

# 8 BIASES

EVERY MARKETER  
MUST OUTSMART  
IN 2026 (PART 1)

A Marketer's Guide to the Psychological Biases That Shape Decisions  
and How to Avoid Them

# CONFIRMATION BIAS

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A high-angle, isometric view of a complex maze constructed from dark, textured stone blocks. The maze is dimly lit, with several narrow, glowing yellow paths that lead through the labyrinth. Small, glowing red triangles are placed at various points along the walls, resembling warning signs or traps. In the lower right quadrant, a small, dark silhouette of a person stands in one of the glowing paths, looking towards the center of the maze. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and challenging.

We favor info that confirms our beliefs and ignore what contradicts them.

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e.g. “Based on one quarter’s success, a marketing team crowned YouTube as the top awareness driver while ignoring years of consistent data proving other platforms performed better.”

## How to Avoid It:

- Individual: Seek disconfirming data.
- Team: Appoint a devil's advocate.
- Org: Train leaders to ask neutral, open-ended questions.



# **ANCHORING BIAS**



Relying too heavily on the first piece of information (anchor) when making decisions

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*e.g. "The first sales forecast calls +20%. Every later projection is measured against it, even when the market says +10% is closer to reality"*



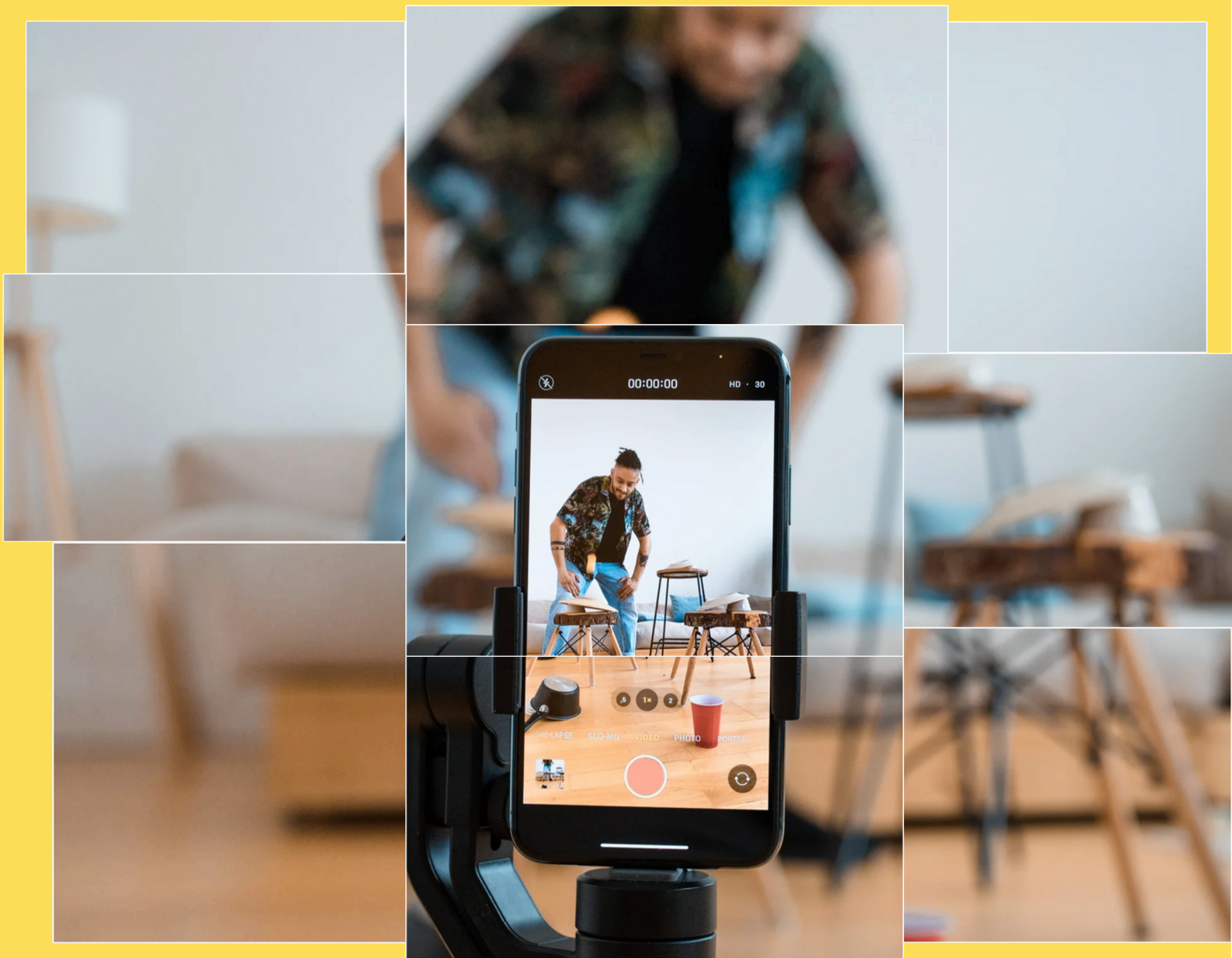
## How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Recalculate without the “first number.”
- Team: Generate independent estimates before sharing.
- Org: Use zero-based budgeting, not last year’s numbers.

# AVAILABILITY BIAS

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We judge decisions based on what's most memorable.

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*e.g. After one viral TikTok, the brand reallocates budget heavily into TikTok, ignoring that 80% of revenue still comes from search and retail media.”*



## How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Look at full-funnel data, not just the last big win.
- Team: Share reports that cover multiple periods, not just recent.
- Org: Collect input from multiple channels before shifting spend.

# OVERCONFIDENCE BIAS

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A person in a dark suit stands on a staircase, looking up at a large, dark shadow cast on the wall behind them. The shadow is significantly larger than the person, suggesting an overestimation of their own size or power. The scene is dimly lit, with the person and the shadow being the primary focus against the textured wall.

Overestimating one's own knowledge or abilities

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e.g. "A brand team skips concept testing, convinced the new product name will resonate. Post-launch, customers find it confusing."



### How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Run a “premortem” — imagine failure, ask why.
- Team: Get external feedback on plans.
- Org: Normalize mistakes, reward humility, and benchmark performance.

# DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT

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A metacognitive bias where the least competent individuals overestimate their ability, while highly skilled people may underestimate theirs.

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e.g. “A new product designer may overestimate his understanding of user needs and skip user research, leading to flawed designs”



## How to Avoid It:

- Individual: Check instincts against real data.
- Team: Make it safe to ask questions and admit uncertainty.
- Org: Use clear ROI benchmarks to ground decisions.

# FRAMING EFFECT

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A surreal landscape featuring a vast, hazy mountain range under a sky filled with large, billowing clouds. In the foreground, two figures stand on a grassy ridge, looking out over the valley. A large, golden, rectangular frame is superimposed on the sky, showing a different perspective of the same scene, where the clouds are more dramatic and the lighting is warmer, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

Making different choices based on how the same information is presented

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e.g. “We gained 20,000 new followers” instead of  
“Follower growth slowed 50% vs last quarter.”



HALF  
FULL

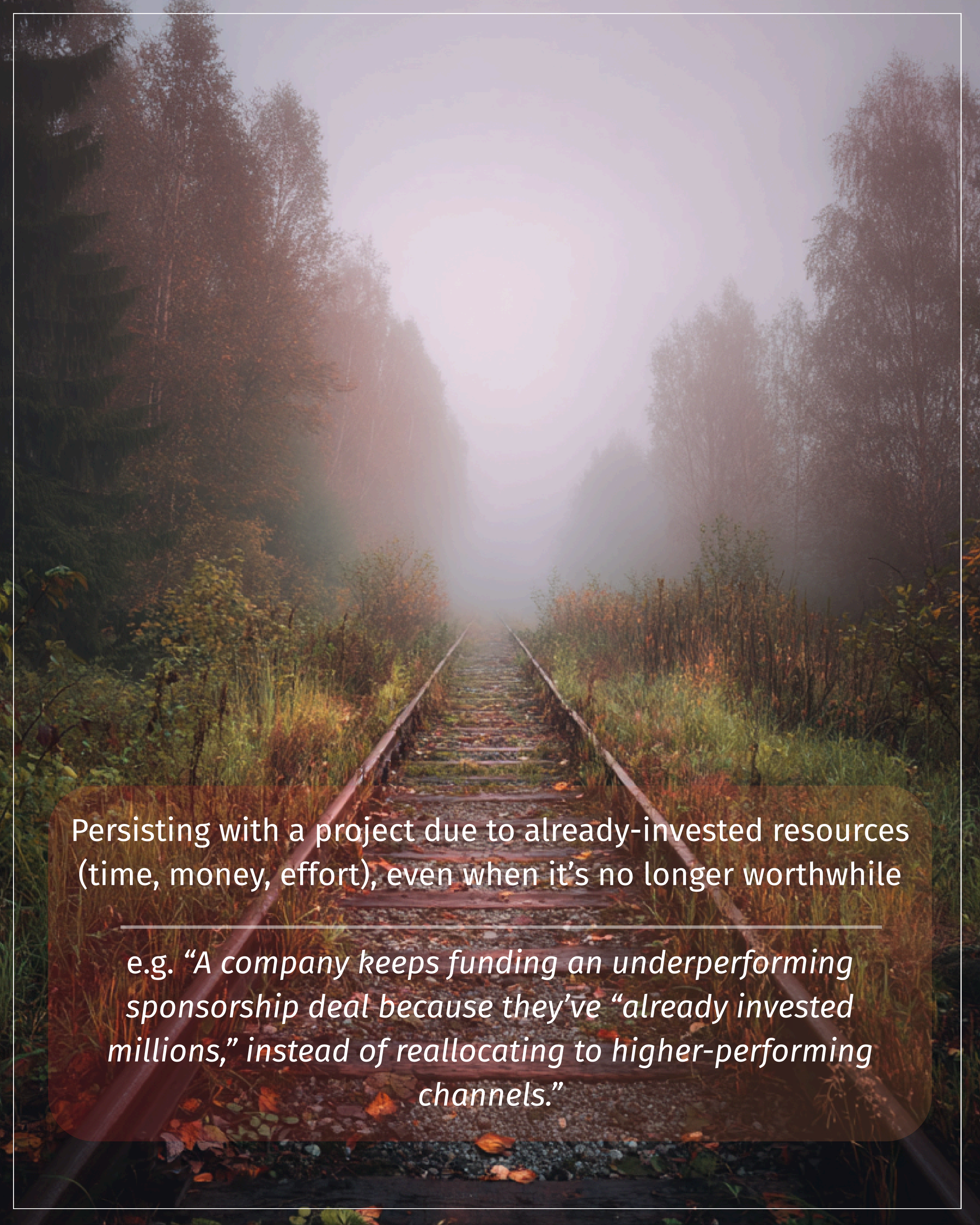
AND DETERMINED

## How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Reframe reports in gains and losses.
  - Team: Present KPIs from multiple perspectives.
  - Org: Standardize reporting to reduce framing spin.

# **SUNK COST FALLACY**

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A photograph of a narrow-gauge railroad track cutting through a dense forest. The tracks lead from the foreground into the distance, disappearing into a thick mist or fog. The trees are tall and thin, with some autumn-colored leaves visible. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat somber.

Persisting with a project due to already-invested resources (time, money, effort), even when it's no longer worthwhile

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*e.g. "A company keeps funding an underperforming sponsorship deal because they've "already invested millions," instead of reallocating to higher-performing channels."*



## How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Ask: If starting today, would I choose this?
- Team: Discuss opportunity cost openly.
- Org: Use clear “kill criteria” for campaigns.

# STATUS QUO BIAS

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Preferring the current state of affairs and resisting change.

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*e.g. “Our current system works fine. why we need to adopt AI, It’s been with us for years, and the team is used to it. Let’s not risk disrupting the workflow now.”*



## How to Avoid It:

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- Individual: Audit old habits, are they still ROI positive?
- Team: Rotate media planners/strategists to refresh thinking.
- Org: Run pilot projects to test alternatives before scaling.



# 7 BIASES

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NEXT WEEK



A Marketer's Guide to the Psychological Biases That Shape Decisions  
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