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# Dream big. Think big. Execute.

Connecting your life  
vision to data-driven  
financial strategy



# Welcome to Your Financial Roadmap



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Dear Business Owner,

Congratulations on your decision to take control of your business' finances and gain more freedom in your life.

This self-assessment is designed to help entrepreneurs identify blind spots and incorporate meaningful change. Change that not drives profit and growth for your company, while allowing you to live the life you want without being consumed by your business.

The scorecard covers 21 key strategies, for an overall score out of 210. The higher your score, the easier it is to run your business without getting lost in the weeds.

We are here to help you build a **business that works for you** – not the other way around.

***Frustrated with your results? Leaking money? Losing time? Burned out?***

With our guidance, mentoring and analytical tools, we can help you get your life back and show you how to work ON your business, not IN it.

Whenever you are ready, simply [click this link](#) to schedule a Discovery Call. We can't wait to learn about your business, your goals, and ultimately, your personal dreams – and to explore how we can help make it all happen for you.

Sincerely,

The Accountability Services Team



*P.S. Your score today is just a starting point.*

*Every missing point is an opportunity to take better control of your business.*

# How to use this tool

## Completing each scorecard

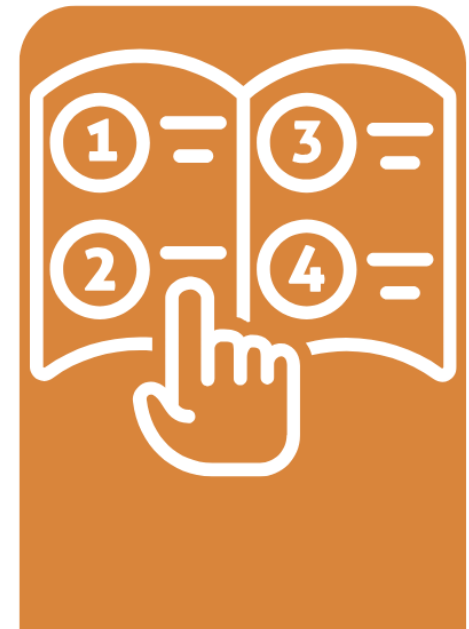
1. Read the **Objective** and **How it works** sections on the left to understand what each key strategy is trying to achieve and why it is important for your business.
2. Go through **all 5 ranking options** to see which description best matches your current reality.
3. Type the numeric score for that ranking into the box in the upper right corner. Choose the higher number if everything is true and the lower number if only some of it is true.
4. Be 100% honest for the best results.

## Tallying your score

Following each category, you will find a summary where you can enter your combined score for that section. When all sections are complete, transfer these scores to the final RESULTS page.

## Putting you results to work

Use your scores from individual strategies and category summaries to identify weaknesses and opportunities. Then, implement the necessary changes to raises these scores – improving your business and your life along the way.



# WORK/LIFE BALANCE: Business & personal goals align

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

To ensure that the efforts you put in at work have a direct and positive impact on your personal, non-work goals.

## How it works

Many entrepreneurs falsely believe that the primary purpose of a business is to make money.

The real reason you start a business is to build the life you have always wanted. Profit is part of this puzzle but far from the whole picture.

Start by imagining your ideal life. Then work backwards to figure out which business goals best align to make that your reality.

Maybe it's a big exit – or a flexible schedule, a legacy to leave to your children, or to retire early.

Your dreams are 100% yours, but so is the responsibility for setting the right goals to get you there.

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Don't feel bad If you score here. It's far more common than you might imagine, especially for new business owners.</p> <p>Goal misalignment manifests in many different forms, If one of these scenarios sounds familiar, it's time to formulate a new strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your business is financially successful, but you have no time for family, friends and hobbies</li><li>• Your unwillingness to invest money, time and effort into your business is leading to financial shortfalls at home</li><li>• You actively dislike what you do to earn a living</li><li>• Your business is causing relationship strain</li><li>• You neither know what your personal nor your business goals are</li></ul>	<p>If you find yourself here, you likely know what your personal and business goals are, but they aren't working in concert, and you haven't the foggiest idea how to better align them.</p> <p>In extreme cases, you may need to reevaluate one or more goals if your personal and business desires just simply don't line up – but most of the time the solution lies in continual improvement.</p> <p>Don't try to tackle the whole problem at once. Instead, consistently make small, incremental, but meaningful adjustments.</p> <p>Try a variety of techniques, systems and changes to slowly narrow the gap between your two sets of goals.</p>	<p>Your business and personal goals align on a superficial level but you're struggling to link business success to your deeper hopes and dreams.</p> <p>Once your business covers the tab for your lifestyle, you can start to expand your plane of thought and find ways to achieve meaning through your business.</p> <p>Unlike many working professionals who can disconnect their career from their home life, business owners tend to be more tied to their work – not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.</p> <p>There's nothing wrong with your business being a defining characteristic of who you are, but that means tying business goals into the person you want to be.</p>	<p>At this stage, success at work directly translates to both superficial and more meaningful accomplishments in your personal life.</p> <p>Whatever the right balance is for you and your family, you've found it.</p> <p>All that is left to do is tweak and optimize.</p> <p>This might be a good time to ask yourself, "What else do I want?" It's easy to become so laser focused on our current set of goals that we fail to see that new opportunities are now available.</p> <p>As your business grows, the possibilities become endless for leveraging that success into more than just financial gain. Get creative, you might surprise yourself with what you come up with.</p>	<p>Once your business and personal goals are fully aligned, you'll wonder how you ever lived any other way.</p> <p>This is what entrepreneurship is all about – putting yourself in a position to make all your dreams come true – and to have the autonomy to shift gears and adjust those dreams when life inevitably happens.</p> <p>All that is left now is to periodically take the time to pause, reflect and reassess, to confirm that your goals have not changed.</p> <p>It's OK if they do, because now you have all the tools in place to make any necessary adjustments that might be necessary for realignment.</p>



# WORK/LIFE BALANCE: Mission/vision align with beliefs

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Align your business mission and vision with your personal beliefs to build a thriving, sustainable business that enriches your life and makes a positive impact.

## How it works

Owning a business that runs contrary to your personal beliefs can lead to burnout when the going gets tough. The more closely the purpose of your business matches the purpose of your life, the more likely your success.

Value alignment leads to:

- Authenticity in your brand and business relationships
- Intrinsic motivation during challenging times
- Clearer decision making
- Improved career satisfaction
- Easier to inspire and lead your team
- Emotional connection with your target market

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Very few people find deep life satisfaction solely in the pursuit of money. If the only parallel between your business vision and your personal one is that profits provide cash to pay for your lifestyle, you may find that as the years wear on, you resent your business more and more.</p> <p>But just because you don't have alignment today doesn't mean you must sell your business and move on. There are countless ways to slowly reshape your business if you make this a priority.</p> <p>The first step is to take time to sit down and write out your personal mission and vision. Often owners find themselves here in the Danger Zone because they don't have a clear idea of what their vision is to begin with.</p>	<p>You have a clear picture of what your personal beliefs are but feel they are mostly disconnected from the purpose of your business. Sometimes you find it hard to stay motivated but there are just enough aspects of your work that relate to your personal purpose that you don't mind what you do.</p> <p>At a high level, rewriting your mission and vision statements to better align with personal beliefs is an effective strategy for turning the ship in the right direction.</p> <p>Next, audit your business practices to make small changes that improve alignment. You're not changing your branding, messaging or business model at this time, simply tweaking workflows to better match with your new mission and vision statements.</p>	<p>You are cognizant of where your business practices do and don't align with your personal beliefs and are making a concerted effort to make changes where you can. This is great progress.</p> <p>Now you can start to reshape the type of people you do business with at every level, including employees, vendors, strategic partners and clients. Don't clean house overnight but do consider ending relationships with people who contradict your principles and start giving heavier weighting to value alignment when building new ones.</p> <p>People are important as they are the driving force of what creates your company culture, and often your culture is a bigger driver of purpose than your business output.</p>	<p>You have the right team in place, both internally and externally, to execute your business mission in a way you can feel proud of. And you have installed programs and protocols to attract and train more stakeholders who believe in your organization.</p> <p>With this strong backing behind you, you can consider making bigger operational changes to your branding, messaging, business model, and even your products or services. While this can be scary at first, the right value shifts can lead to a more loyal following of your brand.</p> <p>Consider implementing accountability measures to monitor how well your business aligns with your beliefs. Track these metrics, regularly review progress and adjust strategies as needed.</p>	<p>100% alignment achieved! You have crafted a cohesive pathway where your personal and professional lives complement and enhance one another.</p> <p>As good as this feels, you have only begun the best part of your business journey.</p> <p>Continue to innovate and evolve to bring your beliefs to life within your business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage business success to support the causes you care about</li><li>• Become a thought leader in your field</li><li>• Further advance work-life balance, flexibility, or wellbeing for you, your team and other stakeholders</li><li>• Promote greater integration of your personal and business worlds</li></ul>

# WORK/LIFE BALANCE: Freedom & flexibility

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Create a balanced work-life dynamic that allows you to pursue personal goals while managing a thriving business.

## How it works

Taking full control over your business does not happen by accident. You need to make a concerted effort to ensure that your business doesn't wind up controlling you.

- Delegate or automate routine or repetitive tasks
- Build systems to reduce reliance on your involvement
- Prioritize and schedule personal time
- Establish boundaries between your personal and work lives
- Empower key team members to make decisions
- Invest in leadership training for your team
- Regularly reflect on your priorities to maintain alignment with your business goals

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>The business completely consumes your time and energy, leaving no real room for your personal life and non-professional goals.</p> <p>Your business is 100% dependent on you being actively involved in operations, leading to burnout, physical and mental health concerns, strained relationships and a lack of ability to focus on anything other than your business.</p> <p>Don't despair. You are neither the first nor the last business owner to wind up in this place.</p> <p>But you need to find a better way forward – as the potential consequences far outweigh financial success.</p> <p>Recognizing the problem and committing to find a solution is the first step.</p>	<p>Most of your waking hours are spent managing the day-to-day operations of your business and you have very limited personal time.</p> <p>What you do have is cognizance of the situation and willingness to take action to reverse the trend.</p> <p>It takes time to change the entire structure of how you run your business. In the interim, implementing these three strategies will make an immediate improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule some personal time into your calendar and treat it with the same priority as work duties</li><li>• Delegate tasks to employees, starting small and increasing in importance as your trust and comfort allow</li><li>• Improve your diet and exercise regimen</li></ul>	<p>You have delegated enough tasks to carve out blocks of personal time, but your business still relies on your active involvement to operate longer than a short break.</p> <p>Your work-life balance is inconsistent, but this is better than non-existent. You are getting adequate time away from your business to avoid burnout and relationship issues but still feel tethered to daily responsibilities and risk dissatisfaction if flexibility does not improve.</p> <p>Along with empowering key team members with more responsibility and autonomy, consider investing in tools and technology to automate tasks and reduce your workload. Develop fixed processes for when you are away and further establish boundaries to protect personal time.</p>	<p>You enjoy a healthy balance between work and personal life, with systems and a reliable team handling day-to-day operations. The freedom to focus on strategic growth or personal pursuits without worrying about your business reduces stress while boosting staff performance.</p> <p>You have almost achieved the ultimate ownership zenith – a business that runs by itself – but the reality is that you would struggle to hire a replacement to take over all your leadership duties.</p> <p>To enjoy the ultimate freedom or prepare your business for the most successful exit possible, you must further develop protocols to maintain operational functionality without your supervision or input. Groom top leaders to potentially take over your role.</p>	<p>Your business operates seamlessly with or without your personal involvement, giving you full control over your schedule and the option to spend as much time as you wish on personal endeavors.</p> <p>You have groomed your successors to be capable of leading your company strategically, meaning any time you spend working on your business at this point is because you want to, not because you must. Your company and its mission and vision will continue to grow with or without you at the helm.</p> <p>Use your freedom to explore personal growth opportunities, mentor others or launch a new venture. Be sure to regularly review your life balance to keep it aligned with evolving priorities.</p>

# WORK/LIFE BALANCE: Work ON the business, not IN it

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Focus on strategic growth and leadership rather than getting bogged down in daily operations to drive long-term business success.

## How it works

Perhaps the greatest cause of burnout among business owners is trying to do everything yourself.

Freeing yourself from this burden not only protects your sanity but also sets your business up for greater success.

The more you pull yourself out of the weeds and into a leadership role, the more effectively you will be able to launch growth initiatives, implement efficiency measures and build a self-sustaining business.

Working ON your business and not IN it, is also key for maximizing business value at exit, as investors want to buy an asset, not a job.

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>You are deeply involved in every aspect of your business, from minor tasks to major decisions and everything in between. Little to no time is spent on strategic planning or growth.</p> <p>It's less that you are a business owner and more that you are self-employed, because each day looks and feels like a job, not a leadership position.</p> <p>Continuing along this path leads to burnout, stagnation and limited growth.</p> <p>You must learn to let go of control and trust your team. If you truly have nobody you can trust – clean house and hire people you can.</p> <p>Start by delegating routine tasks and then work your way up to more important duties.</p>	<p>You spend most of your time on operational tasks but have delegated just enough to free up occasional pockets of time for strategic planning.</p> <p>But as the business remains overly reliant on your daily involvement, the growth initiatives you do develop are often delayed, poorly implemented or postponed indefinitely.</p> <p>Now that you are more comfortable with letting go of control, it's time to develop more complex systems for delegating tasks.</p> <p>You need teams to take on responsibilities without a direct ask. Much of this can be achieved by putting more trust in your managers.</p> <p>Set aside time each week for strategic planning, even if it is just a few hours.</p>	<p>You have moved beyond the delegation of routine tasks into the important phase of allowing your team to take on operational responsibility.</p> <p>Part of this shift has involved accepting different leadership styles and not feeling the need to have every aspect of your business run exactly how you would do it.</p> <p>You still find yourself tied to day-to-day tasks more than you'd like, as you still struggle to empower teams with certain tasks. To get over this hurdle, improve your ability to define standard operating procedures and invest in employee training.</p> <p>Building a team capable of making decisions on your behalf is a short-term investment delivering long-term ROI.</p>	<p>You spend most of your time working on high-level strategy, growth planning and leadership, while your team effectively handles daily operations.</p> <p>The ability to put your vision into action has led to sustainable scaling, innovation, and long-term growth that aligns with your company mission.</p> <p>Now that you have managed to delegate all low- and mid-level responsibilities to employees, you can invest more time in mentoring.</p> <p>As you groom top performers to take on leadership roles, you further expand your ability to support a hands-off approach to the day-to-day running of your business.</p>	<p>You are fully focused on strategic growth, innovation, and leadership while a capable team manages all operational aspects of your company. The business runs efficiently without your constant involvement.</p> <p>Finally, your role as owner looks exactly what you imagined it would many years ago.</p> <p>Just as it works at large corporations, your job is to be the visionary. To uncover new opportunities and develop a strategy for making it happen, while never taking an active role in the implementation of your plans.</p> <p>By working <u>ON</u> your business, not <u>IN</u> it, you have successfully converted your company from a job into an asset you can sell.</p>

# WORK/LIFE BALANCE

As a business owner, you are by default more dedicated to your career than most – and as the rollercoaster ride known as entrepreneurship twists and turns at greater speeds, only you can put on the brakes to find time and energy for the other things that make your life whole.

Work will always be there. Your family, friends, mental health and physical wellbeing may not.

You CAN have it all – but achieving this lofty goal will not happen by accident.

- Reduce stress and burnout
- Increase energy levels
- Drive productivity and creativity
- Feel fulfilled in your career and personal life
- Enjoy the benefits of adequate rest and relaxation, including the ability to think more clearly and innovatively
- Build stronger relationships with the people who matter most
- Spend quality time with loved ones
- Feel more engaged and motivated at work
- Improve career satisfaction
- Achieve long-term personal and professional success



**Total Score**

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# PLANNING: Clear & detailed business plan

## Objective

All decisions and actions can be cross-checked against a single, updated document to ensure alignment with company goals.

## How it works

Your business plan is a detailed guide that outlines your company’s mission, vision, objectives and strategies for achieving success. It provides a clear framework for keeping your business on track and simplifies the decision-making process.

- Market research, products, services and competitor analysis
- Marketing strategy, financial projections and operational plans
- Attract investors and align internal teams around goals
- Document employee development and SOPs for clarity across teams

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>You’re out at sea with neither a compass nor a map.</p> <p>While you might be used to flying by the seat of your pants, continuing to do so puts your business at risk.</p> <p>Without a business plan, you may struggle to set measurable goals, make uninformed decisions or react impulsively to challenges rather than taking a proactive approach.</p> <p>Operating without a written guide can lead to poor financial management, inefficient operations, slow growth and missed opportunities.</p> <p>You also risk owner burnout, low morale, misaligned teams, wasted resources and difficulty attracting funding or investors.</p>	<p>Even the most basic business plan is better than nothing.</p> <p>But if you have gone so far as to start writing down your vision for the company, what is holding you back from going all the way?</p> <p>You need to invest the time in finishing what you’ve started because the long-term benefits are worth it.</p> <p>Imagine having your own “North Star.” A single tool at your disposal that always answers the most difficult questions facing your business.</p> <p>Want to know if XYZ is the right course of action?</p> <p>Open your business plan and determine if it does or doesn’t move you towards completing your mission. That’s what you’re working to achieve.</p>	<p>Great job. Your business plan is complete, and all the basics covered.</p> <p>Your mission and vision statements are solid, and they align with your goals.</p> <p>You’ve included a market analysis, basic financial projections and a general strategic roadmap to follow.</p> <p>But...you’ve been so busy running the day to day of your business that you haven’t looked at it in years.</p> <p>You built the framework but aren’t engaging it as a management tool.</p> <p>Start making the most of your plan by actively using it as part of your decision-making process. Don’t do anything major without first cross-checking against your plan.</p>	<p>Your business plan is a work of art.</p> <p>You’ve gone above and beyond the basics and now have deep insights into market trends, customer behavior and long-term financial clarity.</p> <p>Your plan isn’t just forward-looking, it features contingency plans and detailed steps for achieving short-, mid- and long-term goals.</p> <p>This is a real tool, and you use it often to inform and drive decision making.</p> <p>But you can’t remember the last time you updated your business plan.</p> <p>Times change. So do your goals. So does your business.</p> <p>Revisit and revise your plan annually.</p>	<p>Not only is your business plan robust and useful – you update it regularly to account for changing environments, adjust for new market conditions, and keep up with customer preferences and trends.</p> <p>Your business plan keeps you competitive. More importantly, it helps you be agile and ready to adapt at a moment’s notice.</p> <p>An updated plan makes it easy to track progress, monitor goals and refine financial projections based on real-time data.</p> <p>Congratulations! You’re focused and well-positioned to take full advantage of any opportunity that comes your way – and 100% prepared to tackle unforeseen challenges head on.</p>

# PLANNING: Engage strategic planning

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Align all business resources and actions with long-term objectives. Make informed decisions with a forward-looking mindset to drive growth and maximize opportunities.

## How it works

Creating a structured process to achieve long-term goals takes the guesswork out of decision making.

Proactive strategic planning involves defining your company's vision & objectives, assessing your current position (SWOT analysis), developing strategies that align with business goals and address your challenges & opportunities, creating an action plan, allocating resources to support your action plan, and then continually tracking performance against your goals to make adjustments as needed to stay on course.

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Like running your business without a clear and detailed business plan, failing to leverage strategic planning can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of direction</li><li>Poor decision making</li><li>Inefficient resource allocation</li><li>Missed opportunities</li><li>Increased risk of being unprepared for market shifts</li><li>Inability to create a competitive advantage</li></ul> <p>If you run your business only looking at what's happening today – or even worse – what happened yesterday, you are destined to fall behind.</p> <p>You're well behind the ball here. Dip your toes in the water of strategic planning by mapping out the next week. Then make it a month, a quarter, a year, and so on.</p>	<p>Your short-term goals are locked in, and you have a plan in place for what will happen with your business in the very near future.</p> <p>Short-term strategic planning is great, and it can help prevent “putting out fires” from becoming the headline of your daily routine – but focusing too heavily on short-term gains can harm your long-term aspirations.</p> <p>Failing to look further down the road prevents your business from capitalizing on emerging trends or preparing for potential threats.</p> <p>Too much short-term focus also leads to overspending in areas not critical to long-term growth while underinvesting in the initiatives that set your business up to succeed tomorrow and beyond.</p>	<p>Hitting the point where your strategic plan covers a full fiscal year is a notable achievement many business owners never accomplish – but you're still selling the potential of your business short.</p> <p>Yearly goals can absolutely help you increase sales, adjust product offerings, set up an annual budget, or even open a new location – but when you zoom out, this is still closer to a reactionary approach that truly strategic.</p> <p>Expanding your view deeper into the future allows you to proactively plan for industry shifts rather than reacting to market changes.</p> <p>Benefits of long-term strategic planning also include better alignment of employee engagement with your vision and more consistent growth.</p>	<p>Congratulations, your strategic plan is an established asset driving your business forward.</p> <p>You enjoy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clear vision and direction</li><li>Consistent achievement of goals</li><li>Informed decision-making</li><li>Effective resource allocation</li><li>Flexibility and adaptability</li><li>Engaged, productive employees</li><li>Competitive advantage</li><li>Sustainable growth</li><li>Strong financial performance</li></ul> <p>All that's missing is an advanced tool for monitoring a robust set of KPIs in real time to make smarter, data-driven adjustments.</p>	<p>You have achieved the ultimate goal in strategic planning.</p> <p>A plan that works both as a tool for creating the future you want for your business, and the ability to engage all your strategic data at any time – with the push of a button.</p> <p>Real-time snapshots of your business's finances and KPIs are the most effective measuring stick you can use to make sure everything is going according to plan.</p> <p>And if it's not – you're better off finding out early, rather than waiting for your next strategic planning session at the end of the year.</p> <p>Your business is now in the ideal position to learn from your successes and your failures, to uncover the right path forward.</p>

# PLANNING: Choose the right entity structure

## Objective

Choose the right entity structure for your business to optimize taxes, protect personal assets, and align with your business goals.

## How it works

Determining the ideal structure for your unique business sets the foundation for growth while minimizing risks, lowering your tax liability, and maximizing your long-term potential for profitability and success.

Your entity structure impacts:

- Personal liability
- Operational flexibility
- Legal compliance
- Tax treatment
- Funding opportunities
- Succession planning
- Profit distribution
- Employee benefits
- Business credibility

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>The wrong business in the wrong entity structure can potentially put your entire livelihood at risk – including your personal assets, which can be exposed to business debts and lawsuits.</p> <p>If you've never given your entity structure any thought, you are potentially making your work life harder for no reason.</p> <p>A more appropriate entity structure could lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lower tax burden</li><li>• Better protection for your personal assets</li><li>• Improved growth opportunities</li></ul> <p>Believing your entity structure doesn't matter could be preventing you from taking advantage of low-hanging opportunities.</p>	<p>You've given your entity structure some thought and feel like you have a decent handle on what the pros and cons of each structure are, and which might be the most efficient option for your business.</p> <p>But you haven't done anything beyond the research stage.</p> <p>Changing your entity structure is generally less painful than you imagine it to be, especially when you take into account all the potential benefits.</p> <p>The sooner you make your move the better – whether you decide to DIY it or pay for professional help.</p>	<p>You have done all your research, determined the best entity structure for your business and took the initiative to start your new enterprise off on the right foot – but you never consulted a professional advisor about your decision.</p> <p>Just as you are an expert in your field, CPAs are uniquely qualified to analyze your business and personal situation and help you make the best possible choice.</p> <p>There could be questions you forgot to ask, potential future scenarios you forgot to consider, or unique angles to the problem that never crossed your mind.</p> <p>Even if you are confident with your entity structure choice, it would be wise to have a CPA double-check your thought process.</p>	<p>You understand the value of working with a professional advisor and made an informed decision regarding your business entity structure based on the guidance of your CPA.</p> <p>While having the right entity structure in place is 80% of the battle, knowing how to best leverage the advantages and mitigate the disadvantages is an important part of making the most of your forward-looking planning.</p> <p>Partner with your CPA to make sure future business plans and decisions are in alignment with best practices for your entity structure.</p>	<p>Not only are you 100% confident that you've got the right entity structure in place, you consistently work with your professional advisors to stay up to date on the latest strategies for making the most of your strategic planning.</p> <p>Laws change all the time, and the best way to leverage entity structure benefits today may not be the same next year, or the year after that.</p> <p>Depending on your unique business and the length of time you own it, you may want to change your entity structure multiple times.</p> <p>Reviewing your options periodically is a good idea, particularly if there are major changes impacting the size of your company, number of owners, or other key factors.</p>

# PLANNING: Achieve tax efficiency

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Structure business and financial activities to minimize tax liability while staying in compliance. Retain more of your earnings by optimizing how you handle income, investments and expenses.

## How it works

Maximize wealth growth, improve cash flow and reduce the risk of penalties and audits by following the key elements of tax efficiency:

- Time income and deductions strategically to shift tax liability
- Leverage tax-advantaged accounts
- Take advantage of all available deductions and credits
- Choose the right business structure
- Manage investments to plan for lower capital gains rates
- Plan proactively with a CPA to set tax strategy before the year begins

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Completely ignoring tax efficiency almost always leads to significant financial setbacks for your business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tax overpayment</li><li>• Shortage of cash flow</li><li>• Less available funds for investing in growth</li><li>• Missed opportunities for deductions and credits</li><li>• Lack of tax-advantaged strategies erodes profits and wealth</li><li>• Unexpected liabilities during high-income years</li><li>• Hinder long-term stability</li><li>• Large tax burden at exit</li></ul> <p>Poor tax management also increases the risk of audits, penalties, and legal issues.</p> <p>Flying blind with your tax strategy is essentially throwing money out the window.</p> <p>Stop the bleeding and get a handle on the basics.</p>	<p>You have a very rudimentary understanding of what tax efficiency looks like and how to get there – but all your knowledge comes from word-of-mouth or self-study. You’ve never engaged in tax planning with a professional advisor and have no immediate plans to do so.</p> <p>You’ve made major improvements by cleaning up your biggest mistakes, but you don’t have an all-encompassing tax plan and you’re still missing out on all but the simplest tax-efficiency strategies.</p> <p>At this stage, what you don’t know really is holding you back.</p> <p>Start with scheduling an annual tax planning meeting to increase your knowledge base and start each year off on the right foot.</p>	<p>Congratulations, you see the value in engaging a professional tax advisor and every fall you create a comprehensive tax plan to minimize liability for the coming tax year.</p> <p>Unfortunately, a lack of discipline, diligence and follow through means not all your tax-saving strategies are implemented or optimized.</p> <p>From missing deductions due to poor recordkeeping to mixing business and personal finances or mistiming large purchases or sales without consulting your CPA, your mistakes are still leaving money on the table.</p> <p>The next step is to put systems in place to ensure complete follow-through of your tax plan throughout the year.</p>	<p>You are so close to mastering the art of tax efficiency. Every year you map out a plan with your CPA, and you stick to it! Reaping the rewards of your efforts in the form of paying the least amount of taxes possible for your situation.</p> <p>All that is holding you back from achieving optimally low taxes is to expand your tax planning beyond the year to come.</p> <p>Perfecting short-term tax efficiency strategies will funnel a lot of money back into your business, but only a long-range view of your business growth and life goals can maximize total wealth over your lifetime.</p> <p>Advanced advisory services, including financial planning and analysis (FP&amp;A), ensure you do the right things today for your future self.</p>	<p>Working year-round with your advisory team ensures that business decision take both short- and long-term tax impact into consideration.</p> <p>You understand that it’s not just the taxes you owe this year that matter. Your tax plan extends many years into the future and includes strategies for minimizing the tax burden when you exit your business.</p> <p>By investing in a strategic engagement with your advisors, tax efficiency plans align with your long-term business vision. You make strategic moves with an eye to gaining tax advantages and understand how each lever you pull today impacts your tax efficiency in future years.</p> <p>Your growth machine is optimized as the money you save on taxes goes directly into building your business.</p>

# PLANNING: Exit strategy in place

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Plan in advance to exit your business on your terms, with maximum benefits and minimal regrets.

## How it works

100% of all business owners exit their business eventually. How you exit yours is entirely up to you.

While maximizing the value of your business at the time you sell or transfer ownership is a key strategic goal, there are many more reasons to consider your exit strategy as early as possible:

- Ensure your exit supports personal transition goals
- Minimize tax liabilities
- Reduce uncertainty and stress
- Attract potential buyers
- Facilitate a smooth transition with minimal disruption
- Foster strategic growth
- Protect your legacy
- Be ready for an unexpectedly early exit

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Ignoring exit planning can lead to significant risks and missed opportunities – especially if you are forced to exit under unfavorable conditions.</p> <p>Health concerns, divorce, personal crisis, financial distress or a severe market downturn can all push you out of your business before you are ready, potentially causing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lower business valuation</li><li>• Higher tax liabilities</li><li>• Legal complications</li><li>• Uncertainty for employees, clients and stakeholders</li><li>• Disruptions in business continuity</li><li>• Failure to align your exit with personal goals</li></ul> <p>Don't find yourself unprepared for retirement or your next venture. Make a commitment to start thinking about what's next.</p>	<p>You've taken the time to consider your post-exit plans and have a rough idea of some of the actions you'll need to take in the final year or so before the sale.</p> <p>This is great progress over not thinking about your post-ownership life at all, but the reality is there are strategies you can be putting in force today that can impact your exit many years down the line.</p> <p>Why leave money on the table from your life's work? The sooner you put a well-thought-out exit plan in place, the bigger your payoff will be at the end.</p> <p>If part of your exit plan doesn't include action items for right now, this year, next year and beyond, you need to go back to the drawing board and zoom out to see the big picture.</p>	<p>You are confident in your exit plan but have never cross-checked your strategy with a professional advisor.</p> <p>It's great that you're taking exit planning seriously and have put thought into maximizing the return on your life's work so far ahead – but this really is a scenario where the things you don't know can hurt you.</p> <p>Here are some of the details business owners overlook when exit planning without professional guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full tax implications</li><li>• Improving financial reporting</li><li>• Documentation for key financial records</li><li>• Estate planning for proceeds</li><li>• Addressing liabilities</li><li>• Deferred tax opportunities</li><li>• ESOPs or employee buyout</li><li>• Optimal payment structure</li></ul>	<p>Congratulations, your exit plan includes a clear plan for increasing the value of your business, maintaining strong financial records, minimizing tax liability and transitioning in a way that works both for you and all the other stakeholders in your business.</p> <p>You have met with a professional advisor to discuss your exit goals and have crafted a plan together. One that might even feature more complex tax efficiency strategies, such as deferring taxes through structured payouts or leveraging opportunities like a 1031 exchange.</p> <p>All that remains is to recognize that an exit plan is not a static document. Tax laws and business scenarios change. You must regularly revisit and update your strategy to adapt.</p>	<p>You know you are an exit planning wizard when your to-do list of action-items dates all the way back to today.</p> <p>You have a long-term engagement with a strategic advisor and revisit your exit strategy at regular intervals, just as you rethink and revise every other aspect of your business plan.</p> <p>Every year you operate your business with an eye to the future. One day you'll be glad you did.</p> <p>Beyond putting yourself on the right track to exit on your terms when the time comes, you have contingency plans in place, meaning that in the unfortunate event of a forced early exit, you would still be able to navigate the transfer of ownership in the most efficient and beneficial way possible.</p>



# PLANNING: Protect your business

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Protect your hard work, livelihood and future earnings through thoughtful risk management.

## How it works

Planning for the worst is part of any well-structured business strategy. Budget adequate time and resources to cover all your bases.

- Research and purchase the right insurance coverage
- Have clear, enforceable contracts drawn up for agreements with clients, vendors and employees
- Choose the right entity structure to limit liability
- Invest in data security
- Trademark, patent or copyright IP when relevant
- Stay up to date on regulations related to your business
- Draft a contingency plan to protect against disruptions

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>It is far from hyperbole to suggest that an owner who makes zero effort to protect their business could lose everything – financially and otherwise.</p> <p>A perfect storm of losing a lawsuit and having the wrong entity structure in place could not only bankrupt your business but lead to the liquidation of your personal assets, too.</p> <p>By nature, the life of an entrepreneur involves being comfortable with a certain degree of risk – but never confuse your willingness to bet on yourself as an excuse to not be smart about it.</p> <p>Identify the scenarios that could wipe you out completely and then mitigate these risks. For most businesses, insurance and entity structure are a great place to start.</p>	<p>As a bare minimum you have sufficient protection in place to ensure personal assets cannot be touched in the event of a large business liability.</p> <p>While this is far from being enough, creating separation between personal and business finances puts you on the right track.</p> <p>For many business owners, the struggle in this stage stems from not wanting to budget resources for risk management that could be invested into growth initiatives. This is especially true for newer ventures.</p> <p>But this is something you need to find a way to get over.</p> <p>Just as you can't avoid paying bills in your personal life, being responsible with your business is part of the gig.</p>	<p>At this stage, all the risks that could potentially put you out of business are covered – from a worker being hurt on the job to natural disasters and lawsuits.</p> <p>Now it's time to expand your web of protection to cover essential business functions.</p> <p>A big part of this process is working with your legal team to identify potential hazards and work protections into your contracts and/or business practices. Remember that your lawyer isn't just there to advise you on written documents, but to also help you analyze the way you do business and ensure everything is above board.</p> <p>If you don't have cybersecurity measures in place, do so now. Even if you don't think you need it. In the modern world, every business does.</p>	<p>As a well-protected business, you operate with confidence, focusing efforts on business concerns and not risks out of your control.</p> <p>Your plan is robust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insurance shields against lawsuits, disasters, or unforeseen events</li><li>• Clear contracts establish trust &amp; minimize disputes</li><li>• The right entity structure safeguards personal assets</li><li>• Cybersecurity measures protect sensitive data</li><li>• Intellectual property is secure</li><li>• Emergency plans are ready to enable quick recovery from disruptions</li></ul> <p>The only thing you are missing is to revisit your business protection plan as part of your annual strategy review.</p>	<p>Congratulations. You value the importance of risk management and work with an experienced team of advisors to keep up with the latest threats facing your business.</p> <p>Not only is your protection strategy rock solid, it is something you revisit and revise each year as your needs change.</p> <p>A vital benefit of successful risk management is that you are now free to take bigger operational risks and invest in growth initiatives you might have otherwise avoided.</p> <p>Reducing the potential fallout from risks that can harm your business opens the door to taking on positive risk that can lead to business expansion and long-term ROI.</p>

# PLANNING: Build network of trusted advisors

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Establish year-round access to the guidance, expertise, and strategic support you need to overcome business challenges and take advantage of growth opportunities.

## How it works

Finding the right team of advisors to match your unique business culture and needs is the fastest way to add missing expertise to your leadership team.

- Identify key areas where you require expert advice
- Build relationships with professionals in each field
- Schedule regular check-ins for proactive guidance
- Leverage their expertise in decision-making

Building the right team takes time. Don't be afraid to shop around until you find advisory partners who are the best fit for your business and personality

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>You have invested zero effort in building relationships with professional advisors and all decisions are made internally, without expert input.</p> <p>Even for critical legal and tax concerns, you prefer to take a DIY approach and research your options the best you can online.</p> <p>At a bare minimum, this approach leads to a high likelihood of poor decision making and missed opportunities – at worst, it could lead to serious legal or financial implications, including jail time.</p> <p>Being confident in your problem-solving skills is fantastic but never seeking out expert advice when making critical decisions is reckless, putting more than just your business at risk.</p>	<p>You recognize the most critical scenarios where professional guidance is all but required.</p> <p>You don't "like" to pay for a lawyer or CPA but are willing to do so when necessary.</p> <p>But the advisors you speak with often change, resulting in transactional relationships. None of your advisors have an in-depth knowledge about you, your business, or your personal goals.</p> <p>While this approach keeps you out of trouble, the advice you receive is generic and not catered to your situation.</p> <p>To get more from your advisors, make a habit to engage more often. Shop around to find providers you like, so you can start to build deeper relationships.</p>	<p>Your business has a set team of advisors you consult, across various fields of expertise, but engagements are inconsistent and usually the result of a crisis.</p> <p>Your advisory team knows you well enough to understand the basics of your business, but reactive use prevents these professionals from helping you strategically.</p> <p>Stop missing out on the opportunity to get proactive guidance from your advisory team.</p> <p>Building relationships requires consistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule regular check-in meetings</li><li>• Involve advisors in long-term strategic discussions, not just short-term problem solving</li></ul>	<p>Your business has a strong network of advisors who are actively engaged and aligned with your goals. Your team was chosen carefully, and you are committed to nurturing those relationships.</p> <p>You strike the right balance between trusting your personal vision and supporting decision making with expert advice. Advisors are involved in risk management, operations and strategic growth.</p> <p>Most business owners stop here. To gain a competitive advantage, consider expanding your engagement to include in-depth data analysis. Giving your advisors the power to help you leverage data-driven decision making improves outcomes in real time while better preparing your business for a successful exit.</p>	<p>You have built long-term relationships with a robust team of advisors who consistently provide proactive, tailored guidance to inform decisions relating to operations, risk mitigation, innovation and strategic growth.</p> <p>To maximize the value of your network, you have invested in advanced service offerings that integrate advisors into being de facto members of your leadership team.</p> <p>To improve forecasting and drive data-driven decision making, your CPA engagement includes financial planning and analysis (FP&amp;A). Congratulations, you have taken an important step towards maximizing real-time financial visibility and preparing for the most successful and lucrative exit possible.</p>

# PLANNING: Have a plan for scaling & expanding

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Create a structured plan for achieving sustainable growth while maintaining operational efficiency.

## How it works

Every business owner has unique goals when it comes to the long-term growth trajectory of their business.

Whatever your dreams are, they will only come true if you have a plan in place to get you there.

- Be honest about your personal growth vision
- Identify market opportunities that match your expansion goals
- Develop a step-by-step scaling roadmap
- Align resources and team capabilities
- Regularly review and adapt the plan to account for market conditions or changes in your business mission

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Most healthy businesses will experience some level of expansion over time simply by delivering a quality product or service – but accepting slow, organic gains as your maximum potential for growth is leaving money, and opportunity, on the table.</p> <p>To begin the process of putting a plan in place to accelerate growth, you must first define your long-term goals.</p> <p>Once you have a clear picture in your mind of what you would like your future business to look like, it's easier to work backwards and create a roadmap to get you there.</p> <p>Try to identify one to three growth opportunities and evaluate the resources that would be required to pursue them.</p>	<p>You have a relatively firm vision of your long-term goals and a basic outline of a strategy that might get you there.</p> <p>What you don't have is a timeline for when and how you will implement this strategy and an analysis for how likely it is to succeed.</p> <p>Conduct a full SWOT analysis to map your strengths and assess the risks of the growth initiatives you are considering. As you decide which tactics to move forward with, work out where financial and labor resources will come from.</p> <p>Refine vague growth goals by breaking them down into smaller, specific, measurable steps. The more actionable your roadmap, the easier it is to follow.</p>	<p>Your business has an optimistic growth plan in place, with actionable, measurable milestones. You know where you want to go, how to get there, and where the resources will come from to make it happen.</p> <p>What you haven't considered are potential consequences of growth arriving faster than you anticipate.</p> <p>A well-rounded growth plan covers both your strategy for driving growth and your ability to adapt and deal with it.</p> <p>Rapid expansion or a huge increase in demand can potentially damage your business if you're not ready for it. From hiring to infrastructure, technology and more, consider the steps you'd need to take if sales suddenly doubled without warning.</p>	<p>You have a clear, strategic plan for scaling, and are actively putting it into action. You understand the importance of monitoring progress and continuously meet to evaluate KPIs and adjust your plan if necessary.</p> <p>Your expansion plan aligns with the company mission, considers market conditions and is both manageable and sustainable – but even if growth outpaces your goals, you have a clearly defined contingency plan ready to go to handle it.</p> <p>All that is missing is a fresh set of eyes to validate your plan and help you identify new growth avenues.</p> <p>Engage advisors to provide an outside perspective and expertise with financial projections and analysis your team might be missing.</p>	<p>You operate with a comprehensive, dynamic growth strategy that aligns with company visions, adapts to market conditions, and has been fully validated and enhanced by your team of financial and business advisors.</p> <p>Using cutting-edge technology, you are able to leverage data-driven insights and predictive analytics to draw your expansion plan out deeper into the future.</p> <p>Therefore, your action plan isn't limited to the current fiscal year. You know how you plan to scale next year, the year after that, five years down the road and beyond.</p> <p>In consideration of the unknown, your plan is flexible, regularly reviewed and adjusted when necessary.</p>

# PLANNING: Resources properly allocated to meet goals

## Objective

Align resources with business priorities to ensure short-, mid- and long-term goals are adequately funded and supported.

## How it works

Your strategic business plan is only as effective as your commitment to funding and executing on each of the items listed in your action plan.

As part of your annual budgeting process, establish how each growth initiative will be funded and allocate sufficient resources to improve your odds of success.

- Define resource needs for each goal
- Allocate funds, time, and personnel accordingly
- Monitor resource usage by tracking key metrics
- Adjust allocations as needed, based on performance and changing needs

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>The purpose of creating a budget for your business isn't just to control spending, it's also about making sure you're spending in the right places to support all business goals.</p> <p>Current operations are important but so are short-, mid- and long-term goals.</p> <p>Failing to allocate resources intentionally leads to inefficiencies, unmet goals, and potential financial strain, along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Critical projects lacking funding and/or manpower</li><li>• Less important projects or departments consuming too many resources</li></ul> <p>Start to reverse these trends by measuring current resource consumption by project/area and comparing to see how well proportions align with business goals.</p>	<p>You have analyzed resource usage across the different areas of your business and have identified mismatches between goals and spending.</p> <p>An effort was made to allocate resources more efficiently, but results were mixed. Some areas received adequate support to be successful, but others came up short of expectations due to underfunding. Potential causes could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inaccurate estimates of resource needs</li><li>• Prioritizing the wrong goals or shifting business needs</li><li>• Running too many different initiatives at once, spreading resources thin</li><li>• Lack of KPI tracking to monitor project progress</li></ul> <p>You need deeper insight into your exact resource needs and a better system for tracking.</p>	<p>Resources are generally allocated based on goals and priorities, and you have a system in place to track budgetary results annually to adjust for the coming year.</p> <p>You're doing great but revising your budget at year end leaves zero room for flexibility.</p> <p>Unexpected challenges, changes in priorities, and the relative effectiveness of your various initiatives can all have a meaningful impact on your resource allocation needs.</p> <p>Just as your general budget requires wiggle room to deal with surprises, your resource allocation strategy should include the ability to assess and adjust during the year.</p> <p>Review resource allocation more regularly to ensure alignment and fix inefficiencies.</p>	<p>Resources are strategically allocated across all major goals, with systems in place to monitor usage and efficacy, and adjust as needed.</p> <p>You enjoy steady progress toward achieving business objectives, efficient use of resources, and the ability to pivot in response to changing circumstances.</p> <p>Now that you see the benefits of running resource allocation adjustments through a feedback loop, consider elevating your process by using complex analytical tools to run data more frequently.</p> <p>Whether you partner with an advisor or purchase FP&amp;A software directly for your company, real-time insights will lead to even more efficient resource consumption as you make smarter adjustments, more quickly.</p>	<p>Working with an advisory partner, your business allocates resources dynamically, ensuring every goal is supported appropriately and effectively, with minimal waste. Resource allocation decisions are driven by data to optimize strategic priorities.</p> <p>With real-time KPI tracking and financial visibility, you are able to turn on a dime and reallocate resources quickly when necessary.</p> <p>Now that you have the most advanced analytical tools in place, you can continue to use predictive modeling to extend resource allocation plans years in advance, to anticipate future needs and best align resource expenditures with your long-term strategic vision.</p>

# PLANNING

Just like the old timber adage, ***give me six hours to cut down a tree and I will spend four hours sharpening the axe***, investing time and energy into planning makes it easier to build, operate and grow your business.

## Business planning:

- Provides a clear roadmap to follow
- Aligns goals with strategies
- Ensures proper resource allocation
- Helps you anticipate challenges
- Illuminates opportunities
- Enables a proactive mindset
- Prioritizes your goals and efforts
- Lowers the risk of making mistakes
- Establishes KPIs and metrics to track
- Supports a structured approach
- Improves focus
- Drives accountability
- Informs decision-making
- Prepares your company for growth
- Identifies and mitigates risk
- Adds stability to endure downturns



**Total Score**

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# METRICS/TRACKING: Keep accurate financial records

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Maintain precise, up-to-date documentation of all transactions to provide financial clarity and real-time access to powerful data.

## How it works

For transparency, compliance and informed decisions, records should be accurate, readily available and meaningful to how your business operates.

- Income statement to track revenue, expenses and profits
- Balance sheet to reflect assets, liabilities and equity
- Cash flow statement to highlight inflows & outflows
- Budgets and cash flow plans
- Accounts payable + receivable to know what's coming
- Tax, payroll and expense records for compliance

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Failing to keep accurate financial records is a disaster waiting to happen.</p> <p>This is a no excuses, fix-it-now problem for any business, no matter how big or small you are.</p> <p>Without proper records, it is virtually impossible to accurately track income and expenses, leading to poor decision making and financial mismanagement.</p> <p>Bad books inevitably result in cash flow problems, unpaid bills, missed opportunities for growth, difficulties in funding and potentially going out of business.</p> <p>Additional serious consequences include tax errors, fines, or an IRS audit.</p>	<p>Your records are in complete disarray but at least you know where they are and have a loose idea that you need to clean your books “one of these days.”</p> <p>While you’re slightly better off than a business owner who loses documents on the regular, you’re still at risk for every negative consequence facing a business that doesn’t update their financial records at all.</p> <p>If you’re serious about growing your business, you have got to get serious about bookkeeping one way or another – whether that means hiring in-house help or outsourcing.</p> <p>Good data is your gym membership. Using it to make decisions and project the future is hitting the machines and getting into shape.</p>	<p>Your records look OK and everything you’ve got in the books is accurate – but you’re not even close to being up to date.</p> <p>Playing catch-up once a quarter keeps you safely out of the danger zone, and that’s good. But don’t fall into the trap of believing that not being at risk of losing your business due to gross financial mismanagement is good enough.</p> <p>It’s not.</p> <p>Accurate financial records should be an asset for driving your business forward, not just a tool for preventing you from rolling backwards.</p> <p>You have the skillset on staff to be up to date sometimes. Why can’t you make a commitment to doing it all the time?</p>	<p>You are the kind of client accounting firms love.</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Because when it comes time to upload documents, you’re the first in line, raring to go.</p> <p>So, where can you go from here?</p> <p>What’s better than keeping impeccable financial records?</p> <p>The answer: extracting the data these records contain to illuminate powerful insights for your business.</p> <p>For most business owners, this final step requires professional guidance and advanced software. Which is where Accountability Services comes in to bring you home.</p>	<p>Your financial records aren’t just current and accurate, they’re updated in real time and meaningful to how you run the business. They are your guide.</p> <p>Congratulations. You’re on your way to leveraging financial data for accurate forecasting. Next up is using advanced analytics for strategic planning and running what if? scenarios.</p> <p>Be proud of yourself. You understand accurate recordkeeping is just the beginning for motivated business owners.</p> <p>You can now access real-time snapshots of business performance and always have an up-to-date roadmap at hand. This is a characteristic of ambitious entrepreneurs. They run their business, rather than letting it run them.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Cash flow management

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Cash flow is the life blood of your business and a pillar of financial stability.

## How it works

The goal of cash flow management is simple – to ensure your business maintains sufficient liquidity to cover daily operations, long-term growth initiatives, and unexpected expenses.

Positive cash flow delivers:

- Funds to meet short-term obligations
- More accurate forecasting and planning
- Ability to invest in growth without financial strain
- Preparedness for unplanned expenses or downturns
- Informed financial decision making
- Creditworthiness
- Improved relations with creditors, suppliers and vendors

## RANKING + RECOMMENDATION

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Did you know that poor cash flow management is the #1 cause of small business failure?</p> <p>Some studies show as many as 4 out of 5 failed businesses go under simply because they can't pay their bills.</p> <p>We've all seen "Out of Business" signs on companies we thought were doing well – and in many cases, that's because profit is not cash flow.</p> <p>And because what you have on your balance sheet doesn't always equate to what you have in the bank.</p> <p>Running a business with negative cash flow is a ticking time bomb that will eventually explode – leaving your enterprise in financial collapse.</p>	<p>Most months you can pay your bills on time, and you only occasionally need to dip into credit to cover operational expenses.</p> <p>But unplanned expenses or a slow month collecting on invoices really puts you in a bind.</p> <p>Your business is turning a solid profit, but it still feels like money is going out faster than it's coming in – even when your year-end financial statements tell you otherwise.</p> <p>The good news is, there are simple solutions for turning things around and making your cash reserves something that drives your business forward instead of holding you back.</p>	<p>How great does it feel to never have to worry about how you'll pay for your operational expenses?</p> <p>On a month-to-month basis, your cash flow management is solid. You've got ongoing costs taken care of and have built significant cash reserves to cover emergencies.</p> <p>But what you don't have is any money left over to invest in growth or strategic initiatives.</p> <p>Your cash flow plan should work for all phases of your business – today, tomorrow, and well into the future.</p> <p>The better you plan to allocate cash flow resources into strategic investments, the easier it is to pounce on an opportunity when you see one.</p>	<p>Congratulations. Your business enjoys excellent financial health, and your cash flow plan allocates funds to support short-, mid-, and long-term growth initiatives, including training and professional development for your team.</p> <p>You know your exact cash position at any time and utilize powerful tools to create a dashboard snapshot of where money will flow in and out over the coming month.</p> <p>You're ready for any crisis that comes your way and have the insights you need to make informed financial decisions based on cash availability.</p> <p>All that's left is to monitor and tweak your systems to achieve optimal cash flow efficiency.</p>	<p>A well-oiled ship doesn't begin to describe your business.</p> <p>Every element of cash flow management has been meticulously analyzed and perfected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invoices are sent and collected in a timely manner</li><li>• Payment terms with suppliers are negotiated in your favor</li><li>• All unnecessary costs have been eliminated</li><li>• Efficient inventory management prevents overstocking and shrink while maintaining the levels you need to operate</li><li>• Your lease vs. buy strategy works for your business</li><li>• Pricing has been optimized</li><li>• Good data leads to accurate sales forecasting</li></ul>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Financials ready to go

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Be ready at a moment’s notice to present your financial statements to potential investors or lenders. Be tax ready ahead of schedule and maintain constant and consistent visibility into the financial state of your business.

## How it works

Keeping your financials in order and always up to date requires dedicated systems, diligence and professional guidance.

- Use accounting software to automate financial processes
- Reconcile accounts monthly
- Partner with a CPA to manage and review your financials
- Establish a monthly or quarterly financial close process
- Monitor and track KPIs to identify gaps early
- Invest in staff training to improve recordkeeping
- Implement a document management system

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Chaotic, disorganized business finances are not uncommon – but they do result in serious consequences that can hold your business back.</p> <p>Not having access to current financial statements leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delays when making critical financial decisions</li><li>• Inability to secure a loan</li><li>• Struggles with attracting investors</li><li>• Operational inefficiencies</li><li>• Missing key opportunities</li></ul> <p>Poor financial organization also increases the risk of errors or omissions in financial statements, which can result in compliance issues, audits, tax penalties, or legal complications.</p> <p>Additionally, when you “fly blind” strategic planning is severely hampered.</p>	<p>The first step to cleaning up your books is admitting you have a problem and recognizing that no matter how profitable you are now, this issue is preventing your company from reaching its full potential.</p> <p>You need to allocate resources to make a meaningful improvement before things get messier. Whether that means pulling staff from other tasks, hiring additional help, outsourcing, or for smaller businesses, setting aside time to do it yourself.</p> <p>Start with developing a better system for organizing bank statements, invoices, receipts, tax documents and other financial records. This will make it easier to stick to a consistent schedule for inputting information into your accounting software.</p>	<p>Your financials are not ready at a moment’s notice, but you could have them prepared within a reasonable time frame for a major need such as presenting to investors, applying for a loan or uploading documents to your CPA firm for filing taxes.</p> <p>This is good, and a massive upgrade over businesses with finances in disarray, but if you’re only preparing financial documents when you “have to”, you are missing out on the many benefits of financial visibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informed decision making</li><li>• Strategic confidence</li><li>• Improved cash flow management</li><li>• Identify opportunities to cut costs and boost revenue</li><li>• Detect financial issues early for better risk management</li></ul>	<p>You always have a recent version of all major financial statements available and routinely use them to impact business decisions and improve operational efficiency.</p> <p>This is made possible through consistency, diligence, and investing time and money into setting up systems, tools and human capital to do the work.</p> <p>But what if there were a way to go one step further?</p> <p>What if you could have access to a financial snapshot on any given day, with the click of a button?</p> <p>This is where financial planning and analysis (FP&amp;A) comes in to deliver real-time financials – or even better, accurate forecasts of future financial statements.</p>	<p>Your financials are ready to present at the push of a button and you leverage this data at a vital tool for smarter business management.</p> <p>What’s more, because you have invested in financial planning and analysis (FP&amp;A), you have just as much visibility into your financials of tomorrow as you do into current financial statements.</p> <p>At this stage, you don’t simply consult your financials to compare business strategy to the numbers, you work backwards to let the data do the work.</p> <p>Data-driven decision making minimizes guesswork, reduces risks and enhances your ability to recognize trends quickly, support innovation and ensure that strategy is based on evidence, not assumptions.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Create & stick to a budget

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Develop and maintain a realistic budget to guide spending, ensure profitability and support business goals by aligning financial resources with priorities.

## How it works

Budgeting is at once one of the most basic but also most effective tools you can leverage to keep your business on track.

Unfortunately, not all business owners take advantage of this simple tactic.

Basic budgeting success entails:

- Allocating funds for fixed and variable expense and savings categories
- Tracking income and expenses
- Monitoring progress
- Adjusting as needed
- Updating annually to better account for your current business environment and needs

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Relying entirely on guesswork or reacting to financial needs as they arise puts your business at risk of overspending, running into cash flow concerns, struggling to save for emergencies, or failing to fund structural investments and growth initiatives.</p> <p>The problem is that once you become accustomed to running business financials by the seat of your pants, learning to create and stick to a budget can be challenging.</p> <p>Start by tracking income and expenses for just one month to identify patterns.</p> <p>Then, create a simple budget to estimate and monitor those same expenditures for the following month. Slowly add more line items to the budget as you get used to your new system.</p>	<p>You have a basic budget in place, but it is incomplete, outdated, and rarely followed.</p> <p>Creating a general framework to guide spending and improve fiscal awareness is better than nothing, but when financial decisions are still largely reactive, you are missing out on the most important benefits.</p> <p>To improve budgetary adherence, focus on following the budget diligently for the most critical categories of fixed expenses, variable costs and savings.</p> <p>Take note of improvements to reinforce the value of sticking to your budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Optimized spending</li><li>• Less frequent cash flow surprises</li><li>• Increased savings rate</li></ul>	<p>A detailed budget has been built out and you mostly stick to it – but adherence is sufficiently inconsistent that the numbers rarely match up when you do schedule a financial review.</p> <p>The good news is that your financial structure is adequate for avoiding major overspending and you now have enough of an emergency fund to provide a buffer that protects cash flow.</p> <p>The bad news is that you have yet to unlock one of the key benefits of budgeting: funding strategic initiatives to align spending with business goals.</p> <p>Increase accountability by using software to automate tracking and improve visibility. A broader engagement with your CPA can also help, in addition to more frequent financial reviews.</p>	<p>You have a comprehensive budget in place that covers every outflow in your business from ordinary operational expenses to capital investments, growth initiatives and long-term savings.</p> <p>Your budget fully aligns with your business goals and your actual annual spending closely matches the budgeted amount.</p> <p>The only weakness in your plan is that you budget for no longer than 12 months in advance.</p> <p>Limiting your budgetary view to just one year can leads to delays in major investments, often indefinitely.</p> <p>To incorporate forecasting and future-year budgeting into your planning process, lean on your advisory team.</p>	<p>Your budget is a core strategic tool that aligns business finances with your mission and vision – not just for the current year but well into the future.</p> <p>Driven by powerful software and analytics, your budget is dynamic and provides full visibility into your company’s real-time financial state.</p> <p>Sticking to the budget has become second nature and your annual review process has refined your needs so accurately that little reconciliation is required.</p> <p>By maximizing financial control, optimizing resource allocation, and building strong resilience against unexpected challenges, you can consistently move forward with strategic growth initiatives, even during downturns.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Sufficient working capital

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Maintain adequate working capital to cover short-term obligations, manage cash flow effectively, and support operational stability and growth.

## How it works

Closely related to cash flow management, having access to working capital simplifies the process of funding all your business expenses to maintain operations without the need for financing.

To successfully ensure sufficient working capital:

- Calculate working capital regularly (current assets minus liabilities)
- Optimize accounts receivable and payable terms
- Build an emergency cash reserve
- Review cash flow reports to prevent shortages

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Without a clear understanding of the importance of working capital, your business often runs out of cash, relies too heavily on debt to fund operations and struggles to pay short-term obligations in a timely manner.</p> <p>Frequently dealing with liquidity crises also leads to missed or late payments to vendors or employees, damaged relationships and reputation and the inability to take advantage of growth opportunities.</p> <p>The first step to reverse the insufficient working capital cycle is to meticulously track outgoing cash flow to find opportunities to cut costs and remove waste. Pay down high-interest debt immediately to stop the bleeding.</p>	<p>You have a basic handle on working capital, but the business consistently operates with dangerously low levels. When everything goes to plan you can cover short-term obligations, but the slightest unforeseen circumstance and you're looking for emergency financing to bridge the gap.</p> <p>Barely being able to pay the bills is a slight improvement over always being behind, but when you're vulnerable to unforeseen expenses, it is difficult to find cash to invest in growth initiatives.</p> <p>Continue to find ways to reduce expenses, negotiate better terms with vendors and improve cash inflows by tightening up on accounts receivable.</p> <p>Your next financial goal needs to be an emergency fund.</p>	<p>Your business maintains sufficient working capital to easily meet short-term obligations and minor unplanned expenses, but your financial cushion isn't where you'd like it to be.</p> <p>Your emergency fund is enough to keep you out of liquidity crises in most cases, but only with very careful management.</p> <p>While you do have some money available to invest in growth, plans are often delayed if sales drop or unplanned expenses arise. Having little room for error makes it tough to map out your strategic future, but you are still moving forward.</p> <p>Working with a professional advisor can help you refine and improve your cash flow management strategies for boosting working capital.</p>	<p>By actively calculating working capital, monitoring cash flows, and putting financial strategies in place designed to optimize liquidity, you always maintain healthy levels of working capital.</p> <p>Because you can easily cover operational expenses, have capacity to invest in growth and maintain a sufficiently large emergency fund to weather any storm, you enjoy reduced financial stress.</p> <p>Next, create predictive working capital models to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simplify cash flow management</li><li>• Improve financial planning</li><li>• Enhance decision making</li><li>• Optimize use of resources</li><li>• Identify potential issues</li><li>• Mitigate risk</li><li>• Boost stakeholder confidence</li><li>• Further support growth</li></ul>	<p>You have perfectly balanced liquidity, operational efficiency and strategic growth to maintain strong working capital levels without sacrificing long-term goals.</p> <p>Not only do you have a clear vision of current working capital levels, you leverage financial planning and analysis (FP&amp;A) to project and manage working capital targets well into the future. This predictive knowledge helps your business stay agile, make smarter decisions and build a foundation for sustainable growth.</p> <p>Mastering working capital puts your business in the driver's seat for negotiating a stronger position with suppliers, creditors, investors and even customers.</p>



# METRICS/TRACKING: Accurate financial forecasting

Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Objective

Leverage financial planning and analysis (FP&A) to make data-informed business decisions, anticipate trends, and allocate resources efficiently for short- and long-term success.

## How it works

Accurate financial forecasting gives you the power to predict the future outcome of key business decisions before you make them.

FP&A is a crystal ball powered by your business' historical data that can be used to create forecasts for revenue, expenses or cash flow, and dynamic models for virtually any KPI or metric you wish to track or predict.

To maximize predictive accuracy, work with a team of experienced financial advisors with access to the latest in FP&A software technology.

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>You make zero effort to forecast financials and rely entirely on guesswork and reactive decision making. If you've been operating this way for a long time, you might be under the false impression that it's OK – but accepting a lack of future visibility is damaging your business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Financial instability</li><li>Missed opportunities</li><li>Inability to anticipate cash flow gaps</li><li>No way to budget for strategic growth</li><li>Always making decisions at the last minute</li></ul> <p>To wet your feet in financial forecasting, start with a simple revenue and expense projection for the next month, using historical data to make your best estimate. Compare to actuals at month's end and repeat, extending the time frame with each iteration.</p>	<p>You make an effort to project basic cash flow drivers in the short term but find the numbers to be unreliable due to optimistic assumptions or bad data.</p> <p>Nevertheless, you can now identify and plan for certain risks that you were unable to predict before.</p> <p>You are starting to see the value in financial forecasting but have a long way to go before your models accurately reflect your business' reality. Inaccurate forecasts can be dangerous, leading to bad decisions, underestimated costs or overcommitted resources.</p> <p>Cleaning up your data is key, as is investing in financial software to help you better track sales &amp; expenses and access the numbers that matter.</p>	<p>Your business has a functional forecasting system in place for the short-term, providing the ability to anticipate financial needs, manage cash flow and plan for a month or two – but beyond that, your projections fall apart. Your forecasts also lack contingencies for variability or unplanned expenses.</p> <p>The good news is that your system works to maintain operational continuity. The bad news is that it does little to help you plan for long-term growth or pivot in relation to changes in the market.</p> <p>Take what you've learned and expand your forecasts to span a full quarter, making sure to include best-case and worst-case scenarios to plan for variance. Continue to review and adjust based on real vs. projected data.</p>	<p>Your forecasts are detailed, reviewed and updated regularly, and aligned with current business goals.</p> <p>Given that projections are mostly accurate, these documents enhance your capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Make informed decisions</li><li>Manage risks</li><li>Allocate resources effectively</li><li>Support strategic planning</li><li>Achieve financial stability</li></ul> <p>However, your projections continue to be static and need to be updated manually.</p> <p>Incorporate advanced tools and leverage the guidance of a skilled advisor to refine your forecasting techniques and automate the integration of real-time data for accurate, on-demand projections.</p>	<p>Your business uses sophisticated forecasting models, integrating real-time data and predictive analytics to anticipate financial performance with precision.</p> <p>You have engaged with an FP&amp;A professional and can now seize opportunities or navigate challenges that were once outside the scope of your financial visibility.</p> <p>Truly accurate financial forecasting has opened the door to fully integrating financial planning with long-term strategy.</p> <p>Now, instead of planning for the future you predict, you leverage your own data to create the future you want.</p> <p>You can now see the results of proposed decisions before you take action.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Identify & track KPIs

## Objective

Identify and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress, evaluate success, and guide strategic decisions.

## How it works

Tracking KPIs is the only surefire strategy for accurately evaluating business progress and quickly finding the cause of both successes and failures within your organization.

- Choose KPIs aligned with business goals
- Improve tracking consistency by using software that outputs easy-to-use dashboards
- Analyze trends and identify areas for improvement
- Regularly review KPIs and adjust as needed as business goals evolve

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>According to a very unscientific Google search, approximately 50% of all small business owners have not identified a single KPI to monitor for their business.</p> <p>Realistically, a fair number of owners won't even recognize what a KPI is.</p> <p>That means out of all these scorecards, more businesses will score in the DANGER ZONE here than anywhere else.</p> <p>If you're part of this 50%, this means you don't have a single measurable goal you can use to evaluate business performance beyond the basics of profit and revenue.</p> <p>Step 1: Educate yourself on what KPIs are and why tracking success metrics is crucial to every business.</p>	<p>OK. So, you know what KPIs are, can rattle off a few of the most common ones, and have a firm grasp on why they're important to track.</p> <p>This puts you further ahead of more people than you'd think.</p> <p>But if you're not putting this advantage to work for your business, the results are the same.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business inefficiencies go on unnoticed</li><li>• Decision making continues to rely too heavily on intuition</li><li>• Critical areas of the business are overlooked</li><li>• You have little recourse to determine which business initiatives worked, and which didn't</li></ul> <p>Start with a single KPI tied to your business goals and use a spreadsheet to track it.</p>	<p>Your business tracks a few KPIs, but monitoring can be inconsistent, and the chosen metrics don't fully align with business goals.</p> <p>While you are gaining some insight into business performance, this knowledge rarely translates into meaningful change.</p> <p>Tracking KPIs without taking action is doing all the work without capturing any of the benefits.</p> <p>Perhaps you need to reevaluate which KPIs you monitor? Or maybe you need to commit to more regular KPI reviews?</p> <p>The good news is, you're almost there. The purpose of tracking performance is the ability to try new ideas and have a meaningful way of determining what worked.</p>	<p>You have identified the KPIs that align with your strategic goals, track them consistently, and use the results to inform future decision making.</p> <p>You now have the ability to measure success, identify opportunities for improvement, and make data-driven choices based off past results.</p> <p>Making it to this stage puts your business far ahead of the competition, but there's one more level to go.</p> <p>Real-time KPI analysis.</p> <p>Why wait until the end of the quarter to calculate your results? With the right tools, technology and expertise, you can create a performance snapshot at any time, with the push of a button.</p>	<p>Tracking a comprehensive list of KPIs that are aligned with strategic and operational goals puts your business in the driver's seat for directly translating metric data into actionable, meaningful business improvements.</p> <p>And because you use FP&amp;A to monitor and evaluate KPIs in real time, you'll have the latest foresights available whenever you need them.</p> <p>Exceptional performance visibility and deep, predictive insights lead to a culture of accountability and goal achievement.</p> <p>The ability to keep KPIs relevant as business priorities evolve gives you the flexibility to be nimble and move fast in response to the information you uncover.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING: Optimize pricing strategy

## Objective

Develop a pricing strategy that balances competitiveness, customer value, and profitability to maximize revenue and market positioning.

## How it works

Whether you're charging too much, or too little, the wrong pricing strategy for your product or service impacts your bottom line and the long-term viability of your business.

Getting it right is always a work in progress but a goal worth striving to achieve.

To optimize your pricing strategy:

- Research costs, competitors, and customer value
- Test, evaluate and repeat
- Regularly review and adjust prices
- Be transparent with customers regarding pricing changes

RANKING + RECOMMENDATION				
1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
DANGER ZONE	IMPROVING	NOT QUITE THERE	ALMOST GOT IT	CRUSHING IT!
<p>Your prices were set arbitrarily, and you have never audited your pricing strategy. You neither know how your prices compare to competitors' nor how your customers feel about them.</p> <p>When pricing is entirely disconnected from market trends, consumer demands and COGS, you are almost always leaving money on the table, one way or another.</p> <p><b>Underpricing</b> leads to lost profits. In extreme cases, you could even be losing money on certain services or clients.</p> <p><b>Overpricing</b> drives away business and erodes your brand reputation.</p> <p>First, calculate costs to confirm your prices cover expenses. Then, conduct competitor research to find a baseline for your market.</p>	<p>Pricing is based on costs plus standard markup, with zero consideration to market dynamics or customer value.</p> <p>It's great that your profit margin covers basic cash flow needs, but this simple approach to pricing overlooks opportunities to maximize revenue.</p> <p>Value-based pricing is a strategy that better aligns the true value you deliver (and your customers' perception of that value) with your target market's willingness to pay.</p> <p>This is why researching the competition is crucial – to compare both pricing and the total value proposition.</p> <p>Rank your service offerings versus competitors and then compare prices. Look for an opportunity to fill a hole in the market and differentiate.</p>	<p>You have moved beyond costs plus markup pricing and set prices loosely based on market averages – but you rarely review/adjust these prices and have yet to collect meaningful feedback from your clientele beyond looking at sales volume.</p> <p>There's value in knowing your prices are competitive and generally align with customer expectations, but unless your value proposition equals the market average, you are likely far from optimized.</p> <p>Now that you understand the baseline for your market, you can dig deeper to consider where exactly your business should be positioned in the marketplace and adjust prices accordingly.</p> <p>At a bare minimum, review costs, pricing, and market changes annually.</p>	<p>A dynamic pricing strategy is in place that equally weights COGS, value delivered, customer perception and willingness to pay, market trends, and what your competitors are doing. You regularly review and adjust your pricing strategy to optimize revenue and actively collect feedback to assess customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Your business enjoys increased profitability, is highly competitive, and continues to build a strong brand as pricing aligns with the value you deliver.</p> <p>Now that you have reaped the rewards of pricing optimization, elevate your strategy to the next level using predictive analytics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Track pricing sensitivity</li><li>• Segment customers into pricing tiers</li></ul>	<p>Your business has implemented advanced pricing strategies that integrate real-time data, customer segmentation, market trends and competitor research.</p> <p>Pricing is a key driver of revenue and growth, and your pricing strategy supports your overall business strategy and goals.</p> <p>Using predictive analytics, you are able to make proactive adjustments to pricing that maximize profit and enhance competitive positioning while also aligning perfectly with customer value perception.</p> <p>You communicate pricing changes openly with your client base but receive no pushback.</p>

# METRICS/TRACKING

Peter Drucker, the father of modern management philosophy, famously noted that ***What gets measured gets managed.***

Tracking KPIs isn't simply a vanity exercise for impressing lenders, investors, employees or clients – it's the only way to precisely identify areas for improvement and verify whether your efforts to enact change have been successful.

- Enjoy a clear view of how well you are achieving your business goals
- Guide decision making with real data, rather than relying on guesswork
- Hold teams and individuals (including yourself) accountable for performance
- Pinpoint areas of success and opportunities for improvement
- Boost efficiency by highlighting ineffective systems and processes
- Support business continuity by keeping a keen eye on your financial health
- Anticipate trends and make proactive adjustments with accurate forecasting
- Drive motivation and inspire teams by setting clear benchmarks and goals



**Total Score**

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# RESULTS

Enter your total for each category into this final tally sheet to see which general areas need the most improvement. Then, calculate your final score out of 210 to get a snapshot of your overall performance.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE				Total:
<18	18-27	28-34	>35	
STRUGGLING	COULD BE BETTER	SATISFIED	LIVING THE LIFE	
You are consumed by your business and aren't even sure you like what you do. Bringing this truth to light is the first step towards fixing it.	You are doing OK and enjoy passable work/life balance most of the time but need to delegate more. You neither love nor hate your work. Making the right adjustments can change this.	Your business provides the lifestyle you want and mostly functions on its own without you pitching in. You enjoy adequate freedom and flexibility but could better align your goals.	You control your business – not the other way around. Your business and personal goals fully align, and your company mission is a perfect match to your personal ethos.	

PLANNING				Total:
<41	41-62	63-77	>78	
COMPLETELY LOST	TREADING WATER	ALMOST THERE	FULL STEAM AHEAD	
Failing to set aside time for planning puts your business in real peril. The good news is that it's only up from here! You have unlimited opportunity to improve.	Planning just enough to keep your head above water is a short-term solution. You need to expand your planning efforts to avoid burnout and stagnant growth.	This is where most successful business owners score. You are doing great, and your business is poised for growth, but you have yet to reach your full potential.	You are a planning wizard and three steps ahead of the competition. There's always room to do more but planning is an asset and not an obstacle for your business.	

METRICS/TRACKING				Total:
<35	36-55	56-70	>70	
IN THE DARK	GAINING GROUND	UNDER CONTROL	AHEAD OF THE CURVE	
When it comes to knowing your financial position, you are flying blind. You risk making poor decisions, running out of operating cash, or worse.	A little financial visibility goes a long way, but you are still doing the bare minimum when it comes to effective financial management. It's time for a more proactive approach to your finances.	Your financial systems are all in place and you have strong financial visibility into what has happened and what might happen next. Go further to create the future you want.	Congratulations, you have tapped into the power of FP&A to put your data to work for you. You are in a great position to take a prescriptive approach to financial planning.	

TOTAL: _____			
<94	94-146	147-177	>178
IN TROUBLE	BELOW AVERAGE	HEALTHY	SUPERSTAR



# Where does tax compliance fit in?

You may have noticed that there were no questions about filing tax returns and keeping your business in compliance.

The reason we excluded tax compliance from the roadmap is because this is your **legal obligation**. It's the bare minimum and not optional.

Helping you stay in compliance is important – and our tax team does a fantastic job for all our clients – but our belief is that simply “staying out of jail” isn't good enough.

***Tax compliance doesn't push the needle to get you closer to achieving your goals.***

And that's what this scorecard is all about. Figuring out which changes you need to make so that your business will deliver the life you have always wanted.

***You didn't start a business to file an additional tax return – you did it with the hopes of changing the course of your future and making your dreams come true.***





# What's next?

Now that you have highlighted areas for improvement and identified blind spots, it's time to get to work!

Note that while scorecards offer general advice to help you move from the Danger Zone to Crushing It for each category, this Financial Roadmap is meant to be a diagnostic tool and not a complete step-by-step how to guide.

It's up to you to solve each shortcoming and build your business in a way that accomplishes your goals while providing the lifestyle you want. Investing in an advisory partnership with our firm is a fantastic option to jumpstart this journey – but you must be willing to **execute** and **make changes** to take your business from where it is today to where you want it to be.

- >>> **STEP 1:** *Write down your short-, mid- and long-term goals, both personally and professionally*
- >>> **STEP 2:** *[Click here](#) or call **206-522-0110** to schedule your FREE 30-minute Discovery Meeting*
- >>> **STEP 3:** *Together, we'll chart a path forward to solve your business puzzle and achieve your goals*



## Worksheet for STEP 1

**What would you like your life and business to look like in 3 years?**

**Why are these changes important to you?**

**What are your 3 biggest business opportunities right now?**

**What are 3 obstacles holding your business back?**

**Name one short-, mid-, and long-term business goal.**