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AGENCY · DECISION LOG · POSITIONING

# Why we said no to the brand refresh

How a £180k campaign got pulled in favour of an eight-week positioning programme — and out-performed it.

## CLIENT SITUATION

A European pharmaceutical client, mid-market, plateaued at low-single-digit growth for two years. Strong product pipeline. Sales team consistently hitting activity targets. Leadership had concluded the team needed to try harder.



# The decision we walked into

## THE QUESTION WE ASKED

Before agreeing the brief for a new product launch campaign, we asked whether the existing portfolio's flat growth was actually a sales problem at all. The internal narrative said yes. The dashboard said the team was busier than ever. The forecast disagreed.

## THE OPTION WE RULED OUT

A brand-led broadcast effort timed to coincide with the launch. Refresh the visual identity, run a paid awareness push, retrain the reps on the new pitch deck, raise the activity floor. Estimated cost: £180k over six months. Estimated commercial lift: nil, on the same trajectory as the prior two years.



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## What we picked, and why

### THE OPTION WE PICKED

A positioning programme anchored on the Equipped Test (Ch 4 of It's Not a Sales Problem). Three months of work before any creative was commissioned: rebuild the messaging house from clinical evidence outward, narrow the ICP from European hospital procurement to infusion-bag-protocol-aware anaesthetists in five named markets, and pressure-test every claim against three sceptical clinicians before locking it.

### WHY

The dashboard was telling them the team was busy. The forecast was telling them the message was wrong. The Equipped Test takes eight weeks and costs a fraction of a paid push. If positioning fails the test, no creative budget recovers it. If positioning passes the test, every subsequent layer (content, paid, events) compounds rather than dissipates.



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## What this teaches

When a healthcare commercial leader frames a problem as 'we need more leads' or 'the reps need to try harder', the load-bearing question is whether the message has earned the right to be heard yet. Pipeline shape is downstream of message-market fit.

The cheapest move is the diagnostic. The most expensive move is the brand refresh that papers over a positioning hole.