Character notes: Alex

You are playing Alex, the co-owner of an online supplier of garden gnomes called GnomeBase.

The teams taking part in the scenario are trying to figure out the root cause of GnomeBase's declining sales. They have some printed information about the company, but they will also be able to ask you questions.

Backstory and personality

Alex met Sam at a networking event for entrepreneurs in their local area and immediately bonded over their shared values (i.e. a desire for money, power, and influence) and ambition to be on *The Apprentice*.

They founded GnomeBase together by creating a business plan with lots of very impressive-looking graphs and persuading various elderly relatives to invest.

Alex doesn't actually like gnomes, not even in an ironic way, and thinks that gnome fans are convenient chumps that they can extract money from. However, Alex is cautious about admitting this because it's likely to alienate customers.

Alex firmly believes that they're doing everything right. If there's a problem, it must be someone else's fault.

Note on character names

The character names don't appear in the slides or any of the printed materials, so feel free to change them if you'd rather be called something else.

GnomeBase operations

Roles

The division of responsibilities at GnomeBase isn't nonsensical, it's *disruptive*.

Alex deals with everything coming in to GnomeBase, including:

- Inventory orders
- Accounts receivable
- Customer queries
- Returns (see the GnomeBase returns policy for more information)

Sam deals with all processes that involve sending things out.

Jacqui, the grandmother-of-four whose picture is all over the website, doesn't exist. Alex and Sam made her up because a relatable character is good for branding.

Processes

The returns policy was updated in summer 2025 in response to a high volume of returns. It's designed to discourage people from using it, but it's technically within the law.

All refunds are issued by cheque because people don't get round to taking them to the bank.

Answering questions

Questions about the returns process	You have a copy of the returns policy. Give this to the participants and answer any follow-up questions
Questions about processes you're responsible for	If you know the answer, tell the participants what you know. If you don't know the answer, either make up something plausible or come up with an excuse to leave the conversation (you're very busy and have more important things to do).
Questions about other processes	That's not your responsibility. They'll need to ask your colleague.