



FINAL REPORT

Ember & Oak: your *route* forward.

Prepared for Priya Castellano Focused Strategy Sprint October 4, 2026

01 A note from your strategist

Priya, what struck us most is how clearly your customers already describe what makes you different. They talk about long, clean burns in small spaces and candles that feel like a gift. Your website and wholesale deck talk about "hand-poured luxury", which is what every brand on your shelf says.

The good news: you don't need a new story. You need to tell the one your customers are already telling, everywhere, and stop paying to say the generic one. This report shows where that's worth the most and what we'd do first.

Greg Pittman

Wandering Rebel

02 The short version

Ember & Oak makes a better candle than the shelf around it, but tells the same story as everyone on that shelf.

Customers buy for the burn time and the scent throw, and they say so in reviews and calls. Online, the brand leads with craft and luxury, so shoppers can't tell it apart from three competitors at a lower price.

If Ember & Oak claims the thing buyers already notice, long, clean burns for small spaces, the product page, wholesale pitch and ads can all pull in one direction, and the gift buyers who already love it will find it faster.

THE ONE DECISION IN FRONT OF YOU

Whether to stand for burn quality in small spaces, and stop competing on "luxury".

03 What's at stake

~\$4,800 a month

Revenue at the biggest funnel leak

2,400 product-page views × 2 points more add-to-cart × \$100 average order (estimate)

~9 hours a week

Hours back each week from AI drafting

Product descriptions 4 + wholesale replies 3 + reports 2 hours a week (estimate)

~\$1,100 a month

Paid spend at risk

Meta ads cost \$68 per customer vs. \$22 from email; 16 customers a month from Meta (estimate)

Estimates are built from the numbers you entered in your Field Kit, with the math shown, so you can check them and update them as you learn more.

04 Where you stand

Positioning	Today 42 · 90-day target 65 A clear product truth, described in borrowed category language.
Customer insight	Today 68 · 90-day target 75 Strong instincts from real conversations; not yet written down.
Digital	Today 51 · 90-day target 66 Traffic is healthy; the product page loses buyers.
AI	Today 38 · 90-day target 60 No workflows yet; three obvious time-savers.
Creative	Today 55 · 90-day target 68 Beautiful, but interchangeable with competitors.
Advertising	Today 47 · 90-day target 62 Spend spread thin; one channel is quietly unprofitable.

05 What we found

POSITIONING

Your best proof is burn time, and it appears nowhere above the fold.

| *"Customers always mention it lasts twice as long."*

You're paying to say "luxury" when buyers will pay for longevity.

CUSTOMER INSIGHT

Most first orders are gifts, but the site speaks to self-buyers.

| *"Half our December orders had a gift note."*

Gift buyers need reassurance and speed, not origin stories.

ADVERTISING

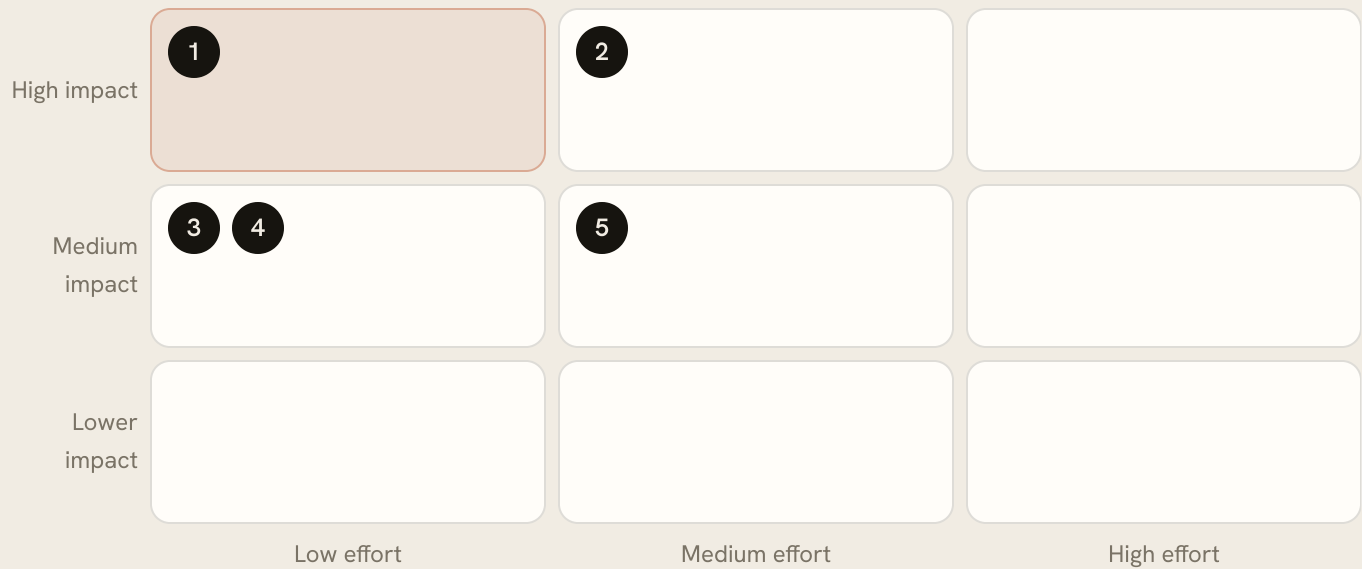
Meta ads cost three times more per customer than email.

| *"We spend about \$1,100 a month on Instagram ads."*

Budget is leaking from the least efficient channel.

06 Priorities at a glance

Each number is a recommendation below. Start top left: the most impact for the least effort.



07 What we recommend

1 Rewrite the homepage around "burns twice as long"

Positioning

Next 30 days

high impact

low effort

Buyers already notice it. Saying it first makes every ad and pitch easier.

1. Test the burn claim on three bestsellers
2. Rewrite the first screen of the homepage
3. Swap slide two of the wholesale deck

OWNER	MEASURE	VALUE
Founder	Add-to-cart rate Now: 3.1% Target: 4.5%	~\$4,800 a month at the leak

You told us: "Customers always mention it lasts twice as long."

FROM YOUR STRATEGIST

We'd start here before spending another dollar on ads.

How we can help: Your Sprint includes writing and testing the new line with you.

2 Add a gift path to every product page

Digital

Next 30 days

high impact

medium effort

Gift buyers are your largest group and the least served.

1. Add gift notes and wrapping above the fold
2. Show delivery dates by zip code
3. Create a "gifts under \$50" collection

OWNER

Marketing lead

MEASURE

Gift-order conversion

Now: Not tracked

Target: Tracked and up 20%

You told us: "Half our December orders had a gift note."

3 Move \$600 a month from Meta ads to email

Advertising

Next 30 days

medium impact

low effort

Email brings customers at a third of the cost.

1. Pause the two weakest ad sets
2. Launch a welcome series for new subscribers
3. Review cost per customer monthly

OWNER

Marketing lead

MEASURE

Blended cost per customer

Now: \$45

Target: \$30

VALUE

~\$600 a month saved

You told us: "We spend about \$1,100 a month on Instagram ads."

4 Pilot AI drafting for product descriptions

AI

Days 31–60

medium impact

low effort

Nine hours a week go to repetitive writing.

1. Write a one-page style guide
2. Draft 20 descriptions with AI, edited by your team
3. Measure time saved after a month

OWNER

Marketing lead

MEASURE

Hours on descriptions

Now: 4 a week

Target: 1 a week

VALUE

~9 hours a week

How we can help: An AI Intensive would set this up with your team.

5 Make Ember & Oak the answer when gifters ask AI

Visibility

Days 61–90

medium impact

medium effort

Shoppers ask AI assistants for gift ideas, and you don't show up.

1. Describe the brand the same way everywhere
2. Publish plain answers to common gift questions
3. Earn two mentions on trusted gift guides

OWNER

Founder

MEASURE

Mentions in AI answers

Now: 0 of 4 assistants

Target: 2 of 4

08 Your first 90 days

Next 30 days

- 1 Rewrite the homepage around "burns twice as long"
- 2 Add a gift path to every product page
- 3 Move \$600 a month from Meta ads to email

Fix the message first, then put money behind it.

Days 31–60

- 4 Pilot AI drafting for product descriptions

Days 61–90

- 5 Make Ember & Oak the answer when gifters ask AI

Later

Nothing scheduled

09 How we'll measure progress

MEASURE	TODAY	90-DAY TARGET	HOW
Add-to-cart rate	3.1%	4.5%	Shopify analytics, monthly
Blended cost per customer	\$45	\$30	Ad and email spend ÷ new customers
Mentions in AI answers	0 of 4	2 of 4	The three-question check, quarterly

We'll review these together at 30, 60 and 90 days.

Let's walk through it *together*.

We'll go through the priorities, answer your questions and agree on the first moves.

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