SAME WAR, NEW WEAPONS · MEASUREMENT & DATA

Vanity-Metric Audit Checklist

Run every number in your current marketing report through four questions, then sort it into keep, move, or drop. Twenty minutes, one report, and a clearer view of what your marketing is actually paying for.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

1. **List every metric** in your current report or dashboard, in the worksheet on page two.
2. **Ask the four questions** below of each one and tick the answers.
3. **Sort each metric: Keep** on page one, **Move** to page two as a labelled diagnostic, or **Drop**.
4. **Rebuild page one** using the report checklist at the end.

The four questions

1. Can it go down?

If a metric only rises when you spend more, it is measuring the budget, not the result. Reach and impressions almost always fail this one.

2. Does it lead to a decision?

If it moved 20 percent tomorrow, what would you change? If there is no answer, it is a vanity number.

3. How far is it from money?

Count the steps between the metric and a sale. Impression, click, visit, lead, sale: four steps. The more steps, the more it can flatter.

4. Would the finance team care?

If the people who approve budgets would shrug, the number belongs on page two, not page one.

Rule of thumb: fails three or four questions, move or drop it. Fails one or two, keep it only if you can name the decision it informs.

16.5 crore

awareness impressions in nine months on one large Indian manufacturing brand, and zero tracked leads. They were never built for leads. The mistake would be reporting them as if they were results.

Real account, December 2024 to August 2025, anonymised.

When a vanity metric earns its place

As a diagnostic. A falling click-through rate says the creative is tired. Impressions that stop growing can mean a budget cap or an exhausted audience. Reach in target regions is a fair goal for a brand campaign, if the report says so plainly.

Common swaps: what feels good, and what pays

Feels good	Pays	Why the swap
Reach and impressions	Cost per qualified lead	Shows what the reach turned into
Followers and likes	Leads or sales from social	Counts the audience that acts
Clicks and CTR	Landing page conversion rate	Tests whether the click could buy
Rankings	Impressions and clicks per keyword	Shows how often you are actually seen
Sessions and page views	Key events: forms, calls, chats	Counts actions, not visits
Total leads	Lead-to-sale rate	Separates buyers from form fills

THE AUDIT WORKSHEET

Score every metric in your report

Tick each question the metric passes. Then write its verdict. The first row is a worked example.

Metric	Can go down	Leads to a decision	Steps from a sale	Finance cares	Verdict and note
Reach (brand campaign)	No	No	4	No	**Move.** Page two, labelled “brand reach in target regions”
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Report checklist: a first page that cannot flatter you

- ☐ Page one opens with spend, qualified leads, cost per qualified lead, and sales or pipeline.
- ☐ Every number sits beside last month and the same month last year.
- ☐ Every channel has a named job, and is judged on the metric that fits that job.
- ☐ Brand metrics are labelled as brand metrics, with a brand goal, not a sales goal.
- ☐ Leads are matched with the sales team at least once a month.
- ☐ Each page carries one line on what changed and what you will do about it.

> THE DECISION RULE
>
> Before any number goes into a report, name the decision it informs. If you cannot name one, move it to the appendix. If it is a brand metric, label it as one and judge it against a brand goal, not a sales goal.

Want reports that tell you the truth?

We build reporting that leads with spend, qualified leads, and revenue, and puts reach where it belongs.
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