AscendEdge SOLUTIONS

Innovating the Future. Empowering the Present

SME QUICK - FREE

SME & MSME EFFICIENCY CHECKLIST

A practical scan for founder dependency, process strain, ageing work, customer issues and growth blockers.

20 STATEMENTS | 10 DIMENSIONS | 5-10 MINUTES

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Use Foxit reader or something similar to edit, save and send the completed document.

IDENTIFY FRICTION

Hidden strain

VERIFY THE ROOT CAUSE

Current operating reality

ACT WITH EVIDENCE

Practical improvement

01 SEE THE STRAIN BEFORE IT GROWS

Complete this rapid scan using what is consistently true today.

A growing SME can look busy while efficiency quietly falls. Employee morale weakens, customers complain or are never asked, old stock grows, mistakes recur, and routine work waits for the owner or one key person.

Signals management can miss

- Routine work waits for the owner or one key person
- Employees lose morale, initiative or confidence
- Customer complaints repeat or no feedback channel exists
- Old stock, backlog or work in progress keeps ageing
- New mistakes appear because methods and supervision are unclear

OLD STOCK IS A CASH SIGNAL

It may reveal forecasting, purchasing, sales, pricing or product-lifecycle gaps.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Organization

Industry / sector

Completed by

Role

Date

Employees / sites

RATING SCALE

Score current operating reality, not intended policy.

1	**Not in place**	Absent, unknown or frequently fails
2	**Informal**	Depends on individuals and works inconsistently
3	**Partly established**	Works in some teams or situations
4	**Consistent**	Generally followed and periodically reviewed
5	**Embedded**	Dependable, measured and continually improved

AUTOMATIC SCORING: Download and open in Adobe Acrobat Reader; save after completion.
EVIDENCE RULE: If a statement cannot be verified, score it 2 and mark it for discussion.

02 ASSESSMENT: DIMENSIONS 1-3

Select one score for each statement. A star identifies a critical-control item.

SCORE 1 Not in place | 2 Informal | 3 Partly established | 4 Consistent | 5 Embedded

1. OPERATING-MODEL ALIGNMENT

Does the way the organization works still fit its current size and complexity?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Everyone can name the organization's current priorities and explain how their role supports them.	○	○	○	○	○
2	Roles, reporting lines and workloads have been adjusted as the organization has grown; they are not simply inherited from an earlier stage.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10) ______

2. KEY-PERSON DEPENDENCY AND CONTINUITY

Can important work continue when key people are unavailable?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
3*	Every critical task has at least one capable backup who can perform it without avoidable delay.	○	○	○	○	○
4*	Essential approvals, secure access, records and customer relationships have documented continuity arrangements; they do not depend on the owner or one key person.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10) ______

3. PROCESS STANDARDISATION AND CONTROL

Is recurring work consistent, controlled and learnable?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
5*	Recurring work follows a current SOP that shows the steps, quality standard, owner and what to do when a step fails.	○	○	○	○	○
6	Employees are trained and observed using the right techniques - not merely given tools or instructions - and errors lead to coaching or process improvement.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10) ______

03 ASSESSMENT: DIMENSIONS 4-6

Select one score for each statement. A star identifies a critical-control item.

SCORE 1 Not in place | 2 Informal | 3 Partly established | 4 Consistent | 5 Embedded

4. CROSS-FUNCTIONAL HANDOFFS

Do departments coordinate work without avoidable friction?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
7*	Each recurring task and handoff has a clearly named owner; work is not left undone because people believed someone else was responsible.	○	○	○	○	○
8	Sales, operations and support teams pass complete information, and the receiving team confirms acceptance of the handoff.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

5. DECISION RIGHTS AND APPROVAL SPEED

Can routine decisions be made at the right level and speed?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
9	RACI, or an equivalent accountability method, is understood and actually followed rather than only documented.	○	○	○	○	○
10*	Routine decisions are delegated within clear limits, and approvals have response times and escalation paths.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

6. MEETINGS AND WORK MANAGEMENT

Do management routines create clarity instead of consuming capacity?

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
11	Meetings end with named actions, owners and due dates, and overdue actions are followed up.	○	○	○	○	○
12	Leaders can see workloads, queues and bottlenecks early enough to prevent avoidable delays, overtime and duplicated work.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

04 ASSESSMENT: DIMENSIONS 7-10

Select one score for each statement. A star identifies a critical-control item.

SCORE 1 Not in place | 2 Informal | 3 Partly established | 4 Consistent | 5 Embedded

7. PERFORMANCE AND KPI VISIBILITY

Can leaders see what is happening early enough to act?

		1	2	3	4	5
13*	A functioning feedback and KPI system gives timely information on delivery, cost, quality, rework, customer sentiment and staff morale - not revenue alone.	○	○	○	○	○
14	Inventory, work in progress and backlog ageing are monitored, and old items trigger action before they absorb excessive cash, space or capacity.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

8. MANUAL WORK AND TECHNOLOGY

Do tools support good processes without creating new confusion?

		1	2	3	4	5
15*	Departments work from a reliable shared source for current customer, stock, task and operational information.	○	○	○	○	○
16	High-volume recurring work is supported by fit-for-purpose systems; remaining manual steps are deliberate, controlled and reviewed.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

9. CUSTOMER-DELIVERY RELIABILITY

Does growth preserve the quality and predictability of delivery?

		1	2	3	4	5
17*	Customer promises, status changes and delays are recorded and communicated clearly to both customers and delivery teams.	○	○	○	○	○
18*	Customer products, property and information are protected through trained handling techniques and quality checks before return or delivery.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

10. SCALABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Can the operating model absorb further growth and learn from experience?

		1	2	3	4	5
19	Before adding volume, services, staff or locations, leaders test whether capacity, skills, tools, stock, controls and systems can support the growth.	○	○	○	○	○
20	Falling morale, new mistakes, complaints and rework trigger root-cause review, corrective action and follow-up - not blame or another quick fix.	○	○	○	○	○

DIMENSION SUBTOTAL (2-10)

05 SCORE AND INTERPRET

Use the total as a directional signal. Do not average away a critical red flag.

TOTAL SCORE	/ 100	AVERAGE	/ 5	RESULT

OVERALL MATURITY BANDS

84-100	**Growth-ready foundation**	Strong, scalable practices in this rapid screen.
68-83	**Generally controlled**	Targeted gaps could constrain the next stage.
52-67	**Developing but inconsistent**	Useful practices exist, but strain is visible.
36-51	**High operating risk**	Growth is outrunning clarity, capability or control.
20-35	**Critical operating strain**	Stabilisation should begin immediately.

DIMENSION SCORECARD

Dimension	Subtotal /10	Interpretation	Priority
1. Operating-model alignment			
2. Key-person dependency and continuity			
3. Process standardisation and control			
4. Cross-functional handoffs			
5. Decision rights and approval speed			
6. Meetings and work management			
7. Performance and KPI visibility			
8. Manual work and technology			
9. Customer-delivery reliability			
10. Scalability and continuous improvement			

CRITICAL RED-FLAG OVERLAY

A starred item scored 1 is an urgent red flag. A starred item scored 2 is a priority vulnerability. Do not describe the result as growth-ready if any starred item is 1, or if three or more starred items are 2 or below.

06 INTERPRET BEFORE YOU INTERVENE

A symptom may be communicating a deeper issue. Trace it before buying another tool.

AES FIELD INSIGHT

Customers complained that products brought in without dents or scratches were returned damaged. The first problem was not the available tools but how products were handled. Employees were trained in better handling techniques before improved tools were purchased.

Lesson: diagnose technique and process before assuming technology is the solution.

ROOT-CAUSE TRACE

Use evidence, not assumptions.

1. What is happening now, and what evidence proves it?

2. Where were we before, and what helped us perform then?

3. What changed as the organization grew?

4. What is the symptom communicating about ownership, technique, workload, process, system or control?

5. Where are we trying to get to, and what is preventing it?

ONE 30-DAY IMPROVEMENT

Owner	Corrective action	Success measure	Review date

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YOUR SCORE SHOWS WHERE TO LOOK.

THE COMPREHENSIVE DIAGNOSTIC SHOWS WHAT TO FIX FIRST.

- 50 statements across 10 operating-model dimensions
- Evidence and observation prompts
- Critical-risk overrides
- Root-cause and priority analysis
- A practical 90-day improvement roadmap
- Suitable for self-service or AES-facilitated use

SAVE, THEN EMAIL TO AES

Third party PDF Reader required for automatic scoring and attachment.

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