

Untangling the Noise

Separate the loudest complaints from what has the highest value to the business

You're juggling urgent issues and competing priorities. The same issues come back again and again, and there is never time to fix what is broken. This tool helps you look at everything competing for your attention and **separate the loudest complaints from the highest-value issues**.

01

List your top issues

Write down the top 5 issues driving customers to contact you, in the order they come to mind. Then circle **in red** the one issue your intuition tells you is most important to fix.

02

Estimate Volume and Volatility

For each issue, estimate contacts in a typical low month and a typical high month.

03

Estimate the pain

Roughly rate how much it hurts customers, agents, and the business.

04

Compare volume vs. pain

Plot each issue on the matrix. Loudest means it drives the most contacts. Painful means it hurts customers, agents, or the business most. Then check where your **red circle** issue landed.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Your top contact reasons from your support platform, and your own judgment. Estimates are fine. You don't need a data analyst to do this.

Spend 30 minutes or less on this. Don't allow yourself to overthink it.

STEPS 1 & 2

List your top issues and estimate volatility

Document the issues consuming your attention

List the top 5 issues driving customer contacts in the order they come to mind, without looking anything up. Put a **red circle** on the one your intuition tells you is most important to fix. Then estimate monthly volume and volatility.

		LOW	HIGH	VOLATILITY RATIO Calculate High ÷ Low
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

STEP 3

Estimate pain

Document the level of pain

List the same issues in the same order as Steps 1 & 2.

Rate pain from 1 to 5 (1 = least pain, 5 = most pain).

For business pain, use a rough rating. Your best guess of risk to revenue, customer retention, or brand reputation is fine.

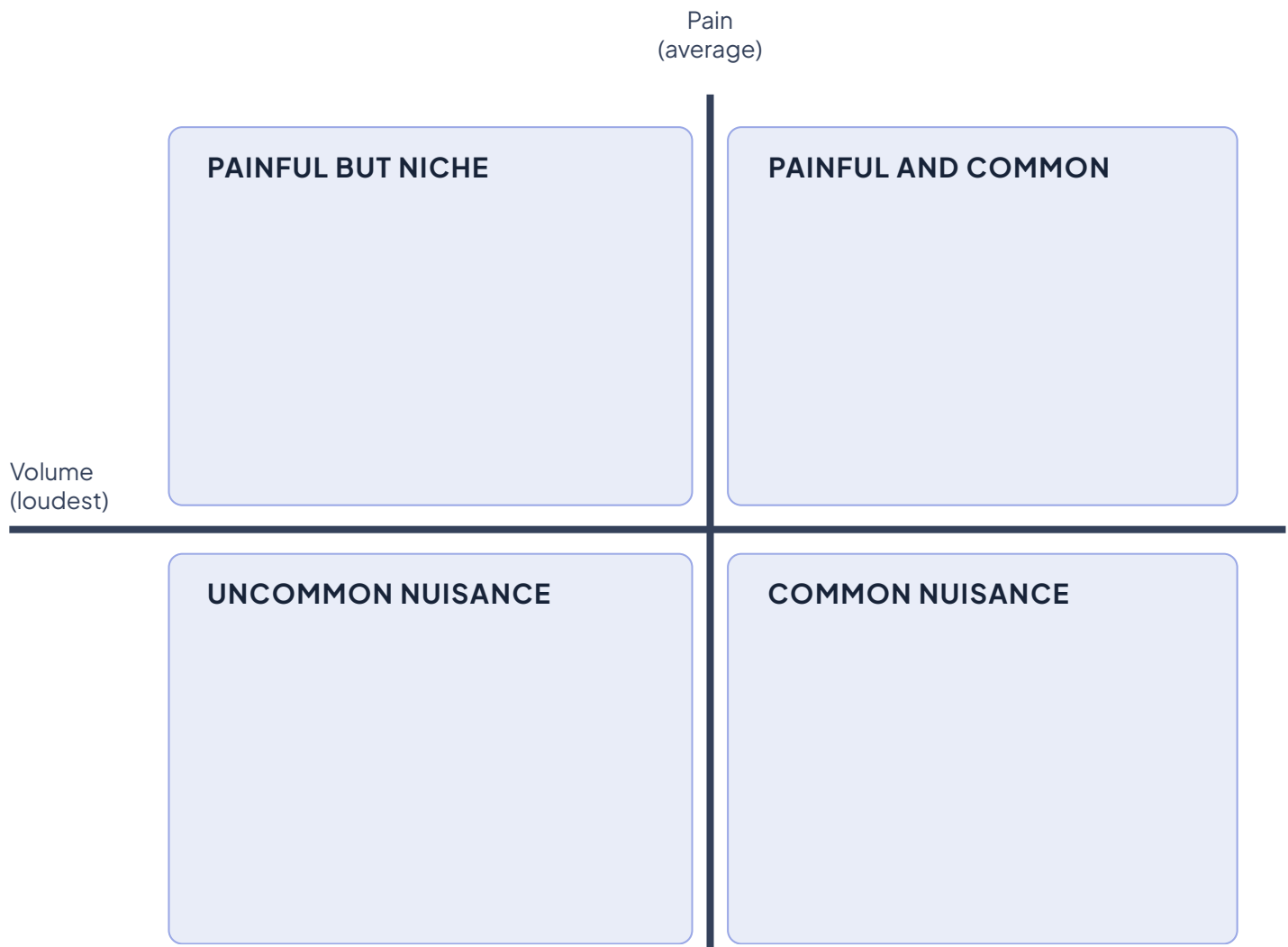
		CUSTOMER PAIN	AGENT PAIN	BUSINESS PAIN	PAIN AVERAGE
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Calculate Average

Loudest vs. Most Painful

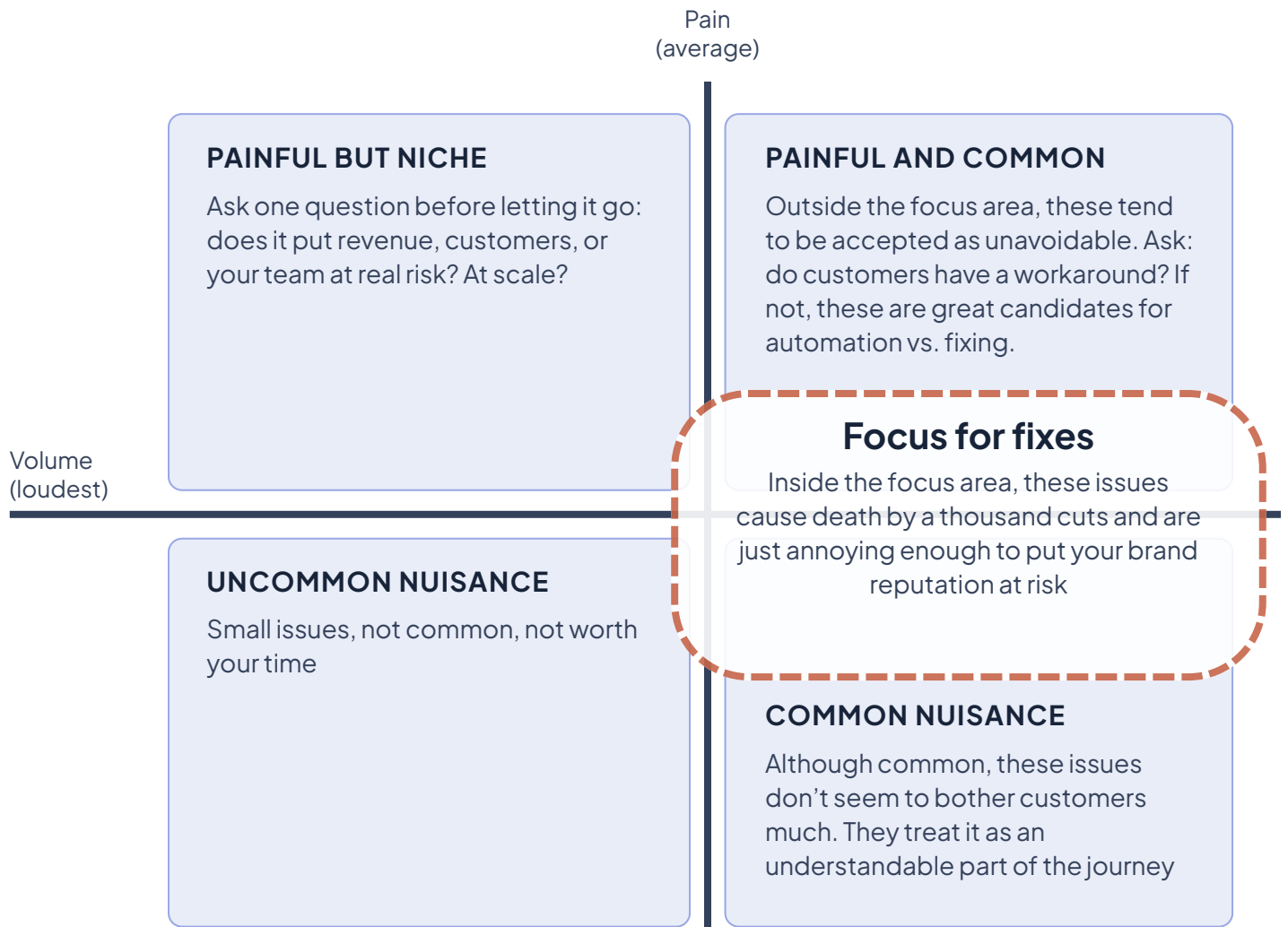
Separate the loudest complaints from the most painful. Pain is where value to the business starts.

Plot each issue using its high-month volume (Step 2) and its pain average (Step 3).
Star any issue with a volatility ratio of 2 or more.



Interpreting Your Matrix

In the Aperture Method, you put a dollar figure on pain. That is where the case for change starts.



What this doesn't tell you yet

Which of these are yours to fix, which are shared, and which you can only influence. And what the trade-offs cost, including the price of doing nothing.

The ah-ha moment

Where did your **red circle** issue land? If it surprised you, that's the skill: getting curious about what's actually happening instead of trusting the first or easiest explanation.

NEXT STEP

Book a live coaching session

Work through your triage tool with live coaching.

[Learn more and book](#)