

MSME OWNER'S PLAYBOOK · BONUS 02

5 Things to Get Right Before You Start Marketing

So your next campaign doesn't burn cash.

WORTH ₹499 — YOURS FREE

For every founder who's watched a marketing budget disappear into "reach" and "impressions" with nothing to show for it.



THE PROBLEM

You Didn't Get a Bad Result. You Got an Honest One.

Meena runs a home-décor D2C brand out of Indiranagar. Last month she put ₹80,000 behind an Instagram campaign over a long weekend — nice product shots, a discount code, boosted to "everyone interested in home decor" across three cities.

40,000 people saw it. Three people bought. She spent the following week blaming the platform, the agency, and Instagram's algorithm, in that order.

You've watched this exact story play out with at least two people you know — the friend who "tried Facebook ads and they don't work for my business," the cousin who paid an agency ₹25,000 a month for six months and can't point to a single customer it brought in.

None of them got a bad result. They got an honest one — the accurate output of a campaign built on guesses instead of five things that needed to be decided before a single rupee was spent.



WHY THIS HAPPENS — AND WHO'S REALLY RESPONSIBLE

Marketing Isn't a Spend Decision. It's a Targeting Decision.

Here's the part that stings: the platform didn't fail Meena. Instagram did exactly what it was told — show this ad to as many "interested" people as possible. Nobody ever told it, precisely, who to actually show it to.

That's on the business owner, every time — not because it's anyone's fault, but because you're the only person who actually knows who your best customer is. An agency can execute a campaign. It cannot invent your customer clarity for you.

Three reasons this keeps happening in businesses like yours:

Marketing feels like an action, not a decision. "Boost the post" feels like doing something. Defining your customer feels like thinking about something — and thinking doesn't feel like progress.

The platform makes it too easy to skip the hard part. You can launch a campaign in four clicks without ever being forced to answer who, exactly, you're trying to reach.

Nobody taught you the five things worth deciding first. Not because they're complicated — because nobody ever sat you down and named them.



ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Let's Actually Get to the Root of It

Run the "5 Whys" on Meena's ₹80,000 weekend — the same drill-down a consultant would use on your own last disappointing campaign:

THE SYMPTOM	"We spent ₹80,000 on ads and got almost nothing back."
	↓ Why?
WHY #1	The ad spoke to "everyone interested in home decor" — a description of millions of people, not a customer.
	↓ Why?
WHY #2	We'd never actually written down who our best, highest-intent customer really is.
	↓ Why?
WHY #3	We started with the platform (let's try Instagram ads) instead of the customer.
	↓ Why?
THE ROOT	We treat marketing as a spend decision — how much to put behind it — instead of a targeting decision. No budget size fixes an undefined audience.

Run this on your own last campaign that underperformed. The root is almost never "the platform doesn't work for us." It's a gap in clarity that existed before you opened the ad manager.



LIKELY SOLUTIONS — AND WHAT EACH ONE ACTUALLY GETS YOU

Four Ways Owners Try to Fix This

A

Hire an Agency and Hand It Off

What you get: Speed, professional creative, someone else running the ad manager.

What it costs you: A monthly retainer regardless of results, and campaigns built on generic targeting because the agency doesn't know your customer better than you do.

B

Do It All Yourself

What you get: Full control, lowest upfront cost.

What it costs you: A slow, expensive trial-and-error education, paid for in ad spend instead of a course fee.

C

Copy What a Competitor Is Doing

What you get: A fast starting template, no blank page to stare at.

What it costs you: Zero differentiation — you'll look like every other ad in the same scroll, invisible by design.

D

Get the Five Fundamentals Right, Then Spend

What you get: Every rupee spent lands against a real, specific person with a real, specific need.

What it costs you: One to two weeks slower to launch — spent thinking instead of boosting.

THE RIGHT DEFAULT BEFORE YOUR NEXT CAMPAIGN



THE RECOMMENDED PATH — STEP BY STEP

The 5 Things to Get Right First

01 Know your one customer, not "everyone"

Name the specific person — role, city, income band, the problem keeping them up.
"Everyone interested in home decor" is not a customer. It's a category.

02 Know the one problem you solve better than anyone

Not three benefits. One sharp, specific problem you're the obvious answer to.

03 Know where that customer already spends attention

Don't guess the platform. Ask five existing customers where they'd have found you.

04 Know what "success" means before you spend a rupee

A number — cost per genuine enquiry, or a sales target — not a vibe like "get some traction."

05 Know your offer — the exact next action you want them to take

"Follow us" is not an offer. "Book a free 15-minute design consult" is.



HOW TO AVOID THIS GOING FORWARD

Make It a Habit, Not a Hope

A fixed pre-launch check beats a good creative brief. Build these into every campaign from now on — not just the next one.

- **Write the customer avatar before you write the ad copy.** One page. Name, role, problem, where they hang out — every single time.
- **Set a stop-loss on every campaign.** A fixed rupee amount to test before you're allowed to scale it up.
- **Review one metric weekly.** Cost per genuine enquiry — not "reach," not "impressions," not vanity numbers that don't pay your bills.
- **Never let the algorithm pick your first audience.** Start narrow and specific. Widen only once you know what's working.

None of this needs a bigger budget. It needs five decisions made before the ad manager, not during it.



THE SIMPLEWORKS FRAMEWORK

The A.B.C. Before You Spend

A one-page check to run before you open the ad manager again.

A

Audience

Who, exactly, is this for? One specific person, not a broad interest category. If you can't describe them in one sentence, you're not ready to spend.

B

Belief

What's the one belief this person needs to hold by the end of the ad — "this is made for people exactly like me"? Design everything around landing that one belief.

C

Cap

What's your spending cap before you're allowed to scale? Decide it before you launch, not after you've already spent it.

Run the ABC before every campaign, however small. It won't guarantee a winner. It will guarantee you never burn ₹80,000 finding out the ad had no one specific in mind.



ABOUT SIMPLEWORKS

One Consultant. Four Connected Disciplines.

Simpleworks Consulting is a boutique advisory practice built for Indian MSME owners — founded by **Prem Menon**, drawing on 39 years across Consumer Durables, Tyres, Telecom, and IT/SaaS. The philosophy is simple: strip away complexity, and give founders tools sophisticated enough to work — and simple enough to run without a large team.

Every Simpleworks engagement draws on four connected practice areas, because strategy, go-to-market, execution, and measurement are rarely separate problems in a real business.

01 Business Strategy

The smallest set of choices that makes every later decision easier — where to play, and how to win.

02 Go-to-Market

Turning the strategic choice into revenue — the right segment, message, channel, and price, working as one coherent system.

03 Execution Enablement

The operating rhythm — meetings, decisions, ownership — that converts intent into outcome.

04 OKRs

The feedback loop that tells you honestly whether the strategy is working, and holds the system accountable.

Four lenses on the same question: how does your business get from where it is, to where you've decided it should be?



LET'S TALK

You've Seen the Problem. Let's Fix It Before Your Next Campaign.

If this booklet described your last campaign, that's usually the first sign it's worth a real conversation — not another boosted post.

Reach out. No pitch, no jargon — just a straight conversation about your marketing, your growth, or whatever's keeping you up tonight.

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