

PAID & LEAD GENERATION · PERFORMANCE MARKETING SPECIALIST

Campaign Diagnosis Worksheet

Performance dropped. Here is what to check, in what order, and what each answer rules out. The order exists so that you diagnose rather than tinker.

THE DECISION THIS TEMPLATE PROTECTS

What actually caused this, before we change anything.

ROLE

**Paid & Lead Generation ·
useful to every role**

COURSE PLACEMENT

**Main Course Module 6 ·
Performance diagnosis
and optimisation**

REVISION

**Version 1.0
Current as of 19 August
2026**

Work top to bottom and **do not change anything until you reach the end**. The instinct under pressure is to act, and acting before diagnosis destroys the evidence you needed. Each layer rules something out. Record what you ruled out, not only what you found.

BEFORE YOU START, YOU NEED

- The account, with change history visible.
- A baseline you trust.
- Thirty uninterrupted minutes. Diagnosis done in a panic is not diagnosis.

01 Layer zero · Is it real?

CHECK	FINDING	RULES OUT
Is the tracking still working?		A measurement failure dressed as a performance failure
Did a definition or attribution setting change?		A reporting artefact

CHECK	FINDING	RULES OUT
Is the comparison period fair?		Seasonality and calendar effects
Is the drop outside normal variance for this account?		Noise

A meaningful share of reported performance drops are measurement failures. Check this first, every time, before telling anybody there is a problem.

02 Layer one · Where in the funnel

Find the step that moved. Everything downstream of it is a symptom, not a cause.

STEP	BEFORE	NOW	MOVED?
Impressions			
Click rate			
Landing page arrivals			
Page engagement			
Form starts			
Form completions			
Qualified leads			
Sales outcomes			

03 Layer two · What we changed

DATE	CHANGE	WHO	COULD IT EXPLAIN THIS?

DATE	CHANGE	WHO	COULD IT EXPLAIN THIS?

Check the website change log as well as the ad account. A large proportion of paid performance drops originate in something a developer shipped.

04 Layer three • What changed around us

EXTERNAL FACTOR	EVIDENCE	LIKELY CONTRIBUTION
Competitor activity or a new entrant		
Auction pressure or seasonal demand		
Platform or policy change		
Creative fatigue: frequency and time in market		
Audience saturation		
Something happening in the client's own business		

05 Layer four • The diagnosis

MOST LIKELY CAUSE, AND THE EVIDENCE FOR IT

WHAT WE RULED OUT, AND HOW

CONFIDENCE IN THIS DIAGNOSIS

Low confidence is a legitimate answer and it should change what you do next.

06 Layer five · The response

ACTION	WHY THIS FIRST	EXPECTED EFFECT	REVIEW DATE

Change one thing. If you change four and it recovers, you have learned nothing and you will face the same problem again with no more knowledge than today.

JUDGMENT PROMPTS

1. Did you diagnose, or did you start changing settings within ten minutes?
2. What is the second most likely cause, and how would you distinguish it from the first?
3. If the diagnosis is external, what does that mean for what you promised the client?
4. Is the pressure to act coming from the data or from the meeting tomorrow?

WHAT THIS TEMPLATE WILL NOT DO FOR YOU

- It will not fix the campaign. It tells you what to fix, which is the harder part.
- Some declines have no single cause. Several small things together is a common and unsatisfying answer.
- It assumes a change history exists. If nobody logs changes, layer two is unavailable and that is the first thing to fix.

THE DEFENSIBLE OUTPUT

A written diagnosis with a confidence level and a stated ruled-out list, and one change with a review date.