T|L

Performance Marketing Playbook

TheThroughLine.AI | v01 | October 26, 2026

This playbook tells you and the QB tasks how to measure, diagnose, and act on ThroughLine performance. Every prompt is ready to run against the tools already connected. Each one ends in a decision.

Owner: Everrett V. Harris. **Operator:** QB daily and weekly scheduled tasks (Opus 5.5).

Goal it serves: 100,000 combined followers by December 31, 2027.

Adapted from: Supermetrics, The comprehensive prompt playbook for performance marketers. Source PDF. The structure follows their ten chapters. The prompts are rewritten for an organic, creator-led brand with no paid spend yet.

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1. How to use this playbook

The Supermetrics playbook is built for paid media teams with budgets, CPA targets, and ROAS. ThroughLine runs on organic short-form video and a Substack. So the levers change. Budget becomes shoot hours and posting slots. CPA becomes views per follower gained. ROAS becomes followers and subscribers per hour of your time.

The loop stays the same. Run it in this order.

1. Monitor: know where you stand today.
2. Diagnose: explain any change before you react to it.
3. Pace: check if this week puts you on track for 100K.
4. Allocate: decide where your hours and posts go.
5. Optimize search: get found on YouTube, TikTok search, and Google.
6. Optimize social and video: protect winners, fix losers, fight fatigue.
7. Plan: turn past results into next week's kit.
8. Measure outcomes: track the social to Substack to site funnel.
9. Act: test one change at a time, with approval.
10. Communicate: report what happened and what you decided.

Who runs what

Section	Daily QB task	Weekly QB task	You
4 Monitor	M1, M2	M3, M4	Read the dashboard
5 Diagnose	D1 when a flag fires	D2, D3	Confirm the cause
6 Pace	None	P1, P2	Accept or reset weekly targets
7 Allocate	None	A1, A2	Approve the hour plan
8 Optimize search	None	S1, S2	Approve titles and keywords
9 Optimize social and video	V2 fatigue check	V1, V3, V4, V5	Shoot and edit
10 Plan	None	L1, L2, L3	Approve the next kit
11 Measure outcomes	F1 snapshot	F2, F3	Fix link and CTA gaps
12 Act	X4 monitor live tests	X1, X2, X3	Approve every public change
13 Communicate	Flag only	R1, R2	Read and reply

2. Data map

Pull from these sources only. Never fill a gap with a guess. If a source fails, say so in the report and move on.

Channel	Tool	ID or handle	What it gives	Known limits
TikTok	Supermetrics TIKBA	Profile thethroughline.ai	Daily views, followers, likes, comments, shares, per-video stats	Profile history caps at 60 days. Follower field is a running total.
YouTube	Supermetrics YT2	UCn8StHyR4-RUhop5TILeu_g	Views, watch time, subs gained and lost	Subscriber total cannot be calculated. Use gained minus lost.
Instagram brand	vidIQ vidiq_ig_profile	@thethroughline.ai	Followers, recent reels, engagement	Text answer. Parse carefully. Never use the personal IGI account.
All socials	Metricool	Brand blogId 7676167, America/New_York	Scheduled posts, best times, cross-network analytics	Media must be a public URL. Google Drive or Dropbox only.
YouTube research	vidIQ	Keyword research, outliers, trending	Search demand, title scores, outlier videos	Directional. Label as estimates.
Substack	Built-in browser, Substack API	thethroughline.substack.com	Posts, opens, views, signups, subscriber total	Needs browser session. Stats need the publisher agreement.
Website	Vercel	prj_6U1E9YHqPjZ72DmU4TtjM4khL4ab	Deploys, runtime errors, page views	Web Analytics is off. No traffic data until you enable it.
Dashboard	Claude Dashboard artifact	claude.ai/artifact/UY4K1jNCBV7WuB2d4hEFfQ	Live view of all of the above plus the QB report tab	Reads the same sources. Not a source itself.

3. Calculation rules

These rules keep the numbers honest. Every QB run follows them. Every prompt in this playbook assumes them.

- **Compute ratios from totals.** Engagement rate equals total engagements divided by total views for the period. Never average per-video rates.
- **Never sum TikTok followers by day.** The daily field is the follower total. Take the last complete day.
- **YouTube subscribers equal gained minus lost.** Report it as net change for the window.
- **Never add reach across platforms.** The same person can see you on TikTok and Instagram. Add followers. Keep views and reach per platform.
- **Keep view definitions separate.** A TikTok view, a YouTube Shorts view, and an Instagram play are not the same event. Compare inside a platform.
- **Use complete days only.** Exclude today. Compare equal-length windows, and match weekdays where you can.
- **Respect minimum data.** Do not judge a video under 48 hours old or under 300 views. Do not judge a format with fewer than 3 posts. Label these Insufficient data.
- **Separate fact from estimate.** Tool numbers are facts. Forecasts, vidIQ volumes, and assumptions carry the label Estimate.
- **Name the source and the window.** Every number in a report shows where it came from and which dates it covers.
- **Use Eastern Time.** Metricool and all scheduling run in America/New_York.

Core metrics

Metric	Formula	Why it matters
Follow rate	Followers gained / views, per platform	The main growth efficiency number. Replaces CPA.
Completion rate	Full watches / views	Tells you if the body holds attention.
Hook rate	Views past 3 seconds / views (where the platform gives it)	Tells you if the first line works.
Save plus share rate	(Saves + shares) / views	The strongest signal for reach on TikTok and Instagram.
Comment rate	Comments / views	Conversation signal. Feeds the viral-moment goal.
Funnel rate	Substack signups / social profile views or link clicks	Tells you if social turns into owned audience.
Open rate	Total opens / total sends	Substack health. Computed from totals.
Hours per 1K followers	Your shoot and edit hours / followers gained x 1,000	Replaces ROAS. Your time is the budget.
Weekly pace	Followers gained this week vs needed per week	The 100K check.

Baseline on October 26, 2026

Signal	Value	Source
Combined followers	About 200	Dashboard followers calc
Instagram brand followers	38	vidIQ, @thethroughline.ai
Needed per week to hit 100K	About 1,617 (61.7 weeks left from Oct 25)	Dashboard progress calc
TikTok posting gap	October 15 to 25, no uploads	Supermetrics TIKBA videos
YouTube Shorts	Dormant	Supermetrics YT2
Substack subscribers	4	Substack subscriber stats
Substack open rate	34.3%	Substack post stats, from totals
Substack total views	114 across 57 posts	Substack post stats
Substack signups from posts	0	Substack post stats
Website traffic	Unknown. Web Analytics off.	Vercel

What the baseline says: the gap to 100K is a volume and funnel problem first. Consistent posting and a working social to Substack path come before fine-tuning hooks.

4. Monitor

Know where you stand before you change anything. These prompts feed the Overview tab and the daily flags.

M1 Daily health check

Daily QB task. Runs every morning.

```
Pull the last complete day and the 7 days before it from:
  TikTok (Supermetrics TIKBA), YouTube (Supermetrics YT2),
  Instagram @thethroughline.ai (vidIQ), Metricool blogId 7676167.
For each platform report views, followers gained, posts published.
Flag any of these:
  No post on a platform in 2 or more days.
  Views down 30% or more vs the prior 7-day average.
  Follow rate down 30% or more vs the prior 7 days.
  A scheduled Metricool post that failed or is missing media.
  A Vercel production deploy error or runtime error spike.
Do not explain causes here. Hand any flag to D1.
Return: Platform | Yesterday | 7-day avg | Change | Flag
```

M2 Cross-channel snapshot

Daily QB task. Writes to 09_QB_Operations/Metrics/metrics_daily.csv.

```
Build one row per platform for the last complete day:
  date, platform, followers_total, followers_gained, views,
  engagements, posts, follow_rate, save_share_rate.
Follow the calculation rules. Append to metrics_daily.csv.
Never overwrite past rows. If a source fails, write the row
with blanks and note the failure in ops_log.md.
Return: The appended rows and any source failures
```

M3 Weekly performance report

Weekly QB task. Feeds R1.

```
Compare this week (Mon to Sun, Eastern) to last week and to
the 4-week average for each platform and for Substack.
Show followers gained, views, follow rate, completion rate,
save plus share rate, posts, and Substack opens and signups.
Name the 3 videos and 1 article that drove the most growth.
Show weekly pace vs the 1,617 per week needed (update the
number from the dashboard progress calc each week).
Return: Platform | This week | Last week | 4-week avg | Change | Driver
```

M4 Find what drives the total

Weekly QB task.

```
Rank every video posted in the last 28 days by followers
```

```
gained where the platform gives it, else by views.
Show what share of total growth the top 3 videos produced.
If the top 3 drive over 70%, say growth is hit-driven and
list what they share: pillar, hook type, format, length,
posting time.
Return: Video | Platform | Date | Views | Share of total | Shared traits
```

5. Diagnose

Explain a change before you react to it. A drop can come from the content, the platform, the calendar, or the data. Rule out the boring causes first.

D1 Explain a flagged change

Daily QB task, only when M1 raises a flag.

```
Flag: [paste from M1]
Check in this order and stop at the first cause that fits:
  1. Data: did the source return a full day? Any auth error?
  2. Volume: did post count drop? (October 15 to 25 is a
     known gap.)
  3. Timing: were posts outside the Metricool best times?
  4. Mix: did the pillar or format mix change?
  5. Creative: did hook rate or completion fall on new posts?
  6. Platform: did views fall on all accounts at once?
State the cause, the evidence, and your confidence.
Return: Cause | Evidence | Confidence (High, Medium, Low) | Next step
```

D2 Diagnose a drop in follow rate

Weekly QB task when follow rate falls two weeks running.

```
Split follow rate by platform, pillar, and format for the
last 4 weeks. Check whether views rose while follows fell.
If so, the content reached people outside the audience.
Check the profile: bio, link, pinned videos, and whether the
last 9 posts tell a viewer what they get by following.
Check the CTA in captions and on screen.
Return: Segment | Follow rate now | 4 weeks ago | Likely cause | Fix to test
```

D3 Real change or tracking problem

Weekly QB task before any report claims a big swing.

```
For any change over 50%, confirm it in a second source.
TikTok: compare Supermetrics TIKBA with Metricool analytics.
Instagram: compare vidIQ with Metricool analytics.
Substack: compare post stats with the subscriber total.
Note field changes, missing days, or reconnects.
If the sources disagree, report both and do not act.
Return: Metric | Source A | Source B | Match | Verdict (Real, Tracking, Unclear)
```

6. Pace

Check if this week puts you on track for 100K. Pace turns a far goal into a weekly number you can hit or miss.

P1 Weekly pace check

Weekly QB task.

```
Goal: 100,000 combined followers by 2027-12-31.
Pull current combined followers from the dashboard
followers calc. Compute weeks left and followers needed
per week. Compare to the last 4 weeks of actual gains.
Map the result to the phase in the 100K plan tab.
Say plainly: on pace, behind, or far behind.
Return: Current | Needed per week | 4-week actual | Gap | Phase | Verdict
```

P2 What it takes to hit the target

Weekly QB task. Feeds the Growth Strategy 100K doc.

```
Using the last 4 weeks of follow rate per platform, compute
the weekly views needed to hit the weekly follower number.
Divide by average views per post to get posts per week.
Show three scenarios: hold current follow rate, double it,
and land one breakout video (use the top-video view count).
Label every output as Estimate. Name the main constraint:
posts, hook quality, follow rate, or funnel.
Return: Scenario | Follow rate | Views needed | Posts needed | Feasible |
Constraint
```

P3 Find what limits delivery

Weekly QB task.

```
Check the three things that cap organic reach:
  Posting consistency (days with no post, last 28 days).
  Ready inventory (videos in 10_Ready_To_Post not yet
  scheduled, and Week kit scripts not yet shot).
  Approval queue age (items waiting more than 48 hours).
Name the one bottleneck that, if fixed, adds the most posts.
Return: Constraint | Current | Target | Fix | Owner
```

7. Allocate

Your time is the budget. Put hours and posting slots where they return the most followers.

A1 Evaluate current allocation

Weekly QB task.

```
For the last 4 weeks, show posts, views, and followers
gained by platform and by pillar (business, technology,
product, policy). Compute followers gained per post.
Compare share of effort (posts) to share of results.
Mark any area where effort share is 1.5x results share.
Return: Area | Share of posts | Share of followers | Followers per post | Verdict
```

A2 Plan next week's hours

Weekly QB task. Goes into the next week kit.

```
Assume [X] shoot and edit hours next week (default 6).
Assign hours and post slots across platforms and pillars
using A1. Repurpose every video to TikTok, Reels, and
Shorts before you plan new shoots. Keep at least 20% of
slots for tests from section 12.
Show what you would cut if hours drop by half.
Return: Platform or pillar | Hours | Posts | Expected followers (Estimate) | Cut
first
```

A3 Model a shift before making it

Weekly QB task on request.

```
Proposed shift: [for example, move 2 posts per week from
Substack-only pieces to YouTube Shorts].
Use the last 4 weeks of per-post results to estimate the
effect. Show the downside if the new area performs at its
worst week. Recommend Go, Test first, or Do not shift.
Return: Option | Expected gain | Downside case | Confidence | Recommendation
```

8. Optimize search

Search is free, compounding reach. YouTube, TikTok search, and Google reward the same thing: say the words people type.

S1 Keyword map for next week

Weekly QB task.

```
For each script in next week's kit, run vidIQ keyword
research on the main topic. Pick the term with the best
mix of volume and low competition.
Put the term in the first spoken line, the on-screen title,
the caption, and the YouTube title. Keep the title under
60 characters.
Label vidIQ numbers as Estimate.
Return: Script | Keyword | Volume (Estimate) | Competition | Title | First line
```

S2 Find search winners and gaps

Weekly QB task.

```
Pull YouTube traffic by source for the last 28 days where
YT2 provides it. Pull vidIQ outliers for 3 competitor
channels in business, tech, and policy explainers.
List topics with search demand we have not covered.
List our videos that rank but have weak titles (score with
vidIQ title scoring).
Return: Topic or video | Evidence | Opportunity | Action
```

S3 Write search-ready titles from past results

Weekly QB task. Drafts only.

```
Use the top 5 videos by follow rate as models.
Write 3 title options per new script: one question, one
number, one plain claim. Match the ThroughLine style guide.
Score each with vidIQ. Put the drafts in approval_queue.md.
Return: Script | Title A | Title B | Title C | Scores | Pick
```

9. Optimize social and video

Protect what works, fix what does not, and catch fatigue early. This is the heart of the 100K plan.

V1 Strongest and weakest videos

Weekly QB task.

```
Rank all videos from the last 28 days that pass the minimum
data rule. Use follow rate first, then save plus share rate,
then completion rate.
Classify each:
  Protect: top 20%. Pin, repost to other platforms, cut a
  part 2.
  Scale: strong rate, low reach. Turn into a series.
  Refresh: good topic, weak hook rate. Reshoot the first
  3 seconds.
  Retire: bottom 20% on every rate. Stop the format.
  Insufficient data: too new or too few views.
Return: Video | Platform | Follow rate | Save plus share | Completion | Class |
Action
```

V2 Detect format fatigue

Daily QB task check, weekly summary.

```
For each recurring format (couch talk, news explainer,
myth vs fact, and others in the kit), track the last 5
posts. Flag fatigue when hook rate or completion falls on
3 posts in a row while posting time and length held steady.
Suggest one change: new opening line, new setting, new
length, or a guest.
Return: Format | Last 5 trend | Fatigue (Yes, Watch, No) | Change to test
```

V3 Find patterns in winners

Weekly QB task. Feeds the Video PRD.

```
Compare the top 10 and bottom 10 videos of the last 60 days.
Tag each on: hook type, first-line length, topic pillar,
face on camera in first second, on-screen text, length,
posting hour, and CTA.
Report only patterns that show up in at least 6 of 10
winners and fewer than 3 of 10 losers.
Update the Video PRD rules with what holds.
Return: Trait | Winners | Losers | Pattern holds | PRD rule
```

V4 Audience fit check

Weekly QB task, monthly depth.

```
Pull audience data where available (Metricool, YT2, vidIQ
```

```
subscriber insights). Compare who watches to the target:
students and early-career people curious about MBA and MPA
topics. Flag if most views come from outside the target.
Suggest topic or framing changes that pull the right people.
Return: Segment | Share of views | Follow rate | Fit | Change
```

V5 Draft new videos from past results

Weekly QB task. Drafts only, into the next week kit.

```
Use V1, V3, and S1. Write 5 new scripts that reuse winning
traits and test one new variable each.
For each script give: hook, 3 beats, CTA, keyword, format,
and the one variable under test.
Follow the ThroughLine style guide. No em dashes.
Return: Script | Hook | Format | Keyword | Variable tested | Based on
```

When paid starts

ThroughLine has no ad spend today. When you boost a post (TikTok Spark Ads or Instagram boosts), only boost videos marked Protect in V1. Then use the paid prompts of the Supermetrics source as written: ad fatigue, audience saturation, and paid-video diagnosis. Add cost per follower as the main KPI. Every boost goes through the approval queue first.

10. Plan

Turn last week into next week. Every kit should be built from evidence, not from scratch.

L1 Lessons from the last 4 weeks

Weekly QB task.

```
Read the last 4 weekly reports and the test log.
List what worked, what failed, and what is still unclear.
Keep only lessons with evidence. Drop anything based on
one video.
Return: Lesson | Evidence | Confidence | Keep, Test again, or Drop
```

L2 Build next week's content kit

Weekly QB task. Writes claude/weekN-content-kit.md and the dashboard weeks dataset.

```
Use L1, A2, S1, and V5.
Include: post dates and times (Metricool best times),
scripts, captions, titles, keywords, the Substack article,
repurpose map, and the one test for the week.
Match the Week 5 kit layout so the dashboard reads it.
Return: The kit file and a one-paragraph summary for approval
```

L3 Adapt a winner for another platform

Weekly QB task.

```
Take each Protect video from V1. Write the version for each
other platform: Reels caption and cover text, Shorts title,
Substack note or article angle, and a LinkedIn post draft.
Keep the hook. Change length and CTA to fit the platform.
Return: Source video | Platform | Changes | Draft
```

11. Measure outcomes

Followers are the goal you track. An owned audience is the asset you keep. Measure the path from a view to a Substack subscriber.

F1 Funnel snapshot

Daily QB task.

```
Pull: social profile views or link clicks where available
(Metricool), Substack new subscribers and signups by post,
and Vercel page views once Web Analytics is on.
Write one funnel row: views, profile visits, link clicks,
site visits, Substack signups.
Mark any step with no data as Not tracked.
Return: Step | Count | Rate from prior step | Tracked
```

F2 Find the broken step

Weekly QB task.

```
Compare each funnel step to the step before.
Today Substack shows 0 signups from posts and 4 total
subscribers. Check: is the Substack link in every bio?
Do videos say why to subscribe? Does the site send people
to Substack? Is the welcome page clear?
Name the single step with the biggest drop and one fix.
Return: Step | Drop | Cause | Fix | Owner
```

F3 Substack article performance

Weekly QB task.

```
For posts from the last 28 days, report views, opens,
open rate from totals, signups, and shares.
Match each article to the video that promoted it.
Show which topics and title styles earn opens and signups.
Return: Article | Date | Views | Open rate | Signups | Promoted by | Lesson
```

12. Act

Analysis only matters when it changes what you post. Test one variable at a time. Nothing public moves without your yes.

X1 Turn a finding into a test

Weekly QB task.

```
Finding: [from V1, V3, D2, or F2]
Write the test:
  Hypothesis: if we change [X], [metric] will rise because
  [reason].
  Control: the last 3 posts in the same format.
  Treatment: the next 3 posts with only [X] changed.
  Primary metric and guardrail metric.
Before and after tests show direction, not proof. Say so.
Return: Hypothesis | Control | Treatment | Metric | Guardrail | Limits
```

X2 Define success before you start

Weekly QB task, same run as X1.

```
Set the baseline from the control posts.
Success: primary metric up 20% or more, guardrail holds.
Promising: up 10 to 20%, run 3 more posts.
No effect: within 10%.
Negative: down 10% or more, or guardrail breaks.
Inconclusive: any post under the minimum data rule.
Earliest read: 48 hours after the third treatment post.
Return: Metric | Baseline | Success line | Guardrail | Read date
```

X3 Prepare a change for approval

Weekly or daily QB task.

```
Write one entry in 09_QB_Operations/Approvals/
approval_queue.md per change:
  Change ID, what changes, where (platform and account),
  current value, proposed value, evidence, rollback.
Public posts, bio edits, pinned posts, schedule changes,
and any boost all need approval.
After approval, schedule in Metricool (blogId 7676167) and
confirm the scheduled post exists. If media has no public
URL, give the manual steps and mark it Not done.
Return: Change ID | Platform | Current | Proposed | Evidence | Rollback | Status
```

X4 Monitor and close a test

Daily QB task while a test runs, weekly to close.

```
Check that treatment posts went out as planned.
```

```
At the read date, compare to the X2 lines and pick the
outcome. Update the test log. If Success, add the rule to
the Video PRD. If Negative, revert the format.
Return: Test ID | Outcome | Evidence | Decision | PRD update
```

Test log template

Keep this table in 09_QB_Operations/Strategy/test_log.md. One row per test.

Test ID	Start	Variable	Hypothesis	Metric	Result	Decision
T-2026-W5-01	2026-10-27	Substack CTA on screen in last 3 seconds	A spoken plus on-screen CTA lifts Substack signups	Signups per 1K views	Open	Open

The first row is a suggested test, not a running one. It targets the broken funnel step from F2.

13. Communicate

Report what happened, why, and what you decided. Short, sourced, and ready to act on.

R1 Weekly QB report

Weekly QB task. Sent by push, email draft to everrettharris@hks.harvard.edu, and the dashboard QB report tab.

```
Sections, in this order:
  1. The one-line verdict on 100K pace.
  2. Three numbers that matter this week, with sources.
  3. What the QB did (docs updated, drafts made, tests read).
  4. Decisions for you, each with a Yes or No ask.
  5. Next week's plan in five lines.
Under 400 words. Style guide rules apply. No em dashes.
Link every file path and source.
Return: The report text and the approval list
```

R2 Explain a missed target

Weekly QB task when pace is behind 2 weeks running.

```
State the target, the actual, and the gap.
Give the cause from D1 to D3 with evidence.
Separate what you control (posting, hooks, CTA) from what
you do not (platform changes, news cycle).
Propose one recovery move and what it costs in hours.
Return: Target | Actual | Gap | Cause | Recovery | Cost
```

R3 Answer a quick question

On demand, in this chat or any QB run.

```
Question: [your question]
Pull the minimum data that answers it. Give the answer in
the first sentence, then the number, then the source.
Say what the data cannot tell you.
Return: Answer | Number | Source | Limits
```

14. Guardrails

- Drafts and docs only. Nothing public, and nothing that changes an account, happens without your approval in approval_queue.md.
- Never send an email or message for you. The QB writes drafts. You send.
- Never treat the personal Instagram as the brand account.
- Never present an estimate as a fact. Label it.
- If two sources disagree by more than 10%, report both and hold any action.
- Log every run, source failure, and change in 09_QB_Operations/Ops_Log/ops_log.md.
- Every file the QB creates in OneDrive ships as DOCX and PDF.

Open items that block parts of this playbook

Item	Blocks	Fix
Vercel Web Analytics is off	F1 and F2 site steps	Enable Web Analytics on the Vercel project
Metricool has no Drive or Dropbox link	X3 auto scheduling	Link Google Drive or Dropbox in Metricool
Week 5 videos not in 10_Ready_To_Post	X3 and P3	Drop the edited files in the folder
YouTube Shorts dormant	A2 repurpose plan	Repost Week 5 videos to Shorts

Related docs: 01_Brand_and_Strategy/Brand_and_Content_Playbook, the Growth Strategy 100K doc, the Video PRD, and the week content kits in the ThroughLine project.