

Step 1:- Research, Strategy & Brand Positioning

Every successful business starts with understanding the market before spending on marketing.

Why is Research Important?

Imagine a doctor prescribing medicine without examining the patient.

Would you trust that doctor?

Probably not.

Marketing works exactly the same way.

Research is our diagnosis. Strategy is our prescription.

Without research, marketing becomes guesswork.

Example 1: Two Budget Hotels in Delhi

Both hotels have:

20 rooms

₹2,500 average room rate

Similar facilities

Located just 2 km apart

Hotel A says:

"We have clean rooms."

Hotel B says:

"A safe and hygienic stay for corporate travellers near major business hubs with home-style food and fast Wi-Fi."

Which one speaks directly to a customer?

Hotel B.

The rooms may be similar, but the positioning is completely different.

Research helped identify the right audience and communicate the right message.

What We Actually Do in Step 1

1. Understand the Customer

- Who books this hotel?
- Corporate travellers?
- Families?
- Medical tourists?
- Students?
- Foreign tourists?
- Weekend couples?

Every customer has different expectations.

If we don't know the customer, we cannot create effective marketing.

2. Study the Competition

We ask:

- Who are the top competitors?
- Why are they getting more bookings?
- What are they doing better?
- What opportunities are they missing?

Our goal is not to copy competitors but to find gaps where our client can stand out.

3. Define the Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

Instead of marketing to everyone...

We market to the people most likely to book.

For example:

Instead of saying:

"Our hotel is for everyone."

We say:

"Perfect for corporate executives visiting South Delhi for 2–5 day business trips."

Now every marketing activity becomes focused.

4. Find the USP (Unique Selling Proposition)

Every hotel has something special.

Sometimes owners don't even realize it.

Examples:

- Walking distance from the metro
- Home-cooked food
- Riverside location
- Pet-friendly stay
- Excellent hospitality
- Large parking
- Fast check-in
- Best value for money

Our job is to identify and communicate that difference.

5. Build the Brand Story

People don't remember features.

They remember stories.

Instead of:

"14 Rooms"

We say:

"A boutique stay where every guest is treated like family."

That's branding.

6. Create the Marketing Roadmap

Only after understanding everything do we decide:

- Which OTAs?
- Which social media platforms?
- Which target audience?
- Which campaigns?
- Which offers?
- Which content?

Now marketing has direction.

7. Prepare Content & Creative Assets

Now we know:

- What photographs we need
- What videos to shoot
- What message to communicate
- What designs to create
- What content to publish
- Everything becomes purposeful.

8. Define KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)

If we don't measure, we cannot improve.

Some examples:

- Occupancy %
- ADR (Average Daily Rate)
- OTA ranking
- Website traffic
- Number of enquiries
- Conversion rate
- Guest review score
- Average response time
- Repeat guest percentage

These numbers tell us whether our strategy is working.

Final Outcome

After Step 1, everyone on the team should be able to answer these questions clearly:

- Who is our ideal customer?
- Why will they choose us?
- What makes us different?
- What message should we communicate?
- Which marketing channels should we use?
- How will we measure success?

Once these answers are clear, every rupee spent on marketing becomes more effective.

- A Simple Analogy for Your Team
- Building a hotel is like constructing a house.
- You don't begin by painting the walls.
- You first lay a strong foundation.
- Research is the foundation.
- Strategy is the blueprint.
- Brand Positioning is the architecture.
- Marketing is the decoration that people see.

If the foundation is weak, no amount of decoration will keep the building standing.

This analogy helps explain why Step 1 is the most important stage of your Growth Framework: every decision that follows is built on the insights gathered here.