THE 88 FRAMEWORK™

The 88-Point Scaling Diagnostic

88 checkpoints that reveal where your growth is stuck — and what to fix first.

88 checkpoints **5** categories **15** minutes

the88creative.com/diagnostic

01 Customer Acquisition

How reliably can you turn strangers into customers?

- [ ] **You can clearly articulate your ideal customer in one sentence**
  Not demographics — the specific problem they have and why they're ready to solve it now.
- [ ] **You know your customer acquisition cost (CAC) by channel**
  Not a blended average — the actual cost per customer from each source: paid, organic, referral, etc.
- [ ] **You have at least one predictable, repeatable acquisition channel**
  Something you can increase spend on and reliably get more customers. Not dependent on luck or timing.
- [ ] **Your website converts visitors to leads at 2%+ (or customers at 1%+)**
  Below these thresholds, you're leaking money on traffic. Above them, you have something to scale.
- [ ] **You have an email list of 1,000+ engaged subscribers**
  Engaged = opened in the last 90 days. Dead lists don't count.
- [ ] **You have a documented lead nurture sequence (not just a welcome email)**
  At minimum: welcome → value → value → soft offer → hard offer. Automated, not manual.
- [ ] **Your paid ads are profitable (or you've validated they can be)**
  ROAS > 1.5x on first purchase, or LTV math that justifies the CAC within a reasonable payback window.
- [ ] **You have organic content generating inbound leads consistently**
  Blog, social, podcast, YouTube — something that brings people to you without paying per click.
- [ ] **You have a referral program or systematic way to generate word-of-mouth**
  Not "our customers refer people." A system: ask, incentive, tracking, thank you.
- [ ] **You know your website traffic sources and can access analytics anytime**
  Google Analytics (or equivalent) set up, conversion tracking working, and you've looked at it in the last 30 days.
- [ ] **Your sales cycle is documented and predictable**
  You know how long it takes from first touch to close, on average, and can forecast based on pipeline.
- [ ] **Someone other than the founder can close deals**
  If every sale requires the founder in the room, you've built a job, not a business.
- [ ] **You have case studies or social proof documented and deployed**
  Not just testimonials in your head — published, accessible, and used in sales/marketing.
- [ ] **Your CRM is actively used and updated (not a graveyard)**
  Every lead tracked, every interaction logged, pipeline updated weekly at minimum.
- [ ] **You have a lead magnet or free offer that generates emails**
  Something valuable enough that people trade their email for it. Converts at 20%+ of landing page visitors.

- [ ] **Your pricing is published or you have a clear quoting process**
  Prospects know what to expect. No "contact us for pricing" black hole.
- [ ] **You retarget website visitors who didn't convert**
  Pixel installed, audiences built, ads running to bring back warm traffic.
- [ ] **You've tested at least 3 different acquisition channels in the last 12 months**
  Diversification isn't optional. Channels die. Algorithms change. Test constantly.

02 Operations & Infrastructure

The systems that let you scale without adding chaos.

- [ ] **Your core processes are documented (not just in the founder's head)**
  Fulfillment, customer service, sales — written down so someone else could execute them.
- [ ] **You have a project management system that the team actually uses**
  Asana, Monday, Notion, ClickUp — doesn't matter which. Matters that tasks don't live in email.
- [ ] **Customer service has defined response time SLAs**
  Customers know when to expect a response. Team knows what "fast" means. Measured and tracked.
- [ ] **You can fulfill 2x current volume without hiring**
  If orders doubled tomorrow, would you survive the week? Systems should have capacity headroom.
- [ ] **Your tech stack is integrated (data flows automatically between tools)**
  No manual exports/imports. CRM talks to email talks to analytics talks to billing.
- [ ] **You have a dashboard showing key business metrics updated weekly**
  Revenue, customers, CAC, churn, cash — visible at a glance, not buried in spreadsheets.
- [ ] **Someone other than the founder can answer customer questions**
  FAQ documented, team empowered, escalation path clear. Founder not in every thread.
- [ ] **Your inventory/capacity is tracked and visible**
  For product companies: real-time inventory. For service: capacity planning. No surprises.
- [ ] **You have vendor/supplier backup options identified**
  If your primary supplier disappeared, you have Plan B ready. Single points of failure kill companies.
- [ ] **Team roles and responsibilities are clearly defined**
  Everyone knows what they own. No "I thought you were handling that" moments.
- [ ] **You have regular team meetings with a consistent agenda**
  Weekly minimum. Same time, same format. Not ad-hoc chaos.
- [ ] **Your contracts and legal docs are standardized and accessible**
  Not reinventing every agreement. Templates ready, signed copies organized.

03 Creative & Brand

Your brand is what people say when you're not in the room.

- [ ] **Quality control checkpoints exist before delivery**
  Someone checks the work before it ships. Errors caught internally, not by customers.
- [ ] **You have a hiring process (not just "post and pray")**
  Job description template, interview questions, skills test, reference check — documented.
- [ ] **New team members have an onboarding checklist**
  Day 1, Week 1, Month 1 — structured. Not "shadow me for a week."
- [ ] **You track customer satisfaction (NPS, CSAT, or reviews)**
  Systematically collected, not anecdotally. You know the number.
- [ ] **Your data is backed up automatically**
  Customer data, financial records, creative assets — recoverable if disaster strikes.
- [ ] **The founder can take a week off without the business stopping**
  The ultimate operations test. If you can't, you don't have a business — you have a job.
- [ ] **You have a clear, differentiated positioning statement**
  Not "we're the best quality" — specific claim, specific audience, specific alternative.
- [ ] **Your visual identity is consistent across all touchpoints**
  Same colors, fonts, imagery style — website, social, packaging, email, everything.
- [ ] **You have brand guidelines documented**
  Logo usage, colors (with hex codes), fonts, voice/tone — so anyone can create on-brand content.
- [ ] **Your website was updated in the last 12 months**
  Not just content — design, messaging, and technical performance reviewed and refreshed.
- [ ] **You have professional product/service photography**
  Not iPhone snapshots. Real photography that makes what you sell look worth the price.
- [ ] **Your brand voice is defined and documented**
  Tone, vocabulary, personality — written down so anyone can write in your voice.
- [ ] **You have a content library of reusable assets**
  Photos, videos, graphics, copy blocks — organized and accessible for campaigns.
- [ ] **You publish content consistently (weekly minimum)**
  Blog, social, newsletter — something on a schedule, not when you remember.
- [ ] **Your packaging/unboxing experience is intentional**
  For physical products: designed, not default. For digital: onboarding is branded.

- [ ] **You have email templates that match your brand**
  Not plain text or generic templates. Branded, professional, consistent.
- [ ] **Your social media profiles are complete and current**
  Bio, links, highlights, pinned content — all updated within the last 90 days.
- [ ] **You have video content (not just photos)**
  Product demos, founder story, customer testimonials — video outperforms everything.

04 Go-To-Market

How you launch, position, and sell.

- [ ] **Your founder story is documented and deployed**
  Why you started, what you believe, where you're going — used in marketing.
- [ ] **You have press/media mentions or coverage**
  Third-party validation. Even one credible mention is better than zero.
- [ ] **You've defined your competitive differentiation**
  Not just "better" — specifically why someone should choose you over alternatives.
- [ ] **Your About page tells a compelling story**
  Not a resume. A narrative that makes people want to work with you.
- [ ] **You have a content calendar (even a simple one)**
  What you're publishing, when, where. Planned in advance, not reactive.
- [ ] **Someone other than the founder can create on-brand content**
  Guidelines + examples + feedback loop = scalable creative.
- [ ] **You have a documented launch playbook**
  New product/feature launch checklist — repeatable, not reinvented each time.
- [ ] **Your pricing has been tested and validated**
  Not guessed. Actually tested against alternatives with real customers.
- [ ] **You have a sales deck/one-pager that closes deals**
  Proven to work. Not just "we have slides."
- [ ] **You've identified and documented your sales objections**
  The 5-10 reasons people don't buy — and your responses to each.
- [ ] **You have partnerships or distribution relationships**
  Someone else selling or promoting your product. Not just direct-to-customer.
- [ ] **You sell through multiple channels**
  Not dependent on a single platform. Website + Amazon, or retail + DTC, etc.
- [ ] **Your product/service has clear tiers or packages**
  Good-better-best or similar. Makes buying decisions easier.
- [ ] **You have an upsell/cross-sell strategy**
  Systematically increasing customer value, not leaving money on the table.
- [ ] **Your onboarding converts trials/leads to paying customers**
  Measured conversion rate. Optimized, not ignored.

- [ ] **You have seasonal/promotional campaigns planned**
  Q4, Black Friday, your industry's key moments — calendar built in advance.
- [ ] **Your competitive landscape is documented**
  Who they are, how they position, what they charge, where they're weak.
- [ ] **You know your customer lifetime value (LTV)**
  Not a guess. Calculated from actual data.

05 Financial & Funding Readiness

Cash is oxygen. These fundamentals determine survival.

- [ ] **You have a repeat purchase or retention strategy**
  Subscriptions, loyalty program, replenishment reminders — something systematic.
- [ ] **Your churn rate is known and below industry average**
  For subscriptions: <5% monthly. For products: repeat rate tracked.
- [ ] **You run regular A/B tests on your sales/marketing**
  Headlines, offers, pricing, creative — continuously optimizing.
- [ ] **Your product roadmap is customer-informed**
  Building what customers want, not what you assume they want.
- [ ] **You have win/loss analysis on major deals**
  Why you won, why you lost — documented and used to improve.
- [ ] **You know your monthly burn rate**
  To the dollar. Not "around $X."
- [ ] **You have 6+ months runway at current burn**
  Cash in bank ÷ monthly burn. Below 6 months = danger zone.
- [ ] **Your gross margins are above 50%**
  For products. For services, should be 60%+. Below that, growth just accelerates losses.
- [ ] **You have a financial model/forecast**
  12-month P&L projection at minimum. Updated monthly.
- [ ] **Your books are clean and up-to-date**
  QuickBooks, Xero, or equivalent — reconciled monthly, not a mess.
- [ ] **You have a bookkeeper or accountant**
  Not the founder doing this at midnight. Professional help.
- [ ] **You know your unit economics (CAC:LTV ratio)**
  Should be 3:1 or better. Below that, you're buying customers at a loss.
- [ ] **Your pricing allows for profitable growth**
  Raising prices won't kill you. There's margin to invest in growth.
- [ ] **You have a pitch deck (even if not raising)**
  Forces clarity. Useful for partnerships, hiring, and strategic conversations.
- [ ] **Your cap table is clean (if you've raised)**
  Or ownership structure is simple and documented. No messy equity situations.

- [ ] **You have a line of credit or emergency funding access**
  Not needed today, but available if things get tight.
- [ ] **Your revenue is diversified (no single customer >25%)**
  Customer concentration risk. If your biggest customer leaves, do you survive?
- [ ] **You have recurring or predictable revenue**
  Subscriptions, contracts, repeat buyers — not starting from zero each month.
- [ ] **Your tax strategy is proactive (not reactive)**
  Working with a tax professional to minimize liability, not just filing.
- [ ] **You know what metrics investors/acquirers care about**
  Even if not raising — MRR, growth rate, churn, CAC payback, gross margin.
- [ ] **Your business could survive 3 months without you**
  Financially and operationally. The ultimate test of a real business vs. a job.
- [ ] **You have a clear path to profitability (or are profitable)**
  Not "we'll figure it out." Specific milestones and timeline.

What's Next

Count your checkmarks. Each unchecked box is a potential constraint.

The section with the most gaps? That's where to focus first.

Customer Acquisition	_____ / _____ checked
Operations & Infrastructure	_____ / _____ checked
Creative & Brand	_____ / _____ checked
Go-To-Market	_____ / _____ checked
Financial & Funding Readiness	_____ / _____ checked

Ready to go deeper?

Book a free 30-minute diagnostic call.

the88creative.com/diagnostic