

Business Growth *readiness checklist*

5 key factors to propel your
business forward

personal



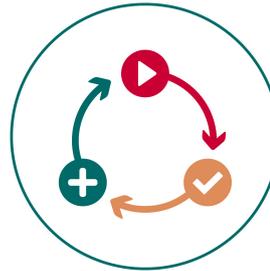
purpose



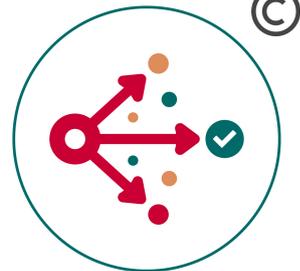
people



process



paradigms



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Why are we here?

If you're reading this, you'll have got to a point in your business where you have a proven, viable business model, a track record of consistent sales... and now it's time to really scale up, grow, and reach your full potential.

You've probably also realised that there are going to be things that your future business needs that you don't have in place now - not just financially or in terms of processes and systems, but in terms of people management skills and ways of working. And maybe in terms of your own mindset and skills as a leader.

So why ask slightly less obvious, deeper questions here? The ones that many entrepreneurs and business owners miss? Well, if we use a sailing metaphor for our growth journey, at this stage we're still in the harbour, checking our rigging, counting our supplies and making sure the crew are all fit and ready for departure.

Focusing on where we're going and the journey to sustainable, purpose-driven business growth is part of the process - but our immediate focus is where we are now, because it defines the starting point and the beginning of our journey, and therefore determines the length and character of the journey itself: is it a short trip to a familiar location, or a major expedition into the unknown? We need to know, so we can plan and strategise accordingly.

This checklist is based on my 5 Ps Framework - the foundation of our Scaling With Leadership programme, and my book 'Get Your Peas In A Row - 5 Key Factors To Propel Your Business Forward'...which are based on my 20 + years experience as a consultant, trainer and coach to businesses large and small all over the world.

It's designed to help you think deeply about where you are now as you prepare for your business growth journey. Because if you don't know (or you're not completely honest about) exactly where you are now, how can you even begin to chart your voyage to where you want to be?

And it's focused on helping you build the strongest possible foundation for your future purpose-driven business, and its sustained growth and prosperity.

Here we go!



PERSONAL

The character, temperament and world view of the founding entrepreneur always has a massive impact on the nature of their business. Always and without exception.

So these questions are all about YOU.

As you lead your team forward, it's important to have a keen sense of self awareness and personal purpose, and a clear idea of who you are outside of your business, as a human being first and foremost. When challenges come, we all revert to our default selves. So you'd better know who that is.

Pause for a moment and consider who and where YOU are in all of this...

1. Placing your business aside for the moment... what do you want out of life?

- Our starting point for all of this....is you and your life goals.

2. Based on your answer, what does your business need to deliver for you?

- Are you growing a business that sustains you rather than consuming you?

3. Are you 'plan it out' person or a 'go with the flow / grab the opportunity' person?

- How has your personal approach impacted on your business so far?

4. What's the largest business or team you've ever led / worked with?

- What can you leverage from that experience?

5. What are you really good at?

- How has this helped you get where you are today? What do you (and your leadership team) have still to learn?

6. What excites you about growing your business? What do you fear?

- How are these emotions impacting you and your business decisions?

7. How do you want to be seen as a business leader?

- How does this reflect who you really are?



PURPOSE

Being clear about your business's sense of purpose and direction moving forward is vital if you're to take people along with you.

Obviously enough, so is your ability to communicate your purpose, vision and strategy throughout your team, ensuring that everyone gets it, buys in, and is pulling in the same direction.

1. What are you working towards? What are your short, mid and long term business goals?

- If you aren't clear on these yourself, your team will be navigating in the fog without a map.

2. How clear are your milestones?

- What achievements and signs will tell you that you're heading in the right direction?

3. How well do your finance, HR, operations, marketing, sales strategies etc align with your overall strategy??

- If you already have a team, how clear is everyone on how their role contributes to your strategy? If not, are all elements of your business actually focused on the same overall goals?

4. How well does each aspect of your business align cross-functionally?

- It'll be crucial to your growing business that things align horizontally as well as vertically.

5. How are conflicts over priorities resolved?

- How are decisions made?

6. If you already have a team, how well can they explain your current strategy, and their part in it? (And don't just guess. Ask them!)

- There may be a difference between what you think they think, and what they actually think.

7. How and how often do you and your team communicate?

- How effective are your formal and your information communication channels? How does information REALLY get passed around?



PEOPLE

As your business grows, your ability to lead and manage people is increasingly important, both directly within your leadership team, and indirectly as you lead and inspire those in your wider business.

So is your ability to develop and train leaders within your team, at all levels.

The bottom line is that it's up to you whether you people turn out to be your biggest asset or your biggest headache: a productive, profitable team...or a shambolic, stressful nightmare.

1. Who's managing who?

- Where are the reporting lines, formally and informally?

2. How do you hire, train, retain and reward people?

- How robust are your people processes? What's telling you this?

3. How clear are roles and responsibilities?

- How clearly do people understand their roles and responsibilities and those of others... and where they connect?

4. How do different functions interact (eg sales, finance, operations?)

- How much space is there for cross functional collaboration and communication?

5. How clearly are strategic goals shared?

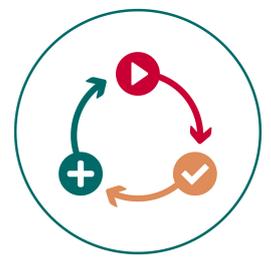
- How and when are business goals communicated?

6. How are people's performance and outputs managed and measured?

- How does everyone know that they're on track?

7. How does your team connect and get together informally?

- Informal structures and networks are powerful. What are yours?



PROCESS

Your processes, systems, measures and procedures are what makes your business scalable, but where's the balance between having the right processes, and overdoing it?

And how useful are they anyway if people aren't following them properly?!

So...are your business processes helping or hindering your growth plans?

1. What do you have processes, procedures and measures for?

- Everything? Nothing? Something in between??

2. How are your processes captured, documented and managed?

- Who does this, and who has access to it all?

3. Where are there gaps or overlaps in systems (eg, between sales and finance)?

- Where is there waste or duplication of efforts?

4. Who uses the processes?

- What's the connection and communication between active users and those impacted further down the line?

5. What tools (eg software) support your processes, systems and measures?

- Are they future focused, fit for purpose...or make-do-and-mend ?

6. How well do your processes and systems support your people to deliver results?

- Do people work with the process...or sometimes work round it to get things done?

7. What behaviours do your processes drive?

- Look carefully: what are the useful behavioural outputs of your processes? Is anything less helpful coming out of them?



PARADIGMS

Your paradigms are your ways of working - your culture.

It's not as difficult to capture and manage as you might think - the starting point is paying attention to what your current culture actually is... as opposed to what we all might like to think it is...

1. Describe your current culture in 5 words

- Try to be honest and include the good, the bad and the ugly

2. How would your team describe your current culture in 5 words?

- Where are you in agreement? What are the differences?

3. What do people love about working at your company?

- Conversely, what do they NOT like so much?

4. What happens in your business that's not useful?

- What's started happening that you're not happy about?

5. How clearly does your internal culture match your external brand?

- Are the messages consistent? Is there a difference between what your brand states and what it's like to work in your business?

6. Where are the informal networks and communications in your business?

- What do people talk about? What do they congratulate each other for? What do they informally reward...or punish?

7. Who's REALLY calling the shots, day to day?

- Where are the informal 'power centres' ?





So now what??

This is just our starting point. In order to know how to best begin the journey, we must know exactly where we are.

And who we are.

And why we are here.

Take the time to think deeply about where you currently are as you begin your journey of sustainable business growth. The usual questions about strategy, financial projections, customer acquisition and so on will present themselves in due course as you move towards your business goals, but these underlying principles **MUST** be part of your thinking process.

If you'd like me and my team at Yara Journeys to work with you on your business growth strategy and implementation, through consultancy, coaching or training, get in touch at www.yara-journeys.com - or contact me at www.annabellebeckwith.com - to find out which our offerings can best serve you...and your growing business.

To your success!



Annabelle Beckwith