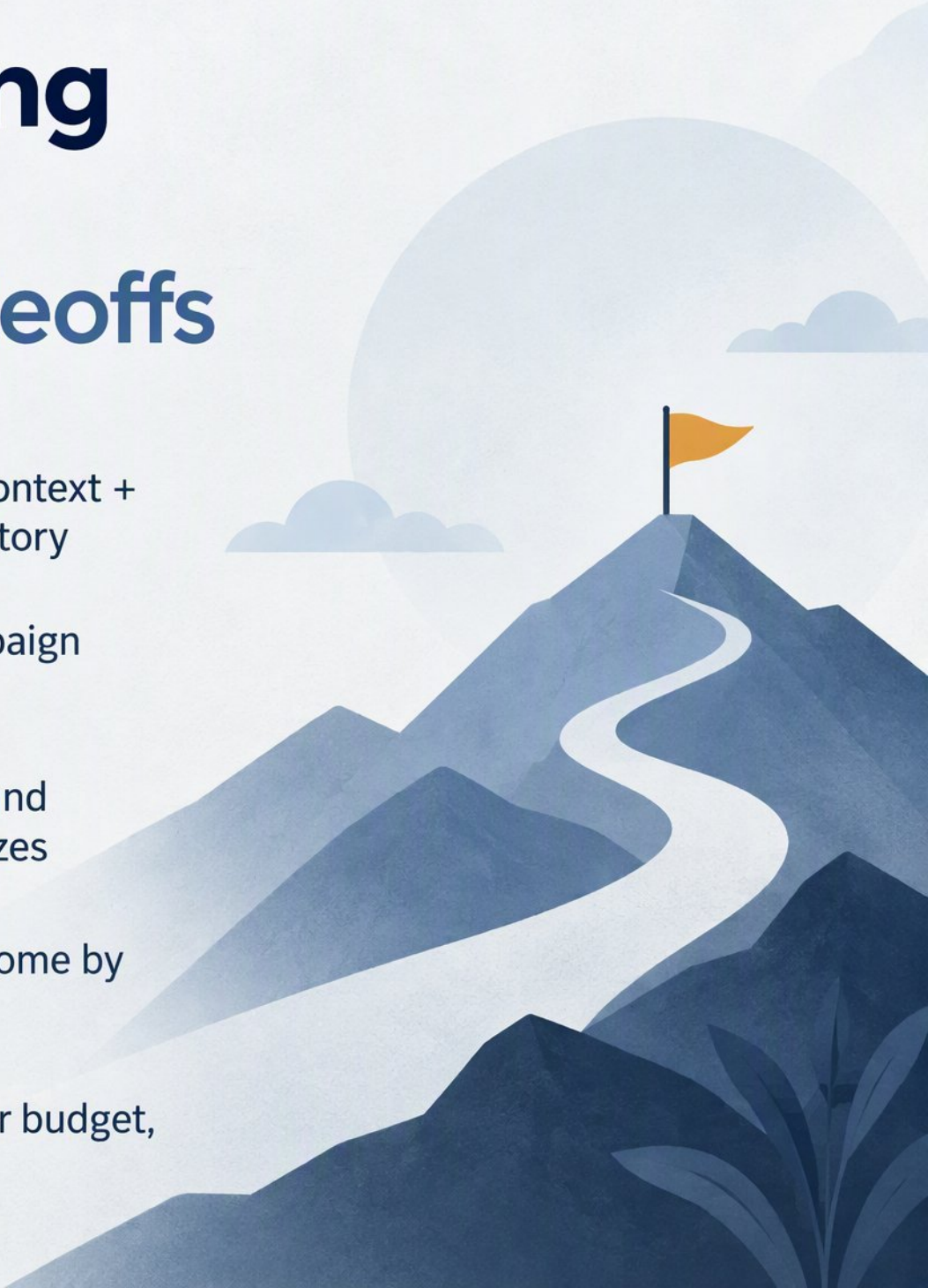
Digital Marketing Case Studies:
Patterns and Tradeoffs

- A documented case = decision + context + evidence + outcome, not a brand story
- Three lenses: channel choice, campaign design, measurement design
- Patterns reveal recurring success and failure signatures across budget sizes
- Tradeoffs: most wins buy one outcome by giving up another
- Goal: judge whether a case fits your budget, headcount, and sales cycle



How to Read a Case: Claims, Evidence, and Context

1. **Separate the claim from the evidence:** spend level, attribution window, comparison group
2. **Context changes everything:** budget size, category, funnel stage, seasonality, sales cycle
3. **Red flags:** cherry-picked windows, blended metrics, survivorship bias, no control group
4. **Reported 4.87 ROAS** fell to 1.6 in the P&L and 0.72 incremental
5. **Score every case:** source quality, metric definition, control, reproducibility



Channel Cases: Paid Search, Paid Social, and Retail Media

REAL EXAMPLES. CLEAR TRADEOFFS. SMARTER DECISIONS.

Paid Search

- Paid search captures intent but inflates brand-query credit: cutting search 96% still lifted leads from 212 to 427 monthly.



Paid Social

- Paid social wins on creative velocity, loses on attribution clarity: Meta-reported CAC €100 vs. €152 incremental.



Retail Media

- Retail media converts at point of purchase: Martinelli's holiday onsite campaign hit $7.45 iROAS and 65% new-to-brand buyers.

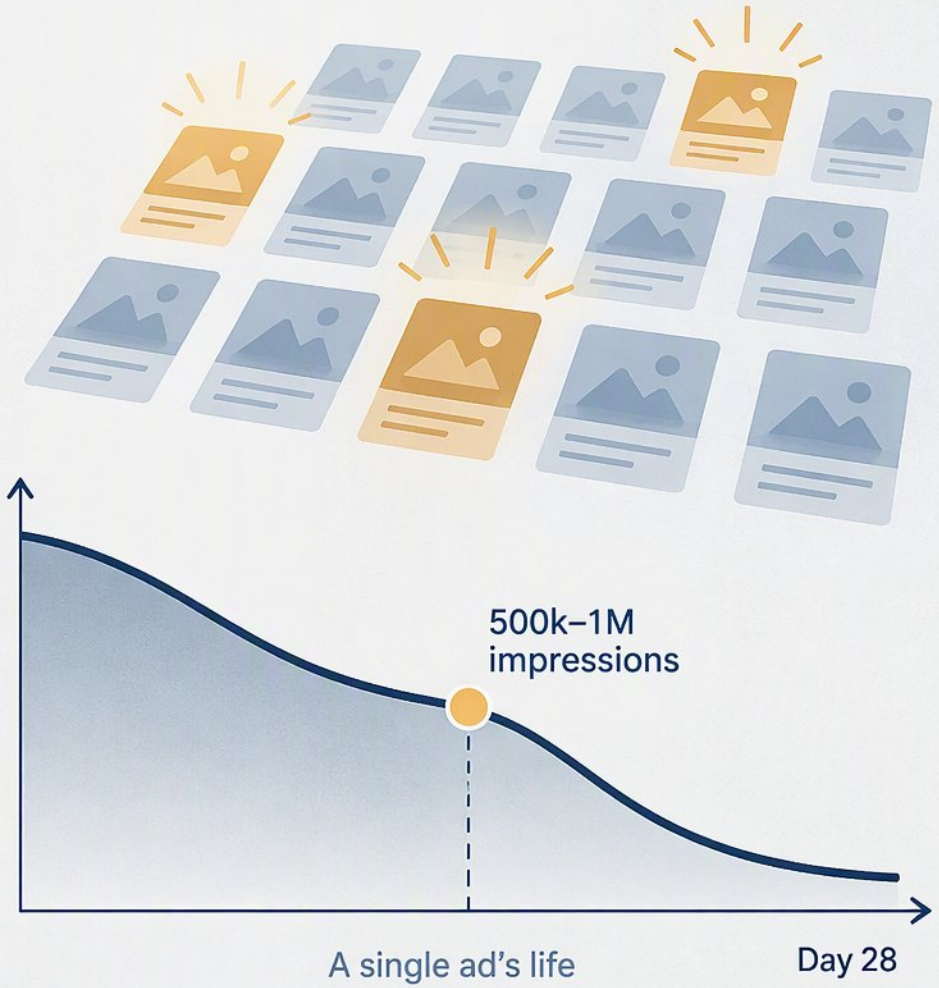


Tradeoffs: control vs. scale, data ownership vs. ease, CPA vs. incrementality.

Mini-exercise: pick the channel whose pattern best fits a $30k/month small team.

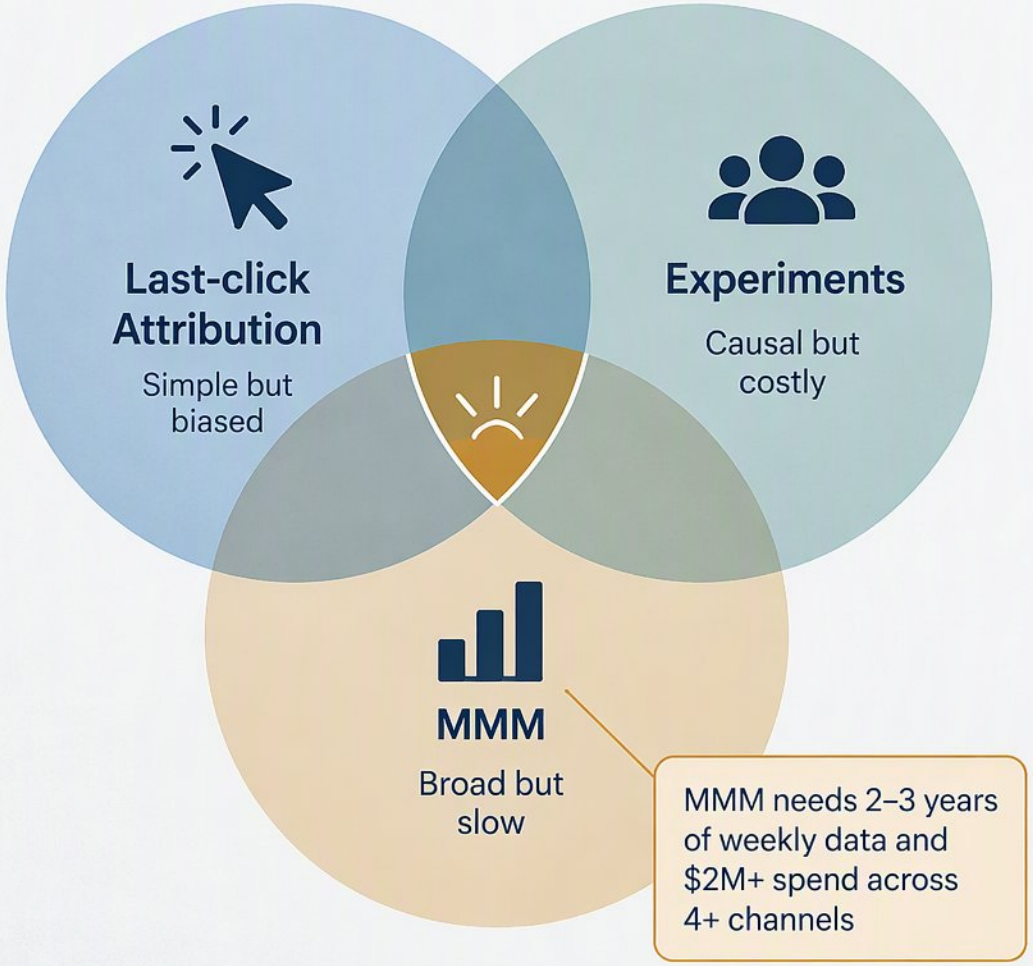
Campaign Design Patterns: What Repeats Across Winners and Losers

- Narrow, single-message campaigns beat broad multi-message ones more often than expected
- Only 4–8% of ads become winners; ~50% are switched off before day 28
- Fatigue signals: CTR down 15% off 7-day baseline, CPM up 10%, CPA up ~20% at 500k–1M impressions
- Alignment failure: a bakery lifted cake-page conversion 18% just by splitting a long form
- Tradeoffs: audience breadth vs. relevance, frequency vs. fatigue, automation vs. control



Measurement Cases: Attribution, Experiments, and MMM

DIFFERENT VIEWS
A CLEARER PICTURE



- No single method is trusted alone; mature cases triangulate all three
- Last-click: simple but biased; experiments: causal but costly; MMM: broad but slow
- MMM needs 2–3 years of weekly data and $2M+ spend across 4+ channels
- Below that, one well-designed geo test per quarter delivers more
- Same campaign can read ‘winning’ and ‘losing’ under two attribution setups
- Before launch: set one primary metric, one guardrail, one decision rule

TRIANGULATE FOR CONFIDENCE

Budget and Funnel Tradeoffs: Where Cases Usually Go Wrong

BETTER QUESTIONS. STRONGER DECISIONS.

PEOPLE
PERSPECTIVE
PROGRESS

1. Test before you move a whole line item; too fast kills learning, too slow wastes spend
2. Brand vs. performance: IPA's ~60/40 optimum vs. pressured marketers skewing the other way
3. That skew feeds the 'doom loop': short-term metrics drive budget, budgets reinforce short-term behaviour
4. Prospecting vs. retargeting: Dunelm found 5.7x higher return from prospecting; incremental ROAS rose 90%
5. Concentration speeds learning; diversification builds resilience. Small teams: pick focus, break it only with a test

Brand vs. Performance

IPA'S ~60/40 OPTIMUM



Prospecting vs. Retargeting

DUNELM FOUND 5.7X HIGHER RETURN
FROM PROSPECTING; INCREMENTAL ROAS ROSE 90%





Tradeoffs shape progress

SAME
INSIGHTS.
BRIGHTER
OUTCOMES.

Small-Team Constraints: Patterns for Limited Budgets and Headcount

- Small teams win on focus and speed, not enterprise breadth
- One channel mastered beats five run thin — solo founder hit 100 customers in 90 days on $1,470
- No-budget fixes: conversion rebuilds (7.90x ROAS on $946), wasted-query pruning (+39% leads, flat budget)
- Tradeoffs: agency vs. in-house, generalist vs. specialists, tooling vs. media
- Guardrails: minimum viable measurement, weekly reviews, explicit kill criteria



Reading Platform-Published Cases Critically

ASK • ANALYZE • LOOK CLOSER

- Platform cases measure credit, not causation — conversions may have happened anyway
- Distortions: view-through windows, blended audiences, silent targeting shifts between periods
- Furniture brand: Meta understated lift 180%, then overstated after targeting moved to remarketing
- Ask every vendor: control group, attribution window, what changed, who audited
- Borrow the structure, not the bias



SAME STORIES.
BETTER QUESTIONS.

From Case to Decision: A Reusable Tradeoff Checklist

A simple structure to make better decisions., faster.

1. **Step 1:** state the **decision** and **its constraint** — budget, headcount, timeline
2. **Step 2:** name the tradeoff and what you will give up
3. **Step 3:** fix **evidence standard** before launch — test type, primary and guardrail metric, decision rule
4. **Step 4:** set **review dates** and **kill criteria** so a losing bet exits fast

Worked example: run a hypothetical $20k launch through all four steps

Skip Step 3 and you **get a result that** cannot change any decision

Worked Example: $20k Launch

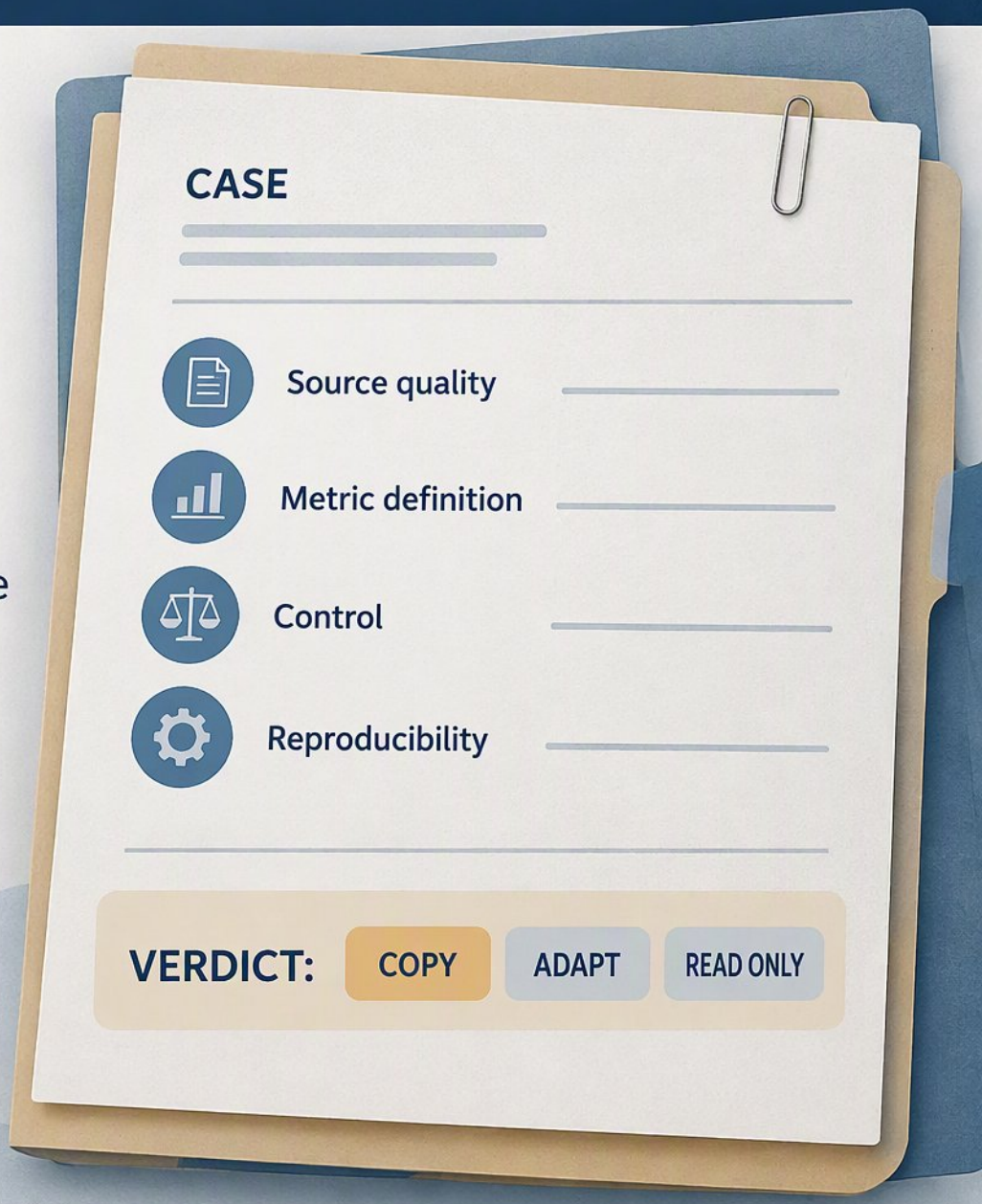
1. Decision and constraint
2. Tradeoff and what you will give up
3. Evidence standard
4. Review dates and kill criteria



Clear tradeoffs lead to stronger decisions.

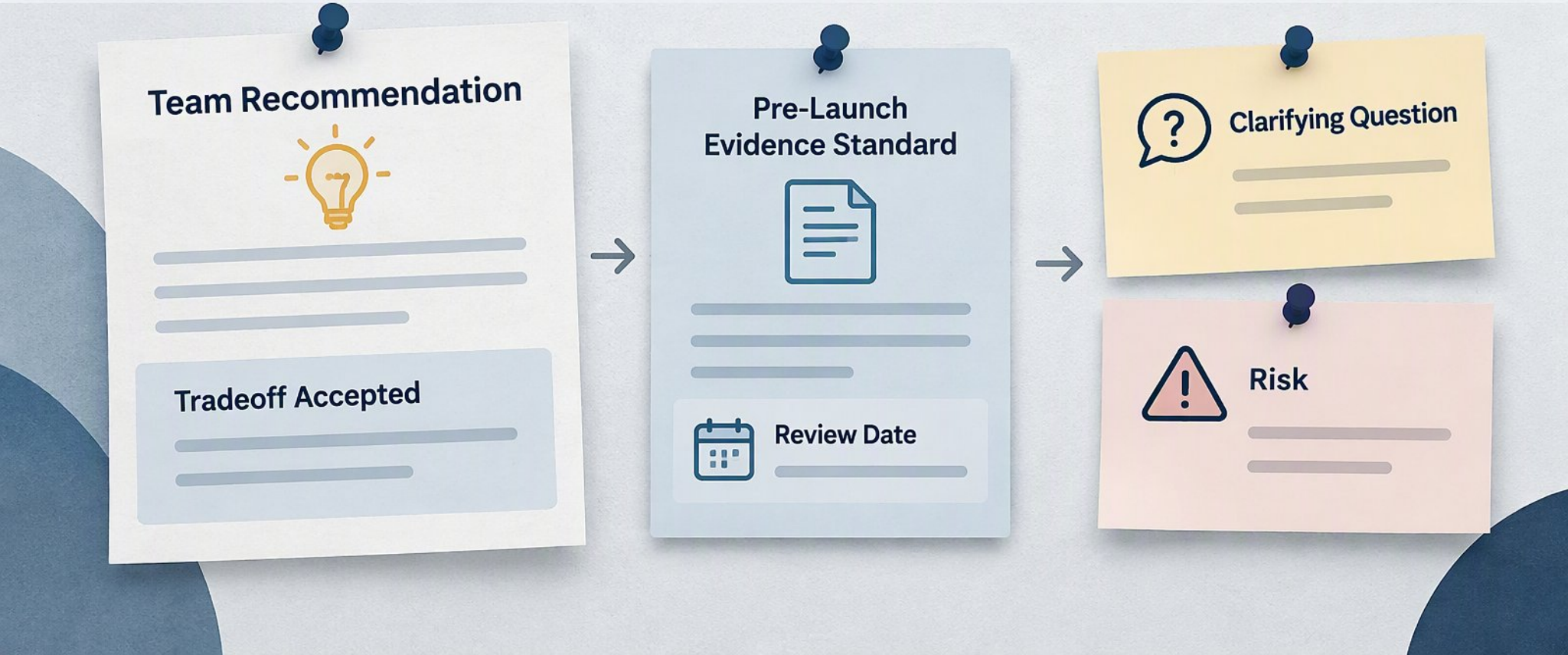
Hands-On, Part 1: Score a Case's Evidence Quality

1. Each team receives a short case: channel, campaign, and measurement
2. Apply the four-part rubric: source quality, metric definition, control, reproducibility
3. Check the channel and campaign pattern slides for what 'good' looks like
4. Deliverable: one-line verdict — copy, adapt, or only read
5. Judge the evidence, not the headline ROAS



Hands-On, Part 2: Defend a Reallocation and Its Tradeoff

- Each team proposes one reallocation and names the tradeoff it accepts
- Required: a test or evidence standard before launch, plus a review date
- Peer challenge: one clarifying question and one risk per recommendation
- Cite which pattern from Slides 3–7 the reallocation relies on
- State whether that pattern transfers to your budget and headcount



Debrief: Which Patterns Held, Which Tradeoffs Stayed Vague

SAME QUESTIONS. SHARPER INSIGHTS.





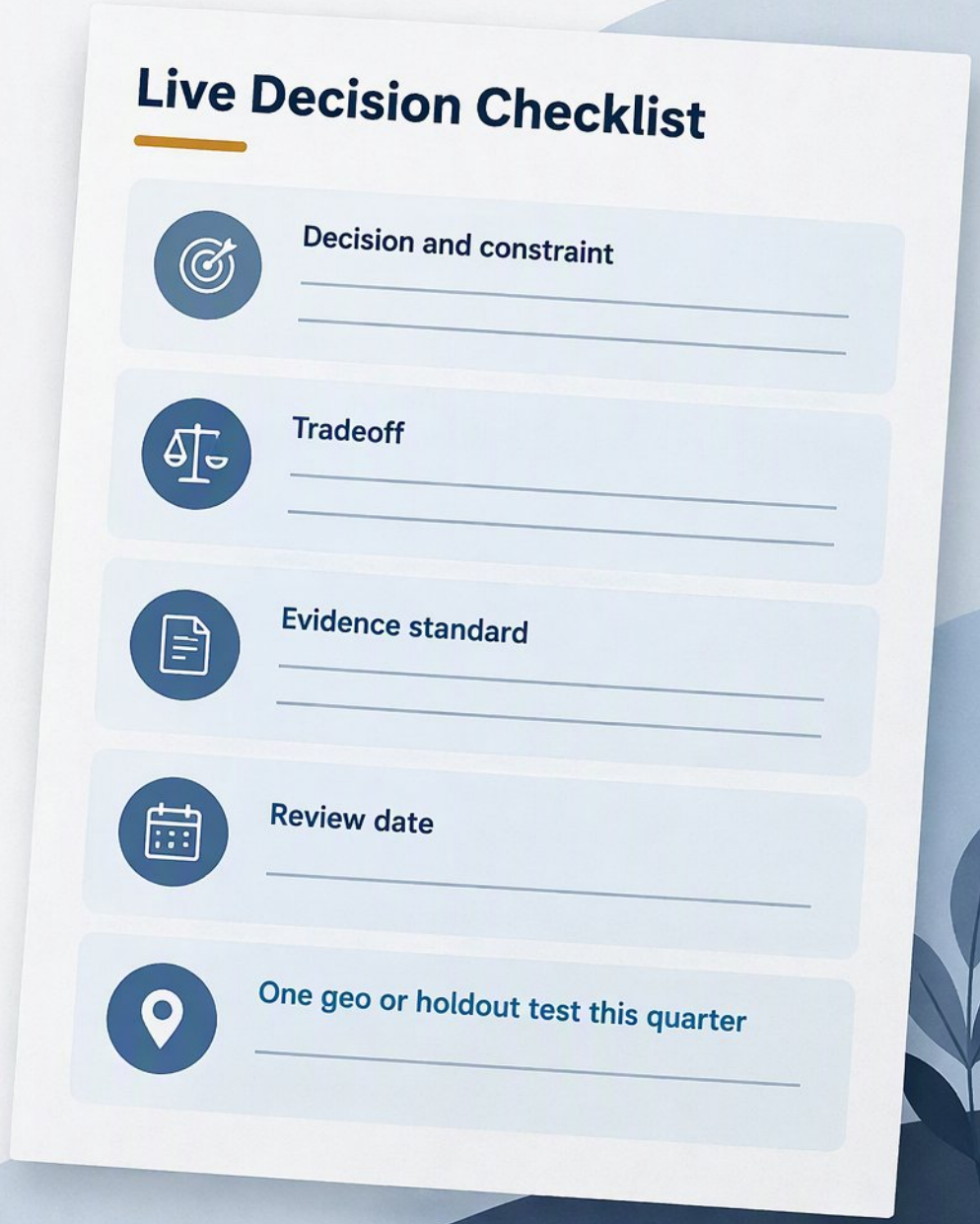
Different perspectives. Clearer decisions.

- Which channel and campaign patterns recurred across teams — and which cases split the room?
- Vague tradeoff: "we'll optimize." Explicit tradeoff: "we accept lower short-term ROAS for cleaner incrementality."
- Doom-loop risk: performance-heavy reallocations look strong on attribution, erode next year's growth
- When budgets tighten, 42% shift further toward performance; WARC warns growth then declines
- Rubric: map each defense back to the session's patterns and tradeoffs

FROM DISCUSSION TO DIRECTION

Take-Home: Apply the Checklist to Your Next Live Decision

- Pick one live campaign decision this quarter; run the four-step checklist before spending
- Write the tradeoff and evidence standard where a colleague can challenge them
- Schedule a review date; add one geo or holdout test per quarter on your largest line
- Under $1M annual spend, favor one incrementality test over an MMM build
- Take-home: one-page checklist template plus the session reference list



Course Recap: Three Lenses, One Habit



- Apply all three lenses to any case: channel, campaign, measurement
- Patterns tell you what usually happens; tradeoffs price the cost
- The habit: name the claim, ask for evidence, state the tradeoff
- Set the decision rule before launch, not after results
- Build a personal library: three cases you can defend, three you read skeptically

BETTER QUESTIONS
BRIGHTER DECISIONS

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