Mandate to Motion

Five steps for turning an AI mandate into a business plan the leadership team can act on.

AI mandates usually arrive one of two ways: as a top-down directive that sounds clear until you try to act on it, or as a fault line in the business that no single team can explain.

The five-step framework

01. Reframe

What is the CEO really being asked?

Do: Turn the mandate into a business question before answering it.

Output: The real question, in one sentence.

02. Prioritize

Which opportunities are worth pursuing?

Do: Start with marketing's data, score impact and effort, and identify dependencies.

Output: A shortlist of what marketing can lead and what requires partners.

03. Prove

Is it real, and how big is it?

Do: Size the opportunity where the value actually lands.

Output: A credible value range that finance can test.

04. Pilot

What would prove this can work?

Do: Design a small number of measurable pilots with named owners.

Output: Focused pilots with clear measures and decision points.

05. Partner

How does the leadership team take ownership?

Do: Bring peers in early and shape the plan around what they already own.

Output: A plan your peers co-own and a clear decision for leadership.

Does this require the broader business?

Does it affect revenue or margin outside marketing's direct control?

Does it require decisions or budget marketing does not control?

Is it a lasting shift rather than a short-term problem?

Does it change how customers choose you or what they cost to serve?

Before your next leadership meeting...

- **Rewrite the AI ask as** the business question that actually needs answering.
- **Ask what your own data says** and identify the highest-value opportunities.
- **Map the teams each opportunity depends** on, and involve them before you write the plan.
- **Bring one 90-day pilot** forward with an owner, sponsor, and scorecard.

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