

DIAGNOSTIC-FIRST GROWTH NETWORK

Growth Recon



Expose Toolkit

Strip away the bullshit. Find the ONE objective.

01 Objective Clarity

- Individually surveyed leadership on the ONE business objective
Ask each leader independently: 'What is the single most important thing marketing needs to achieve?' They won't match.
- Facilitated alignment session - resolved conflicts with data
The gap between leadership answers is where budget disappears. Use revenue data to pick the answer, not opinions.
- Defined objective in one sentence with a measurable metric
If you can't state it in one sentence with a number attached, it's not clear enough to execute against.
- Audited every page against the objective
Every page on the website either serves the objective or competes with it. There is no neutral.
- Audited every campaign against the objective
Campaigns not connected to the objective are vanity projects. Evaluate or kill them.
- Created three-question decision filter for new initiatives
Before any new initiative: How does this serve THE OBJECTIVE? What metric proves it's working? What's the timeline to know?
- Distributed decision filter to all team leads
The filter only works if everyone uses it. Distribute, train, enforce.
- Scheduled 30-day review to enforce consistency
Drift happens fast. A 30-day check catches misalignment before it becomes the new normal.

COMMON TRAP

Agreeing on two objectives because the CEO won't pick one. 'Leads AND brand awareness.' Two priorities means no priority.

02 Spend vs. Output Analysis

- Listed every channel, tool, and vendor with full monthly cost (including team time)**
Include salary cost of time spent - a '20 hours/week' organic social strategy by an \$80K employee costs \$3,300/month.
- Defined output metric per line item tied to the business objective**
Not impressions, not likes - the output that connects to revenue. Leads, signups, qualified pipeline.
- Calculated cost per unit for every item**
Monthly cost / output units. Simple math that makes waste visible instantly.
- Sorted by efficiency - worst performers at the bottom**
The bottom of the list is where your waste lives. This creates the conversation.
- Categorized each as Producing, Testing, Legacy, or Political**
Producing: works. Testing: too early, has a deadline. Legacy: never evaluated. Political: someone senior wants it.
- Set metric + deadline for every item in Testing**
No open-ended tests. Define success, set a deadline, make a binary keep/kill decision.
- Flagged Legacy items with 30-day evaluation window**
Anything that's 'always been running' gets 30 days to prove value with a defined metric. Passes or dies.
- Identified Political items and prepared data presentations**
Don't fight political items with opinions. Present data and let numbers make the argument.
- Calculated total unproductive spend across all categories**
Add it up. The total number is what creates urgency and executive buy-in for change.
- Built monthly dashboard to track changes over time**
Visibility prevents backsliding. When the numbers are visible, people maintain discipline.

COMMON TRAP

Including only media spend and ignoring team time. Nothing is 'free' when you count labor.

03 Agency & Vendor Audit

- Inventoried all external vendors with full annual costs**
Every agency, contractor, and vendor gets a row. Include hidden fees, management time, and contract penalties.
- Documented specific deliverables and contract terms for each**
Vague scope = vague value. If you can't list specific deliverables, you can't evaluate performance.
- Ran replacement test - in-house hire vs. agency for each relationship**
Could a \$60-80K hire do this AND keep the IP in-house? Calculate the annual comparison.
- Assessed IP ownership for every vendor engagement**
Who owns the creative? The data? The accounts? Agencies that own your assets create dependency by design.
- Categorized each relationship: Keep, In-house, Hybrid, or Eliminate**
Keep: true specialist work <10 hrs/mo. In-house: core competency >20 hrs/mo. Hybrid: strategy in, execution out. Eliminate: doesn't serve objective.
- Identified overlapping services across multiple vendors**
Three agencies doing parts of the same job with zero shared context is a coordination tax you're paying for nothing.
- Calculated total external spend vs. equivalent headcount cost**
The aggregate number often shocks leadership. It should.
- Prepared transition plans for any relationships being changed**
Don't cut without a plan. Knowledge transfer, timeline, and internal capability must be ready.

COMMON TRAP

Keeping the agency because 'we don't have time to manage it internally.' That's not an argument for the agency - it's an argument for fixing internal capacity.

04 Sacred Cow Slaughter

- Listed all initiatives with no defined success metric
If it can't be measured, it can't be evaluated. No metric = no accountability = waste until proven otherwise.
- Listed all initiatives with metrics that have never been reviewed
Having a metric that nobody looks at is the same as having no metric. Review it now, in the room.
- Listed all senior-championed initiatives with no accountability
The VP's pet project that 'builds the brand' with no definition of what that means. Data doesn't care about titles.
- Ran sacred cow test in group setting - full transparency
Five questions per candidate: What's the objective? What metric? When was it last reviewed? If we stopped, what happens? Who would notice?
- Set 30-day prove-it deadlines for anything without a metric
No more 'we'll figure out how to measure it later.' 30 days. Define, measure, or kill.
- Killed initiatives that failed the stop test
If stopping has no customer impact in 30 or 90 days, it was already dead. You're just making it official.
- Documented every decision with supporting data
Transparency protects you. Every kill decision has a data trail. No he-said-she-said.
- Calculated total budget freed by eliminating sacred cows
This is the ROI of the Expose stage. Freed budget goes to what actually works.

COMMON TRAP

Killing things quietly. Do it visibly with data. Kill a VP's pet project behind closed doors and you've made an enemy. Present data in a meeting and you become the ally of everyone who already knew it was waste.