

When Marketing Decisions Aren't Challenged

Strong marketing plans fail, but not because teams move too slowly. They fail when decisions move forward before their underlying assumptions are challenged.

Most marketing plans pass the first reading easily. The objective is clear, the audience appears defined, and the channels seem appropriate. The timeline makes sense. Everything connects neatly enough that the plan feels finished. That sense of coherence can be misleading.

A strategy can look logical while still resting on assumptions that have never been challenged. Before moving forward, organizations should ask a few critical questions:

- What must be true in the market for this strategy to succeed?
- Which audience behaviors are we assuming remain stable?
- What conditions does the plan rely on?

Once a decision moves forward, it becomes harder to revisit. Budgets are assigned, timelines are established, and teams begin optimizing within the chosen strategy. From that point on, the organization becomes very good at executing inside a frame that was never examined closely.

This is why reviewing a marketing plan should involve more than confirming that the pieces fit together. A strong review looks beneath the structure of the plan and identifies the assumptions it depends on.

If those assumptions hold, the strategy may be sound. If they do not, even strong execution will struggle to produce the intended outcome.

Decision quality determines whether the strategy being executed was sound in the first place.