

Fictional exchange. Companies, people, operational inputs, interviews and reviews are invented. Updated 15 September 2026. Listed attachments are rendered pages in this PDF, not native downloadable files.

# Raise prices, go downmarket, or specialize before FY planning?

FROM Marta Lindevar, CEO, PlantThread B.V. <marta.lindevar@plantthread.example>  
TO IQ256 | iq256.com/contact  
DATE 8 September 2025, 09:14 CEST

Hi IQ256,

We need one decision within 30 days because it determines next year's product hiring, sales territories, and budget. Our CFO wants a 25% price rise. Product wants a EUR 499 self-service tier. Sales wants to focus only on multi-site food and beverage groups.

I lean toward the cheaper tier because it feels like the largest market. I am not confident enough to commit eight hires and most of the roadmap to it.

Please tell us which direction to choose, why the other two are wrong for us now, and what would make you reverse the decision. Also propose a price structure and 90-day validation plan. Thanks, Marta

ATTACHMENTS (3)

- **Board\_decision\_and\_context.docx**  
Decision required by 8 October 2025

01
- **Commercial\_metrics\_Q1-Q8.xlsx**  
Trailing 12 months ending 31 August 2025

02
- **Win\_loss\_and\_customer\_notes.pdf**  
82 recorded losses and selected customer interviews

03

# Board decision: where should PlantThread compete?

Decision required by 8 October 2025

Fictional inputs. Benchmarks, interviews and voices are invented.

## Three options

| Option            | Proposal                                            | Why leadership likes it                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| A. Raise prices   | Increase list prices and renewals by 25%            | Could add EUR 760k ARR without a product launch |
| B. Launch Starter | EUR 499 per site per month with guided self-service | Appears to open the largest market              |
| C. Specialize     | Focus on food and beverage groups with 3-12 plants  | Matches the strongest existing customers        |

## Decision constraints

|                                                                            |                                                                |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>EUR 1.6M</div> <div>Net new ARR</div> <div>Minimum in 12 months</div> | <div>75%+</div> <div>Gross margin</div> <div>At year end</div> | <div>EUR 450k</div> <div>Incremental cash</div> <div>Maximum before December</div> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

PlantThread has 73 employees and EUR 5.04M ARR. The software coordinates changeovers, maintenance handovers, and corrective actions across factories.

Board\_decision\_and\_context.docx

## Current packages and operating reality

| Package    | Annual price  | Typical buyer  | What usually happens                   |
|------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| Team       | EUR 18k-24k   | One factory    | Needs more onboarding than expected    |
| Network    | EUR 48k-96k   | 2-12 factories | Expands after one site proves value    |
| Enterprise | EUR 120k-260k | 13+ factories  | Security and custom work reduce margin |

- A new customer needs 22-140 hours of assistance before the first live workflow.
- Only 18% activate without a live workshop.
- Network customers commonly add plants within 12 months.
- Enterprise logos help credibility, but custom work delays the roadmap.
- The EUR 499 competitor supports task lists, not cross-site corrective-action workflows.

## Internal disagreement

Simulated voice: CFO: We are underpriced. Price creates revenue without waiting six months for a product launch.

Simulated voice: Product: If we do not build Starter, a simpler competitor will own the next generation.

Simulated voice: Sales: Almost every clean win looks like the same customer. We should sell to that customer on purpose.

Simulated voice: CEO: Specializing may improve focus, but it could make our market look too small to investors.

Board\_decision\_and\_context.docx

## Assignment scope

This fictional assignment is complete when the agreed review and documents are delivered and checked. Its business recommendations and future execution are separate from that completion.

| Agreement                      | Boundary in this example                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Delegated work                 | Analyze the supplied segments and commercial evidence, recommend a focus, and prepare a price hypothesis, margin bridge and 90-day validation plan.                                 |
| Requested output               | A commercial review, proposed offer, budgeted plan and assumptions/watchlist. No real interviews, price experiment, sales campaign or revenue outcome was produced.                 |
| Completion checks              | Reconcile cohort totals, weighted scores, margin repair and ARR scenarios; label price/expansion assumptions and preserve reversal evidence.                                        |
| Authority retained by customer | Marta retains segment focus, customer pricing, spending, outreach and hiring decisions. The prepared recommendation does not authorize IQ256 to change quotes or contact customers. |
| Remaining checks               | Validate account-level exports, willingness to pay, qualified pipeline, enterprise cost allocation, references and the proposed 20-opportunity test.                                |
| Fee and timing                 | Agree the review scope, price and deadline before paid work. This sample illustrates an agreed document collection; operational execution needs its own scope and quote.            |
| Business budget                | The EUR 450k cash envelope, EUR 1.6M growth objective and proposed PlantThread prices are fictional business figures, separate from the IQ256 fee.                                  |

Where human input is agreed, IQ256 selects, briefs, coordinates and pays contributors. IQ256 integrates the agreed work and performs baseline completion checks. Extra verification answers a specified additional concern. External information packets require explicit customer approval; no approval is needed for every internal step within the agreed mandate.

If scope, price, deadline, sharing or customer effort changes materially, agree the next course before exceeding the mandate. A recommendation may name one option while the customer retains the decision; permission to act or commit money is agreed separately.

### Discuss a defined assignment

<https://iq256.com/contact>

Start with a short, non-confidential description. Initial human reply normally within 2-48 hours, distinct from the agreed delivery deadline.

# Commercial metrics

Trailing 12 months ending 31 August 2025

Fictional inputs. Benchmarks, interviews and voices are invented.

## Economics by company shape

| Customer shape   | Customers | ARR       | NRR  | Gross margin | CAC payback |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|-------------|
| Single site      | 61        | EUR 1.15M | 88%  | 82%          | 22 months   |
| Multi-site, 2-12 | 42        | EUR 2.65M | 121% | 76%          | 8 months    |
| Enterprise, 13+  | 8         | EUR 1.24M | 116% | 55%          | 23 months   |

## Commercial performance by industry

| Industry              | ARR       | NRR  | Qualified win rate | Median time live | Pipeline  |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Food and beverage     | EUR 2.08M | 129% | 46%                | 36 days          | EUR 3.90M |
| Pharma and cosmetics  | EUR 0.91M | 117% | 27%                | 95 days          | EUR 1.05M |
| General manufacturing | EUR 1.46M | 101% | 21%                | 63 days          | EUR 2.20M |
| Other                 | EUR 0.59M | 91%  | 16%                | 58 days          | EUR 0.74M |

## The strongest cohort

Nineteen food and beverage customers with 3-12 plants account for EUR 1.52M ARR, EUR 540k of recent expansion, a 47% win rate, 6.7-month CAC payback, and eleven completed reference calls. Only one logo churned in 24 months.

## Price and demand observations

| Observation                                | Result   | Meaning                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Network deals closed without discount      | 14 of 19 | Target buyers are not broadly price-sensitive |
| Expansions asking for site pricing         | 6 of 8   | Sites are a natural value unit                |
| Single-site renewals seeking concessions   | 23 of 49 | Weak cohort is price-sensitive                |
| Enterprise deals with unpriced custom work | 7 of 8   | Contract value hides services economics       |
| Deals lost directly to EUR 499 rival       | 2        | Cheap competitor is not the main threat       |

FORECAST GAP

**Starter assumes 3,800 qualified trials in year one. No acquisition source is identified for 2,900 of them.**

# Win/loss and customer notes

82 recorded losses and selected customer interviews

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## Primary loss reasons

| Loss reason                           | All losses | Target-cohort losses |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Price or budget                       | 25         | 2                    |
| Implementation risk or weak reference | 19         | 9                    |
| Missing integration                   | 14         | 4                    |
| No internal owner                     | 11         | 0                    |
| Competitor feature                    | 8          | 5                    |
| Timing or procurement                 | 5          | 4                    |

Twenty of the 25 price losses were single-site prospects with annual software budgets below EUR 25k.

## Fictional customer voices

Simulated voice: Five-site beverage producer: Your price was not the concern. We needed proof that the second plant would be easier than the first.

Simulated voice: Eight-site food group: We would prefer one platform fee and a predictable amount for every additional site.

Simulated voice: Single-site plastics manufacturer: PlantThread is useful, but our spreadsheet is free and the problem is not urgent.

Simulated voice: German food producer: Procurement stopped because you had no German reference and could not commit the ERP connector date.

## Known gaps

- No statistically reliable willingness-to-pay study.
- No tested self-service onboarding flow.
- Competitor retention and support economics are unknown.
- Only one DACH prospect will act as a public reference.
- The forecast does not separate signed intent from sales optimism.