



# IS YOUR GROWTH ENGINE MISFIRING?



Why Smart Companies Stall and What to Do About It

# The Hidden Cost of Stalled Growth

Growth doesn't collapse overnight. It erodes quietly.

For many leadership teams, there's a growing disconnect between internal optimism and external performance. Leaders are investing more, pushing harder, and yet results stall. This creates an invisible pressure cooker everything looks busy, but nothing truly moves.

2 years ago, I worked with a £30M B2B services firm that had grown steadily for a decade. After realigning their go-to-market strategy and focusing on a tighter ICP (Ideal Customer Profile), they reignited lead generation, improved sales conversion by 18%, and saw YoY growth return within 9 months. But their lead generation pipeline had dried up, and they were clinging to outdated referral models.

The CEO insisted, 'We're doing everything right.' They weren't. They were doing what had always worked — but the market had moved on.



# The Psychology of Growth. Why Friction Feels Like Failure

Humans are hardwired to avoid pain, discomfort, and perceived risk even when staying the same costs more in the long run.

This creates organisational inertia. In boardrooms, this shows up as polite avoidance, circular debates, or relentless optimism masking deeper fears.

I recently observed a strategy session where four senior leaders debated marketing spend. No one would call out the real issue, their core product no longer excited buyers. Why? Because admitting it would trigger a wave of painful rework, role shifts, and potential conflict. So they carried on and growth declined further.

Friction isn't failure. It's the raw material of real alignment. When it's surfaced, structured, and worked through, it drives performance. When it's buried, it breeds decay.



# Signal 1 – Flat Revenue, Rising Frustration

Your board meetings are filled with activity reports but outcomes remain flat. Marketing is producing content. Sales are 'working the funnel.' Operations are 'optimising delivery.' Yet profit remains stubbornly still.

A tech client I worked with had nearly doubled their headcount in two years. They'd invested in CRM, automation, and new hires. But they couldn't explain their declining sales velocity.

The truth? They were chasing the wrong customers with the wrong message.

Frustration grows when effort doesn't translate to outcome. It creates confusion, blame, and burnout. The issue is rarely laziness or incompetence, it's misdirected energy due to misaligned strategy.



# Signal 2 – Post-Acquisition Plateau

M&A is supposed to accelerate growth. But often it magnifies misalignment.

One company I supported acquired a niche competitor to gain new market access. After establishing a joint leadership task force, aligning on customer segments, and restructuring go-to-market messaging, they reduced churn by 23% and generated a 12% uplift in cross-sell opportunities within the first two quarters post-reset.

But 12 months later, integration had stalled. Their systems didn't talk, sales teams didn't trust each other, and customer churn increased.

Why? Because the integration was structural, not cultural. No one had aligned the teams behind a single go-to-market strategy. Leadership assumed 'synergy' was automatic. It isn't.

Growth through acquisition only works when there's shared vision, clear priorities, owned accountability and cultural cohesion. Otherwise, you've simply bought complexity.



# Signal 3 – Marketing is Busy, Not Effective

Your marketing team is active but the sales team complains the leads are weak. The funnel looks full, but the pipeline doesn't close.

At one scale-up, their marketing dashboards showed thousands of clicks and hundreds of MQLs. After shifting focus to deeper persona research and bottom-of-funnel offers, MQL-to-SQL conversion increased 3x, and the sales team closed their first £250K deal in over six months. But their sales team hadn't closed a deal in two quarters.

Why? They were measuring engagement, not intent.

The buyer journey has changed. Messaging that worked five years ago is now noise. Companies stuck in content calendars, vanity metrics, and automated emails miss the deeper shift: buyers demand relevance, trust, and proof of value.

The most dangerous marketing activity is the one that looks productive but delivers nothing.



# Signals 4 & 5 – Decision Drag + Cultural Drift

Indecision is often more dangerous than a bad decision. It creates inertia, drains morale, and kills innovation.

In one board I advised, five leaders couldn't agree on pricing changes. With structured facilitation and external market benchmarking, we reached agreement in 3 weeks. The changes drove a 7% increase in gross margin over the next quarter and created renewed confidence in decision-making processes.

For six months they debated, tested, stalled and their competitors outpaced them. Eventually, the decision was forced by declining margins not alignment.

Cultural drift is more subtle. You see it in disengaged middle managers, shrinking ambition, and the quiet exit of once committed staff. When no one believes in the future state, the organisation becomes a machine of maintenance, not momentum. Growth needs belief. And belief needs clarity.



# A Path Forward – From Misalignment to Momentum

Growth doesn't require reinvention. It requires realignment.

The companies that reignite momentum do three things well:

1. They surface truth even when it's uncomfortable.
2. They align around the next stage of growth not the last stage of success.
3. They simplify the complex turning confusion into confident action.

If any part of this guide feels familiar, it probably is. That's not a problem. It's an invitation.

Let's talk. No fluff. No pitch. Just clarity and the next right step.





# Summary (TL/DR)

**It's painful until it's not**

**It's time to act and quickly if;**

- **Frustration - You're spending more on people, platforms, and plans but revenue remains stubbornly still. The return on effort feels less than it should be.**
- **Post Acquisition benefits not realised - You expected uplift from a recent acquisition or carve-out. But the synergies haven't materialised. Are key team members protected from competing work streams?**
- **Busyness in Marketing - Campaigns are being run, platforms are active, yet the results don't follow.**
- **Decision Making is Slow - You've got smart people around the table. But decisions are delayed**
- **People are Disengaging - Top performers are doing the bare minimum and it shows.**
- **Financial Reports show Flat line (which is decline) - Lots of justification but no real action with outcomes tracked honestly.**



**WAS THIS HELPFUL?**

**WAS ANY OF IT TRUE?**

**WANT TO DISCUSS?**

