

What makes a KPI actually useful?

D8A.ACADEMY/RESOURCES/SMART-KPI

S · SPECIFIC

the test	one metric, one owner, one definition
bad → good	"engagement" → "weekly active users"

M · MEASURABLE

the test	a number from a system, not a feeling
bad → good	"brand love" → "NPS, run quarterly"

A · ACHIEVABLE

the test	ambitious, but within your influence
bad → good	"+500% sales" → "+15% vs last quarter"

R · RELEVANT

the test	moves a business goal, not an ego
bad → good	"pageviews" → "signup conversion"

T · TIME-BOUND

the test	a deadline and a review cadence
bad → good	"grow users" → "10k MAU by Q4"

KPI VS METRIC

metric	anything you can measure
KPI	the 3–5 metrics a decision hangs on
the rule	nobody acts when it moves? Not key.

→ a KPI without an owner and a target is decoration

WORTH MEMORIZING

01 Vanity vs actionable

Vanity metrics only go up. Actionable metrics can hurt you.

VANITY

- Total registered users
- Pageviews, app downloads
- Cumulative anything
- Always up and to the right

ACTIONABLE

- Weekly active users
- Signup to paid conversion
- Churn rate by cohort
- Can go down, and you learn

→ Quick test: if the number dropped 20% tomorrow, would anyone change what they do?

02 Trap: the KPI zoo

Twelve KPIs means zero KPIs.

symptom	a dashboard nobody opens on Monday
cause	every team added "their" number to stay visible
fix	3 to 5 per level, each with an owner and a target
→ The K stands for key. Keep it that way.	