

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.

Recommendation: repair the engine before driving farther

FROM IQ256 | iq256.com/contact
TO Elena Brantvik, CEO, OrchardQuill Systems GmbH <elena.brantvik@orchardquill.example>
DATE 16 September 2025, 15:18 CEST

Hello Elena,

Do not approve the full US launch now. Approve a 90-day Core First program plus a tightly capped US Proof Lane for up to three paid design partners. Cap incremental cash at EUR 620k, existing-team use at 4.0 FTE-equivalent, and make no US hires before 22 December.

OrchardQuill does not have a geography problem. It has an activation-capacity problem. Customers that reach value within 45 days expand; customers delayed beyond 90 days contract or leave. The full launch scales the constraint before removing it.

This does not abandon the US. The Proof Lane keeps the strongest opportunities active and turns pipeline into paid evidence. If the attached gates pass, begin a phased launch. IQ256

ATTACHMENTS (3)

- **IQ256_Growth_and_Execution_Review.pdf**
OrchardQuill Systems GmbH | Prepared 16 September 2025

01
- **90_Day_Execution_Plan.xlsx**
Day 0: 23 Sep 2025 | Day 90: 22 Dec 2025 | Owner: Sofia Renvik, COO

02
- **Decision_Gate_and_Risk_Register.pdf**
22 December 2025 | Proposed fictional CFO check

03

Growth and execution review

OrchardQuill Systems GmbH | Prepared 16 September 2025

Fictional worked example: scenario inputs, calculations and proposed actions.

DECISION

Do not approve the EUR 2.1M full US launch. Approve a 90-day Core First program and capped US Proof Lane.

1. Freeze all 8 proposed US hires until 22 December.
2. Cap incremental cash spending at EUR 620k and existing-team use at 4.0 FTE-equivalent for 90 days.
3. Put one executive owner in charge of contract-to-first-value.
4. Reduce onboarding time and backlog through standard scope and reusable integration paths.
5. Keep up to three US prospects as paid design partners with no bespoke commitments.
6. Launch only if all three hard gates and the published operating-indicator rule pass.

Why this is the least-regret choice

Full launch now	Core First + Proof Lane
Commits EUR 2.1M before repeatable activation	Buys operating proof for a capped EUR 620k
Adds 8 phased hires to an overloaded system	Removes the shared bottleneck
Treats two non-binding letters as validation	Requires paid demand with standard scope
Depends on an uncommitted financing round	Preserves cash and reversibility

CONFIDENCE

High on direction; medium on the exact 90-day pace because account-level delivery data, direct prospect interviews, and committed financing are absent.

The real problem

REFRAME

This is an execution bottleneck disguised as a geography decision.

1. Custom scope enters before delivery review: 43% of new deals need bespoke configuration.
2. Implementation demand exceeds capacity: leads are at 150%; integration engineers at 140%.
3. Median time to first value reaches 93 days; only 36% are live by day 60.
4. Customers first live in 91-120 days show 89% NRR; those not live by day 120 show 71%.
5. Sales adds more custom work to compensate for slowing growth, and the cycle repeats.

Repair is not the opposite of growth. It is the fastest available route to durable growth because demand already exists. The scarce resource is successful activation.

Important unknown

Better-fit customers may both launch faster and retain better. The 90-day program must compare like-for-like cohorts instead of treating correlation as proof of sole causality.

Four options tested

Option	Result	Best argument	Why it loses or wins
Full US launch	Reject now	First-mover speed and larger deals	Scales the same scarce functions and fails the runway constraint
Full US pause	Incomplete	Maximum focus and cash protection	Discards valuable information from the strongest US prospects
Partner-led US	Not primary	Lower fixed cost and local presence	Does not remove product, scope, or integration constraints
Core + Proof	Recommend	Fixes constraint and preserves the market option	Paid evidence, capped downside, reusable improvement

Weighted check

Criterion	Weight	Full launch	Pause	Partner	Core + proof
Durable growth evidence	25%	3	2	3	5
Customer outcomes	25%	1	5	2	4
Execution feasibility	20%	1	5	2	4
Cash resilience	20%	2	5	4	4
Option value	10%	4	2	4	5
Weighted result	100%	2.00	3.95	2.85	4.35

Financial and operating consequences

After 12 months	Current course	Full launch	Core + Proof
Incremental spend	EUR 0	EUR 2.10M	EUR 0.62M
Cash remaining	EUR 6.00M	EUR 3.90M	EUR 5.38M
Ending burn	EUR 300k	EUR 450k	EUR 340k
Runway at ending burn	20.0 months	8.7 months	15.8 months
Estimated ending ARR range	EUR 13.7M-15.0M	EUR 13.5M-17.0M	EUR 14.2M-16.2M

ARR bridges: Current course = EUR 10.4M retained opening ARR + EUR 3.3M-4.6M expansion/new sales. Full launch = EUR 9.9M-10.8M retained/expanded opening ARR + EUR 2.8M-3.6M Europe + EUR 0.8M-2.6M US. Core First = EUR 10.6M-11.3M retained/expanded opening ARR + EUR 3.3M-4.3M Europe + EUR 0.3M-0.6M paid US proof. These are planning ranges, not forecasts.

EUR 620k cap

Use	Cap	Purpose
Configuration + integration tooling	EUR 220k	Remove repeated engineering
Temporary implementation capacity	EUR 120k	Clear backlog while process changes
Data and customer recovery	EUR 80k	Create comparable evidence
US Proof Lane	EUR 120k	Standard paid pilots and security work
CFO contingency	EUR 80k	Only against gate metrics

Strongest dissent

Simulated voice: Waiting 90 days could surrender a real category window. The strongest US prospects and competitor hiring may matter more than EUR 620k.

The dissent is credible. It does not win because the Proof Lane keeps the best opportunities active, requires them to pay for standard scope, and avoids creating a larger queue from the current 93-day activation system.

Early review triggers

- At least EUR 8M of financing becomes contractually committed and a separate delivery team can operate without borrowing European capacity.
- Two US design partners sign at least EUR 300k combined ARR, pay first invoices, accept a reusable standard path, and require no bespoke features.
- Median time to first value reaches 45 days for two consecutive monthly cohorts with no increase in severe support incidents.
- Three target accounts choose a rival mainly because OrchardQuill lacks US presence, confirmed by direct interviews.
- Like-for-like analysis shows delayed activation explains under 30% of lost ARR.

FINAL CALL

Vote yes to Core First and the US Proof Lane. Vote no to the full US launch until the gate passes.

Program chronology: day 0 is the fictional board vote on 23 September 2025; day 90 is 22 December 2025. The report date, 16 September, precedes the program start.

Delivery record and remaining work

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	Review the supplied expansion and operating evidence, recommend a path, and prepare a budgeted execution plan with decision gates and customer-side owners.
Work illustrated as delivered	A growth review, 90-day operating plan and risk/gate register. This is an execution-plan sample; no US launch, customer recovery or operating program was carried out.
Completion checks	Reconcile pipeline weighting, cash/runway and budget; align day 0/day 90; retain hard gates, indicator rules, RED precedence and original caps.
Authority retained by customer	Elena and the board retain launch, hiring, spend and customer-contact decisions. The named executive roles are proposed fictional customer governance, not powers granted to IQ256.
Remaining checks	Verify real account-level capacity and outcomes, committed cash, paid partners, standard technical scope and comparable operating evidence.
Fee and timing	Agree the review scope, price and deadline before paid work. A defined implementation task may be quoted separately; this plan does not include running the company or the program.
Business budget	EUR 620k cash and 4.0 FTE are fictional program limits; EUR 2.1M is the rejected launch proposal. None is an 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.

90-day execution plan

Day 0: 23 Sep 2025 | Day 90: 22 Dec 2025 | Owner: Sofia Renvik, COO

Fictional worked example: scenario inputs, calculations and proposed actions.

Program governance

Role	Owner	Authority
Executive sponsor	Elena Brantvik, CEO	Resolve conflicts within 24 hours
Program owner	Sofia Renvik, COO	Own first value and EUR 620k cap
Financial gatekeeper	Amira Solvane, CFO	Release contingency; validate runway
Product owner	Daniel Brechtor, CTO	Protect standard architecture
Commercial owner	Marc Delvaren, CRO	Run Proof Lane; enforce scope

Days 0-30: stop adding load

Due	Action	Owner	Evidence
Day 2	Freeze US hiring, broad marketing, and new bespoke commitments	CEO + CFO	Written controls
Day 3	Name activation owner and 8-person team capped at 4.0 FTE	CEO	Rights and capacity published
Day 7	Create one contract-to-first-value dashboard	COO + Data	Every account has stage, age, blocker
Day 10	Choose recover, rescope, or exit for 14 stalled accounts	COO + CS	Written action per account
Day 12	Move delivery review before commercial signature	CRO + COO	No custom scope without approval
Day 15	Define Standard Launch: segment, SAP path, roles, data, training	CTO + COO	One sellable package
Day 18	Select 8 comparable European accounts and record baselines	COO	Eight signed cohort records
Day 20	Start first 4; move commission to 70% signature / 30% first value	COO + CRO	Four launches active
Day 30	Start second 4; invite up to 3 US Proof Lane candidates	COO + CRO	Eight launches active

Operating rules: every account needs a sponsor, data owner, and success event; a one-off integration must be reusable for at least three target customers; no design partner receives an off-roadmap promise; the 4.0 FTE cap is tracked separately from cash.

90_Day_Execution_Plan.xlsx

Days 31-90: prove repeatability

Due	Action	Decision evidence
Day 40	Release data validator and 3 SAP mapping templates	Engineering hours per launch fall 25%
Day 45	Review first 4 Standard Launch customers	At least 3 live or dated to day 60
Day 55	Reduce backlog	Nine weeks or less; Finance validates
Day 60	Sign first paid US design partner	Cash received; no bespoke promise
Day 75	Review all 8 comparable European customers	Eight-account evidence set
Day 75	Sign second paid US design partner	Combined ARR at least EUR 300k
Day 80	Audit metrics and cohort comparability	Exceptions disclosed
Day 85	Build launch scenario from observed capacity and sales cycle	Actual metrics, not plan assumptions
Day 90	Board chooses Green, Amber, or Red	Signed record dated 22 December

Proof Lane boundaries

Allowed	Not allowed
Up to three paid design partners	US GM or sales-team hiring
Standard SAP and existing hosting	One-customer integration or second hosting stack
Security discovery and standard contracting	Unpriced roadmap promises
Up to EUR 120k from the cap	Spending outside CFO control

Weekly dashboard: median days to first value, day-60 go-live, backlog, bespoke scope, implementation hours, severe incidents, paid Proof Lane ARR, total spend, and runway. Stop using signature as implementation success, assuming data readiness, or treating weighted pipeline as delivery proof.

Decision gate and risk register

22 December 2025 | Proposed fictional CFO check

Fictional worked example: scenario inputs, calculations and proposed actions.

Three hard launch gates

Gate	Green threshold	Evidence rule
Paid market proof	2+ partners; EUR 300k ARR; one repeatable segment	Contracts signed; first invoices paid
Technical scope	Standard or reusable integrations; current hosting; no one-customer product commitments	CTO signs scope map
Cash resilience	15+ months under downside exit-burn	CFO counts committed cash only

Five operating indicators

Indicator	Start	Green
Median time to first value (8 comparable customers)	93 days	45 days or less
Live by day 60 (same cohort)	36%	At least 75%
Implementation backlog (validated queue)	14 weeks	6 weeks or less
Bespoke configuration (all program-period deals)	43%	15% or less
Severe support incidents (per live customer)	Index 100	No higher than 110

A material severe-support regression means the rolling 30-day severe incidents per live customer exceed index 110, with the frozen baseline set to 100.

Board outcome

Outcome order: RED overrides. GREEN applies only if every stated GREEN criterion passes. Otherwise, if technical scope passes and no RED condition applies, the result is AMBER.

- GREEN: All 3 hard gates and at least 4 of 5 indicators pass; first-value, backlog, and severe support must be among them. Hire GM, solution engineer, and onboarding specialist first. Return before total spend exceeds EUR 1.2M.
- AMBER: If technical scope passes and the result is neither GREEN nor RED, continue the Proof Lane for 60 days with no US hiring. Keep the extension inside the original EUR 620k cash and 4.0 FTE-equivalent caps; any extra spend requires a new board-approved cap.
- RED: Any material severe-support regression above index 110, fewer than 3 indicators, median time-to-value over 60 days, backlog over 9 weeks, or failed technical scope. Stop new Proof Lane starts, freeze US hiring, run a focused 60-day recovery, and return to the board before resuming. Run recovery from the approved operating budget; no incremental cash or FTE beyond the original caps without a new board-approved cap.

Decision_Gate_and_Risk_Register.pdf

Key risks

Risk	Earliest signal	Mitigation
Strong prospects leave	Refuse paid standard partnership	CEO contact and dated gate
Core team loses priority	P0 work late over 3 days	CEO resolves conflict in 24 hours
Teams game time-to-value	Usage rises without sponsor value	Customer sponsor defines first value
Temporary capacity hides bad process	Backlog falls but hours do not	Gate includes bespoke rate and hours