

[CONTACT US](#)

Rethinking marketing attribution for Subscription brands.

Project period: Q3 2025

FILDI

Client snapshot

[CONTACT US](#)

Industry: D2C Wellness Subscription Business

Market: US & Canada

Stage: Rapid scale-up mode

Size: 8-figure ARR

Project: Q3 2025

Challenge

[CONTACT US](#)

A wellness subscription brand was optimising marketing spend based on which channels drove the most conversions. Facebook and Google delivered strong acquisition numbers. Abandoned cart campaigns and SMS marketing via Postscript showed respectable conversion rates. The marketing dashboard looked healthy.

But subscriber retention told a different story.

Despite efficient acquisition costs, the brand faced persistent churn that undermined unit economics.

The disconnect between marketing performance and business outcomes suggested the attribution model itself was flawed.

The analysis

CONTACT US

The analysis tracked subscriber cohorts by attribution source over 21 months, revealing dramatic retention differences that conversion metrics had obscured.

Direct and organic social traffic emerged as clear winners, maintaining 70% retention at month 24 versus a 68% baseline. Facebook and Google tracked close to the index throughout the subscriber lifecycle.

The underperformers told a different story:

- Abandoned cart subscribers retained at only 63% by month 5 versus the 80% index, dropping to 49% by month 21.
- Postscript performed similarly poorly.
- Affiliate network Avantlink churned fastest, dropping to 53% retention by month 8 whilst the index held at 73%.

The gap represented a 29% lower retention rate for what appeared on paper to be an efficient acquisition channel.

Insights

[CONTACT US](#)

Traditional e-commerce attribution rewards channels that drive conversions. This works for one-time purchases. For subscription businesses, conversion is just the beginning.

The analysis exposed a fundamental problem: channels optimised for immediate conversion attract price-sensitive customers or subscribers with weak product intent. These customers convert readily but lack commitment to sustain long-term subscriptions.

Abandoned cart recovery illustrates this perfectly. These campaigns convert hesitant shoppers efficiently through discounts or urgency messaging, but subscribers acquired through last-minute persuasion prove less committed and more likely to churn.

Direct and organic traffic indicate higher intent. These subscribers actively sought out the brand and made deliberate purchase decisions. This intent translates directly into retention.

The brand was inadvertently optimising for subscriber volume rather than value, flowing spend toward channels that simultaneously increased churn and degraded cohort economics.

Recommendations

[CONTACT US](#)

Subscription brands require attribution models that account for customer lifetime value, not just acquisition efficiency.

1

Measure channel performance by long term retention rates, prioritising channels that build a sustainable subscriber base.

2

Calculate true customer acquisition costs using retention-adjusted LTV, recognising that cheaper conversions often cost more through early churn.

3

Segment channels into 'growth' and 'fill' categories, capping low-retention channels whilst investing in high-intent sources like organic social.

Implication

[CONTACT US](#)

Most subscription brands inherit attribution frameworks designed for transactional eCommerce. These frameworks measure success at the point whereas the subscription business is just beginning its customer relationship.

Marketing teams face pressure to demonstrate efficient acquisition. Dashboards highlight cost per acquisition and conversion rates because these metrics are immediate and clear. Retention performance requires months of data and sophisticated analysis.

But subscription economics depend entirely on retention. A 10-percentage-point improvement in 12-month retention typically delivers more value than a 20% reduction in acquisition costs. Subscriber quality trumps subscriber quantity.

Brands evaluating marketing through conversion-focused attribution will systematically misallocate budget toward channels that undermine their business model. The solution requires organisational willingness to prioritise long-term cohort performance over short-term acquisition metrics.

[CONTACT US](#)

Measuring marketing by conversions
makes subscription brands
waste money on bad customers.

FILDI

[CONTACT US](#)

Who are FILDI ?

FILDI

What FILDI is, and why it exists

[CONTACT US](#)

FILDI is a consultancy drawing on 15+ years of hands-on experience in subscriptions and memberships, across marketing, product, strategy and operations with leading DTC brands like Sky, BT, News Corp, NFL and Future.

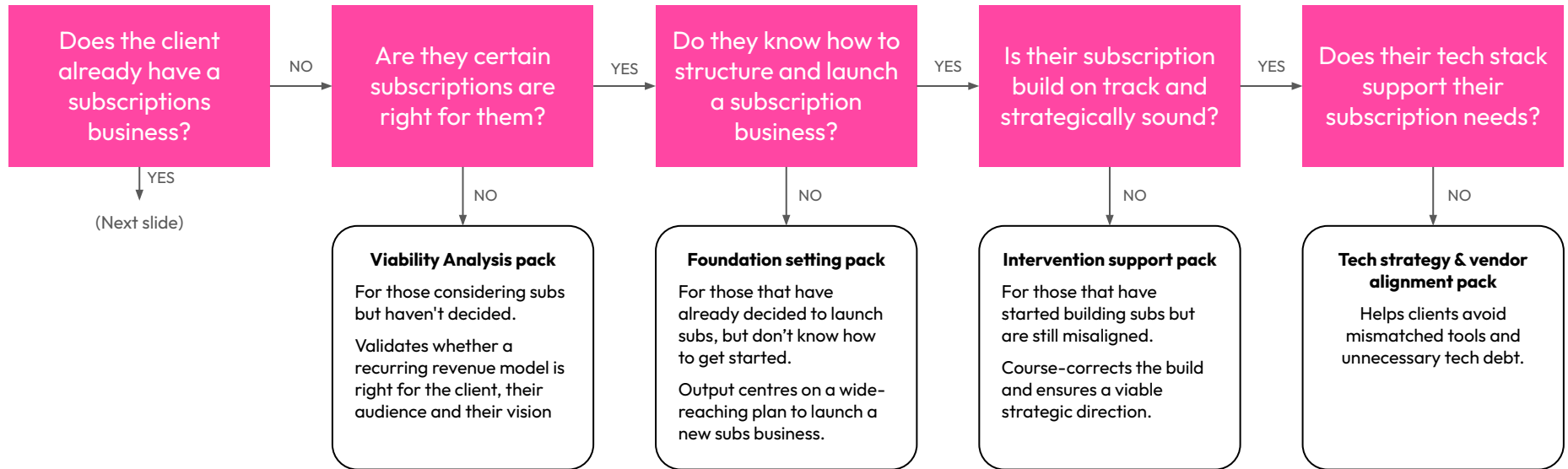
FILDI exists to help DTC scale-ups accelerate their subscriptions business by applying proven strategies and hard-won lessons from leading brands, helping to avoid common pitfalls and translate industry best practices into faster growth.

Building and scaling a subscriptions revenue business isn't easy, so **FILDI** simply exists to make it easier.

Packaging up our Subscriptions Expertise (1)

[CONTACT US](#)

FILDI offers subscription modules for every stage - from launch planning to performance optimisation.

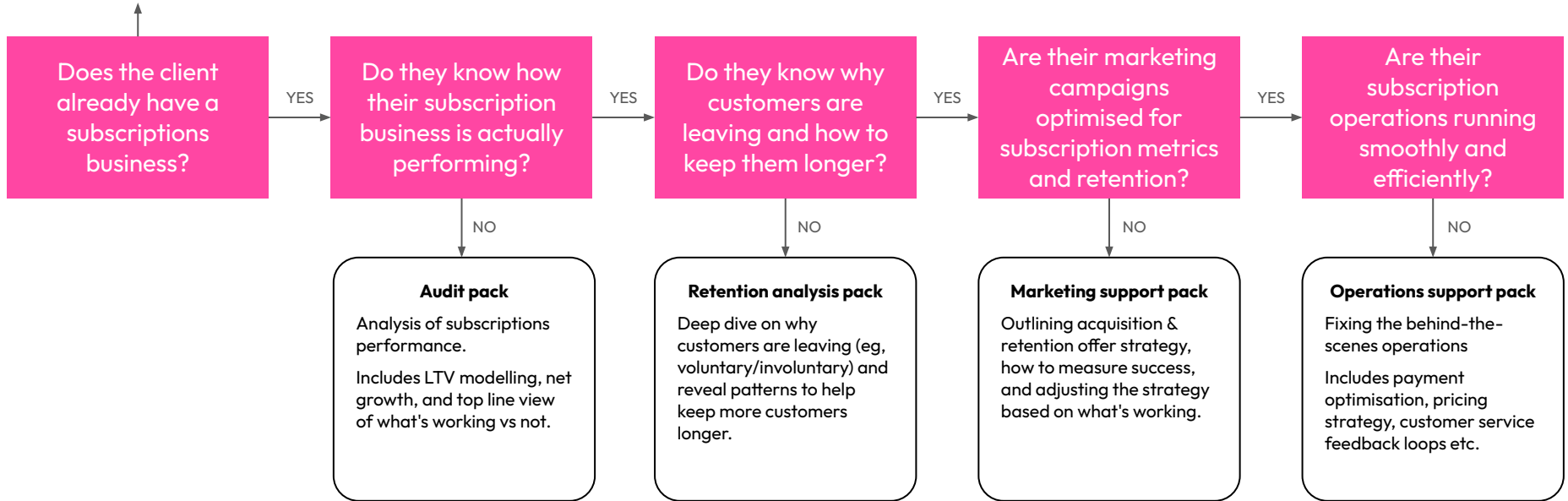


Packaging up our Subscriptions Expertise (2)

CONTACT US

FILDI offers subscription modules for every stage - from launch planning to performance optimisation.

(Previous slide)



Why FILDI?

[CONTACT US](#)

- ✓ **Real experience at scale:** 15+ years implementing these models at leading brands, not just theory
- ✓ **Avoid costly mistakes:** We've seen what doesn't work, so you don't have to learn the hard way
- ✓ **Proven frameworks:** Apply strategies that have generated millions in recurring revenue
- ✓ **Focus on your business:** Tailored solutions only. We don't do one-size-fits-all approaches

[CONTACT US](#)

Thanks

FILDI