

You are not selling a product. You are selling a decision.

The most useful hour in any marketing plan is the one you spend writing a single sentence — and most teams skip it entirely.

When a campaign underperforms, the review almost always looks at execution. Wrong channel. Weak creative. Bad targeting. Budget too thin. Occasionally that is true. More often the campaign was executing a decision nobody had defined.

The sentence

Before anything else, finish this:

I am asking [a specific person] to stop [what they do now] and start [what I want], at the cost of [what they give up].

It looks trivial. It is not. Most teams cannot complete it without arguing, and the argument is the point — it surfaces disagreements that would otherwise show up three months later as a campaign that "didn't land."

What the sentence exposes

That the decision is bigger than you thought. "Book a demo" sounds small. What you are really asking is: admit internally that the current process is failing, spend political capital raising it, and put your name on a change that might not work. That is not a button. That is a career risk.

That you are asking the wrong person. Plenty of campaigns speak beautifully to a user who has no budget authority, while the person who signs never hears the argument that would move them.

That the cost is not money. When we built the mall-navigation model at iMaxem, the blocker was never the price. It was that no mall operations director wanted to defend a capital expense for something a competitor had not done first. So the model changed: the mall pays nothing, the tenants subscribe. The cost we removed was reputational, not financial — and it was the only one that mattered.

Three tests

1. **Could a competitor's customer say the same sentence?** If yes, you have described a category, not a decision.
2. **Does the cost line make you uncomfortable?** If it does not, you have not been honest about what you are asking.
3. **Can the person you named actually say yes on their own?** If not, you are running a campaign to an audience that has to go and persuade someone else — so your real job is to arm them with the argument, not to convince them.

What changes downstream

Once the sentence is written, most of the plan writes itself. The channel is wherever that person is already thinking about that problem. The message addresses the cost, not the feature list. The proof is whatever makes the risk feel survivable. The metric is the number of people who crossed that line — not impressions, not likes.

Every case study on this site is written in the same shape for exactly this reason: problem, insight, decision, result. Not because it is a tidy format, but because a project that cannot be described that way was never really strategised.