

Stop. blaming *HubSpot.*

Fix what's underneath it.

Why some HubSpot customers get the ROI they were promised, and others drift back to spreadsheets. A look at what a Clarity Reset means for adoption, ROI and long-term growth in the age of AI.

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What's *inside*.

A structured argument around why HubSpot instances stall after go-live, what a proper reset looks like, and the financial and strategic case for doing it now rather than at the next renewal.

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The platform kept its promises. *The onboarding didn't.*

It's a familiar story. A business buys HubSpot, ticks off the onboarding checklist, and eighteen months later still can't get a straight answer out of its own CRM.

We work with two kinds of HubSpot customers. One does the readiness work before they sign up for the software. They develop clear lifecycle stages, clean data, a team that agrees on what a qualified lead actually means.

The other skips straight to go-live, often on the promise of a cheaper licence deal and eighteen months later calls us to ask why the platform they were promised isn't the platform they got.

This whitepaper is for the second group.

The pattern repeats in near-identical language every time we hear it. Sales logs in once a week, if that. Marketing built forty workflows in the first quarter and then abandoned half of them. Nobody agrees on what counts as a qualified lead, so the pipeline report everyone actually trusts still lives in a spreadsheet. HubSpot works exactly as designed. Nobody trusts what it's telling them.

None of this is really about HubSpot. The platform is a mature and stable product used well by tens of thousands of companies every day. The businesses we're describing didn't buy the wrong tool. They bought before doing the thinking the tool needed, and they've paid for that gap every month since.

By the time a business calls us about a stalled portal, they've usually tried the obvious fixes already. Another training session. A new admin. A firm email from the CRO about data hygiene. These help for a fortnight, then the team drifts back to the workaround it trusts, because the workaround, unlike the CRM, still tells the truth about the pipeline.

The person who championed the purchase carries this hardest. They stood up in the leadership meeting and said this would fix the reporting problem. Eighteen months on, they field the "what are we actually getting for this" question, usually from whoever's holding the renewal invoice.

Whether you're on Starter, Professional or Enterprise, across one Hub or all five, the underlying problem is the one we set out in our earlier whitepaper, *Stop. Before you buy a CRM*, the software was never the constraint. Data structure, process definition and team alignment are, and none of them fix themselves after go-live.

This whitepaper makes a simple but important argument that the HubSpot customers who finally get the ROI they were promised are the ones who *reset their foundations once, properly*, rather than patching them forever.

DRAWN FROM PORTAL AUDITS, HUBSPOT IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE AND OUR ROI CALCULATOR

What's changed since you signed the contract is how far AI now reaches across the platform. HubSpot has spent the past two years pushing AI further into the core of every Hub: predictive lead scoring, content generation, prospecting agents, data enrichment. If your portal wasn't ready for basic reporting, it isn't ready for AI making decisions on your behalf either.

- WE CALL THIS RECOVERY APPROACH

Clarity Reset.

Clarity Reset isn't a rebuild from scratch, and it isn't another round of generic training. Think of it as a structured diagnostic and fix process: treat the live portal the way we'd treat a fresh implementation, fix the data, redesign the processes people will actually follow, then re-onboard the team against a system they can trust.

A live portal is not the same as *a working one.*

If it is any solace you're not the only business paying full price to use a fraction of the platform. Across software generally, roughly half of what gets bought delivers no return at all.

Buying HubSpot and going live feels like the finish line. The licences are active, the data's imported, the team's had their onboarding calls. On paper, the project is done.

In practice, "done" and "delivering value" are very different things, and the gap between them is where most HubSpot customers get stuck. The platform is live. Adoption isn't.

55%

of large enterprise software licences go unused.

ZYLO, 2024 ENTERPRISE SAAS MANAGEMENT REPORT

That figure covers enterprise software generally, not HubSpot specifically, but the mechanism is identical, a platform gets bought with good intentions, the rollout gets rushed or under-resourced, and the licence keeps renewing on autopilot long after anyone's confident it's earning its keep.

Research from Vertice puts a finer point on it saying that roughly 15% of business software sits completely unused, and a further 51% is active but running at less than half its purchased capacity.

HubSpot portals follow the same curve. A fully abandoned instance is rare. Far more often, we see one Hub properly adopted, a second limping along with three people using it correctly, and a third that was switched on, configured once, and never revisited since. The invoice doesn't distinguish between them and charges for all of them equally.

WORTH SAYING PLAINLY

None of this is a HubSpot problem. It's an adoption problem that happens to be running on HubSpot, and it will keep happening on whichever platform replaces it if the foundations underneath don't change.

The same five causes, *every time.*

Two decades of CRM research point to the same answer, the software isn't the variable. The foundations underneath it are.

48%

Lack of business strategy

Teams went live without a shared, specific answer to what the platform needed to achieve, so nobody can now agree whether it's actually working.

45%

Lack of process change

HubSpot got configured around the old process instead of a redesigned one, so it digitises the same friction that existed before go-live.

40%

Lack of executive support

Without active sponsorship, day-to-day usage has no authority behind it, and teams always revert to whatever leadership doesn't actively enforce.

50%

Poor data quality

Half of all CRM problems trace back to inaccurate, incomplete or duplicated data. No amount of Breeze automation compensates for a flawed dataset.

46%

User resistance

Gartner names this the single leading cause of CRM failure. Sales reverts to the old workflow the moment it stops seeing value, and value is hard to see through bad data.

None of these five causes are about which CRM got chosen. They're about what happened, or didn't happen, in the months either side of go-live. If your portal shows two or more of these symptoms today, that isn't a sign HubSpot was the wrong decision. It's a sign the groundwork got skipped, and skipped groundwork doesn't fix itself just because the licence keeps renewing.

These figures are drawn from the same research base we cited in *Stop. Before you buy a CRM:* Gartner's 2024 CRM research and the Johnny Grow CRM Failure Report, which together put overall CRM implementation failure at 55%, with an average variance of 51% against the goals originally set.

The technology still works. The question, eighteen months later, is the same as on day one: *was the business set up to use it?*

Breeze doesn't know *your data is wrong.*

Every AI feature HubSpot has shipped in the last two years depends entirely on the quality of what it's fed. If your portal was already struggling, AI doesn't fix that. It broadcasts the chaos faster.

HubSpot's AI is no longer a bolt-on. Breeze now touches lead scoring, content generation, prospecting and customer service across every Hub, and HubSpot's own product direction makes clear it isn't slowing down.

For a business with clean data and clearly defined lifecycle stages, that's a real edge. For a business still running on the workarounds described in the last section, it's a new kind of risk. A predictive scoring model trained on inconsistent lifecycle stages scores noise, not signal. A prospecting agent pulling from duplicated, outdated contacts sends personalised outreach to the wrong people, confidently. An AI-generated forecast built on a pipeline where "Proposal Sent" means five different things to five different reps produces a number that looks precise and means nothing.

THE DIFFERENCE AI MAKES

Traditional CRM with poor foundations gives you a tool that underperforms. AI-powered CRM with poor foundations gives you a tool that actively misleads you, and it does so faster and more convincingly than a person ever could.

This is the part most HubSpot customers haven't connected yet. A portal that's been underperforming for a year isn't just missing out on Breeze. It's actively degrading the outputs Breeze does produce, and every new AI feature HubSpot ships makes that gap more expensive to leave alone.

Too invested to stop. *Too stuck to grow.*

Mid-market B2B businesses, roughly 50 to 1,000 employees, face a particular version of this problem, and it gets more expensive the longer a stalled portal goes unaddressed.

These businesses are complex enough to need proper implementation, with several departments, longer sales cycles and data relationships that don't simplify easily. They rarely have the dedicated RevOps function or change management budget that larger enterprises can deploy, so when the original go-live gets rushed, there's no internal team positioned to catch it and put it right.

1.6×

Larger organisations (£1bn+) are more likely to blow their CRM budget than smaller ones.

26%

Average CRM adoption rate across all sectors. Most of the investment generates no return.

<40%

Adoption rate for rollouts without executive advocacy or role-specific training.

For a business already months or years into a HubSpot contract, the DIY-abandonment fork we described in our original whitepaper has already been passed. Nobody simply reverted to spreadsheets and cancelled the licence. Instead, most businesses do something far more expensive: they keep the licence, keep half-using it, and keep a shadow system running alongside it in Excel and email. **They end up paying for both, indefinitely.**

And with Breeze pushing further into every Hub, the pressure compounds. The features HubSpot is charging for get more capable every quarter. The foundations needed to use them properly don't improve on their own.

The financial impact is *quantifiable*.

Using the same illustrative mid-market assumptions as our original whitepaper (a £2,500 monthly licence, six people involved, £45 an hour loaded cost), the case for fixing this now rather than at the next renewal is stark.

A stalled HubSpot portal doesn't sit still. It costs money every month it's left alone: in wasted licence spend, in staff time spent working around a system nobody trusts, and in commercial value that never gets realised because nobody acts on reporting they don't believe.

Cost element	Standing still	Clarity Reset
Licence spend during low adoption (6 months)	£15,000	£5,000
Internal staff time on workarounds	£21,060	£6,480
Disruption and rework (25%)	£5,265	£1,620
Delayed commercial value	£24,000	£8,000
Reset diagnostic & fix engagement	£0	£6,000
Total	£65,325	£27,100

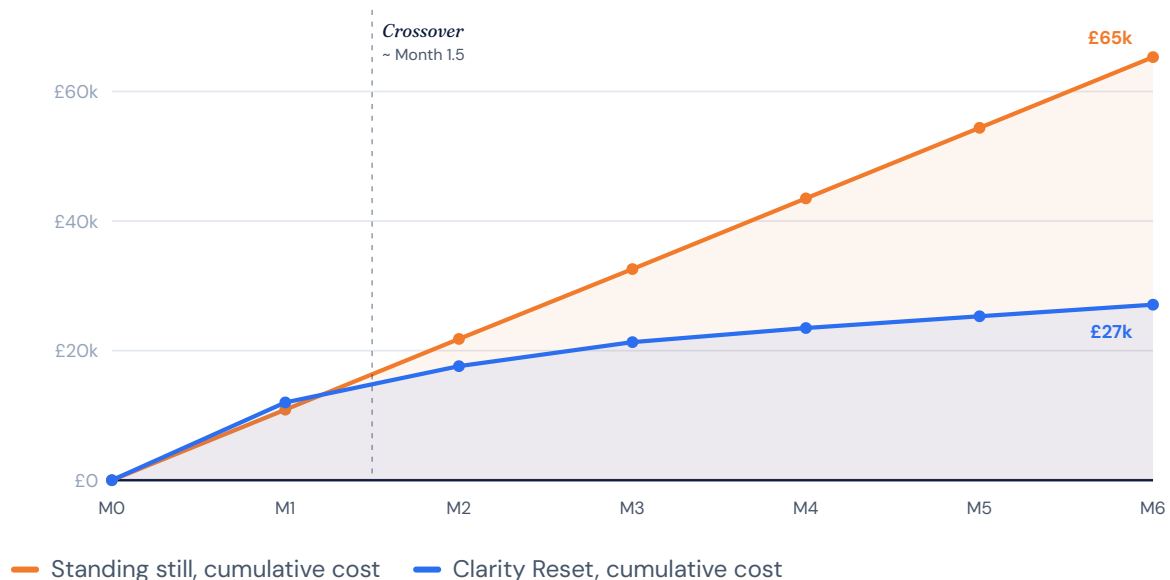
The gap is **over £38,000 across six months**, and that's before accounting for what happens to the renewal conversation when a stalled portal becomes the reason the whole platform gets re-tendered.

Standing still gets *expensive fast.*

The chart below tracks cumulative cost over six months for both scenarios. The orange line is the cost of leaving the portal as it is; the blue line is the cost of resetting it, front-loaded into the first two months and then flattening out.

Cumulative cost comparison over 6 months

Figure 1 · Based on a £2,500/month licence, six people involved, £45/hour loaded cost, and £4,000/month in estimated unrealised commercial value.



By month six, standing still has cost roughly £65,000. Resetting the foundations costs roughly £27,000, most of it incurred in the first two months. The gap keeps widening after that, because the standing-still line keeps climbing and the Clarity Reset line flattens out once the portal is trusted again.

Fix the foundations once. *Properly.*

A Clarity Reset treats your live portal the way we'd treat a brand-new implementation: audit it honestly, fix what's broken, and re-onboard the team against a system they can trust.

The point isn't to prove the original implementation was wrong. It's to validate what the business needs now, then rebuild the operating model around it, in the portal that's already live.

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	WHAT GETS FIXED
01 Portal diagnostic	An honest, scored assessment of the live portal: data quality, process clarity, lifecycle definition, team alignment and adoption, Hub by Hub.	An audit of what's actually being used, what's been abandoned, and where the data, process and adoption gaps sit.
02 Data & process reset	Deduplication, field clean-up and lifecycle redesign, done without touching go-live dates or disrupting deals already in flight.	Lifecycle stages redefined against how the business actually sells today. Pipeline stages, deal properties and MQL/SQL handoffs rebuilt around the sales motion the team genuinely follows.
03 Automation & AI audit	Every workflow and Breeze-dependent feature reviewed, consolidated where it overlaps, and rebuilt where the underlying data can't support it yet.	Workflows built one at a time over an agreed timeline get documented and tested. Data and process brought to a standard where Breeze is trustworthy rather than confidently wrong.
04 Re-onboarding	Role-specific training built around how the reset system actually works, delivered to the team that will use it daily.	No more generic walkthroughs of features nobody asked for.
05 ROI re-baseline	A quantified, defensible view of platform value rebuilt from the reset system's data.	A clear answer to what the platform is actually delivering now, ready for the next renewal or budget conversation.
06 Governance plan	Clear ownership, review cadence and change control, so the portal doesn't just drift back to where it started six months later.	

The purchase was for the business. *The doubt is personal.*

Beneath the surface objections (it's too disruptive, we don't have time, let's just push through to renewal) sits the same psychological driver that stalls CRM (and many other) buying decisions in the first place.

Matthew Dixon and Ted McKenna's research, published in *The JOLT Effect*, analysed over 2.5 million sales conversations and found that 56% of deals lost to inaction aren't lost to a genuine preference for the status quo. The buyer already wants to change. What stops them is indecision, driven by the fear of making things worse.

Dixon and McKenna call this FOMU, the Fear of Messing Up. Their research was about the decision to buy in the first place, but the same psychology doesn't stop once the contract's signed. It just changes shape.

For a business already well into a HubSpot subscription, FOMU shows up alongside a second bias: the sunk cost fallacy, the well-documented tendency to keep funding a decision because of what's already been spent on it, not what it's likely to deliver from here. Behavioural economists have studied this bias for decades, and it shows up especially strongly in technology decisions, where admitting a platform isn't delivering means admitting the original business case hasn't held up.

That's what makes a stalled HubSpot portal so sticky. Fixing it means someone has to say, out loud, that months of licence fees haven't delivered what was promised. Leaving it alone means accepting a worse outcome, but one nobody has to admit to in a meeting. Given the choice, most people take the silent option, even when it's the more expensive one.

A Clarity Reset isn't an admission that the original decision was wrong.
It's evidence that someone finally did something about it.

87%

of customers show moderate or high indecision during buying.

43%

of B2B buyers admit to making defensive decisions over 70% of the time.

74%

of B2B purchase decisions are influenced by fear of career impact.

And when the answer to indecision is pressure, a stricter mandate, a public dashboard, a deadline, it tends to make things worse, not better. Dixon and McKenna found that sellers who doubled down on the pain of inaction made a buyer's indecision worse 84% of the time. The same holds internally: threatening a team into adoption rarely produces adoption. **Removing the sources of uncertainty does.**

What changes when the foundations *get fixed*.

No more wasted licence spend

Stop paying full price for a fraction of the platform. Portal audits typically find close to half of licence value delivering no return until the foundations are fixed.

Faster time to trust

The data and process work gets done once, properly, instead of being debated in every weekly meeting. Reports start being believed again within weeks, not quarters.

Immediate re-adoption

Training happens on a system the team helped redesign, not one imposed on them for a second time.

Faster return on investment

Every month pulled forward in the reset timeline is a month of commercial value that compounds instead of leaking away.

Lower risk of a costly re-platform

Most “let’s just switch CRMs” decisions are foundation problems wearing a platform-choice costume. Fixing the foundations first often removes the case for switching at all.

AI-ready, properly this time

Breeze’s predictions and content only improve once the data and lifecycle definitions underneath them are trustworthy. A reset is what makes that possible.

A stronger renewal conversation

A rebuilt, defensible ROI baseline turns the next renewal or budget review from a defence into a case.

Better long-term outcomes

Higher adoption produces better data, better data produces better decisions, and better decisions produce renewals and expansion instead of churn.

Fix it once. *Stop paying to not use it.*

The evidence is consistent: HubSpot instances that get properly reset, once, recover the ROI the original business case promised. The ones left to drift rarely recover on their own.

A HubSpot subscription is a continuing investment in licence cost, team time and organisational trust. With Breeze now built into every Hub, the technology has never been more capable, and the gap it exposes when the foundations are weak has never been more visible. The businesses that recover aren't the ones that switch platforms fastest. They're the ones that stop, admit the foundations need work, and fix them once.

+27%

Improvement in customer retention rates with proper implementation.

+47%

Lift in customer satisfaction scores.

245–505%

Three-year ROI range when properly implemented.

These numbers describe CRM done right. For HubSpot customers who've already bought the platform, they're not hypothetical. They're recoverable. A Clarity Reset is how a business that's already spent months paying for the wrong outcome gets back onto the trajectory it was promised at the start.

A stalled portal is a *due-diligence problem too*

For any business considering future investment, acquisition or exit, the state of its CRM is a due diligence item that directly affects valuation. Acquirers and private equity firms routinely examine pipeline health, win rates, sales cycle trends and the reliability of revenue forecasting.

A HubSpot portal with clean data, consistent processes and reporting people actually believe signals operational maturity. A portal that's been limping along for two years signals the opposite, and due diligence finds that gap regardless of how the renewals have been going.

• THE BOTTOM LINE

The question isn't whether HubSpot was the right platform. *It's whether the business around it is ready to use what it's already paying for.*

If your honest answer is “not yet”, that's not a reason to keep drifting. It's a reason to reset. A relatively modest investment, in the region of £6,000, changes the trajectory by converting a portal that's costing tens of thousands a year into the growth engine it was bought to be.

TALK TO US

marketing-engineers.co.uk

Where are you on your *HubSpot journey?*

Scan a QR code, or type the URL into your browser. Each is designed to move you from reading about Clarity Reset to actually seeing where your own portal falls short.



01 START HERE

Portal *Health Check*

A structured review of your live HubSpot instance against the five failure causes covered in this whitepaper, with a scored report at the end.

www.marketing-engineers.co.uk/hubspot-readiness/tools/portal-health-check



02 TALK TO US

Get *in touch*

Speak with the Intergage team about a Clarity Reset engagement or just compare notes on where your portal is right now.

www.marketing-engineers.co.uk/contact



03 EXPLORE

Where are you on your *HubSpot journey?*

Whether you're weighing up the investment, just getting started, or need to get more from what you already own, we've helped hundreds of businesses at every stage.

www.marketing-engineers.co.uk/hubspot

Research & *references.*

All statistics and findings cited in this whitepaper are drawn from the following published research and analyses.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 Gartner CRM Research (2024) | 02 Johnny Grow CRM Failure Report |
| 03 Forrester Research | 04 <i>The JOLT Effect</i> (Dixon & McKenna) |
| 05 Zylo, 2024 Enterprise SaaS Management Report | 06 Vertice, 2026 SaaS Wastage Insights |
| 07 IDC CRM ROI Research | 08 Nucleus Research CRM ROI Studies |
| 09 HubSpot Breeze AI Documentation | 10 The Decision Lab: The Sunk Cost Fallacy |
| 11 HubJoy: CRM in Due Diligence and Business Valuation | 12 BisValue: Business Valuation Drivers |