METHOD SAMPLE / FICTIONAL COMPOSITE

CONSTRAINT TO EXECUTION

Decision memo for a stalled growth system

THE DECISION

Where should leadership place the next 30 days of attention when acquisition still works, but growth no longer compounds?

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

A confidentiality-safe demonstration of how Mikhail Bakhman can convert an ambiguous commercial problem into testable constraints, explicit choices, owners, and stop criteria.

The company, data, symptoms, and recommendations are fictional and composite. This is not client work, a performance claim, or a guarantee of outcome.

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Product, growth, monetization, and special situations

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01 / FRAME THE REAL DECISION

Growth is a system, not a single metric

The working case below begins with a leadership team seeing familiar symptoms and reaching for more acquisition. The memo first separates the visible signals from the constraint that can plausibly explain them together.

FICTIONAL CONTEXT

Northstar Loop sells a workflow platform with a service layer. Lead volume is stable, close rates are soft, activation is slow, and delivery is absorbing senior time.

DECISION TO MAKE

For the next 30 days: increase acquisition, sharpen the offer, repair activation, reduce service complexity, or sequence more than one intervention.

WORKING PRINCIPLES

01	**Name the decision**	A diagnosis is useful only when it changes an allocation of time, capital, or attention.
02	**Separate fact from story**	Observed signals, interpretations, and hypotheses are kept visibly distinct.
03	**Demand disconfirmation**	Every preferred explanation needs a threshold that could prove it wrong.
04	**Protect reversibility**	Early actions should produce evidence before they create expensive commitments.

02 / MAP THE CAUSAL CHAIN

Symptoms converge on one operating constraint

The map is a working model, not a verdict. It compresses four symptoms into a sequence that can be tested with existing data and a small pilot.

OBSERVED SYMPTOMS

1. Lead volume holds
2. Win rate slips
3. Time-to-value expands
4. Senior team enters routine delivery

→

LIKELY MECHANISMS

Broad promise attracts mixed-fit demand.

Sales compensates with custom explanation.

Delivery compensates with custom work.

→

CANDIDATE CONSTRAINT

The commercial promise is wider than the repeatable delivery system. More demand increases variation before it increases throughput.

CONSTRAINT STATEMENT

Until promise, qualification, and first value are aligned, additional acquisition is likely to magnify operational variation rather than create predictable growth.

BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

IN SCOPE

Offer clarity, qualification, activation, service variation, and evidence cadence.

NOT ASSUMED

That product demand is weak, that the sales team is underperforming, or that pricing is wrong.

NOT YET IN SCOPE

Rebrand, new market entry, major platform rebuild, or organization redesign.

03 / SET EVIDENCE THRESHOLDS

A hypothesis earns attention only when it can lose

Each hypothesis has a fast evidence test, a threshold for prioritization, and a disconfirming signal. Thresholds would be calibrated to the company's real baseline before use.

ID	HYPOTHESIS	EVIDENCE	PRIORITIZE WHEN	DISCONFIRM WHEN
H1	**ICP / promise mismatch**	Qualified win rate by segment + loss language	>= 1.5x win-rate spread and repeated promise confusion	No material segment spread; losses are timing or budget
H2	**Activation friction**	Time-to-first-value + step-level abandonment	>= 35% of viable accounts stall at one controllable step	Delay is driven mainly by customer-side dependencies
H3	**Service variation**	Delivery hours and exception count by offer variant	Top exceptions consume >= 25% of senior delivery time	Exceptions are rare, priced, and margin-accretive
H4	**Acquisition saturation**	Marginal CAC, payback, and quality by channel	Incremental spend worsens payback without improving fit	Unit economics hold after cohort and quality adjustment

Decision rule: do not launch a broad transformation. Advance only the smallest intervention whose evidence clears its threshold and whose result can be read inside the 30-day window.

04 / CHOOSE A REVERSIBLE MOVE

Score the options against the decision, not their appeal

Illustrative scores use a 1-5 scale. A higher score is better for evidence strength, speed, revenue protection, low organizational load, and reversibility.

OPTION	EVIDENCE	SPEED	REVENUE	LOAD	REVERSIBLE	SCORE / CALL
A / Scale acquisition	2	3	1	3	3	12 / 25 HOLD
B / Tighten ICP + promise	4	4	4	4	5	21 / 25 ADVANCE
C / Repair first value	4	4	4	3	4	19 / 25 ADVANCE
D / Build a new product	1	1	2	1	1	6 / 25 STOP

SELECTED SEQUENCE / B THEN C

First narrow the promise and qualification rule; then repair first value for the chosen segment. Keep acquisition flat during the test so the signal is readable. Release spend only after evidence clears the thresholds on page 04.

05 / CONVERT THE CHOICE INTO AN OPERATING RHYTHM

Thirty days to a better decision, not a promised transformation

The purpose of the sprint is to reduce decision uncertainty and establish an executable path. Each phase has an owner, an evidence output, and a reason to stop.

DAYS	PHASE	OWNER	EVIDENCE OUTPUT	STOP WHEN
01-03	**Baseline**	**Ops lead**	Cohort view, loss language, delivery exceptions	Data cannot be reconciled
04-07	**Promise test**	**Growth lead**	One segment, one promise, qualification rubric	No segment has a coherent need
08-14	**First-value pilot**	**Product lead**	Reduced activation path with instrumented steps	Pilot requires platform rebuild
15-21	**Controlled traffic**	**Sales lead**	Matched cohort and unchanged-spend comparison	Quality or compliance risk rises
22-30	**Decision gate**	**Executive owner**	Scale, iterate, or stop memo with owners	Evidence remains below threshold

CADENCE AND DECISION RIGHTS

DAILY / 15 MIN

Evidence deltas, blockers, and owner commitments only.

TWICE WEEKLY

Hypothesis review: strengthen, weaken, or retire each explanation.

DAY 14 GATE

Executive owner decides continue, narrow, or stop the pilot.

DAY 30 GATE

Choose scale, iterate, or stop. Assign the next owner and budget.