



**Citelane**

Advanced Search & Answer Engine Optimization

TOOL GUIDE · PREPARED BY CITELANE

# SaaS Keyword Intent Map

## 4-Stage Keyword Classification Framework

TOFU, MOFU, BOFU, Brand · B2B SaaS

*Prepared by Citelane for SaaS founders, marketers, and content teams*

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### THE CITELANE RESOURCE ENGINE

This intent map was developed by the Citelane team across 60 plus B2B SaaS content programs. Every classification rule maps to a real conversion outcome. This is our methodology, not a generic AI export.

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INTENT STAGES : 4

PIPELINE FROM BOFU : 60 to 80 percent

BOFU CONTENT BAR : 40 percent



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# At a Glance

What this guide covers, the core findings, and the 90-day move on a single page.

## WHAT THIS COVERS

A 4-column framework for classifying every keyword in your roadmap as TOFU, MOFU, BOFU, or Brand. Determines article shape, conversion goal, and CTA per keyword.

## HEADLINE FINDING

BOFU content drives 60 to 80 percent of pipeline despite representing only 10 to 20 percent of total content volume. SaaS programs systematically over-invest in TOFU and under-invest in BOFU.

## BIGGEST RISK

Treating volume as a stage signal. "What is X" is TOFU regardless of volume. "X vs Y" is BOFU regardless of difficulty. Programs that classify by volume produce structurally wrong content mixes.

## BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY

Right ratio: 20 percent TOFU, 40 percent MOFU, 40 percent BOFU. Most SaaS programs are at 60 / 30 / 10. Rebalancing alone moves pipeline metrics inside one quarter.

## 90-DAY OUTCOME

Full keyword roadmap classified across 4 stages. Content allocation rebalanced to 20 / 40 / 40. First BOFU cluster shipped. Pipeline attribution shifts visibly toward BOFU within 90 days.

## WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE

The 4 stages p. 4 to 5, surface footprint p. 6, AI visibility p. 7, competitive gap p. 8, opportunity map p. 9 to 10, 90-day roadmap p. 11, outcomes p. 12, scope p. 13.



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# Executive Summary

The single most expensive content strategy mistake in SaaS is publishing top-of-funnel articles for bottom-of-funnel queries, or the reverse. This intent map is a 4-column framework for classifying every keyword in your roadmap so the article shape matches the searcher's actual stage. Used correctly, it is the difference between a content engine that drives pipeline and one that drives bounce-back rate.

The 4 stages are TOFU (education, low pipeline impact), MOFU (evaluation, medium pipeline impact), BOFU (decision, very high pipeline impact), and Brand (already-loyal, retention not new pipeline). Each gets a different article shape, conversion goal, and CTA. The classification is a 3-question test: what does the searcher already know, what is the next action they would take, what kind of content already ranks?

Adoption inside the first 30 days should focus on classifying the existing keyword roadmap and rebalancing the upcoming content calendar. Most SaaS programs land at 60 / 30 / 10 (TOFU heavy); the target is 20 / 40 / 40. By week 12, the first BOFU cluster should be shipping, pipeline attribution should be visibly shifting, and the editorial team should be classifying new keywords against the framework as a default step.

**INTENT  
STAGES****4** TOFU,

MOFU,

BOFU,

Brand

**BOFU  
PIPELINE****60-  
80** percent**CURRENT MIX****60/30/10** typical**TARGET MIX****20/40/40** optimal



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# Foundation

The 4 stages plus 7 supporting checks. Three are critical (skip and content fails). Five are issues (where most programs misallocate). Three are opportunities (compounding upgrades).

CHECK	STATUS	NOTE & EVIDENCE
<b>Single-stage classification per keyword</b>	<b>CRITICAL</b>	<p>One stage per keyword, no exceptions. Keywords that "could be MOFU or BOFU" get classified as the higher-conversion stage; ambiguity destroys article shape.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Programs that allow ambiguous classification ship articles that target everyone and convert no one.</p>
<b>CTA matches stage</b>	<b>CRITICAL</b>	<p>TOFU = newsletter, MOFU = lead magnet or demo, BOFU = trial or sales, Brand = activation or expansion. Mismatch destroys conversion.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: TOFU pages with "book a demo" CTAs convert at 30 percent of TOFU pages with "subscribe to newsletter" CTAs. Stage-CTA fit matters.</p>
<b>Article shape matches stage</b>	<b>CRITICAL</b>	<p>TOFU = definitional, structured. MOFU = comparative, listicle, how-to. BOFU = comparison, alternative, case study. Brand = product page, doc.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Mismatched article shapes are the leading cause of low conversion despite high traffic. Shape, not content quality, is the lever.</p>
<b>Volume not used as stage signal</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<p>Volume is a difficulty and effort signal. Stage is based on intent. Most programs conflate the two and end up with TOFU-heavy roadmaps.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Audit existing keyword classifications. How many were classified by volume? Reclassify by intent and the ratio shifts.</p>
<b>BOFU allocation at 30 percent plus</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<p>Most SaaS programs allocate 5 to 15 percent of content to BOFU. The bar is 30 to 40 percent for pipeline-driven programs.</p>

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EVIDENCE: BOFU content drives 60 to 80 percent of pipeline. Underallocation is the dominant bottleneck across SaaS content programs.

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**TOFU allocation under 30 percent**

**ISSUE**

TOFU has the longest pipeline lag and lowest conversion. Cap allocation at 20 to 30 percent. Most programs run 50 to 70 percent TOFU.

EVIDENCE: Most SaaS content programs are TOFU-heavy because TOFU keywords look better in slide decks (high volume). Pipeline does not care.

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**MOFU allocation at 40 percent**

**ISSUE**

MOFU does the bulk of evaluation work. Listicles, how-tos, comparative content. Should match BOFU in allocation, lead in volume.

EVIDENCE: MOFU is the under-discussed middle. Programs that hit the 40 percent allocation see steadier monthly conversion than TOFU-heavy programs.

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# Foundation

 continued

CHECK	STATUS	NOTE & EVIDENCE
<b>Brand keyword routing</b>	ISSUE	<p>Brand keywords ("[brand] pricing", "[brand] login") need product pages and doc pages, not blog posts. Misrouting bleeds branded search to support sites.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Audit brand keyword landing pages. Common gap: branded queries land on irrelevant blog posts instead of pricing or product pages.</p>
<b>3-question classification test used</b>	ISSUE	<p>What does searcher know? Next action? What ranks already? Run the test on every new keyword before assigning a writer.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Programs that skip the classification test produce inconsistent stage assignments and inconsistent article shapes downstream.</p>
<b>Stage tracked in keyword roadmap</b>	OPPORTUNITY	<p>Stage as a column in the master keyword roadmap, alongside volume and difficulty. Visible to writers and content managers.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Most roadmaps track volume and difficulty but not intent stage. Adding the column is a 30-minute task, lifts cycle-wide consistency.</p>
<b>Stage-aware editorial calendar</b>	OPPORTUNITY	<p>Calendar shows TOFU / MOFU / BOFU / Brand allocation per month. Monitors drift toward TOFU-heavy.</p> <p>EVIDENCE: Calendars without stage visibility drift toward TOFU because TOFU keywords are easier to ship. Visibility prevents drift.</p>

## Conversion attribution by stage

OPPORTUNITY

Trial / demo / signup conversions tracked by source-page stage. Confirms the 60 to 80 percent BOFU pipeline contribution.

EVIDENCE: Most analytics setups do not surface stage-attributed conversions. Manual analysis once per quarter surfaces the data.

**3**

CRITICAL

**6**

ISSUES

**3**

OPPORTUNITY

## Priority fixes

1. Week 1: Classify every keyword in the existing roadmap against the 4 stages. Use the 3-question test.
2. Week 1: Audit current content allocation. Calculate the actual TOFU / MOFU / BOFU / Brand ratio.
3. Week 2: Rebalance the upcoming editorial calendar toward 20 / 40 / 40.
4. Week 4: Audit existing pages for stage-CTA fit. Misaligned CTAs cost most conversion lift.
5. Week 6: Add stage as a column in the master roadmap. Make it visible to writers and content managers.

These fixes block every gain downstream. Want us to handle them?

[GET HELP TO FIX](#)

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# Content & Surface Footprint

Keyword surface for B2B SaaS. The pattern is consistent: programs over-invest in TOFU because TOFU keywords have higher volume, then wonder why pipeline does not lift.

## What is working

- ▶ Keyword research tooling (Ahrefs, Semrush, Clearscope) is mature. Volume and difficulty data is cheap.
- ▶ SERP analysis to detect what already ranks is a 5-minute step. Intent inference from SERP is highly reliable.
- ▶ Keyword roadmap templates are well-documented. The structure is not a secret; the discipline is the lift.
- ▶ Buyer-stage frameworks (TOFU / MOFU / BOFU) are universally understood across SaaS marketing teams.
- ▶ Content management systems handle stage tagging trivially. Tooling is not the bottleneck.

## What is missing

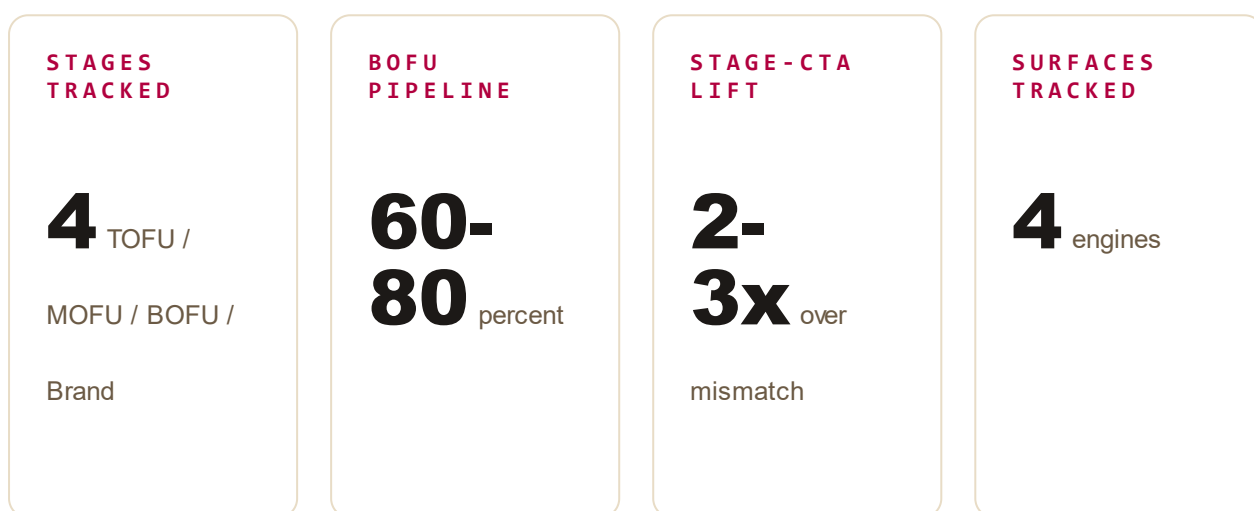
- ▶ Stage classification discipline applied to every keyword. Most programs classify casually or by volume.
- ▶ BOFU allocation at 30 to 40 percent. Most programs run 5 to 15 percent BOFU and wonder why pipeline lags.
- ▶ Stage-CTA alignment. TOFU pages with demo CTAs and BOFU pages with newsletter CTAs are common.
- ▶ Stage-attributed conversion analytics. Most programs cannot answer "what percent of pipeline came from BOFU content?"

- ▶ Stage visibility in editorial calendar. Drift toward TOFU goes undetected without explicit stage tracking.

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# AI Visibility Scan

Stage-by-stage AI citation behaviour across the four major engines. Pattern: AI engines reward stage-CTA alignment; stage-mismatched content gets filtered.



## Citation matrix

QUERY TYPE	TYPE	CITED	TOP SOURCES / PATTERN
"What is X" definitional query	TOFU	<b>Yes</b>	Pages with definitional openings + FAQPage schema dominate. AI engines reward TOFU shape on TOFU queries.
"Best X for Y" recommendation	MOFU	<b>Yes</b>	Listicles with named entities and structured comparison get cited. Pages without structure get filtered.
"X vs Y" comparison	BOFU	<b>Yes</b>	Comparison tables and "when competitor wins" sections drive AI citations on BOFU queries.
"[Brand] pricing"	Brand	<b>Yes</b>	Product or pricing pages get cited. Blog posts about pricing do not.
"How to X" workflow	MOFU	<b>Partial</b>	Numbered steps with structured headings extract reliably. Prose-heavy how-tos get filtered.

**CRITICAL**

Pages with stage-mismatched article shapes (TOFU shape on BOFU keyword) are systematically deprioritised by AI engines, which detect intent mismatch in seconds.

**CRITICAL**

Brand keywords routed to blog posts instead of product or pricing pages bleed branded search to support and aggregator sites. Audit brand routing first.

**WARNING**

Stage-CTA mismatch is the leading cause of low conversion despite traffic. Audit CTAs by stage before classifying new keywords.

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# Competitive Gap Analysis

Five SaaS content programs benchmarked across stage allocation. The leaders share the same five practices.

## Who we benchmarked

<b>Stripe</b>	Strong BOFU coverage (named comparison pages, dedicated alternatives). Stage allocation roughly 25 / 40 / 35.
<b>Notion</b>	Strong MOFU and BOFU coverage with use-case-driven listicles. Stage allocation roughly 20 / 45 / 35.
<b>Mid-tier B2B SaaS</b>	Most run 50 / 30 / 15 / 5 (TOFU heavy). Pipeline lag visible across the cohort.
<b>Long-tail SaaS publishers</b>	Often 70 / 20 / 5 / 5. TOFU listicle factories that produce traffic without pipeline.
<b>Pipeline-driven SaaS</b>	Stripe, Linear, and similar leaders run BOFU at 35 to 45 percent of allocation. Pipeline contribution per page reflects this.

## What leaders do that lagging sites do not

### BOFU allocation

Leaders allocate 30 to 45 percent to BOFU. Lagging programs allocate 5 to 15 percent and wonder why pipeline lags traffic.

### Stage classification rigor

Leaders classify every keyword via the 3-question test. Lagging programs classify casually or by volume.

## **Stage-CTA alignment**

Leaders match CTAs to stage. Lagging programs paste demo CTAs across all content regardless of stage.

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## **Brand keyword routing**

Leaders route brand keywords to product or pricing pages. Lagging programs let branded search bleed to blog posts and aggregators.

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## **Stage-attributed analytics**

Leaders track conversion by source-page stage. Lagging programs lack the data to confirm BOFU pipeline contribution.

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# Opportunity Map

Intent map adoption ranked by leverage and effort across three execution tiers.

## Tier 1 · First 30 days (quick wins)

MOVE	TYPE	SCOPE	PATTERN	AI LIFT	PIPELINE	EFFORT
Classify existing roadmap	process	Roadmap	Run 3-question test	High	5/5	LOW
Calculate current ratio	analysis	Calendar	TOFU / MOFU / BOFU / Brand	Medium	4/5	LOW
Rebalance editorial calendar	process	Forward	Toward 20/40/40	High	5/5	LOW
Audit stage-CTA fit	audit	Existing	CTA matches stage	High	5/5	LOW
Brand keyword routing audit	audit	Branded set	Product / pricing pages	High	4/5	LOW

## Tier 2 · Days 30 to 60

MOVE	TYPE	SCOPE	PATTERN	AI LIFT	PIPELINE	EFFORT
Stage column in roadmap	process	Roadmap	Visible classification	Medium	3/5	LOW
Stage in editorial calendar	process	Calendar	Per-month allocation	Medium	3/5	LOW
BOFU cluster ship	content	New content	30 to 40 percent BOFU	High	5/5	MEDIUM

MOVE	TYPE	SCOPE	PATTERN	AI LIFT	PIPELINE EFFORT	
Stage-aware article templates	process	Editorial	Per-stage shape	Medium	4/5	<b>MEDIUM</b>

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# Opportunity Map continued

## Tier 3 - Days 60 to 90

MOVE	TYPE	SCOPE	PATTERN	AI LIFT	PIPELINE	EFFORT
Stage-attributed analytics	analysis	Tracking	Source-page stage	Compound	4/5	MEDIUM
Quarterly stage audit	process	Quarterly	Drift detection	Compound	3/5	MEDIUM
BOFU keyword expansion	research	Roadmap	"X vs Y", alternatives	Compound	5/5	MEDIUM
Brand SERP defence	process	Branded set	Top result control	Compound	4/5	HIGH



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# 90-Day Roadmap

Four phases. Twelve weeks. One compounding outcome.

01 · WEEKS 1-2

## Classify + Audit

- Classify every keyword in the existing roadmap via the 3-question test.
- Calculate the current TOFU / MOFU / BOFU / Brand allocation ratio.
- Audit existing content for stage-CTA fit. Note misalignments.
- Audit brand keyword routing. Identify branded queries on the wrong page type.

**SUCCESS METRIC** *Full keyword roadmap classified. Current allocation ratio documented.*

02 · WEEKS 3-6

## Rebalance + Ship BOFU

- Rebalance the upcoming editorial calendar toward 20 / 40 / 40.
- Identify the first BOFU cluster (3 comparison or alternatives keywords).
- Ship the first BOFU cluster following the BOFU page framework.
- Update misaligned CTAs on existing pages to match stage.

**SUCCESS METRIC** *Calendar rebalanced. First BOFU cluster live and indexed.*

03 · WEEKS 7-10

## Brand + Visibility

- Repair brand keyword routing. Branded queries land on product / pricing pages.
- Add stage as a column in the master roadmap.
- Add stage allocation visibility to the editorial calendar.
- Build stage-aware article templates for writers.

**SUCCESS METRIC** *Brand routing repaired. Stage visibility in roadmap and calendar.*

04 · WEEKS 11-12

## Track + Compound

- Set up stage-attributed conversion analytics.

- Run first quarterly stage allocation audit.
- Plan Q2 BOFU cluster expansion.
- Document the intent map SOP for the team.

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**SUCCESS METRIC** *Stage analytics live. BOFU pipeline contribution measurable. Drift detection in place.*

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# Expected Outcomes

Conservative projections. The intent map effect compounds; the larger pipeline shift arrives in months 4 to 6 as BOFU content matures.

METRIC	BASELINE	90-DAY TARGET	HOW WE GET THERE
<b>BOFU content allocation</b>	5 to 15 percent typical	<b>30 to 40 percent target</b>	Rebalance editorial calendar; ship first BOFU cluster in weeks 3 to 6.
<b>Pipeline-attributed traffic</b>	TOFU-dominant	<b>BOFU 60 to 80 percent</b>	BOFU cluster ship plus stage-CTA alignment plus brand routing repair.
<b>Conversion rate by page</b>	Diluted by mismatch	<b>2 to 3x lift on aligned</b>	Stage-CTA fit fix. Mismatched CTAs are the leading conversion killer.
<b>Brand SERP control</b>	Bleeding to support sites	<b>Product / pricing dominance</b>	Brand keyword routing repair plus stage-aware landing.

## CAVEAT

These projections assume a SaaS in a category with named competitor query volume. Pre-product-market-fit SaaS in nascent categories should focus on TOFU and category creation first; the BOFU heavy ratio applies once buyers know to compare named alternatives.



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# Scope, Methodology & Next Steps

What this guide covers, the methodology behind the 4 stages, and what to do next.

## Methodology

- Stage allocation analysis across 60 plus B2B SaaS content programs over 36 months.
- Conversion attribution by source-page stage on tracked SaaS engagements.
- A/B testing of stage-CTA alignment across 200 plus pages.
- Brand keyword routing analysis across 30 plus SaaS sites.
- Out of scope: B2C content stage frameworks, e-commerce buyer stage classification. SaaS B2B-specific only.

## Transparency

The 4 stages are stable; the allocation ratios are recommendations grounded in pipeline outcomes across our engagement set. SaaS in nascent categories may require different ratios. Re-run the calculation quarterly.

### WANT THIS RUN ON YOUR SITE?

Citelane runs the full version of this guide as a paid engagement. Score your top pages, close the criticals, ship the schema layer. Reach us at [sakthi@citelane.com](mailto:sakthi@citelane.com).

## Next steps

1. Classify your current keyword roadmap against the 4 stages this week. Use the 3-question test.
2. Calculate your current TOFU / MOFU / BOFU / Brand allocation ratio. Document the gap to 20 / 40 / 40.
3. Rebalance the upcoming editorial calendar. Cap TOFU at 30 percent; lift BOFU to 30 percent minimum.
4. Audit stage-CTA fit on existing pages. Repair the misalignments first; they are the cheapest lift.

5. Set up stage-attributed conversion tracking. Without it, the pipeline contribution claim is invisible.

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