

# The marketer's generalized guide for tracking research ROI

The broad stroke steps to figuring out ROI are quite similar for both research that's meant for tactical and for strategic purposes. Here's a handy framework to help guide you.



## 1. Frame the research

- What is the objective of this research?
- Is it a tactical effort looking at **immediate sales impact**?
- Is it a strategic initiative focused on **market segmentation, product development**, or intangible factors like **brand equity** and **trend forecasting**?
- Craft the research question in carefully measurable terms. For example, “How high does brand loyalty rank as a factor in the smartphone purchasing decision of consumers aged 18-35 in New York City?”

## 2. Involve all stakeholders

- The most successful projects are the ones with all the players in the room, says Trautz.
- That's how you figure out at the very beginning: what is success for **marketing**? What is it for **sales**, for **product engineering**?
- What decisions do the stakeholders want to inform with this research?
- Skipping this step could lead to that dark outcome of zero or negative ROI, because the results couldn't be implemented into the decision-making.

### 3. Identify impact metrics

- What specific metrics will indicate the impact of your research?
  - If you're researching immediate sales impact, you might look at **conversion rates**, **click through rates**, or **sales revenue**: You'll calculate the difference in rates/revenue before and after the research.
  - Research on market segmentation may look at **reduced ad spend** on less-responsive segments.
  - Product development research may track changes in **adoption rate**.
  - Brand equity research could target **awareness** and **engagement rates**.
  - Research to forecast trends could look at **lead time gain**— how far in advance can your forecasts allow you to prepare for emerging trends?
- 

### 4. Choose the right methodologies and tools

Tactical research on, for instance, behavioral outcomes, tend to require quantitative research methodologies and tools like:

- Surveys
- Polls
- A/B testing
- Google Analytics to track user actions on websites.

Strategic research on segmentation, product development or brand equity might require a more qualitative approach, or even mixed methods:

- Focus groups
- In-depth interviews
- Tools like the Implicit Association Test or visual semiotic analysis, depending on the objective and research question.

More advanced research tools might be required for objectives like trend forecasting, like:

- Data mining techniques and machine learning algorithms to analyze large datasets for patterns.

## 5. Draw out a plan, complete with budget, measurement plans and baseline data

- A research project can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Or hundreds. Or between \$20,000 to \$50,000, with agile polls and surveys.
  - It all depends on factors like methodology, sample size, analysis techniques, and timeline to implementation. Budget according to your needs and projected results.
  - Outline how you'll track and collect key metrics. What tools will you use?
  - And establish baseline data as a reference point for measuring the impact of your research efforts. What did the metrics look like before the research initiative?
- 

## 6. Execute the research

- Monitor metrics in real time using analytics tools and analyze the data tracked.
- 

## 7. Measure research ROI

- Compare the benefits (like increased sales or improved brand sentiment) to the costs of your research efforts.
- 

To learn more, visit [stagwellmarketingcloud.com](https://stagwellmarketingcloud.com)