

# Your Startup Isn't Growing. Is It From A Bad Product, Bad Marketing, Or A Bad Market?

## Use This Worksheet To Find Out

### Instructions:

1. Rate your company in each of the areas below.
2. If you're unsure of what to measure, review the definitions on the second page of this worksheet.
3. When you're done, compare your result to the examples at <https://johnrougeux.com/why-your-startup-isnt-growing/>.
4. Depending on the result, cry, cheer, or spend the afternoon pondering your role in the universe.

	Weak	Average	Strong
Paid Marketing			
Search (product/company)			
Search (related term)			
PR Coverage			
Direct Traffic			
Website Conv Rate			
Sales Close Rate			
Referrals			
Churn/Retention			
Reviews/NPS			

## Definitions

**PPC/SEM Marketing** – anywhere you spend money to drive leads, clicks, etc. Evaluate the ads themselves, not the entire conversion funnel (here are some [good benchmarks](#) to reference). *Why this matters: if your ads themselves perform well but you're not growing, it probably indicates a product- or market-related problem.*

**Search traffic for your product/company** – what's the search volume for the name of your company or if applicable, your own products? Nonexistent? Moderate? Growing? *Why this matters: if people are searching for you, they've probably heard about you from someone else. That's a usually good thing!*

**Search traffic for related terms** – this is the search volume for terms that are related to what you do, like “landing page software”, “energy efficient lightbulbs”, or “books on how to find a girlfriend”. *Why this matters: if there's high search volume for things related to what you do, that's a good sign that there's a market for what you're selling.*

**PR coverage** – are other sites interested in writing about you? Or does your local newspaper turn you down so they have space to cover that local fashion show for seniors? *Why this matters: if you can't get any PR, chances are your product isn't interesting or valuable enough to be worth writing about.*

**Direct/referral traffic** – having plenty of these visitors means people are (a) bookmarking your site, (b) heading there directly, or (c) coming to your site from articles written about you. *Why this matters: it means you're doing something right – people love you enough to visit you often to tell others.*

**Website Conversion Rate** – you might generate lots of “top of the funnel” interest from a paid ad campaign, but once visitors actually learn what you do on your website, are they still interested? *Why this matters: a low-performing site means your product just isn't compelling, or that you haven't described it clearly.*

**Sales Close Rate** – do leads show up for calls, and are they closing at a healthy rate? Or do you resort to discounts just to get a few closes? *Why this matters: a really good marketing team can get people interested, but if the product is weak and/or the market is wrong, then sales won't get very far.*

**Referrals** – what portion of your does your growth come from referrals? If your not sure what a good benchmark is, look at [this article from FriendBuy](#). *Why this matters: if you're getting little growth from referrals, that's a sign that people aren't passionate enough about your product to tell others.*

**Retention/Repeat Purchases** – do your customers buy from you again? And if you're selling a subscription-based product, do they stick around for long? *Why this matters: low retention or a low repeat purchase rate is a major red flag that your product doesn't fit with the market.*

**Reviews/Net Promoter Score** – either one will tell you what people really think about your product. If you don't know how to measure NPS, [here's how to do it](#). *Why this matters: low ratings on either metric are a sign that your product is weak. But if you have high ratings and still aren't growing, that points to a marketing issue.*