LEVELS ON LEVELS ON LEVELS

Of Scale...

Why the marketing that got you here won't get you there... and what's ACTUALLY breaking underneath it

I've personally managed more than $130 million in ad spend over the last decade, and I've been wrong about nearly everything in this report at least once. Usually with someone else's money.

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From The Desk of: Ashton Shanks.
Nashville, Tennessee
Friday, 7:06a

If you're reading this, you're my kind of people.

Entrepreneur-kind-of-people...

Entrepreneurs are people who believe they can figure ANYTHING out.

Not in an arrogant, "I'm better than everyone" kind of way...

(Well. Not *completely* that way. Maybe a little.)

But that belief is what made you dangerous in the early years.

Remember when you had no budget, no team, and no permission... but you figured it out anyway? Badly at first, sure.

But then?

Here you are.

You built a REAL business. You defied the odds. You're putting solid money in the bank...

Then at some point, the business got big enough that you couldn't carry all of it yourself anymore.

So you delegated. You outsourced.

(Some of those tasks you were still really good at, by the way.)

But you knew there were things only the founder could do, and those things needed you more.

So one day, you handed off the marketing.

In-house hire. Or an agency. Nerve-racking either way. But you told yourself: *"Surely they know what they're doing. I vetted them..."*

And it starts off well enough..

Then one day you're on a call about rising CPAs...

They give you an answer.

The answer *sounds* like an answer.

They tell you what they're going to do next. You hang up. And something just doesn't sit right.

But you can't name exactly what's wrong or how to fix it. So you land in the worst place a founder can be:

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"I guess I just need to trust their process."
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Here's what's actually happening on those calls.

A lot of the time, they don't know either. They are NOT lying to you. They're telling you the next thing they intend to TRY. Which is a very different thing from a diagnosis. And from the outside, those two are almost impossible to tell apart.

So you wait.

That's what this stage feels like. Not a crisis. A slow burn and a slow bleed, month over month, while you keep trusting, because the alternative is admitting you can't evaluate the most expensive department in your company.

Eventually you conclude they don't know what they're doing.

I want to offer you a more useful conclusion.

Most marketers who end up in this position were hired when you were a smaller business. They were GOOD at the problem you had then. And nobody (including them) noticed the moment your problems changed shape.

The skill that gets a company to $200k/month is genuinely not the skill that gets it past $200k/month.

And there's no alarm that goes off when you cross that line.

The Thing Almost Everyone Believes About Scaling (Which Is Wrong)

Ask most founders what it takes to scale marketing and you'll get some version of two answers:

Diversify your channels. Make enough creative to keep up.

That's not it.

At higher levels of business, everything underneath you gets HEAVIER. Overhead rises. Fixed costs rise. Payroll rises. Your personal responsibility for other people's livelihoods rises. The margin for error you enjoyed at $50k/month does not exist at $500k/month. Because the same percentage mistake is now a real number with real consequences.

Which means marketing has to stop being a channel and start being an ECOSYSTEM.

Channels, offers, buyer segments and sales cycles, all meshing together to hit a COMPANY target instead of a channel target. That's what produces stability. Not a better media buyer. Not a bigger creative budget. An ecosystem, where each part does a job the other parts depend on.

Almost nobody builds that. Because almost nobody gets told it exists.

Instead, when performance slips, a sequence plays out with remarkable consistency. I've watched it in dozens of companies. I could set my watch by it:

- **First... refresh the creative and test new audiences.**
- Then, when that doesn't hold, decide the offer is "fatigued" and build a new offer.
- **Then... decide the funnel is the problem and build a new funnel. (Usually a VSL. Usually because somebody said "Webinars are dead.")**
- Then, launch a low-ticket offer to subsidize the ad spend. It doesn't work, because low-ticket funnels are their own discipline, and this one was built as a rescue mission.
- **Then, hire a new agency or a new media buyer. And start the sequence again from the top.**

Here's what makes that sequence so expensive: every single step is a REASONABLE thing to try.

You can spend 18 months and several hundred thousand dollars working through it and never once do anything indefensible.

The report that follows are the 6 things actually breaking underneath it... *plus* a 7th that explains why none of it ever gets fixed:

- **The "efficient funnel" you're proud of that has never persuaded anyone of anything** (you'll want to argue with this one... until you see the 4-day number)

- The one place your cheapest wins are hiding while your dashboard points your attention everywhere else (we've taken pages from 16% to 65% with this)

- **Why fighting Meta for a cheaper CPA is the losing side of the math... and the "Reverse Stair-Step" that fixes it from the other end**

- Two diseases with identical symptoms... one your ad account reports, one it CANNOT see (this one killed an entire company)

- **The 3 legs every piece of persuasion stands on, and how to find the one your marketing is missing (I'm guilty of this myself... currently)**

- Why your "best segment" probably isn't (it's just the only one that ever got a fair trial)

- **And the ONE gap you cannot close by trying harder, which is why the sequence above keeps repeating**

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01 · SALES CYCLE

ONE: Your Sales Cycle Is Too Short... And You Think That's a Good Thing

Let me start with the claim you're most likely to argue with.

If your customers buy quickly, you've been taught to read that as strength. Low friction. Hot traffic. "Efficient funnel."

Sometimes it is.

Often it's the single clearest sign that your marketing has never persuaded anyone of anything.

I was brought into a high-ticket coaching program in a category where buyers carry real shame. Their product was several thousand dollars. Their buyers had been living with the problem for YEARS (in many cases the better part of a decade) and had tried other things and failed.

Their average sales cycle was 4 days.

Sit with that.

A person carries something painful for 8 years... encounters this company... and buys inside of 96 hours.

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8 yrs	4 days	$40k
LIVING WITH THE PROBLEM	AVERAGE SALES CYCLE	PAID MEDIA, 4 ENROLLMENTS

That is NOT persuasion. Nothing in the world convinces a person to reverse 8 years of avoidance in 4 days. What that number actually tells you is that their marketing only ever reached people who had ALREADY decided, independently, before any of it touched them.

And when you look at where their leads came from, that's exactly what you find. Almost all of it came from a single directory listing. Which is to say: pure intent. People who had already gone looking.

Then they tried to scale.

They spent $40,000 on paid media and got 4 enrollments back. On one platform, 148 booked calls turned into 36 shows... and 2 sales.

The paid channel wasn't broken. The paid channel was doing something the business had never had to do before: CREATE demand instead of harvesting it. And there was no infrastructure anywhere in that company for creating demand. No nurture. No mechanism for building belief in someone who wasn't already standing at the buying line.

Here's the general form. Write this down:

Intent-based traffic will take a good business to roughly $1M/month. It's the cheapest, easiest revenue there is, and every business that finds it early mistakes it for a marketing system.

The thing that takes you from there to $3-4M/month is nurture COMPOUNDING on top of intent. Not instead of it. On top of it. And it takes months to build, which is precisely why nobody starts building it until they need it.

At which point they need it immediately.

I sat with a different business coach doing about $1M/month who told me, with total confidence: *"If somebody's followed me for more than 30 days without buying, they probably never will."*

He believed that was an insight about his audience.

It's a description of a company that has never given anyone a reason to buy on day 40.

Ask yourself this. What's the median number of days from first touch to purchase in your business? Now: how long has your buyer had the problem you solve? If the second number is measured in YEARS and the first is measured in days, you don't have an efficient funnel. You have a "harvesting operation."

And you're harvesting a field that has an edge to it...

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02 · ATTENTION

TWO: You're Optimizing the One Thing Your Dashboard Makes Easy to Optimize

Your ad platform is very good at telling you how your ads are doing.

It is SILENT on everything after the click.

This isn't a conspiracy... it's an interface. The dashboard puts cost-per-click and cost-per-lead directly in front of your face every morning. So that's where attention goes. And over time, the entire company comes to believe that marketing performance and AD performance are the same subject.

They're not.

And the gap between them is usually where all the cheap money is sitting.

I was on a call with a woman running a high-ticket program for music educators. Her landing page was converting at 3%. Her lead cost had drifted from $30 up to $50. She'd responded by launching an entirely new set of creative. Because that's what you do.

She hadn't touched the landing page.

I looked at her ads. Nothing badly wrong with them. So on the call, live, I rewrote the headline and subheadline. Nothing else. Same offer. Same traffic. Same ads.

4 days later, the page was converting at 10% and her leads cost $18.

ONE HEADLINE CHANGE · 4 DAYS · SAME TRAFFIC

3 → 10%	$50 → $18	16 → 65%
PAGE CONVERSION	COST PER LEAD	BEST OPT-IN PAGE MOVE TO DATE

That's not an unusual result. It's just an unusually VISIBLE one. We've moved opt-in pages from 16% to 65%. From 8% to 33%. From 2% to 25%. In one case, a single headline change took a client from 2 booked calls to 17.

Run the arithmetic on your own business. Taking a page from 5% to 7.5% is a **50% LIFT** in your entire funnel's output. Now ask yourself what it would take to cut your CPMs in half, and which of those two projects you'd rather bet next quarter on?

There's a second layer to this. It's the more expensive one.

It's not only the elements INSIDE your funnel that go untested. It's the architecture of the funnel itself. A webinar, a VSL, a lead magnet and a low-ticket offer are not 4 flavors of the same thing. They serve different levels of market sophistication, and they demand completely different amounts of attention from the buyer.

That same shame-heavy coaching program I mentioned earlier? They were running a 57-minute webinar with the call-to-action at minute 52.

Think about who their buyer is. A person who has hidden this for years is not going to sit in front of a video for the better part of an hour to reach an ask. The webinar produced exactly 1 enrollment. It wasn't a bad webinar... it was the wrong instrument, handed to the wrong buyer. And no amount of creative testing upstream was EVER going to fix that.

One more thing. Because it's the most common example of this failure, and the easiest to miss:

That music educator fixed her landing page. Her ads still carried the old language. One of them promised her customers would be "seen more clearly."

Ask 10 people what that means and you'll get 10 answers. Which means your prospect has to decide whether to spend 5 seconds decoding you... or a fraction of a second scrolling past.

You know which one they pick.

The page and the ads are not two projects. They are ONE continuous promise. And the reader can feel the difference.

Ask yourself this. In the last 90 days, how many tests did you run on your ads? And how many on your landing page, your order form or booking page, your thank-you page and your follow-up? If the second number is zero... good news. Your cheapest wins are still sitting there, untouched...

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03 · THE MATH

THREE: You're Fighting Meta for a Cheaper CPA When You Could Just Raise Your Cart Value

There are exactly 2 ways to make the math work.

Pay less to acquire a customer... or collect more from each one.

Almost everyone attacks the first. It's the number the platform shows you, and the number your media buyer is judged on. It's also the number you have the LEAST control over, because you're negotiating against an auction with hundreds of thousands of other bidders in it.

The second number is entirely yours.

Here's a structure I've run and published for years:

> Front-end at $97. Order bump at $47. Upsell #1 at $497. Downsell at $297. Upsell #2 at $197. Second downsell at $97.

SIX points of cash collection instead of one.

Now look at the ordering, because this is the part almost everyone gets backwards. The instinct is to stair-step upward. Small front end, slightly bigger upsell, bigger one after that. It feels polite. It feels like you're "earning the right" to ask for more.

It’s what the ‘funnel hackers’ teach.

It's the wrong way round.

Every customer sees the FIRST upsell. Fewer see the second. Fewer still see the third. So you put your largest number where the most eyeballs are... not where you're most comfortable asking. I call it the "Reverse Stair-Step." A $497 offer at a modest take rate produces more cash than a $197 offer at a good one, and it makes everything downstream of it feel like a bargain by comparison.

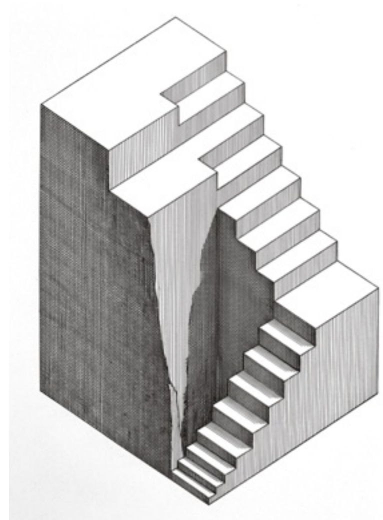
Two things I would NOT have believed if I hadn't watched them myself:

Our order bumps have held a 70-80% take rate at $47, contributing more to average order value than a $147 downsell did.

And a downsell page that took under 4 hours to build collected $1,029 in half a month, at $27 per unique page view. It paid for 300+ ad clicks... by existing. It required no additional selling. It simply gave people who had already said "no" a second, easier thing to say yes to.

If you sell a subscription, there's a version of this you're almost certainly leaving on the table. The moment a customer completes checkout is the PEAK of their attention and their commitment. You will never have that much of either again. Most businesses treat that moment as the finish line and go quiet...

Offer them 6 months prepaid at 20% off right there. Watch what happens to your cash position and your churn at the same time.



Ask yourself this. How many separate points of cash collection exist between a stranger clicking your ad and that same person becoming a customer? If the answer is one... your entire business is a bet that you can outmaneuver an auction.

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04 · SHELF LIFE

FOUR: Nobody Told You Your Angle Had a Shelf Life

When performance drops, you refresh creative.

New footage. New hooks. A different creator. A fresh batch of UGC. And sometimes it WORKS. Which is exactly what keeps you doing it. Because a win teaches you that the problem was creative and the fix was creative.

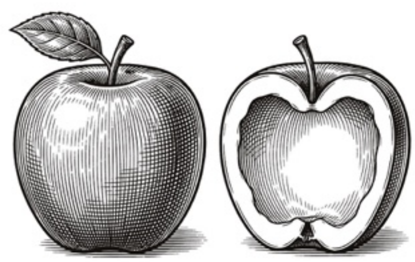
But there are 2 different diseases here. And they present with identical symptoms.

"Creative fatigue" is your audience seeing the same asset too many times. That one happens, it's measurable, and your ad account will tell you about it. Frequency climbs... the asset decays... you swap it out.

"Angle fatigue" is something else entirely. Angle fatigue is the market having already heard the CLAIM.

Not from you. From ANYONE.

And your ad account has no idea it's happening. Your frequency can be perfectly healthy while your angle is already dead.



Eugene Schwartz named this 60 years ago and most people still read past it. He separated awareness (your prospect's relationship to your solution) from sophistication (how many times that market has heard the promise before you showed up with it).

Here's the part that gets skipped: *you* don't set your sophistication level.

Your competitors do.

Watch what happened to "Get X or you don't pay." When it was new, that claim did the entire job. Cole Gordon made it famous. It was mechanism and risk-reversal in a single line, and it printed. Then everyone in the coaching and agency world ran it. Today, that same line lands in front of a buyer who has already heard it from a dozen people. Nothing about the offer changed.

The market moved underneath it.

Now let me give you the worst version of this I have ever been part of.

Back in 2021 we had a client selling premium face masks. COVID had made them. They were spending $10-15k a DAY. Then performance started sliding.

So we did what everyone does. We assumed creative fatigue. We spent 4 weeks refreshing creative, testing new audiences, testing new angles, with the client getting more frustrated every single week.

Then somebody finally opened Google Keyword Planner and searched "face mask." Then "safety face mask." Then "breathing mask."

The volume had fallen off a cliff.

It wasn't creative. It wasn't the angle. Demand for the entire INDUSTRY was collapsing, and public sentiment was going with it.

That check takes 10 minutes.

We didn't run it for a month.

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10 min	4 wks	$15k/day
THE CHECK THAT ANSWERED IT	BEFORE ANYONE RAN IT	SPEND AGAINST THE WRONG HYPOTHESIS

And I want to be honest about WHY, because the reason is more useful than the mistake: we were their Facebook team. That was the scope they were paying us for. So our entire field of vision was Facebook. And when performance moved, every hypothesis we generated was a Facebook hypothesis.

Because that was the room we were standing in.

But your customer does not live in a channel. NOBODY wakes up and spends their day inside Meta. They scroll, they search, they watch, they ask people they trust, and they move between all of it without ever thinking about it.

The 'channel' is your org chart. It is not their behavior.

Your ad platform will tell you how people responded to your ad. It CANNOT tell you whether the population still wants the thing. Those are two different questions, and only one of them has an answer inside the platform you're optimizing.

Search volume answered the second one in about 10 minutes. It didn't matter what we did on Facebook... in aggregate, people had simply stopped looking for the product.

We brought them the diagnosis. They didn't believe us. They let us scale back, then left for another agency that promised scale, and that agency couldn't fix it either. Because it wasn't fixable.

The company eventually shut down.

Ask yourself this. What are your competitors running right now, and how long has your best angle been sitting out in the open where they can see it? When did you last test a different LEVEL of claim, rather than a different execution of the same one? And what has changed outside the channel you're optimizing? If the honest answer is "nobody's looked"... you are where we were with those masks. 4 weeks in, spending real money against the wrong hypothesis.

05 · LANGUAGE

FIVE: Your Marketing Describes What You Do Instead of Naming What They Want

Picture every company in your category standing in a row across an aisle, all of them shouting the same question at the same crowd:

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"Is this how you feel?"
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That's the game. The winner is not the one with the best production or the biggest budget. It's the one where the most hands go up. Where the most people in that crowd stop and think... *"That's EXACTLY how I feel. How did they know?"*

Almost every business I look at is shouting something else.

They're shouting what they BUILT.

I was on a call recently with a very sharp agency owner who serves high-end outdoor contractors. Pools, landscaping, hardscaping. The kind of buyer whose average project runs $20-50k. He's built a genuinely impressive integrated program, and he was walking me through it.

There was a custom assessment of 40-50 questions. A second system that turned those answers into a "positioning blueprint." Deep research across the market, the competitors and the reviews. Gap analysis. Briefs for Meta, for Google, for the website, for SEO, for copy, for social, for video scripts, for sales scripts, for follow-up...

I stopped him. Because I was confused.

I couldn't tell whether he was selling a program his clients ran themselves... or a service he ran FOR them. And I'm a marketer. I've spent a decade doing this. If I can't follow your offer, a contractor who's been on a job site since 6am has no chance at all.

Here's what I told him (and it's the heart of this whole section):

His process is genuinely good. But they have no ability to VALUE it. They don't know to want a "positioning blueprint." They don't know to want "gap analysis." They don't even know to want positioning.

They know they want more customers. They know they're tired of losing jobs to somebody 10% cheaper. They know they should be making more money than they are.

That's the language in THEIR head.

Everything else is the language in yours.

Eugene Schwartz described this as 3 legs holding up any piece of persuasion: desire, belief, and identification. Take away any ONE of them and the whole thing falls over. And most businesses I meet are missing a specific one, and have never diagnosed which.

Desire is meeting the customer at what they THINK they need... not what you know they need. I once worked with a company selling operations coaching. Leadership, culture, diagnostics, company pacing. That was genuinely what their buyers needed, which is precisely why the buyers ignored it. What actually sold? A spreadsheet template. Because a spreadsheet is what a struggling operator BELIEVES will fix things. You have to meet the suspicion they already have before you earn any right at all to educate them past it.

Belief is whether they think the mechanism works... and works for someone like THEM. That shame-heavy coaching program from earlier had burned through angle after angle looking for the one that would unlock their market. None of them worked. None of them were ever going to. Their buyers didn't lack desire. They had wanted this for a DECADE. What was missing was any reason to believe that this method would succeed where 10 years of trying had failed. No headline solves that.

Only a mechanism does.

Identification is whether buying from you confirms the person they're trying to become. It's the difference between why someone shops at Whole Foods and Walmart, between Gucci and Nike... and it's why two functionally identical products can support wildly different margins.

Now let me put myself on the table. Because I am NOT describing a failure I've escaped.

I've spent roughly the last 18 months building software. Which means that for 18 months, my working vocabulary has been architecture... agentic flows... orchestration... retrieval. It's genuinely how I think now.

The market does not respond to ANY of it. And I had to learn that the slow way. They're not where I am. They're not thinking in "architecture." To most of them, AI is a buzzword they feel behind on. The words in my head and the words in their head had drifted a very long way apart... and I didn't notice.

Because you never notice from the inside.

I still catch myself assuming what I think a customer wants instead of finding out. It's one of the hardest habits in this business to break: you're so far inside the thing you built that you can't see the outside of it anymore.

Ask yourself this. The remedy costs nothing and almost nobody does it. Pick up the phone and call 5 current customers and 5 people who considered you and said no. Don't ask what they wish you did... ask what they wish had HAPPENED. Then take your recorded sales calls and pull out the exact phrases people use when they describe their problem, before your team has trained them into your vocabulary. That language IS your marketing.

Everything else is a translation. And something is always lost in one.

SIX: Your Entire Business Is Built for One Buyer... And You Don't Know Which One

This one requires you to DO something rather than read something. Give it 2 minutes.

First: write down every distinct type of buyer you serve. Not demographics. Actual different SITUATIONS. The person who found you at the start of the problem and the one who found you after failing 3 times are not the same buyer, even if they buy the same product for the same price. The person buying for themselves and the person buying because their partner asked them to are not the same buyer.

Most businesses at your scale can name 4 or 5 without much effort.

Now go into your ad account and find the campaign built for each one. Find the creative written for each one. Find the landing page, the follow-up sequence, the offer positioning, the proof selection built for each one.

For nearly everyone reading this, that exercise ends the same way:

4 or 5 buyers. ONE set of everything.

And here's the part that costs you money.

You believe you know which segment is your best segment. You almost certainly do NOT. What you actually know is which segment your marketing was BUILT for, and it's unsurprising that it performs the best, because it's the only one that was ever given a fair trial.

The others were never tested. They were served a message written for somebody else. They didn't respond. And that non-response got recorded in your mind as evidence that they're not a good market for you.

That's not evidence. That's an untested hypothesis wearing an answer’s clothing.

This matters enormously RIGHT NOW... because it's the specific thing standing between you and the next stage of scale. The reason your costs are climbing is often not that your marketing got worse. It's that you have SATURATED the one segment you built for... and you're now paying escalating prices to reach the least interested remaining members of it, while entire adjacent segments sit untouched, because nobody has ever spoken to them properly.

I'll be straight with you about the hard part, because pretending otherwise serves neither of us.

LISTING your segments is easy. You can do it today. Knowing which of them deserve their own funnel, their own offer positioning and their own budget, and which ones will quietly drain a quarter's worth of ad spend teaching you nothing... is NOT easy. It's a judgment call, made from experience, on your specific numbers.

That judgment is the difference between an avatar map... and an avatar map that makes MONEY.

And One More... Briefly

There's a 7th thing I see constantly. I'm going to name it rather than dwell on it, because it's uncomfortable, and because you can already feel whether it applies to you.

Marketing at scale requires somebody in the room with INDEPENDENT conviction.

When daily spend climbs, the emotional temperature climbs with it, and decisions start getting made against the calendar instead of the data. Tests get killed at day 4 because a bad Tuesday felt like a trend. Direction changes twice in a month. And very often, the person running the account has never operated at this spend level before. So when the founder pushes, they fold.

Because they have no independent basis to say "hold the line for another week."

The result is a company that is technically testing constantly...

...and learning NOTHING. Because no test is ever allowed to finish.

Why NONE of This Ever Gets Fixed

Everything above is solvable. Some of it is solvable this week.

So here's the real question. Why has none of it been solved already... in a business that has smart people in it and a decade's worth of accumulated effort behind it?

Because your company has no memory.

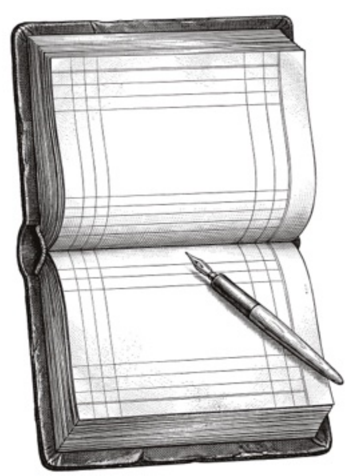
I have never ONCE, in 10 years and across more companies than I can count, taken over an account and been handed a real record of what was tested.

Not just a list of 'top performing' ads. A RECORD.

> `What was the hypothesis? What were we actually trying to learn? What did the last test teach us that made us run this one? What did we conclude?`

That document does not exist. Anywhere. In ANY company.

What exists is the ad account. And the ad account is the only log anybody has, which is why the first thing every incoming agency does is scroll through it hunting for past winners and calling that an "audit."



But an ad account records OUTPUTS. It does not record intentions. I can see the ad you ran. I cannot see what it was testing, what it was competing against, what you believed before you launched it... or what you decided afterward. So I reverse-engineer a guess from the ad preview link. And I'm confidently guessing. And so was the last person. And so will the next one.

Which means nobody in your company can tell you WHY your winners won.

Only that they won.

And it gets worse than that. Because without a written target set in advance, the word "winner" stops meaning anything at all.

I said this to a client recently and I watched it land: her best-performing ad was not a winner. It was just the best of the group she happened to launch. If your business needs a $20 lead and the best of your 5 ads produced a $35 lead... you did not find a winner.

You ranked 5 losers and promoted one.

Then you build the next round of creative off it. And the round after that off THAT one. And 2 years later, you're 3 generations deep into a lineage that started from a benchmark nobody ever wrote down.

THIS is why the sequence I described at the beginning repeats. New creative... new offer... new funnel... new low-ticket... new agency. Each new person arrives, finds no record, and re-runs the experiments their predecessor already ran. At full price. Reaching the same conclusions.

And not writing those down either.

You are not paying for marketing.

You are paying... over and over... for the same education.

You can fix every other problem in this report by trying harder. You CANNOT fix this one that way. There is no amount of effort that recovers what was never recorded. The only version of this that works starts the day someone decides to start writing it down, which is why it's the last thing in this report, and the FIRST thing I do with any company I work with.

What This Is Actually Costing You

Let me go back to where we started.

You are a person who has never been beaten by a problem you could see clearly. That's the journey of how you got here. Every hard thing in this business... you looked at it directly, you worked it out, and you moved.

None of the 7 things in this report have ever been put in front of you clearly.

That is the ONLY reason they're still here.

So do the arithmetic on what that's costing. Because it is not abstract:

- **If your funnel converts at 5% and it should convert at 7.5%... you're not losing a percentage. You're losing a HALF of everything you've already paid for. At $30k/month in spend, that's $15,000 a month buying traffic that lands on a page you haven't touched.**
- If you have 1 point of cash collection where you could have 4... every competitor with a properly built cart can outbid you for the same customer. Forever. And there is no creative good enough to close that margin.
- **If your sales cycle is 4 days and your buyer has had the problem for 4 YEARS... then every dollar you spend is bidding against every other advertiser for the same small pool of people who were already leaving. That pool has an edge. Your rising costs are you reaching it.**
- And every month that passes without a record is another month of tuition you will pay AGAIN, because the next person you hire will run the tests the last person already ran.

None of that shows up as a crisis. That's what makes it dangerous. It shows up as a good business that has to work harder every quarter for the same result...

...and a founder who can't quite explain why.

What I'd Like to Do About It

I'd like to spend 45 minutes with you on your ACTUAL numbers.

Not a "discovery call." I will have read your application before we speak, which means we don't spend the first 20 minutes with me asking what you sell.

We start at the diagnosis.

By the end of it, you'll know 3 things you do not know right now:

> Which 2 of the 7 gaps are costing you the most money today. Roughly what each of them is worth in a month. And what ORDER they have to be fixed in, because several of them cannot be attempted until an earlier one is closed.

You keep all of that whether or not we ever work together.

If I can help, I'll tell you exactly what that would look like, what it would cost, and how long before you'd see a number move. If I can't help, I'll tell you that too... and where I'd send you instead. I've been doing this for over a decade and I've personally managed more than $130 million in advertising. The single most valuable thing I've learned is how to tell QUICKLY whether a business is one I can actually move.

There's no charge for the call.

Now, I understand that free things make sensible people suspicious... so let me tell you why:

I make my money on retainers & performance incentives. And I take on very few of them at a time (only 3 at any given time). The call costs me 45 minutes. If 45 minutes is what it takes for you to decide whether I'm worth $10k-$15k a month...

that is the cheapest sales process I could possibly design. And the most honest one.

I would rather show you how I think than send you a case study.

Who This Is For... Plainly

I'd rather tell you now than let you find out at the end of a form.

This is for businesses spending at least $30,000/month on advertising, doing at least $120,000/month in revenue, where the person reading this can authorize a change to the funnel without a 3-month approval cycle.

The advice doesn't change much below those numbers. The ARITHMETIC does. Under $30k/month in spend, the gaps in this report are real, but they're not yet expensive enough to be worth my time or yours. And I will not take the call.

The Application

It's below. And it's longer than you expect.

That's deliberate.

It asks for your sales cycle in days. Your points of cash collection. When you last tested your landing page. The buyer segments you serve. Who has to approve a change... and how long that takes.

Those are usually the first 20 minutes of a call. Answer them now, and we skip straight to what they MEAN.

If you're not willing to spend 4 minutes on that... we wouldn't have enjoyed working together anyway. Better we both find that out today.

One last thing.

The ceiling you're pressed against is not made of money. It's not made of effort. You have both of those in quantity.

It's made of the things nobody has shown you yet.

That's a very good problem to have. It's the only kind that comes apart quickly... once somebody says it out loud.

[APPLICATION]

Answer the application. Four minutes.

hemon.ai/apply

FOUR MINUTES

START THE APPLICATION

Talk soon,

Ashton

P.S. If there's someone in your company who owns marketing... bring them to the call. This works far better when the person who has to execute the fix hears the diagnosis at the same time you do, rather than receiving it secondhand from you afterward.

P.P.S. Like I said, I only take a small number of retainers at a time, which means I also take a small number of these calls. If the application is open, there's room on my calendar. That's the only "scarcity" I'll ever pitch you.