

METRICS FRAMEWORK

Signal vs Noise™

Filter vanity metrics from decision-grade signals. The framework we use to rebuild executive dashboards for revenue clarity.

FORMAT

PDF Workbook

LENGTH

9 Pages

EDITION

Edition 2026.1

THE PREMISE

A dashboard with thirty numbers is a dashboard with zero decisions.

Most marketing dashboards are designed to demonstrate effort. The right marketing dashboards are designed to surface decisions.

The Signal vs Noise framework is what marketFX uses to rebuild executive marketing reporting for revenue clarity. It works by asking four questions of every metric on a dashboard. If a metric cannot answer all four, it is noise. Noise belongs in a tab, a footnote, or a deletion. Signal belongs at the top of the page.

The Signal vs Noise principle. A signal is a metric that, when it moves, changes a decision. Everything else is noise — sometimes interesting, occasionally diagnostic, but not material to action. The point of an executive dashboard is to surface signals fast and bury noise discreetly.

How this framework is used

The framework has three working layers: the four-question Filter, the Strategic / Tactical × Leading / Lagging Matrix, and the Decision Cadence map. Used together, they collapse a thirty-metric dashboard into a ten-number executive view, with the rest available on demand.

THE FILTER

Four questions every metric must pass.

Run every metric currently on your reporting through these four questions. A metric must answer **yes** to all four to qualify as decision-grade. Three out of four is diagnostic. Two or fewer is noise.

Q1 Is it actionable?

If this number moves, does someone change what they do? If the honest answer is "we note it," the metric is noise.

Q2 Is it tied to revenue?

Can the metric be traced — directly or through an agreed proxy — to leads, pipeline, sales, or customer lifetime value? Metrics with no path to revenue belong in operational reports, not executive dashboards.

Q3 Is it repeatable?

Same definition, same source, same calculation, every time. Metrics that get re-defined every quarter cannot be trended, and metrics that cannot be trended cannot drive decisions.

Q4 Is it accountable?

Is there a single named owner who answers for this number — its accuracy, its movement, and the action it implies? Metrics without owners decay into noise within a quarter.

The honest filter. When teams run this filter properly, somewhere between 40% and 70% of their current dashboard fails. That is not a problem with the dashboard. It is the dashboard finally working.

THE MATRIX

Where every signal lives.

Once a metric passes the filter, it has to live somewhere meaningful. Plot every signal on two axes: **Strategic** (long-cycle, executive view) vs **Tactical** (short-cycle, operator view), and **Leading** (predicts future revenue) vs **Lagging** (confirms past revenue).

	LEADING	LAGGING
STRATEGIC (QUARTERLY)	<p>Pipeline coverage, share of voice, AI & organic visibility, customer acquisition cost trend.</p> <p>These are the metrics CFOs and CMOs use to make next-quarter bets. They predict revenue but don't confirm it.</p>	<p>Revenue contribution by channel, customer lifetime value, retention curves, brand health.</p> <p>These metrics confirm strategy is working — or isn't. They are slow but definitive.</p>
TACTICAL (WEEKLY)	<p>Qualified lead volume, CTR & conversion rate trends, list growth, ROAS by campaign.</p> <p>These metrics tell operators whether to keep pushing or change tactics. They predict the week ahead.</p>	<p>Vanity metrics live here.</p> <p>Impressions, raw clicks, follower counts, raw email opens, "engagement rate" without a denominator. Lagging tactical metrics are the cemetery of executive dashboards.</p>

How to use the matrix

- **Top-left (Strategic / Leading) is the executive headline.** Three to five metrics maximum.
- **Top-right (Strategic / Lagging) is the proof.** Reviewed monthly; informs strategy adjustments.
- **Bottom-left (Tactical / Leading) is the operator view.** Reviewed weekly; drives in-quarter action.
- **Bottom-right (Tactical / Lagging) is mostly noise.** If it lives here and you cannot justify it strategically, retire it.

RETIRE / ADOPT

Twelve metrics to retire — twelve to adopt.

Not every retired metric is wrong. They become noise when they sit at the top of an executive view, displacing the metrics that drive decisions.

Retire from the headline

METRIC	WHY
Impressions	Unfiltered reach
Raw clicks	No quality signal
Follower count	Decoupled from revenue
Email open rate (alone)	MPP & bot-inflated
Bounce rate (sitewide)	Too averaged to act on
Time on site	Ambiguous direction
Page views	Activity, not outcome
Engagement rate (no denominator)	Not comparable
Reach (organic social)	Platform-defined
Domain Authority (alone)	Third-party proxy
Likes / reactions	Surface-level
"Brand mentions" raw count	Sentiment-blind

Adopt as signal

METRIC	WHY
Pipeline coverage ratio	Predicts next-quarter revenue
Marketing-sourced revenue	Closed-loop
CAC by channel (rolling)	Efficiency trend
LTV / CAC	Sustainability of growth
Qualified lead → SQL rate	Quality, not volume
Branded search trend	Demand health
Direct + branded organic share	Brand strength
AI search visibility	Future demand pre-indicator
Retention & repeat rate	Post-conversion value
Reply rate (CRM)	Real engagement, not opens
Net revenue retention	Compounding
Share of voice (vs competitors)	Strategic position

Retired does not mean deleted. Many "vanity" metrics are still useful diagnostically — they just don't belong on the executive page. Move them to channel-level operational dashboards where they can do real work.

THE EXECUTIVE VIEW

The ten numbers that matter.

Executive marketing dashboards work best with eight to twelve numbers — never more. The configuration below is the template marketFX uses. Adjust the names to your business, but keep the shape.

TIER 1 · OUTCOME (3)

\$

MARKETING-SOURCED
REVENUE (MTD / QTD)

x

LTV / CAC RATIO

%

NET REVENUE RETENTION

TIER 2 · PIPELINE (3)

x

PIPELINE COVERAGE RATIO
(NEXT 90 DAYS)

#

QUALIFIED LEADS (WEEK-
ON-WEEK)

%

QL → SQL CONVERSION
RATE

TIER 3 · DEMAND SIGNAL (4)

↑

BRANDED SEARCH
TREND

↑

AI SEARCH
VISIBILITY

%

SHARE OF VOICE

%

DIRECT +
BRANDED
ORGANIC SHARE

Two design rules for the executive page. First, every metric has a target and a delta — not just an absolute number. Second, every metric has an owner's initials beside it. Numbers without context or owners drift into noise.

THE DECISION CADENCE

When each signal is reviewed.

The right metric reviewed at the wrong cadence becomes noise. Pipeline coverage looked at weekly is anxiety. Looked at quarterly, it is strategy. Conversion rate looked at quarterly is too late. Looked at weekly, it is operations.

CADENCE	AUDIENCE	WHAT GETS REVIEWED	WHAT GETS DECIDED
Daily	Channel operators	Pacing, anomalies, bid/budget triggers	Today's spend; this week's tests
Weekly	Marketing leadership	Tactical leading signals — leads, conversion rate, ROAS, list growth	This week's allocation; tactical adjustments
Monthly	CMO + CFO	The full executive view; pipeline coverage; CAC trends	Forecast revisions; in-quarter strategy adjustments
Quarterly	Board / executive	Strategic lagging signals — LTV, NRR, brand health, share of voice	Next-quarter plan; budget reallocation; strategic bets

The cadence checklist

- Every recurring meeting has a defined metric set.** No off-the-cuff pulls. No "while we're here, can you also show me..."
- The same number means the same thing in every meeting.** One definition, one source.
- Every metric has a target and a delta.** Absolute numbers are nearly useless without comparison.
- The agenda is written around the metrics, not around channels.** Channels are the inputs. Metrics are the outputs.
- Every off-target metric triggers a documented response.** Discussion is not action. Action is action.

IMPLEMENTATION

Rebuilding an executive dashboard in four weeks.

This is the sequence marketFX uses with new clients. It is deliberately short — the temptation to spend a quarter "getting the data right" is how teams stay stuck on the dashboard they already have.

- 1. Week 1 · Filter the current dashboard.** Run every existing metric through the four-question filter. Tag each as Signal, Diagnostic, or Noise. Expect 40–70% of metrics to fall to noise. Document why.
- 2. Week 2 · Plot remaining signals on the matrix.** Strategic vs Tactical, Leading vs Lagging. Identify the empty quadrants — those are the gaps. The most common gap is the Strategic / Leading quadrant.
- 3. Week 3 · Build the new executive view.** Eight to twelve metrics, three tiers (Outcome, Pipeline, Demand Signal). Every metric gets a target, a delta, and an owner. Build the underlying queries; validate against the old dashboard for three full weeks of history.
- 4. Week 4 · Map the cadence.** Decide what is reviewed daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly. Update meeting agendas. Move retired metrics into operational dashboards where they can still do diagnostic work. Communicate the change.

" The dashboard works when an executive can read it once a month and know exactly what to do next.

— MARKETFX MEASUREMENT PRINCIPLE

"

Rebuild your dashboard for decisions, not demonstrations.

marketFX rebuilds executive marketing dashboards for revenue clarity. A 30-minute strategy session is the fastest way to see what your current view is hiding — and what it should be showing instead.

[Book a Strategy Session →](#)