

A Professional's Guide to Surviving & Winning in the Markets

From antwerks (useThinkScript)

This isn't about hype, motivation, or quick money. This is the **baseline standard** if you want to trade consistently, protect capital, and actually improve over time.

1. Start Your Day Before the Market Does

If you're reacting, you're already late. Serious traders use the morning to:

- Map key levels and scenarios
- Identify A+ setups *before* they form
- Review prior trades and mistakes
- Align mentally before volatility begins

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Preparation removes emotion. Reaction creates it.

MAP KEY LEVELS AND SCENARIOS

These is NOT random lines on a chart. You're building a decision map for the day/week.

WHAT ARE "KEY LEVELS"?

You're looking for areas where behavior is likely to change, not just "support/resistance." Core categories you should focus on the following:

A. STRUCTURAL LEVELS (PRICE MEMORY)

These are where price has *proven reaction*:

- Prior day high / low
- Prior week high / low
- Range highs/lows (consolidation boxes)
- Breakout / breakdown levels
- Failed breakout levels (**VERY important**)

These answer "Where did traders get trapped or rewarded?"

B. VALUE LEVELS

This is where your decision system shines.

- **VWAP (daily / anchored)**
- Volume nodes (if you use them)
- Your "range center / zero line" like POC on the volume Profile

These answer "Where is fair value shifting?"

C. LIQUIDITY / POSITIONING LEVELS

These are where moves accelerate:

- Gaps (especially unfilled)
- Overnight highs/lows
- Option walls (if you track them)
- “Obvious highs/lows” (retail stops)
- Low volume zones on Vol Profile

These answer “Where will movement speed up?”

D. INDICES (YES = VERY IMPORTANT)

You should ALWAYS map:

- SPY / ES
- QQQ / NQ
- Sometimes IWM (for breadth)
- Sometimes I map out category ETF like XLK for tech since that group is drive by just a few

Why? Because individual stocks don't move independently in most environments

What to look for in indices:

- Are they trending or compressing?
- Where are THEY relative to VWAP / ARVWAP?
- Are they at extremes or in balance?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Before the open, you should be able to say:

If price reclaims X → likely move to Y

If price rejects X → likely move to Z

That's mapping.

WHAT ARE “SCENARIOS”?

They are NOT trade strategies. They are **conditional paths**.

SCENARIO = “IF / THEN LOGIC”

Example:

Bull Scenario

- IF price holds above VWAP / *whatever indicator you use
- AND momentum expands
- THEN look for continuation then next resistance

Bear Scenario

- IF price rejects key level
- AND momentum weakens
- THEN look for move back to value

Chop Scenario

- IF price stays inside value (VWAP bands / *whatever bands)
- THEN do nothing or scalp only

A strategy is “how you execute”

A scenario is “when you’re allowed to execute”

2. Treat Every Trade as Data (Journal Everything)

If you’re not tracking it, you’re not improving. Your journal should include:

- **Entry reasoning** (setup, context, confirmation)
- **Exit reasoning** (planned vs emotional)
- **Market condition** (trend, chop, volatility)
- **Emotional state** (calm, rushed, revenge, hesitation)

Over time, patterns emerge:

- What actually works for *you*
- Where you consistently lose
- When you should *not* be trading

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Your journal is your edge—without it, you’re guessing.

3. Risk Management Is the Business

You’re not in the business of being right. You’re in the business of **not blowing up**.

Non-negotiables:

- Fixed risk per trade (e.g., 0.5%–1%)
- Proper position sizing (based on stop distance)
- Hard stops — no exceptions
- Zero revenge trading

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Survival first. Consistency second. Profit last.

4. Build a Body That Can Handle Pressure

Trading is cognitive performance under stress. If your body is weak, your decisions will be too. Focus on:

- **Strength training** → discipline & structure
- **Cardio** → endurance during long sessions
- **Mobility/breathing** → stress control in volatility

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Your physiology affects your execution more than your strategy.

5. Master Emotional Control (Execution > Prediction)

Most traders don't fail from bad setups. They fail from bad execution. You must develop the ability to:

- Execute your plan **without hesitation**
- Accept losses without emotional reaction
- Avoid impulsive trades outside your system

KEY PRINCIPLE:

The market doesn't care what you think—it rewards what you execute.

6. Protect Your Sleep Like It's Capital

Fatigue destroys discipline faster than losses do. Minimum standards:

- Consistent sleep/wake cycle
- No screens before bed (or reduce stimulation)
- Dark, cool sleep environment
- Avoid late-night dopamine overload (charts, socials, etc.)

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Recovery is part of performance. No recovery = no edge.

7. Study With Purpose Every Day

Experience alone is slow. **Deliberate study accelerates everything.** Focus your study on:

- Trade reviews (your own first, then others)
- Market structure and behavior
- Risk and position management
- Psychological patterns (fear, greed, hesitation)

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Skill compounds. Motivation doesn't.

Scanning - The Opportunity Universe

The First Layer: The Scan (Opportunity Universe)

TOS Stock Hacker scan is not just a simple stock filter. It is building a curated universe of tradable setups before the watchlist scoring even runs.

Try to filter the scan filters:

- **Liquidity**
 - Price >\$15
 - Open Interest > 1000
 - Options with real volume
 - This removes illiquid garbage stocks.
- **Tradable Option Structure**
 - Delta 0.30–0.50
 - 2–8% OTM
 - 2–45 DTE
 - This means the scan is finding stocks where wheel / premium selling trades make sense.
- **Volatility Edge**
 - I have included $IV > HV$ by at least 5%
 - That means Options are overpriced relative to realized volatility. This is exactly what premium sellers want.
- **Risk Control**
 - I also filtered earnings No earnings within 7 bars so, I avoid earnings volatility spikes.
- **Trend Bias**
 - The custom script requires a Bullish trend, so that the scan produces a universe of stocks that are liquid, optionable, bullish and with elevated IV. That alone is a very strong institutional-style filter.

The Decision Dashboard

This is intentionally a three-layer decision system.

The screenshot shows a financial dashboard with a grid of data for various stocks. The columns include: Symbol, Last, %Chg, WME, TREN, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, P31, P32, P33, P34, P35, P36, P37, P38, P39, P40, P41, P42, P43, P44, P45, P46, P47, P48, P49, P50, P51, P52, P53, P54, P55, P56, P57, P58, P59, P60, P61, P62, P63, P64, P65, P66, P67, P68, P69, P70, P71, P72, P73, P74, P75, P76, P77, P78, P79, P80, P81, P82, P83, P84, P85, P86, P87, P88, P89, P90, P91, P92, P93, P94, P95, P96, P97, P98, P99, P100. The data is color-coded by row and column.

The Watchlist Engine

Once stocks pass the scan, they enter my watchlist scoring system. This layer evaluates the quality of the setup.

The columns measure:

Category	Columns
Trend	EMA / Trend / Engine
Momentum	ROCV / ACC
Volatility	ENV / IV
Risk	ATR / Deployment
Structure	BOS / CHoCH

This means the system evaluates:

- trend
- momentum
- volatility
- structure
- risk

Most scanners evaluate only one or two of these. This Score column combines them, weighs them and provides a final score based off the other columns scripts.

Example interpretation:

Score	Meaning
95–100	explosive setup
85–95	strong setup
70–85	forming setup
55–70	early stage
<55	weak

Because the original scan already removed weak stocks, most candidates score high. That's normal.

The Timing Engine

This is where the system becomes special. Two columns: Breakout Probability (BO%) and Momentum Ignition State. These are not just indicators, they determine WHEN to trade.

Breakout Probability (BO%)- BO% estimates how likely the stock is to break out soon.

It evaluates things like:

- momentum (ROC)
- trend alignment
- ATR expansion
- price vs highs

Example interpretation:

BO%	Meaning
90–100	breakout now
75–90	ignition forming
60–75	strong setup
40–60	early setup
<40	weak

Momentum Ignition State

This column describes the stage of the move.

State	Meaning
COIL	compression before move
IGNITING	breakout starting
RUNNING	trend expansion
EXHAUSTION	move ending

This is extremely useful because markets move in cycles.

COIL then IGNITING then RUNNING then EXHAUSTION. Most traders only recognize RUNNING.

This system finds COIL, which is where the best trades start.

WHY THE COMBINATION IS POWERFUL

Most scanners do only one layer.

Example typical retail workflow:

- Scan for RSI
- Look at chart
- Guess entry

This system instead does:

- Step 1 - Scan filters the market to tradable candidates.
- Step 2 - Watchlist scoring ranks the quality of setups.
- Step 3 - Ignition state determines entry timing.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

Examples from a watchlist table:

Trade 1	Trade 2	Trade 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ARM<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Score = 100○ BO% = 90○ MO_I = RUNNING○ Meaning:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- strong trend- momentum active- breakout already underway○ This is a momentum trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NBIS<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Score = 90○ BO% = 50○ MO_I = NEUTRAL○ Meaning:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- good structure- momentum building- breakout not triggered○ This is a watchlist setup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STM<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Score = 50○ BO% = 20○ MO_I = EXHAUSTION○ Meaning:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- trend fading- momentum dyingAVOID

The Real Edge

This system now identifies three types of opportunities.

1. Early setups

- Score > 80
- BO% 60–75
- MO_I = COIL
- These are tomorrow's movers.

2. Breakout entries

- Score > 85
- BO% > 75
- MO_I = IGNITING
- These are the best entries.

3. Momentum trades

- Score > 90
- MO_I = RUNNING
- These are trend continuation trades.

Why This Is Rare

This approach combines three different trading disciplines:

- options volatility screening
- technical momentum analysis
- market structure detection

Most traders use only one.

The Hidden Advantage

This system finds stocks before they move. Because the sequence works like this:

- Scan detects opportunity
- Score confirms setup
- Ignition column times entry

THE SCORING FRAMEWORK

CORE STRUCTURE: “FROM CONTEXT → SIGNAL → ACTION”

Column	Name	What It Measures	How to Interpret	Why It Matters
Symbol / Last / %Chg	Price Data	Current price + daily move	Basic context	Starting point for all analysis
Yield	Dividend Yield	Income component	Higher = income bias	Useful for CC/CSP strategies
WHE	Weighted Edge Score	Composite strength metric	0–100 scale	Your primary ranking engine
TREND	Trend State	Directional bias (1–5)	Higher = stronger trend	Confirms directional trades
PST	Position State	Strat/structure position	P1:S1:T1 Trade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stocks • verticals • directional options • put spreads • call spreads (on shorts) P1:S1:T0 P1:S0:T0 P0 = No go	Where price sits in structure
PRICE	Relative Price Score	Position vs ranges	High = extended Price X above EMA No up trend Uptrend & Price > EMA Uptrend & Price > -0.01	Helps avoid chasing

RELATIVE STRENGTH + TREND LAYER

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
RS_21 / RS_50 / RS_200	Relative Strength	Performance vs market over timeframes	100 = strong leader	Multi-timeframe confirmation
MKT	Market Alignment	Stock vs overall market	1-5 scale	Filters weak setups in bad tape

MOMENTUM + STRUCTURE ENGINE

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
ROC	Rate of Change	Momentum velocity 1 = Exhaustion / Risk 2 = Bear 3 = Neutral 4 = Pullback 5 = Momentum / Expansion	Rising = acceleration	Early move detection
BBX	Breakout/ Compression	Volatility state Green = Close > Upper BB Red = Close < Lower BB Orange = w/l range	BBX = squeeze/ expansion	Identifies setup phase
ACC	Accumulation Score	Buying vs selling pressure	High = accumulation Acceleration = Bullish Deceleration = Bearish Accumulation = Close >= VWMA Distribution = Close < VWMA	Smart money behavior
ENG	Engine Rank Score	Momentum Internal trend force	Accel / Decel Green >= 85 Cyan >= 75 Yellow >= 50 Red < 50	Core of your system
ENV	Environment	Market condition based on Dollar Volume, ATR, Chop & Structure State	Trend / Range / Extreme 1 = Tradable 0 = Mixed -1 = Untradable	Context filter

VOLATILITY + OPTIONS CONTEXT

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
IV_Reg	IV Regime Detect	Implied volatility state	EXPA / COMP IV Extreme IV Expanding IV Compression Normal	Options pricing edge
HEAT	Volatility Pressure	Movement intensity	99 = Compression (unstable) 3 = Strong Bull 2 = Osc > AvgOsc 1 = Inflection Up -1 = Inflection Down -2 = Osc < AvgOsc -3 = Strong Bear	Risk awareness
ATR	Average True Range	Price movement range	Higher = bigger moves	Position sizing
ImpVol	Implied Volatility	Options pricing	High = premium selling	CSP/CC alignment

RISK + POSITIONING LAYER

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
DEPL	Deployment	Capital exposure justified Weekly short prem.	Higher = active 1 = Deploy 0 = Do Not Deploy	Portfolio awareness
RISK	Risk Score	Downside potential	0 - 100 Higher = riskier	Trade filtering
Sell P	Sell Pressure Premium Selling Ranking Score + Earnings Safety Filter	Distribution signal	High = bearish	Exit warning
PRED	Prediction State	Internal bias	Bull / Bear / Coil COIL = Compression REVUP = Inflection Up REVDN = Inflection Down BULL BEAR	Forward-looking edge

STRUCTURE + TREND ALIGNMENT

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
EMA	Trend Alignment	Moving average bias	Bull + Bull Flat Bear Bear +	Trend confirmation
CC_Readiness	Covered Call Readiness		Better as score increases (0-10)	
CSP_Readiness	Credit Spread Put Readiness		Better as score increases (0-10)	
ENG (2nd) ??	Secondary Engine	Confirmation momentum	Reinforces signal	Reduces false signals
BULL	uTS TapeReader with Reversals & Volume Accumulation	Aggregate bullishness	Reversal/Buy = White Bullish = Green Neutral = Gray Sell = Red Volume Div (WOW) = Plum	Directional filter
OVR	Institutional Accumulation Score Overextension	Combines accumulation + compression + momentum	High = stretched	Mean reversion risk

THE "EDGE LAYER" (MOST IMPORTANT)

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
BO%	Breakout Probability	Likelihood of expansion	Prob \geq 80 Prob \geq 60 Prob \geq 40 Prob \geq 20	Timing engine
MO	Momentum State	Cycle phase	RUN COIL IGNITE EXHAUST NEUTRAL	Trade timing
SCORE	Trade Score Engine	Composite ranking Combines Trend + Momentum + Projection + Volatility	Score \geq 85 Score \geq 70 Score \geq 55 Score \geq 40	Final decision metric

EXECUTION LAYER (THE SECRET SAUCE)

Column	Name	What It Measures	Interpretation	Why It Matters
PRE-BO	Pre-Condition	Setup readiness Detects setups BEFORE the breakout	Pre-Break Bull = PRE 1-2U Pre-Break Bear = PRE 1-2D INSIDE (coil) NONE	Early detection
READINESS	Real-Time Trigger	Live signal Compares BO to set thresholds	ACTIVE READY BUILDING EARLY LATE	Entry timing
LIQ	Liquidity / Expansion State Based on Supply/ Demand Engine	Tradability	UP EXPANSION DN EXPANSION COMPRESSION RANGE ACTIVE NEUTRAL	Execution quality

HOW THIS SYSTEM IS DIFFERENT

It's NOT just indicators — it's a decision engine

Most systems:

- Indicator THEN Guess

This system:

- Context then Structure then Momentum then Probability = Execution

It separates **SETUP** vs **TRIGGER**

COIL + High BO% → Setup

RUN + Confirmations → Trigger

EXHAUST → Exit / Avoid

It aligns **PERFECTLY** with options strategies

Condition	Strategy
COIL + High BO%	Buy options / directional
RUNNING	Ride trend / spreads
EXHAUSTION	Sell premium (CSP / CC)
HIGH IV + RANGE	Premium selling

THE REAL PROCESS

STEP 1 — SCAN (BROAD FILTER)

Find stocks with:

- Trend alignment
- Volume
- Volatility (expansion or compression)

We rank stocks based on:

1. Trend (Is it moving?)
2. Momentum (Is it accelerating?)
3. Structure (Is it ready to move?)
4. Volatility (Is it priced right?)
5. Probability (Will it break out?)
6. Timing (Is now the moment?)

STEP 2 — APPLY YOUR FRAMEWORK

Then we convert that into:

- A SCORE (quality)
- A STATE (timing)
- A PROBABILITY (edge)

Now ask:

- Where is price vs VWAP?
- Is it stretched or coiled?
- Is PNVI expanding or compressing?
- Is vol engine in compression (ready to move)?

STEP 3 — PRE-DEFINE THE TRIGGER

Example: “If price pulls back to VWAP AND PNVI expands then A+ long”

Now you’re waiting, not chasing.

WHAT IS AN “A+ SETUP”?

This is the most important question you asked.

WHAT IT IS NOT

- Not “looks good”
- Not “strong candle”
- Not “RSI oversold”

WHAT IT IS

Alignment of multiple independent factors...It’s stacking independent edges. An

A+ setup for YOU looks like:

A+ LONG

- Price above **VWAP**
- VWAP sloping up
- Pullback into VWAP or band
- PNVI spread expanding upward
- Vol engine expansion or coming out of compression
- RangeCenter/ MA > 0 (or turning up)

A+ SHORT

- Price below VWAP
- VWAP sloping down
- Rally into VWAP/band
- PNVI weakening
- Vol expansion downward

KEY INSIGHT

An A+ setup is not “one signal”, it is **confluence + timing + location**

Final Framework: How to Actually Apply This Daily

Every trading day should follow this structure:

Before Market

- Prep levels and scenarios
 - Where is price likely to react? - (key levels)
 - What happens IF it reacts there? - (scenarios)
- Review yesterday's trades
- Define your A+ conditions → What conditions must align for me to act?

Most traders look for trades. You define conditions **before price gets there**.

Let the action come to you!!!

During Market

- Execute only predefined setups
- Respect risk on every trade
- Stay neutral emotionally

After Market

- Journal every trade
- Review mistakes and wins
- Identify one improvement for tomorrow

Bottom Line

Trading isn't about finding more setups. It's about:

- Doing fewer things
- With more discipline
- More consistently over time

This system is essentially a hybrid between:

- Quant ranking system
- Market structure model
- Options flow logic
- Momentum timing engine

If you follow this framework:

- You'll trade less impulsively
- You'll recognize your real edge
- You'll stay in the game long enough to improve

And that's what separates traders who **last** from those who disappear.