

Before You Make the Asset

A PMM clarity check for requests that look simple but are hiding unresolved buyer, message, proof, risk, or ownership decisions.

A PMM clarity check for requests that look simple but are hiding unresolved decisions.

A quick asset is only quick when the thinking behind it is ready.

Use this before you open the deck template, rewrite the product page, approve the AI draft, build the battlecard, or turn a messy note into a one-pager.

This is not about slowing the team down. It is about stopping unclear thinking from becoming a polished file that three teams then have to defend.

1. The request

Write the request exactly as it came in.

Example: "Can you quickly make this into a one-pager?"

Actual request:

Now answer this before doing anything else:

What is this asset supposed to make someone understand, believe, or do?

If this answer is vague, the request is not ready.

2. What kind of request is this really?

Pick one.

A. Real asset request

The thinking is clear. The buyer is known. The claim is approved. The proof exists. PMM needs to package it.

PMM move: Make the asset.

B. Clarity request

The request says "make this sharper," but the buyer, problem, value, or proof is unclear.

PMM move: Pause and define the missing clarity.

C. Alignment request

Sales, product, marketing, or leadership disagree and want PMM to make the disagreement sound settled.

PMM move: Name the disagreement before writing.

D. Urgency request

The team waited too long, and now PMM is being asked to absorb the mess.

PMM move: Ship only the smallest safe version, then log the system failure.

E. Strategy request disguised as copy

The company has not decided what it believes yet, but wants PMM to rewrite the words.

PMM move: Do not start writing. Escalate the decision.

This request is mostly:

- ☐ A. Real asset request
- ☐ B. Clarity request
- ☐ C. Alignment request
- ☐ D. Urgency request
- ☐ E. Strategy request disguised as copy

Why?

3. The readiness check

Score each area from 0 to 2.

0 = missing or unclear 1 = partly clear, but risky 2 = clear enough to use

Area	Question	Score
Buyer	Do we know who this is really for?	
Problem	Do we know what pain, pressure, or decision this speaks to?	
Message	Do we know what the reader should understand or believe?	
Proof	Do we have evidence that supports the claim?	
Moment	Do we know where this asset will be used?	
Risk	Do we know what could be misunderstood or overclaimed?	
Owner	Do we know who can approve unresolved decisions?	
Next step	Do we know what the reader should do next?	

Total: ` /16`

Read the veto before you read the total. If Buyer, Message, or Proof scored 0, the asset is not ready whatever the total says. A single missing decision is what stops an asset. A good average cannot cover for it.

4. What the score means

Score	Meaning	Decision
0 to 5	The asset is not ready.	Pause. Resolve the thinking.
6 to 10	The asset is risky.	Make a temporary version only if urgent. Mark the gaps.
11 to 14	The asset is mostly ready.	Build it, but review weak areas.
15 to 16	The asset is ready.	Make it.

If section 2 and the score disagree, section 2 wins. A strategy request with a high readiness score is still a strategy request, and packaging it will not settle what the company has not decided.

Decision

- ☐ Make it
- ☐ Pause it
- ☐ Make a temporary version
- ☐ Escalate the missing decision
- ☐ Kill or rewrite the request

5. The missing decision

If the asset is not ready, do not write a better headline.

Before pausing anything, write down what the pause costs. Both halves of this are already in the plan, so it takes ten minutes and no new data.

What is waiting on this asset, and when does it need it?

If the decision gets resolved first, how much later does this ship?

If that delay costs more than the confusion would, ship the smallest safe version and log the gap. Pausing is a judgement made against a number, not a default setting.

Name the missing decision.

The asset cannot move cleanly until we decide:

Who owns that decision?

When is it needed?

6. Proof check

What is the strongest claim this asset makes?

What proof supports it?

Choose one:

- ☐ Proof is strong enough.
- ☐ Proof exists, but needs context.
- ☐ Proof is weak. Use softer language.
- ☐ Proof is missing.
- ☐ The claim should be removed.

What should this asset avoid saying?

7. Risk check

Mark anything that could create trouble.

- ☐ The asset could overpromise.
- ☐ Sales could repeat this as an unsupported claim.
- ☐ A buyer could misunderstand the product.
- ☐ The proof is stale.
- ☐ The asset uses private client, employer, pricing, product, or roadmap information.
- ☐ Product, sales, legal, or customer success may disagree with the claim.
- ☐ AI was used and the source trail is unclear.
- ☐ The asset could become outdated quickly.

Risk decision

- ☐ Safe to use
- ☐ Needs source review
- ☐ Needs softer language
- ☐ Needs product/legal/leadership review
- ☐ Do not ship yet

8. The PMM response

Use one of these.

If it is ready

This looks ready to produce. I'll build it around the agreed buyer, message, proof, and next step.

If clarity is missing

I can make the asset, but first we need to decide who it is for, what it should make them believe, and what proof we can use.

If teams disagree

This copy request has a decision underneath it. We need to decide which buyer problem we are leading with before I package it.

If it is urgent

I can ship a temporary version, but we should mark the gaps. The real issue is that this request arrived before the thinking was ready.

If it is strategy disguised as copy

This is not a writing problem yet. We need to decide what we believe before I can make it clear.

9. Final question

If we make this now, what confusion are we accepting?

If the answer makes the team uncomfortable, that is the work.

Do not hide it inside the asset.