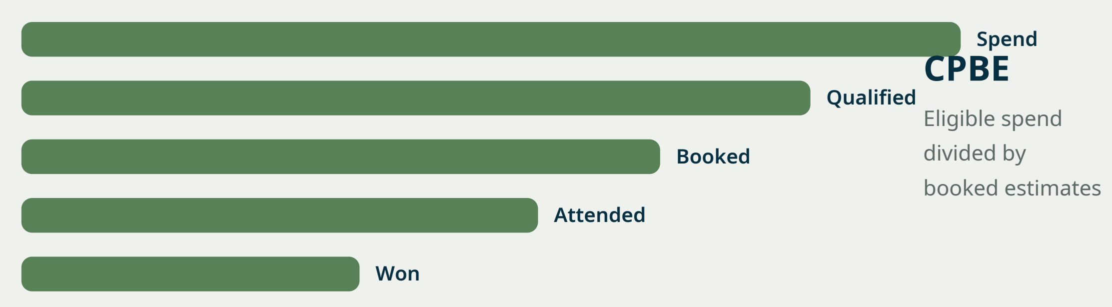
Layer	Question	Failure signal
Demand	Are enquiries for the work and territory you want?	Price shoppers, wrong services, out-of-zone requests
Response	Does one person or system own the first action?	Voicemail, slow forms, duplicate follow-up
Sales	Do qualified leads book, attend, and close?	Proposal ageing, no-shows, weak handoff
Delivery	Can crews service the work at the planned margin?	Overtime, drive time, backlog, rework
Retention	Does recurring or contract work renew?	Late renewal, complaints, price-only conversations

- [ ] One source name per channel
- [ ] One booked-estimate definition
- [ ] One renewal date per contract or programme
- [ ] One owner per lead
- [ ] One capacity view by week
- [ ] One exception list for missing data

THE MODEL

The acquisition chain

Read each conversion step separately. The point is not to force one benchmark across every service. The point is to find the step that turns spend into wasted crew or estimator time.



Cost per qualified enquiry = eligible spend / qualified enquiries.

Cost per booked estimate = eligible spend / booked estimates.

Cost per attended estimate = eligible spend / attended estimates.

Cost per sale = eligible spend / won jobs.

Contribution after acquisition = job contribution - cost per sale.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Any sample values in this paper show the calculation method only. Replace them with verified account, sales, job, and margin data before publishing or making a budget decision.

THE OPERATING METHOD

Run the work in a sequence the team can repeat

01	Define eligible spend and keep ad spend separate from management.
02	Set qualification rules for service, territory, timing, budget, and property type.
03	Connect calls and forms to an estimate record.
04	Track cancellations and no-shows instead of counting every calendar entry.
05	Compare cost per sale with contribution margin, not total contract value.

The weekly meeting

Review exceptions before averages.

Name the owner and due date for every correction.

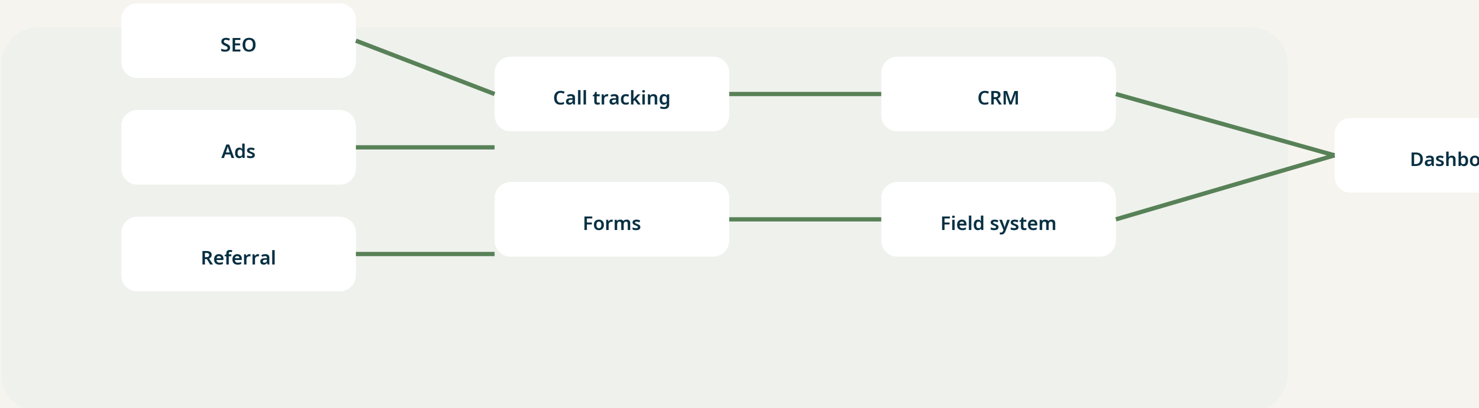
Separate marketing action from sales or operations action.

Stop spend when capacity or route fit is the binding constraint.

SYSTEMS AND OWNERSHIP

Keep one source of truth for each operating layer

The cleanest model connects the ad platform, call tracking, website forms, CRM, and field system. When a booked estimate lives only on a paper calendar, attribution stops before the number that matters.



Layer	System owner	Minimum record
Website and channel	Marketing	Source, campaign, landing page, call or form ID
Sales	CRM or pipeline	Lead owner, qualification, estimate, status, next action
Delivery	Field software	Job, crew, route, schedule, invoice, service history
Financial	Accounting	Collected revenue, committed cost, margin inputs
Management	Dashboard	Exceptions, operating measures, decisions, owner

GREEN INDUSTRY CONTEXT

Plan around the operating calendar, not a flat twelve-month budget

A spring campaign can tolerate a higher acquisition cost when crews have profitable capacity. The same campaign becomes wasteful when the schedule is already full or route gaps make the next booked job expensive to deliver.

Window	Primary operating question
January to March	What systems, scripts, pages, and spring capacity must be ready before demand rises?
April to June	Where is response, estimating, route fit, or crew capacity losing the value of demand?
July to September	Which services, contracts, and fall campaigns deserve budget and operational attention?
October to December	Which renewals, winter offers, reporting fixes, and next-spring builds happen now?

MEASUREMENT

Report the operating decision, not a pile of channel numbers

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Average contribution per won job				
Estimator hours used				
Crew capacity by week				

Monthly report order

What changed against the company baseline.

Why it changed, with exceptions named.

What the team changed this month.

What will be measured next.

What cannot yet be claimed because the data is incomplete.

PROOF RULE

A result becomes publishable only when a named client approves the figure and the measurement method. Until then, show the process and the measures.

NINETY-DAY PLAN

Build the minimum system, then improve it from live data

Days 1-15	define the formula and exclusions.
Days 16-30	connect call and form records to estimates.
Days 31-60	calculate by channel and service line.
Days 61-90	change bids, qualification, landing pages, and budget from the weak step.

What Vortox Lab would inspect first

Account ownership and access.

Tracking from source to booked work.

Response and qualification rules.

Service-line capacity and route fit.

Seasonal priorities and renewal dates.

Get the written audit before the build.

We send the written audit within three working days, then book a 30-minute call.

Book a growth audit

Growth packages from $2,000/mo

OPERATOR WORKSHEET

Put your own baseline into the model

Use one row per service line, branch, route, campaign, contract, or operating period. The purpose is to identify the next decision, not to create another report nobody uses.

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] Definition agreed
- [ ] Source verified
- [ ] Owner named
- [ ] Baseline entered
- [ ] Target tied to capacity
- [ ] Next action dated
- [ ] Exception recorded
- [ ] Review scheduled

NO DATA YET

Start with ten manually reconciled records. A small accurate sample is more useful than a dashboard built on unmatched names and missing outcomes.

OPERATOR APPENDIX

SEO calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Google Ads calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
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Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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OPERATOR APPENDIX

Local Services Ads calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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OPERATOR APPENDIX

Paid social calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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OPERATOR APPENDIX

Referral calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Email and SMS calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- ☐ What changed since the last review?
- ☐ Which assumption is still unverified?
- ☐ What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- ☐ Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Website organic calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Outbound calculation sheet

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Recurring lawn care service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Commercial maintenance service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- ☐ What changed since the last review?
- ☐ Which assumption is still unverified?
- ☐ What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- ☐ Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Design-build service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Irrigation service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Tree care service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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OPERATOR APPENDIX

Landscape lighting service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

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- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Snow and ice service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- ☐ What changed since the last review?
- ☐ Which assumption is still unverified?
- ☐ What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- ☐ Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Fertilisation service economics

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

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____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Low-capacity scenario

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
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Won jobs				
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Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

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OPERATOR APPENDIX

High no-show scenario

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
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- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

High close-rate scenario

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- ☐ What changed since the last review?
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- ☐ What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- ☐ Who owns the next action and when is it due?

OPERATOR APPENDIX

Contribution-margin scenario

Enter only costs that belong in the agreed acquisition model. Keep ad spend, management, creative, landing-page work, and call handling visible so the number can be audited.

Owner	Review date	Status
____________________	____________________	Not started / Active / Closed

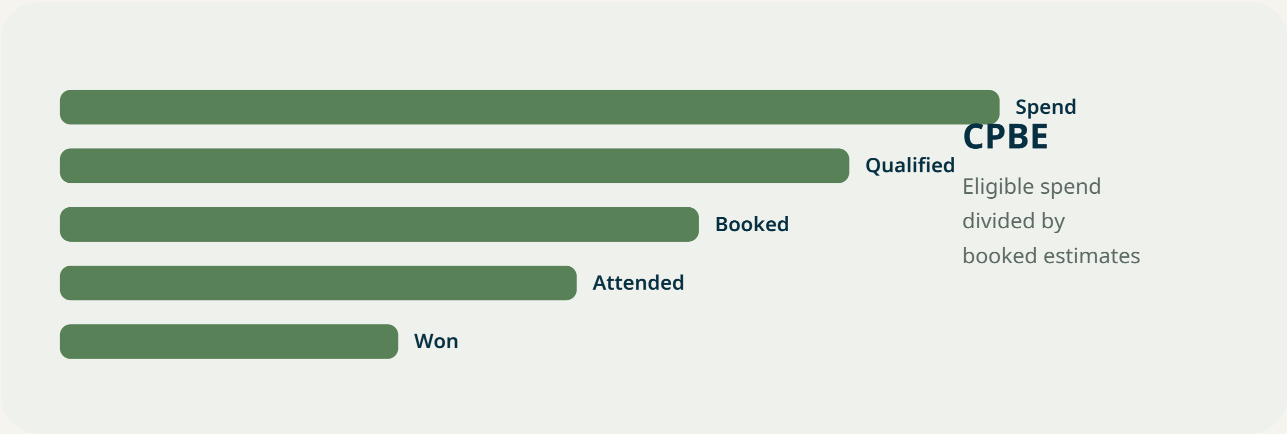
Measure	Current	Target	Owner	Next action
Eligible marketing cost				
Qualified enquiries				
Booked estimates				
Attended estimates				
Won jobs				
Contribution per job				
Estimator hours				
Capacity available				

- [ ] What changed since the last review?
- [ ] Which assumption is still unverified?
- [ ] What costs time, margin, or renewal risk if nothing changes?
- [ ] Who owns the next action and when is it due?

NEXT STEP

Lead cost is one part of it. We run the whole growth system.

One team manages marketing, AI, website, and reporting. Ad spend is billed direct.



The growth audit

We review the accounts, website, tracking, response path, service mix, seasonal priorities, and the operating constraint. You receive a written priority list within three working days, then a 30-minute call. No contract, no obligation, and no mailing-list add.

Book a growth audit. See the constraint clearly.

Growth packages start at $2,000 per month. Ad spend is excluded.

Book a growth audit

Growth packages from $2,000/mo

vortoxlab.com | growth audit | growth packages