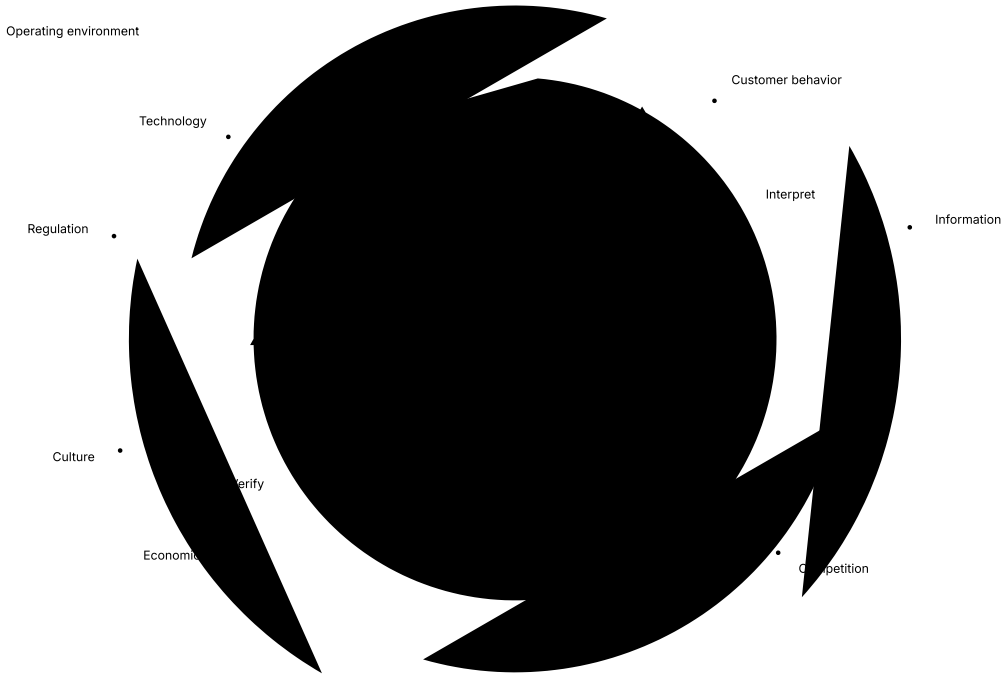
GUIDE

Decide. The stage that protects the parts of a brand that must not move.

Adaptation without a decision stage is just change. This is where a business separates what is allowed to move from what is not, and names who holds the authority for each.

3 minute read



Who decides what a business changes, and how is the core protected from being changed by accident?

The decision stage answers four things: what should stay exactly as it is, what should change, who has the authority to make that call, and what evidence will show whether it worked.

The fourth is the one that gets dropped, and dropping it makes the rest of the cycle decorative. A change made without naming its evidence in advance can be declared a success afterward using whatever number happened to move.

The core is protected here or nowhere

A brand has a small number of decisions that only pay off through repetition. Who the business is for. What it refuses to do. The standard it holds. The name and the handful of phrases attached to it. Each of these compounds over years, and each resets to zero when it changes.

Everything else is execution: the words on a page, the proof shown, the channels used, the way an offer is described. Execution is expected to move, constantly, because it competes in an environment that moves constantly.

The failure this stage exists to prevent is the quiet one, where the core gets changed as a side effect of an execution decision. Nobody proposes changing what a company stands for. They propose new homepage copy, and the new copy addresses a different buyer. The position moved and no decision was ever recorded, which means it cannot be reviewed, reversed, or defended.

Authority is named per decision, not per person

- **Execution decisions sit with Digilu.** Wording, structure, proof, internal links, schema, which page answers which question. These are the decisions a client is paying not to have to make, and routing them upward recreates the bottleneck the arrangement exists to remove.
- **Core decisions sit with the business.** Position, promise, category, pricing, who the customer is. Digilu recommends and does not act. A supplier that can change a client's position on its own judgment is not managing a brand, it is borrowing one.
- **Anything that cannot be undone gets named before it is done.** Not because it is likely to be wrong, but because reversibility is what makes a fast decision safe, and a decision without it deserves a slower process.

Deciding not to act is a decision

It is recorded the same way, with the same evidence and the same review date. This sounds like paperwork and it is the difference between a business that chose to wait and a business that did not notice. Six months later those two look identical from the outside, and only one of them can explain itself.

Where this stage fails

Two limits worth stating.

The first is that a business which cannot state its core does not have an adaptation problem, it has an unresolved one. Adapting around a position nobody has settled produces faster incoherence: every cycle changes something, nothing accumulates, and the business ends up with a well documented record of going in circles. The honest response is to stop and resolve the position, which is a different piece of work and should be named as one.

The second is that this stage can be used to justify inertia. A core that is genuinely stable and a core that is merely unexamined look the same from inside the business, and “that is who we are” is available as an answer to any uncomfortable signal. The test is whether the business can say what would change its mind. If nothing would, the core is not protected, it is frozen.

The decision stage sits at the center of the model described on the Adaptive Brand Management page, which sets out how the six stages connect.

Digilu runs this cycle continuously on behalf of the businesses it manages. The theory behind the model is published separately by Marketing Helix in Adaptive Brand Management: Foundations. What this page describes is the delivery. Compare memberships.

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