

— A 10-MINUTE DIAGNOSTIC

# The *Strategy-Execution Gap* Assessment

A 10-minute diagnostic to surface where your 2026 plan has already drifted.

By Q2, most organizations are already quietly running two agendas: the strategy approved in January, and the work actually consuming time and budget. Use this tool to see the gap before it consumes another quarter.



## List the strategy you're *supposed* to be executing.

Before you can see drift, you have to anchor the original plan. List your top three to five strategic goals from Q1 planning. Use the language leadership signed off on — not what the team has been calling it since.

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## Map the work that's *actually* running.

List the major initiatives consuming your marketing budget and team time. For each, answer the three questions below.

| Initiative                                        | Supports goal # | Defend today? | What was cut?              | Reconsider? |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| EXAMPLE →<br><i>Retargeting for trial signups</i> | <i>Goal 2</i>   | Yes           | <i>Cold-audience video</i> | N           |
|                                                   |                 |               |                            | Y / N       |
|                                                   |                 |               |                            | Y / N       |
|                                                   |                 |               |                            | Y / N       |
|                                                   |                 |               |                            | Y / N       |
|                                                   |                 |               |                            | Y / N       |

### Which goal?

Enter the goal number, "Multiple," or "None."  
Anything tied to "None" has already drifted.

### Defend today?

Yes / Probably / Maybe / No.  
Be honest with yourself.

### What was cut?

What did you stop doing to make room for this?  
"Nothing" is a valid (and revealing) answer.



Count your answers.  
Then read what they *say*.

Initiatives tied to a **single** goal

Initiatives you'd **defend** today (yes)

Initiatives where you made a **trade-off**

### *Executing*

The work  
reflects the plan

Most initiatives tied to specific goals, you'd defend most of them, and you made trade-offs to fund them. **You're executing the strategy.**

### *Two agendas*

Drift is starting

Mixed results. Some tied, some unclear; some defensible, some not. **Part of your budget is executing strategy, part is reacting to what emerged after planning.**

### *Left the building*

The strategy  
has drifted

Few initiatives tied to goals, you wouldn't defend most of them, and no trade-offs were made. **You're funding activity that doesn't connect to the outcomes leadership approved.**



### If you see a gap

You're not alone. Most growth-stage organizations discover by Q2 that initiatives have multiplied, the original strategy has faded into the background, and no one is making the hard calls about what to stop.

The gap won't close itself.

### If you're executing

You're executing the strategy, not just talking about it. The next step is to build a review cadence that keeps this alignment intact as the year progresses and new opportunities emerge.

Monthly for reality. Quarterly for realignment.

## Three questions for your leadership team this week

Which initiatives would we stop if forced to choose today?

How did work that doesn't support the strategy get funded in the first place?

What needs to change in our approval process to prevent this drift for the rest of the year?

### Notes

If the gap is bigger than this tool can address,  
*that's the work we do.*

START A CONVERSATION

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