

The quick business health check

"My first six years in the business were hopeless. There are a lot of times when you sit and you say 'Why am I doing this? I'll never make it. It's just not going to happen. I should go out and get a real job, and try to survive'." George Lucas

The big idea

If you are working on your own, or there are only a few of you, it is often a challenge to step back and review what you have achieved and where your business is going. There are, however, many successful business owners who would stress how important it is to find the time, particularly in a shifting and unpredictable environment. We often say we are too busy to have time to think, but what that means in practice is we are letting lots of other 'stuff' get in the way.

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to persuade you to spend a short period reviewing some key questions in relation to your business. The hope is that this will encourage you to continue to monitor your motivation and the growth of the business.

The tool

The tool consists of a number of statements that you can rate in relation to your business. The statements are divided into seven areas to reflect the core aspects of your work. Read a statement and select a number based on how strongly you agree or disagree with it. Try to do the scoring quickly and go with your immediate response. Capture any insights or thoughts that the questions bring to mind as you go through them.

Once you have completed the form, think about the questions it has raised for you and answer the following:

- What are the key things you need to address right now?

- What do you need to address in six months?
- What do you need to address in 12 months?

The next step

Think about your responses. Do you still enjoy running your own business? When was the last time you reviewed your business? How much has it changed since then? Is that what you would have expected? How regularly do you feel you need to review your progress?

Top tips

- Try not to over-analyse: go with your first response as you read the questions
- Think about any other questions you need to ask that are specific to your work and business
- Check your answers with someone who knows you well: they may have a different perspective on you and your business
- Be realistic about the targets you set yourself from here

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About you

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree	
I am happy the business is achieving the things I set out to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have plenty of get-up-and-go and feel very motivated about my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am creative and am regularly coming up with new ideas for the business	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am flexible and able to adapt to changes and surprises quickly and successfully	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe there is a good balance between my work and my personal life	1	2	3	4	5	6
I prefer working on the creative aspects of my work and am not interested in managing a business	1	2	3	4	5	6

Your customers

	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
I have a broad range of customers	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I have a good understanding of what my customers want	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I can identify a range of potential customers	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I have increased my customer base in the last 12 months	1 2 3 4 5 6	

Your offer

	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
I am constantly reviewing my offer in relation to what my customers want	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I have a number of ideas for forthcoming products/services	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I have a clear sense of where my business is positioned in my sector or sectors	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I know which areas of my work generate the best income	1 2 3 4 5 6	
I undertake research and development to test new ideas	1 2 3 4 5 6	

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Communications

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
I use a wide range of communication channels to develop my business	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the 'gift of the gab' and enjoy communicating with others	1	2	3	4	5	6
I regularly network with others to gain information for my business	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am good at building and sustaining partnerships	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have an extensive resource network that I am constantly building	1	2	3	4	5	6

Money

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
I will earn more from my business this year than I did last year	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am comfortable dealing with the numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6
My finances are well organised and I keep my records up to date	1	2	3	4	5	6
I pay my debts on time	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am good at managing my cashflow	1	2	3	4	5	6

Growth

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
I am good at spotting new opportunities as they arise	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am prepared to take a calculated risk to grow the business	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a development plan for my business for at least the next 12months	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am motivated by success and driven to do well	1	2	3	4	5	6

Working with others

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
I have successful and productive relationships with partners	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a network of peers I can turn to for advice	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am always looking for people to work with	1	2	3	4	5	6
When I need someone to take on some tasks for me, I have people I can rely on to ask	1	2	3	4	5	6
It's important to me to get out and meet people when I'm working on my own so much	1	2	3	4	5	6