

The Customer Resiliency Framework

Featuring the PRP: Program Resiliency Plan

A Structural Model for Evaluating Account Survivability in Customer Success

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The Problem

Most Customer Success teams believe they know which accounts are healthy.

They do not.

They are measuring activity, not survivability.

Enterprise customer relationships rarely fail in obvious ways. Most accounts that churn or contract do not begin in a visibly unhealthy state. Adoption may be strong, meetings continue, and no escalations are active. From a surface view, the account appears stable.

That view is misleading.

Failure develops beneath the surface. The internal value narrative weakens. Stakeholder alignment narrows. Engagement patterns change in subtle ways that go unaddressed. By the time risk appears in traditional metrics, the account is already unstable and difficult to recover.

Health scores, success plans, and engagement tracking describe what is happening now, but they do not indicate whether the account will hold if conditions change.

That is the gap.

The governing question is simple and unforgiving: Would this account remain stable if conditions changed tomorrow?

The Program Resiliency Plan (PRP) exists to answer that question and force action before instability becomes visible.

What the PRP Is and What It Is Not

The PRP is a method for evaluating whether a customer relationship is structurally sound, not merely active. Its purpose is to expose hidden fragility and drive action before that fragility becomes measurable risk.

The PRP is not a success plan, and it is not a risk register. It does not catalog issues or track tasks. Traditional risk management focuses on what is already wrong. The PRP focuses on what would break under change.

Most enterprise accounts do not fail because known risks were ignored. They fail because structural weakness was never identified.

Gating Condition: Priority Alignment

The PRP does not begin until one condition is confirmed. The customer must still be actively prioritizing the problem your solution addresses.

The Customer Success Manager must verify that the initiative is tied to a current, funded, or actively discussed business priority. The customer must be able to articulate that priority without relying on the vendor.

If this condition fails, the issue is not resiliency. It is relevance.

The PRP stops. The account enters requalification. Expansion pauses, forecast confidence drops, and executive engagement is required to determine whether the relationship is still viable.

A relationship cannot be stabilized if it is no longer tied to something the customer cares about.

Who This Framework Is Designed For

The PRP is designed for enterprise and high-value accounts where multiple stakeholders influence outcomes, organizational change is common, and renewal carries material impact.

It is not a generic health check. It is a structural assessment for accounts where hidden weakness distorts forecast accuracy and expansion timing.

When to Use the PRP

The PRP is a targeted intervention, not a continuous process.

It activates when an account shows early signs of instability but has not yet reached a formal at-risk state. These signals include stakeholder loss or disengagement, absence of executive participation across review cycles, unclear renewal positioning within six months, stalled expansion without a defined objection, or a visible change from proactive to reactive engagement.

The PRP is designed for this window. Its value drops sharply once the account enters late-stage risk.

When Not to Use the PRP

The PRP is not appropriate when the account is already in active churn or escalation. That requires recovery.

It is not appropriate when no clear value has been established or when the customer has deprioritized the problem. Those require requalification.

It is also not appropriate for low-impact accounts where the intervention cannot be justified.

Time Horizon and Operating Modes

The PRP enforces time constraints.

With more than six months before renewal, the full cycle can be executed. There is time to diagnose and correct structural weakness.

Between three and six months, the model compresses. Focus narrows to the highest-risk dimension and the actions most likely to change the outcome.

Within ninety days, the PRP is no longer the correct model. The account moves to recovery.

Not all instability can be corrected in all timeframes. The PRP reflects that reality.

Core Dimensions of Resiliency

The PRP evaluates four dimensions, each representing a distinct failure mode.

- Relationship Density measures how broadly the relationship exists across stakeholders. Dependence on a single individual creates fragility.
- Narrative Strength measures whether the customer can explain value independently in terms of current priorities. If the vendor carries the story, the relationship is unstable.
- Early Risk Signals identify emerging instability. Structural signals such as executive sponsor loss, budget pressure, or ownership confusion require immediate action. Behavioral signals such as slower engagement require validation before escalation.
- Services Stability measures whether delivery reinforces or erodes trust. Inconsistent delivery weakens even strong relationships.

Each dimension stands on its own. Together, they define structural integrity.

Minimum Viable Resiliency

The objective is not perfection. It is stability.

An account reaches Minimum Viable Resiliency when all four dimensions meet a baseline. Multiple stakeholders are engaged. The customer can articulate value tied to a current priority. No high-severity structural risks remain unresolved. Delivery is stable and predictable.

The account must also pass a disruption test. If a key stakeholder leaves or priorities change, the relationship should not destabilize immediately.

If it would, resiliency has not been achieved.

The PRP ends when this baseline is met.

Interpreting the Assessment

The PRP does not use composite scoring.

Averaging hides weakness. Strong areas mask critical gaps.

Each dimension is evaluated independently. The weakest dimension determines priority. Effort goes where the account is most vulnerable.

Operational Execution: The 30-Day PRP Cycle

The PRP operates in a thirty-day cycle: Diagnose, Act, Validate.

- Diagnose identifies the weakest dimension and its root cause. This phase is brief and focused.
- Act concentrates effort on that dimension. Relationship gaps drive stakeholder expansion. Narrative gaps drive executive alignment. Structural risk signals drive escalation. Delivery instability drives immediate correction.
- Validate confirms improvement externally, not internally. This occurs in an executive-level discussion. The customer must demonstrate stronger alignment, clearer value, and reduced risk.

If validation is not achieved, the cycle continues.

If validation fails across two consecutive cycles, the account is no longer considered structurally recoverable within the PRP and must be reclassified as a recovery scenario.

Ownership Model

The PRP changes ownership and visibility.

The Customer Success Manager initiates and orchestrates the process, but the account becomes a shared priority once the PRP is active.

Sales supports relationship expansion and executive access. Services and Support are accountable for delivery stability. Leadership is responsible for visibility and escalation when structural risk is present.

The PRP is not a coordination request. It signals elevated risk with revenue implications. Participation is required.

Failure to engage in PRP actions must be escalated, as lack of participation directly increases revenue risk.

Decision Impact

The PRP changes how the business evaluates the account.

- Weak Narrative Strength reduces renewal confidence and requires adjustment to forecast assumptions.
- Limited Relationship Density restricts expansion and should prevent pipeline advancement until resolved.
- Active structural risk elevates forecast visibility and may change commit status.
- Delivery instability requires immediate correction and may affect renewal timing or commercial posture.

The PRP exists to correct false confidence in renewal and expansion forecasts by exposing structural weakness that traditional metrics do not capture.

The PRP also redirects time. Accounts in the PRP take priority over stable accounts until Minimum Viable Resiliency is reached. Structural weakness creates asymmetric downside and must be addressed early.

Cadence and Integration

The PRP operates as both a trigger and a checkpoint.

It activates when instability appears and is applied quarterly to prevent silent degradation.

It should be embedded in account reviews, renewal planning, and executive engagement. It strengthens both account discipline and forecast accuracy.

System Integration and Tracking

The PRP must be observable.

Each dimension is tracked using clear indicators in CRM or Customer Success platforms. Each dimension must resolve to stable or unstable. If it cannot be clearly classified, it is treated as unstable until proven otherwise.

Ambiguity triggers action.

The goal is consistency and visibility, not additional reporting.

Operating in Real-World Environments

The PRP is designed for imperfect conditions.

Execution can begin with the Customer Success Manager, but lack of cross-functional engagement must trigger escalation rather than silent compensation.

The framework prioritizes execution, focus, and consequence.

What Makes This Different

Traditional Customer Success measures performance.

The PRP measures survivability.

Most teams track what is happening now. Performance creates the illusion of stability. Survivability tests whether that stability is real.

The PRP evaluates whether the account will hold under pressure.

That distinction changes how accounts are assessed, how risk is identified, and how decisions are made.

Composite Example: Applying the PRP

An enterprise account shows strong adoption and consistent engagement driven by a single stakeholder. It appears healthy.

The PRP reveals concentration risk. There is no executive alignment, and the broader organization cannot clearly explain value. Relationship Density and Narrative Strength are weak.

The Customer Success Manager activates the PRP. Stakeholder engagement expands. The value narrative is rebuilt and validated in executive discussion. Delivery dependencies are stabilized.

The account becomes structurally sound. It no longer depends on one individual or one voice to maintain value.

Without this intervention, a single change could have destabilized the account.

Final Perspective

Accounts do not fail because activity disappears. They fail because structure was never strong enough to begin with.

The PRP exposes that weakness early and forces action while there is still time to change the outcome.

If you are not assessing survivability, you are not measuring health. You are measuring activity.

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