

THE STEM MARKETING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

BY TRUST INSIGHTS

STRATEGY · TACTICS · EXECUTION · MEASUREMENT

In business, few words are so misunderstood as strategy. What does it mean? How do we differentiate among strategy, tactics, and execution? The STEM marketing strategic framework helps clear up confusion and provide easy to understand definitions for marketers at any level of an organization. All great marketing plans STEM from the same fundamentals.

COMPONENT	STRATEGIC GUIDANCE
S	STRATEGY WHY Why does this plan exist? What are the goals and big picture methods? Strategy is the reason everything else exists. It defines why you're doing what you're doing, what you're trying to achieve, and the high-level approach you'll take to get there. Without a clear strategy, tactics are random activities with no direction.
T	TACTICS WHAT What are we going to do? What's on or off the table? Tactics are the specific things you choose to do in service of the strategy. Email marketing, SEO, paid social, events — these are all tactics. The key word is "chosen." Deciding what NOT to do is just as important as deciding what to do.
E	EXECUTION HOW How will you get the job done? What's the timeline, budget, and resources? Execution is where tactics become real work. This is the project plan: who does what, by when, with what budget, using what tools. Most marketing plans fail here — not because the strategy was wrong, but because execution was under-resourced or poorly managed.
M	MEASUREMENT KPIS How will you know you've succeeded? What are your KPIs? Measurement closes the loop. It tells you whether the strategy is working, which tactics are performing, and where execution needs adjustment. Define your KPIs before you start — not after. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

KEY PRINCIPLE

Strategy without tactics is a daydream. Tactics without strategy is a nightmare. Every marketing plan needs all four STEM components working together — skip one and the whole plan falls apart.

ASK YOURSELF

- Strategy: Can you explain in one sentence why this marketing plan exists and what business goal it serves?
- Tactics: Can you list your tactics and explain how each one directly supports the strategy?
- Execution: Does every tactic have a named owner, a deadline, a budget, and the resources it needs to succeed?
- Measurement: Have you defined specific, measurable KPIs for each tactic, and do they ladder up to the strategic goal?

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