BLACKSMITH INFOSEC

PARTNER TRAINING

The Risk Assessment Wedge

How to use a free risk assessment to open doors and close compliance deals

The Problem You're Solving

Most SMBs don't know they have a compliance problem.

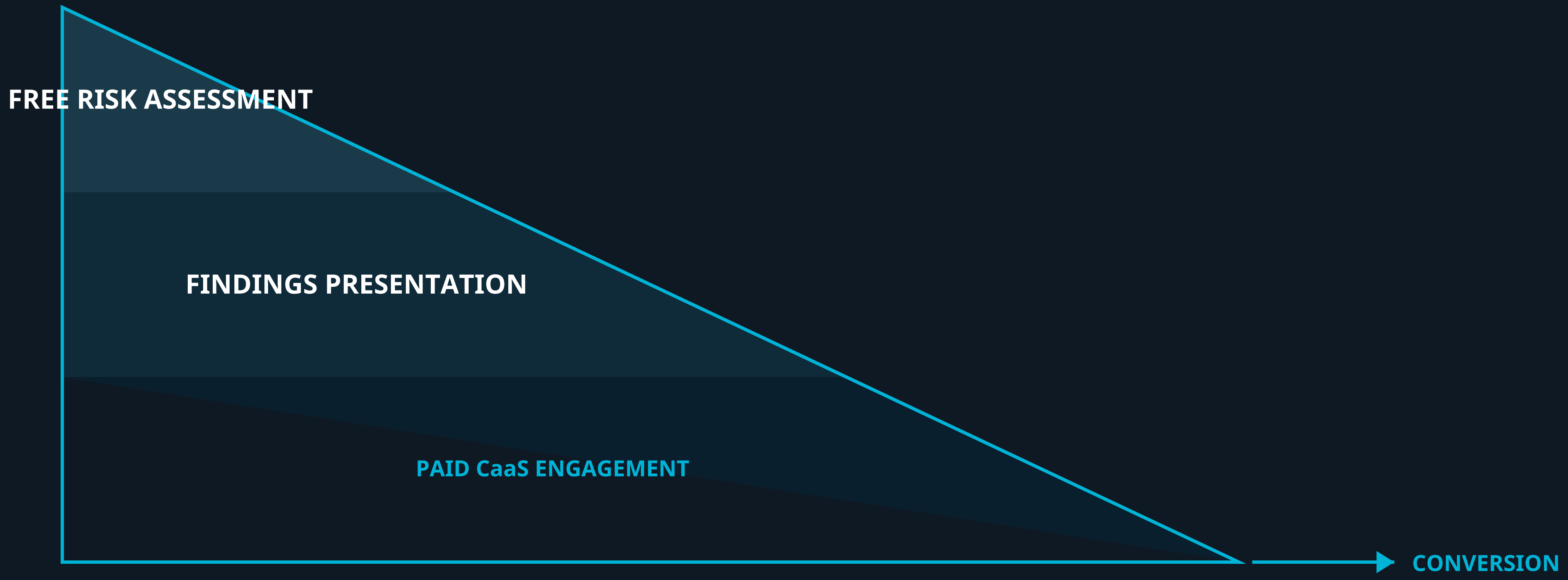
Your job is to show them — before a breach does. The challenge is that standard sales approaches don't work here:

- Clients aren't asking for compliance — they don't know they need it
- They don't understand their exposure until it's too late
- Price objections kill conversations before they start
- Generic fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD) doesn't move decisions

> The Wedge changes the conversation from 'do you want to buy compliance?' to 'here's what's actually exposed in your business.'

What the Wedge Is

The Risk Assessment Wedge is Blacksmith's proprietary sales methodology. It uses a free, platform-generated risk assessment as the entry point to a paid compliance engagement.



The assessment creates obligation, trust, and urgency simultaneously. You're not selling — you're delivering a finding.

Why It Works

1 Low barrier to yes

It's free. There's no reason to say no to a free assessment of their security posture.

2 Creates shared understanding

Clients can't un-see their own risk. Once they see the findings, the conversation changes.

3 Urgency is earned, not manufactured

The findings create real urgency — not sales pressure. You're showing them their own exposure.

4 Specific beats generic

A finding about their business is worth more than any industry statistic you could cite.

How to Position the Ask

The goal is a yes to the assessment — not the sale.

What to say

- "We offer a complimentary risk assessment for businesses like yours — takes about an hour, no obligation."
- "We're not here to sell you anything today. We just want to show you where you stand."
- "If the findings are clean, great. If not, we'll talk about what that means for your business."

What NOT to say

- Don't mention compliance frameworks by name in the opener
- Don't lead with price
- Don't use the word 'audit'
- Don't oversell the assessment itself

When they ask 'what's the catch?' — your answer: 'There isn't one. If there's nothing to fix, we shake hands and move on.'

Running the Assessment

The risk assessment is built into the Blacksmith platform. Here's how it works:

1. Log in to the Blacksmith platform at web.blacksmithinfosec.com
2. Create a new client record for the prospect
3. Launch the Risk Assessment module from the client dashboard
4. Work through the assessment with the client — or send it to them to complete
5. The platform generates a findings report automatically
6. Schedule the findings presentation within 48 hours

> Tip: Do the assessment with the client present when possible. Walking through it together builds rapport and primes them for the findings conversation.

The Findings Presentation

This is where the sale happens.

Structure your findings presentation in three parts:

1 What's working

Start here. Acknowledge what they're doing right. This builds credibility.

2 What's a gap

Present gaps as business risk, not technical deficiencies. 'This means a breach here could cost you X.'

3 What's a liability

These are the must-fix items. Frame them as things that need a plan, not an emergency.

Close with: 'Here's what a 90-day remediation program looks like — and what it would cost to have us manage it for you.'

Handling Objections

"We're too small to be a target"

Attackers don't target by size — they target by vulnerability. Small businesses are hit more often because they're easier.

"We already have antivirus / a firewall"

Those are tools. Compliance is a program. One doesn't replace the other — and your assessment shows exactly where the gaps are.

"We can't afford compliance right now"

The findings tell us what's actually at risk. Let's look at what a phased approach costs versus what a breach costs.

"Let us think about it"

Absolutely. What would help you feel confident moving forward — is it the cost, the timeline, or something in the findings?

Pricing the Follow-On Engagement

The findings justify the price. Never present pricing before the findings presentation.

Three pricing principles

- Always present three tiers — never a single price. Options prevent 'yes or no' decisions.
- Anchor to the market rate. Blacksmith MSPs charge an average of $1,300/month per CaaS client.
- Tie each tier to specific findings. 'For $X/month, we address items 1–4. For $Y, we cover everything.'

> The findings report is your price justification. If you've done the presentation well, the client is asking you what it costs — you're not pitching.

Your 30-Day Action Plan

Here's how to run your first Wedge in the next 30 days:

Week 1

1. Identify 5 existing clients for a free assessment. Pick the ones most likely to have gaps.

Week 1

2. Draft your outreach email using the Client Conversation Guide.

Week 2

3. Complete your first two assessments inside the Blacksmith platform.

Week 2-3

4. Run your findings presentations. Use the structure from Slide 7.

Week 3-4

5. Close your first CaaS engagement. Your first $1,300/month starts here.

> Your goal: one closed CaaS engagement in 30 days. One client at $1,300/month is $15,600 in annual recurring revenue.

Resources & Next Steps

Everything you need is in your Blacksmith partner onboarding:

- Platform access: web.blacksmithinfosec.com
- Full onboarding walkthrough: [your onboarding URL]
- Client Conversation Guide — in your onboarding downloads
- Compliance Task Triage Table — helps clients see findings as a journey, not a project (Step 5 of onboarding)
- Book a setup call with your partner rep: info.blacksmithinfosec.com/meetings/blacksmith/blacksmith-demo

The first assessment is the hardest. After that, it's a system.

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