CHECKLIST BOOK

STANDARD WORK

Fifty-Seven Checklists for the Situations a Business Actually Faces

From the Monday war room to the cash crunch, the senior search, the platform migration and the day the largest account calls. Open to the page, run it exactly, close it.

Companion to The Velocity Operating System — Operator's Manual

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Why Checklists, and Why These

A checklist is not a substitute for expertise. It is a defence against expertise failing under load. The failures this book prevents are almost never failures of knowledge — they are failures of a competent person, under time pressure, skipping the step they have performed a hundred times. That is the entire clinical finding behind checklists as a discipline, and it transfers to operating businesses without modification.

These checklists are also the enforcement surface for the rest of the system. A covenant nobody checks is a sentence in a book. A gate criterion nobody reads aloud is a preference. Every rule in the Rule Book that has a physical moment of application appears here as a line with a box next to it, because a box that is visibly unticked is harder to ignore than a principle that is merely unmet.

The two modes

Mode	How it is run	Used for
READ–DO	One person reads each item aloud; the work is performed as it is read. Nothing is done from memory and nothing is done ahead.	Crises, gates, irreversible actions, anything performed rarely or under pressure.
DO–CONFIRM	The team performs the work from expertise, then pauses at a defined point and confirms every item aloud before proceeding.	Recurring cadence, familiar processes, work where flow matters and the risk is omission rather than sequence.

Five rules of use

- Somebody reads it aloud. A checklist run silently in one person’s head is not a checklist; it is a memory test with better branding.
- The reader is not always the most senior person. Frequently the best reader is the most junior, precisely because they have no incentive to skip an item that is inconvenient for the person running the room.
- Every item is binary. Done or not done. An item that can be partially satisfied has been written badly and should be split.
- An unticked box stops the process. That is the only power a checklist has, and it evaporates the first time it is overruled casually.
- Amend at the retrospective, never in the moment. Every checklist below carries a version implicitly; when reality proves an item wrong, change it for everyone at the next review.

OPERATING DOCTRINE

The value of a checklist is concentrated in the two or three items everybody is tempted to skip. When you shorten one of these lists — and you should, to fit your business — delete the obvious items and keep the inconvenient ones. A list of ten comfortable steps and no uncomfortable ones is a document that will never once change an outcome.

CONSEQUENCE FRAMING

The characteristic failure is not that a checklist is missing. It is that a checklist exists, is filed, and is not run — and its existence produces exactly the false confidence that makes the omission expensive. A list nobody reads aloud is worse than no list, because the organisation believes the check is happening.

Index of Checklists

PART A

Standing Cadence

Ten checklists for the recurring machinery. These are DO–CONFIRM: run the meeting from expertise, then confirm before closing. The confirmation takes ninety seconds and is the reason the cadence does not decay over a year.

A1 Daily Morning Protocol

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Every working day, before the first reactive commitment	Each executive, individually	45 minutes	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Cash position and yesterday's demand or order data reviewed. Not "how are we doing" — did anything move that changes today?
- ☐ 02 Tripwire register checked. Any breach overnight? Any metric within tolerance of a threshold?
- ☐ 03 Covenant proximity checked where any covenant is inside two quarters of binding.
- ☐ 04 From everything competing for today, the single highest-convexity action identified. One, not three.
- ☐ 05 That action time-blocked in the calendar before the calendar fills with symmetric, low-upside obligations.
- ☐ 06 One bridge-building contact made into a cluster where the business has a structural hole — capital, a buyer at a thin account, a regulatory body, a technical community.
- ☐ 07 Yesterday's ship-list commitment confirmed shipped or explicitly flagged as missed.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The highest-convexity action is blocked in the calendar and the outbound contact has been sent. Reactive work begins only after both.

Note. One high-convexity action per working day compounds to roughly 250 a year. The executive dispersed across fifteen reactive threads completes near zero. The protocol is the difference.

A2 Daily Huddle

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Every working day	Single-threaded owners	15 minutes, standing	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Yesterday's ship-list items called out by owner: shipped or not shipped. No percentages.
- ☐ 02 Today's blockers named, each with the person who can remove it.
- ☐ 03 Any stop-the-line flags raised and routed.
- ☐ 04 Escalations assigned to a named person with a due time, not a due day.
- ☐ 05 Nothing discussed that belongs to a weekly or monthly forum.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Every blocker has a name against it. The huddle ends on time regardless of what remains interesting.

A3 Weekly War Room

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Same time weekly	CEO/GM with the transformation lead	30–45 minutes	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Last week's ship list reviewed first, aloud, binary, before anything new is written.
- ☐ 02 One scorecard on the table. Deltas only — metrics that did not move get no airtime.
- ☐ 03 Any metric that moved without an owner who can explain the mechanism gets a named investigation with a due date.
- ☐ 04 Tripwire register reviewed. Any firing this week? Any two firings this quarter?
- ☐ 05 If two tripwires have fired this quarter, the standing question is asked on the record and the burden of proof shifts to whoever wants to continue the current posture.
- ☐ 06 Next seven days' ship list written, with public owner commitments and binary deliverables.
- ☐ 07 Nothing on the list is a status update, an investigation with no end date, or a task smaller than a day.
- ☐ 08 Capital allocation, strategy and anything the MBR owns explicitly deferred.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The seven-day ship list exists, every line has one name, and every owner has said their commitment out loud.

A4 Commercial Council

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Weekly	Commercial or key-account lead	30 minutes	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Adoption of last week's play reported by rep and by account — not in aggregate.
- ☐ 02 If adoption is below the floor after two weeks, the play is redesigned. It is not re-announced.
- ☐ 03 Among non-adopters, the pattern classified: capability, incentive or belief. Each has a different remedy.
- ☐ 04 The one play for the coming week named. One. A business running five plays is running none.
- ☐ 05 The play written in the words the front line will actually use, not in the words leadership used to conceive it.
- ☐ 06 Participation tracking confirmed live before the meeting closes.
- ☐ 07 Any commitment made to an account this week logged, with the date it must be honoured.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> One play is named, written in field language, and tracked. Not two.

A5 Growth Review

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Weekly	Growth owner	45 minutes	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 For every test at verdict: the pre-registration document opened and the criterion read aloud, verbatim, with its date, before any result is discussed.
- ☐ 02 The measured result stated against the required result. Numbers before interpretation.
- ☐ 03 Verdict called: kill, iterate or scale. There is no fourth verdict.

- ☐ 04 For any miss, the override question asked: what would have to be true for us to override our own criterion? If nobody answers in one sentence, the verdict stands.
- ☐ 05 Killed tests: learning filed in the failure archive, specific enough to be reused, and resources redeployed this week.
- ☐ 06 Velocity accounting updated: tests shipped, cycle time, cost per test, win rate, kill rate.
- ☐ 07 Kill rate checked against the floor. Below it, the slate is audited for trivial tests or unenforced gates.
- ☐ 08 Next sprint's slate agreed, with every pre-registration document signed before the meeting ends.
- ☐ 09 Convexity ratio of the new slate checked against the standard.
- ☐ 10 Any test live beyond two quarters without a verdict closed on the spot.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Every test at verdict has a recorded decision, and every test launching next week has a signed pre-registration document dated today or earlier.

A6 Spend and Promotion Gate

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any discretionary commitment above the materiality threshold	Finance and compliance jointly	Within the published SLA	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The 60–90 day true-ROI projection presented, net of subsidisation, cannibalisation, forward-buy and post-event decay. Not a lift projection.
- ☐ 02 Margin integrity tested: does net contribution stay positive across the full cycle, not the promoted week?
- ☐ 03 Forward-buying risk quantified: how much of this volume is borrowed from a future period?
- ☐ 04 Effect on average discount depth calculated. Does this move the trend that is already being watched?
- ☐ 05 Compliance reviewed: claims, pricing representations, partner commitments.
- ☐ 06 Event-level measurement confirmed in place before approval, not promised after.
- ☐ 07 Kill condition set, with the person who watches it named.
- ☐ 08 If rejected, the condition under which the proposal returns is stated in the rejection.
- ☐ 09 Decision and its projection logged, so the realised number can be compared at day 60.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The true-ROI projection exists in writing and is signed by both finance and the business owner. A projection presented verbally has not been made.

Note. Discretionary spend is routinely the second-largest line on the P&L and the least measured. This is the highest-return meeting in the cadence stack.

A7 Monthly Business Review

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Monthly	Executive team	3 hours	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Driver tree reviewed node by node against trajectory, decomposed by cohort. No aggregate presented without its decomposition.

- ☐ 02 Covenants attested by name, not by function: runway, concentration, position sizing, vendor dependency, open severity-1 items.
- ☐ 03 Every saving identified this month names its convex destination in this meeting. No destination, no credit for the saving.
- ☐ 04 Realised true ROI on every event that hit its day-60 gate, compared against the projection made at approval.
- ☐ 05 Kill list reviewed: what did we stop this month, and what should have been stopped and was not?
- ☐ 06 Reallocation decisions made and recorded — this meeting exists to move resources, not to review history.
- ☐ 07 Revenue per FTE, automation coverage and failed automation reviews on the same page as gross margin.
- ☐ 08 Decision latency by class reported against the published SLA.
- ☐ 09 Any metric on any scorecard that cannot be traced to the tree in one step identified and deleted.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Covenant attestation is signed by name and at least one reallocation decision has been made. A review that moved nothing was a report.

A8 Quarterly Strategic Reset

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Quarterly	CEO	Half day	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Convexity audit of the entire initiative pipeline. Anything with capped upside and open-ended downside is an exit, not a fix.
- ☐ 02 Every position scored: is the upside structurally unbounded, and is the downside capped by structure rather than by hope?
- ☐ 03 Kill count for the quarter reviewed. Zero kills means we are not running enough shots.
- ☐ 04 Threshold progress reviewed: documented wins, reputation assets, inbound flow.
- ☐ 05 Offer, pricing and pack architecture revisited against realised elasticity, not assumed elasticity.
- ☐ 06 Relationship development plan updated against the structural-hole map.
- ☐ 07 Every proposed amendment to a Standard heard here — this is the only mid-year forum permitted to change a rule.
- ☐ 08 Every gate override from the quarter reviewed, with its written override case.
- ☐ 09 Prediction reviews: decisions whose review date fell this quarter compared against what was recorded.
- ☐ 10 Capital reallocated toward what the gates validated, and away from what they did not.
- ☐ 11 Next quarter's WIP slate set at or below the cap, with displacement named for every addition.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Capital has actually moved and the WIP slate for next quarter is at or below the cap. A reset that reallocated nothing was a discussion.

A9 Annual Offsite

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Annually	CEO / Chairman	Two days	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Portfolio convexity audit across every position the enterprise holds, including the ones nobody thinks of as positions.
- ☐ 02 Survivorship stress test run against a severe revenue-decline scenario. What breaks, in what order, and how much notice do we get?

- ☐ 03 Every covenant limit re-examined — this is the only forum permitted to amend one.
- ☐ 04 Network topology mapped: which clusters we reach, which we do not, and which structural holes are worth bridging next year.
- ☐ 05 Threshold targets set for documented wins and reputation assets.
- ☐ 06 The operating system's own objectives reviewed. This is the only forum permitted to change them.
- ☐ 07 Every benchmark band in the threshold register recalibrated to current industry reality.
- ☐ 08 Rule Book amendments to Covenants heard, decided and logged in the amendment log.
- ☐ 09 Annual capital allocation framework set, with the convex portfolio sized explicitly rather than residually.
- ☐ 10 Succession exposure named for every seat whose sudden loss would be a company-level event.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The capital allocation framework is written, the stress test has been run against real numbers, and every amendment is in the log.

A10 Any Gate Review

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Every gate, everywhere in the system	Forum chair	Six moves	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Read the criterion aloud from the signed document, with its date. Not from memory, not paraphrased.
- ☐ 02 State the measured result against the required result. Result before interpretation.
- ☐ 03 Call the verdict: kill, iterate or scale.
- ☐ 04 Ask the override question: what would have to be true for us to override our own criterion?
- ☐ 05 If no answer arrives in one sentence, the verdict stands and the discussion is closed.
- ☐ 06 Name the next commitment: owner, resource, date.
- ☐ 07 Record the journal entry and the prediction.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> A verdict has been called and recorded. "Keep watching" is not a verdict; it is how zombies consume budget.

Note. This is the most-used checklist in the book. Its six moves exist so that gate discipline does not depend on the seniority or the mood of whoever is chairing.

PART B

Transitions

Five checklists for the moments when ownership changes hands — of a business, a function, a seat or a product line. Transitions are where institutional memory leaks and where the most avoidable damage occurs.

B1 Taking Over a Business

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Day one of a new mandate, acquisition or turnaround	Incoming CEO/GM	Fourteen days to Gate 1	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Establish the 13-week rolling cash position and who owns it. Everything else can wait an hour; this cannot.
- ☐ 02 Identify the largest single customer, channel and vendor exposure as a share of net revenue.
- ☐ 03 Ask what commitments have been made to partners, customers and staff in the last four quarters that have not yet been honoured.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Stand up the war room: one room, one wall of scorecards, one owner.
- ☐ 05 Build the driver tree from the actual P&L. Decompose until the binding constraint is visible in cohort data, not in narrative.
- ☐ 06 Pull cohort cuts nobody has looked at in a year: repeat behaviour by acquisition vintage, contribution by product and channel, performance by account and by unit.
- ☐ 07 Run the hidden-economics check: decompose apparent lift into subsidisation, cannibalisation, forward-buying and genuine incrementality.
- ☐ 08 Reconstruct the last ten material decisions from calendar and email. Count touches and elapsed days.
- ☐ 09 Run the trust scan across the front line and the top accounts. One question does most of the work: were commitments made in the last four quarters kept?
- ☐ 10 Inventory every auto-renewing programme, contract and promotion that nobody has measured.
- ☐ 11 Publish decision rights with latency standards. Unpublished authority routes every decision through your calendar by default.
- ☐ 12 Publish the stop-doing list. Stopping is the fastest capacity you will ever create.
- ☐ 13 Name the binding constraint on one page, with the cohort cut that proves it.
- ☐ 14 Set the scorecard at seven metrics or fewer, each with an owner and a baseline.
- ☐ 15 Identify the two people everyone quietly routes around and the two everyone quietly depends on.
- ☐ 16 Install the daily huddle and the weekly ship list this week — not after the offsite.

> DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL
>
> The binding constraint is named with cohort evidence, the scorecard is live with owners and baselines, the cash bleed is quantified, and decision rights are published. Day fourteen arrives regardless of how interesting the remaining questions are.

Note. The characteristic failure here is that the diagnostic expands to fill available curiosity. Week three arrives with a beautiful segmentation and no decision. The clock is the countermeasure.

B2 The 90-Day Install

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Installing the operating system in any business or unit	CEO with transformation lead	90 days, four gates	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Days 1–14: complete checklist B1 in full. Gate 1 convenes on day fourteen.
- ☐ 02 Days 15–30: launch the first experiment slate against the constraint — two experiments, not twelve, every criterion pre-registered before launch.
- ☐ 03 Days 15–30: stand up the automation layer for scorecard production and cohort decomposition. Baseline cost per test and revenue per FTE.
- ☐ 04 Days 15–30: freeze all procurement and offers lacking a matrix score. Gate 2 tests for pre-registered movement against control.
- ☐ 05 Days 31–60: scale validated pilots ring by ring, killing failures publicly and cheaply within three weeks of the miss.
- ☐ 06 Days 31–60: where the constraint is behavioural, deploy a time-boxed incentive overlay paying on scorecard metrics rather than gross volume.
- ☐ 07 Days 31–60: install the performance cadence and run the first keeper-test review. Gate 3 tests unit economics at each ring and overlay ROI against its floor.
- ☐ 08 Days 61–90: codify every validated play into standard work — written, trained, and in use by people who were not in the pilot.
- ☐ 09 Days 61–90: sunset or formalise every temporary structure. The war room either becomes the standing operating meeting or it ends.
- ☐ 10 Days 61–90: run the first Quarterly Reset and commit next quarter’s slate and spend calendar.
- ☐ 11 CEO time tapers from 8–10 hours weekly to 4–6 by day 61. If it cannot taper, the system is being held up by hand rather than installed.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> Gate 4: the operating model has run two consecutive full cycles — scorecard meeting, ship list, gate review — without founder intervention, with gains sustained inside tolerance.

Note. A failed gate is the plan working, not the plan failing. The only unrecoverable failure is a gate that passes on narrative. Gate 4 is the one most often skipped and the only one that determines whether any of the preceding work survives next year.

B3 New Executive Onboarding

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A senior hire accepts	Hiring manager	Signed offer to day 30	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The written outcome scorecard — the same one used to run the search — handed over on or before day one. It does not get rewritten to match the person.
- ☐ 02 The 90-day plan with pre-registered criteria confirmed as agreed before the start date, not drafted in week two.
- ☐ 03 Metrics carrying their name identified explicitly. No ambiguity, no shared ownership.
- ☐ 04 Access provisioned before day one, scoped to the role rather than to convenience.
- ☐ 05 They read the Operator’s Manual, Culture Guide and Rule Book in week one. Comprehension is not expected; location is.
- ☐ 06 They read the last quarter of decision-journal entries in their area — the fastest way to learn how the business actually thinks.

- ☐ 07 They read the failure archive before the wins. Kills carry more information and fewer myths.
- ☐ 08 They attend every forum in the cadence stack once, including those above their level, and ask what decision each produces.
- ☐ 09 They ship one thing in week one, however small.
- ☐ 10 The daily deposit starts immediately: one convexity action, one outbound contact, one reputation asset.
- ☐ 11 Week-two and week-six check-ins scheduled now, against the scorecard rather than against feelings.
- ☐ 12 They disagree with something out loud, with evidence, before day thirty — and are visibly taken seriously when they do.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> By day thirty they can draw the driver tree for their area from memory and name every metric that carries their name.

B4 Leader Departure and Handover

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any leader with owned metrics or relationships is leaving	Their manager	From notice to last day	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Every metric, initiative, gate and workflow carrying their name listed, with the new single owner named against each before the last day.
- ☐ 02 Every relationship they own singly identified, and a second relationship holder introduced while they are still in post.
- ☐ 03 Open commitments to customers, partners and staff documented with dates — including informal ones.
- ☐ 04 Decision-journal entries for open decisions completed, including predictions not yet due for review.
- ☐ 05 Any pre-registered criteria they set are transferred unchanged. A successor does not inherit the right to renegotiate someone else's gate.
- ☐ 06 Undocumented process in their head converted to standard work in their remaining time — this is the highest-value use of a notice period.
- ☐ 07 Credentials, agent ownership and access revoked on a scheduled date, verified rather than assumed.
- ☐ 08 Communication to accounts and partners drafted and sent before rumour arrives ahead of it.
- ☐ 09 Exit conversation held, honest, and recorded: what would have made staying obviously correct?
- ☐ 10 If regretted: root-cause the departure. How long had the manager known, and what did we not do?
- ☐ 11 If not regretted: root-cause the hire. Which selection stage produced the false-positive signal?

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> No metric, relationship or open commitment is unowned as of the last day. Anything still unowned defaults to the departing leader's manager, personally.

B5 Winding Down a Product, Market or Line

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A gate has been failed decisively, or the line has been judged unrecoverable	Named executive	Decision to closure	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The decision recorded as a forward capital-allocation decision, not as a failure to persevere. Sunk cost is not an argument.
- ☐ 02 Working capital tied up in the line quantified: inventory, prepayments, committed spend, receivables at risk.

- ☐ 03 Customer and partner commitments inventoried, with the honouring plan for each. This is where trust is either preserved or spent.
- ☐ 04 Contractual exit costs and notice periods mapped before any announcement.
- ☐ 05 Sequence set: staff first, then key customers and partners individually, then the market. Never in the reverse order.
- ☐ 06 Staff affected handled under the separation checklist, with redeployment considered before exit.
- ☐ 07 Announcement drafted to say what is true, once, without euphemism. Managed disclosure damages more than the closure does.
- ☐ 08 Assets recoverable identified: data, IP, relationships, learnings, standard work worth keeping.
- ☐ 09 Freed cash explicitly named to a convex destination in the same meeting that approves the wind-down.
- ☐ 10 Post-mortem scheduled under H5 while the participants are still present.
- ☐ 11 The failure archive entry written: what was the thesis, at which gate did it fail, and what would we test differently?

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Every customer and partner commitment has a named honouring plan, and the freed cash has a stated destination.

Note. A kill executed well is a recruitment asset and a trust deposit. A kill executed by attrition and silence is the most expensive way to save the same money.

PART C

Commercial Moves

Eight checklists for the decisions that move revenue. Every one of them shares a single governing rule: velocity before distribution. Reach can be purchased; per-unit productivity must be earned, and buying the first without proving the second is the most reliable way to purchase a write-off.

C1 New Product Launch

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A product is proposed for commercial release	Brand or product owner	Concept to first ring	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Which driver-tree node does this move, and by what mechanism? If the answer is a narrative benefit, stop here.
- ☐ 02 Convexity screened: bounded downside known before launch, upside structurally unbounded, reversible inside one cycle.
- ☐ 03 Base rate established: what happened the last ten times a company like ours launched into this space?
- ☐ 04 Cannibalisation modelled explicitly. How much of the projected volume comes from our own existing items?
- ☐ 05 Pre-registered per-unit productivity floor set for the first ring, with the number written before launch.
- ☐ 06 The smallest version that still answers the question identified, and the launch scoped to it.
- ☐ 07 Claims and compliance language cleared by the named authority before any asset is produced.
- ☐ 08 Supply and quality readiness confirmed: what is the escaped-defect exposure if demand exceeds plan?
- ☐ 09 Kill criteria pre-registered with the date they are assessed and the person who assesses them.
- ☐ 10 Pre-mortem filed: it is twelve months on and this failed — the three most-cited causes each have an owner and a leading metric.
- ☐ 11 Distribution spend held back until velocity proves out in the first ring.
- ☐ 12 Decision journal entry with predicted outcome, number and date.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

The per-unit productivity floor and the kill criteria are written and signed. A launch without a floor is a launch that cannot fail, which means it cannot succeed either.

C2 Market or Geography Entry

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Expansion into a new market is proposed	Named executive	Proposal to first test market	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Bounded downside stated in currency, known before commitment, and capped by structure rather than by intention.
- ☐ 02 Base rate checked for entries of this type by companies of our size and channel position.
- ☐ 03 Regulatory, claims and labelling requirements mapped before any commercial commitment.
- ☐ 04 Local cost-to-serve modelled including freight, duty, returns and the deduction regime in that market.
- ☐ 05 Test market selected with matched controls, and the per-unit floor pre-registered.
- ☐ 06 Partner or distributor evaluated on the vendor matrix. A distributor is a vendor with a revenue line attached.
- ☐ 07 Concentration effect checked: does success here create an exposure above the flag level?
- ☐ 08 Exit path defined before entry. What does leaving cost, and how long does it take?

- ☐ 09 Talent question answered: who runs this, singly, and are they already in the business?
- ☐ 10 Pre-mortem filed and red-team memo commissioned if this is a Type 1 commitment.
- ☐ 11 Ring sequence drawn: this market, then which, on what evidence.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The test market is live with a pre-registered per-unit floor and a defined exit path. Scale dollars release only on measured productivity.

C3 New Channel Entry

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A new route to market is proposed	Commercial lead	Proposal to first ring	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Channel economics modelled to net, not gross: margin, deductions, returns, freight, promotional expectation and payment terms.
- ☐ 02 Gross-to-net for this channel compared against existing channels. Channels rarely fail on demand; they fail on the deduction regime.
- ☐ 03 Conflict with existing channels assessed — pricing, assortment, partner reaction.
- ☐ 04 Working capital requirement calculated, including the inventory the channel expects to be carried.
- ☐ 05 Per-unit productivity floor pre-registered for the first accounts or outlets.
- ☐ 06 Service and fulfilment capability confirmed at the channel's standard, not at ours.
- ☐ 07 Compliance and claims requirements specific to the channel reviewed.
- ☐ 08 Concentration effect modelled at plan volumes.
- ☐ 09 One named owner assigned. Channels fail more often from split ownership than from bad economics.
- ☐ 10 Kill criteria and review date set.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Net channel economics are modelled and positive at realistic promotional depth, and the per-unit floor is written.

C4 Price Increase

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A list or realised price change is proposed	Commercial lead with finance	Proposal to effective date	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Cumulative increase already taken over the last three years calculated. Elasticity is a function of the sequence, not the increment.
- ☐ 02 Elasticity evidence assembled for this specific item and channel, not for the category.
- ☐ 03 Effect on per-unit velocity modelled separately for the top and bottom outlet deciles.
- ☐ 04 The honest question asked and answered: is price-led growth substituting for a volume problem we have not solved?
- ☐ 05 Effect on the promotional calendar modelled. A list increase absorbed entirely by deeper discounting is a margin illusion.
- ☐ 06 Partner and key-account notification sequence planned, with the commercial owner delivering it personally.
- ☐ 07 Competitive response scenarios considered, including the case where nobody follows.
- ☐ 08 Where possible, tested first: a bounded price test with a pre-registered MDE before a full list move.

- ☐ 09 Guardrails set: the velocity level at which the increase is reversed or mitigated.
- ☐ 10 Effective date, communication date and monitoring plan set with named owners.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The elasticity evidence is item- and channel-specific, and the reversal guardrail is written with a named watcher.

C5 Promotion or Spend Event

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any discretionary commercial event	Business owner, gated by finance	Proposal to day-60 review	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Run checklist A6 in full. This checklist does not replace the Gate; it prepares for it.
- ☐ 02 The 60–90 day true-ROI projection written, net of subsidisation, cannibalisation, forward-buy and decay.
- ☐ 03 Depth checked against the current average depth trend. Does this event deepen a trend already being watched?
- ☐ 04 Event-level measurement instrumented before launch. Unmeasurable spend is an assumption, not a spend.
- ☐ 05 Baseline period defined and clean — no other change running on the same surface.
- ☐ 06 Post-event decay expectation stated in advance, so the actual can be compared to it.
- ☐ 07 Inventory and supply confirmed to avoid an availability failure at the moment of peak demand.
- ☐ 08 Compliance sign-off on claims, pricing representation and partner commitments.
- ☐ 09 Day-60 review scheduled at approval, with the person who will run it named.
- ☐ 10 At day 60: realised true ROI compared to projection, and the question asked — if this were proposed today with these actuals, would it clear the Gate?
- ☐ 11 Result logged so the next proposal from this owner carries a track record.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The projection is signed, measurement is live, and the day-60 review is in the calendar with a name against it.

C6 Opening the Next Distribution Ring

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A request to expand doors, accounts, seats, regions or capacity	Commercial lead	Request to decision	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Prior ring’s economics on the scorecard. Not reported — on the scorecard, visible, with a history.
- ☐ 02 Per-unit productivity in the prior ring measured in the top and bottom deciles, not as an average.
- ☐ 03 The buyer’s or partner’s hurdle rate established, and our performance against it in the specific units that matter to them.
- ☐ 04 Unit economics confirmed to hold at the new ring, allowing for degradation as we leave the best-fit segment.
- ☐ 05 Incremental cost of the expansion quantified, and the break-even per-unit productivity calculated.
- ☐ 06 Working capital and supply implications modelled at the new volume.
- ☐ 07 Overlay or incentive economics re-validated against the ROI floor if one is being used to drive the expansion.
- ☐ 08 Kill criteria for the new ring pre-registered before it opens.
- ☐ 09 If economics do not hold: the CEO personally delivers the "not yet" to the account or partner requesting expansion.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

The prior ring's economics are visible on the scorecard and hold. Enthusiasm from the buying side is not evidence; it is demand for our capital.

Note. Distribution bought before velocity proves out is the single most reliable way to convert a good quarter into a write-off two quarters later.

C7 Major Pitch or RFP

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A material new-business opportunity opens	Named pursuit owner	Qualification to decision	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Qualified honestly first: is there a budget, a decision date, a defined process, and a reason for them to change?
- ☐ 02 Concentration effect modelled at win. Would this create an exposure above the flag level, and are we prepared for that?
- ☐ 03 Economics modelled at the price we will actually win at, not at list.
- ☐ 04 Multi-threading mapped: who else in their organisation would take our call, and have we met them?
- ☐ 05 The incumbent understood — what is genuinely wrong, from the buyer's perspective rather than ours?
- ☐ 06 Proof assets assembled: documented wins, references at their scale willing to take an unscripted call.
- ☐ 07 Delivery capability confirmed before the promise is made. Winning on a commitment we cannot keep is a trust liability disguised as revenue.
- ☐ 08 Walk-away terms set in advance — price, scope and risk terms below which we decline.
- ☐ 09 Pre-mortem run on the win case: we won, it went badly, why?
- ☐ 10 Decision journal entry with the predicted outcome and probability.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

Walk-away terms are written before negotiation begins. Terms decided in the room are terms decided by whoever is more comfortable with silence.

C8 Key Account at Risk

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any signal that a material account is at risk — including a quiet one	Account owner, escalated to CEO	Signal to plan within 48 hours	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Establish what actually happened, from them, in a live conversation. Not a summary from the account team.
- ☐ 02 Classify it: price event, service event, or trust event. The remedies are entirely different and misclassification wastes the only chance you get.
- ☐ 03 Check the concentration position and whether any covenant moves if this account is lost.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Review what the trust scan said about this account before this happened, and whether anyone acted on it.

- ☐ 05 List every commitment made to them in the last four quarters and mark each kept or not kept. Do this honestly; they have the same list.
- ☐ 06 Review the economics: what is this account worth on a net contribution basis, and at what point does retaining it destroy value?
- ☐ 07 Identify who else in their organisation we know, and whether we are single-threaded.
- ☐ 08 Decide who delivers the response. For a material account this is the CEO, in person, not a written proposal.
- ☐ 09 Build the response around what is provably fixable with a date, not around a discount. A discount answers a price event and inflames a trust event.
- ☐ 10 Set a follow-up cadence and then never miss it. Trust is rebuilt by predictable communication and spent by silence.
- ☐ 11 Model and plan for the loss case in parallel. Hoping is not a plan and the parallel work costs little.
- ☐ 12 If lost: run H5 post-mortem and update the trust scan instrument with whatever it failed to catch.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> The situation is classified, the commitment record is honest, and a named human has spoken to a named human on the other side.

PART D

Capital and Deals

Six checklists for irreversible commitments. Every item in this part is a Type 1 decision by definition, which means the full substrate applies without exception: matrix, pre-mortem, red team, base-rate check, journal entry.

D1 Raising Capital

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A decision to raise equity or credit	CEO with CFO	Decision to close	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The use of proceeds traced to specific driver-tree nodes with expected movement. "Growth" is not a use of proceeds.
- ☐ 02 Runway modelled with and without the raise, under base and bear cases. Raising from strength and raising from necessity are different transactions at different prices.
- ☐ 03 Dilution or covenant burden modelled against the alternative of not raising and operating tighter.
- ☐ 04 Every claim in the materials sourced. Any commissioned research presented as independent analysis is removed or relabelled — this is the single most common material misrepresentation in fundraise decks.
- ☐ 05 Every forward-looking number reconciled to the internal forecast. Two sets of numbers is a governance failure that will be found.
- ☐ 06 The three numbers a hostile, well-informed reader attacks first identified, and addressed in the pack rather than in the room.
- ☐ 07 Prior predictions reviewed: what did we tell investors or lenders last time, and how did it turn out? Bring that comparison unprompted.
- ☐ 08 Covenant terms modelled against the bear case. A covenant that binds in the bear case is a covenant that will bind.
- ☐ 09 Concentration disclosures prepared honestly. This will be diligenced and finding it late costs more than disclosing it early.
- ☐ 10 Data room built with the driver tree as its spine, so diligence questions resolve to one decomposition.
- ☐ 11 Red-team memo commissioned on our own thesis before the first meeting.
- ☐ 12 Decision journal entry with the predicted outcome, terms and timing.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> Every number in the materials reconciles to the internal forecast, and every claim has a source. Anything unsourced is removed rather than softened.

D2 Acquisition (Buy-Side)

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A target is under serious consideration	CEO	LOI to close	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Base rate established first: what share of acquisitions of this type, at this size, by companies like ours, created value?
- ☐ 02 The thesis written in one page before diligence begins, so diligence tests it rather than decorates it.
- ☐ 03 Concentration effect modelled: does this create a position above the enterprise-value limit on any measure?
- ☐ 04 Downside capped by structure — earnout, staged tranches, seller participation — not by confidence in the thesis.
- ☐ 05 Quality of earnings tested independently, with particular attention to deductions, returns, promotional accruals and any revenue recognised at gross.

- ☐ 06 Their cohort data pulled and decomposed. Aggregate growth conceals the two things that matter: acquisition quality and retention by vintage.
- ☐ 07 Their promotional and trade spend measured at event level. If they cannot measure it, assume the reported margin is optimistic.
- ☐ 08 Customer and channel concentration on their side assessed, including contracts up for renewal inside twelve months.
- ☐ 09 Key-person dependency mapped. Who has to stay, and what happens on the day they do not?
- ☐ 10 Working capital and cash conversion normalised. Reported EBITDA and available cash diverge most in exactly this kind of business.
- ☐ 11 Integration cost and time modelled explicitly and added to the price. Integration is not free and is systematically underestimated.
- ☐ 12 Pre-mortem filed and red-team memo commissioned and read. Not summarised — read.
- ☐ 13 Walk-away price set before negotiation and written down where the negotiator can see it.
- ☐ 14 Decision journal entry: predicted outcome, number, date, and the name that signed.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> The red-team memo has been read, the downside is capped by structure, and the walk-away price is written down. A walk-away price decided during negotiation is not a walk-away price.

D3 Exit Readiness

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A sale, recapitalisation or strategic process is contemplated	CEO with CFO	Twelve months out, ideally	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Driver tree cleaned so every reported number reconciles to one decomposition. Buyers discount what they cannot reconcile.
- ☐ 02 Cohort data assembled by vintage — retention, LTV, contribution. This is what sophisticated buyers actually underwrite.
- ☐ 03 Concentration reduced or explained. An exposure above the flag level will be priced against you; an explained, contractually protected one will be priced less harshly.
- ☐ 04 Promotional and discretionary spend measurable at event level, with realised ROI history. Unmeasurable spend reads as unmanaged margin.
- ☐ 05 Key-person dependency reduced. A business that requires the founder in the room is a business with a valuation ceiling.
- ☐ 06 Standard work documented for every play that generates revenue. This is the difference between selling an asset and selling a person.
- ☐ 07 Contracts, IP, data rights and vendor terms diligence-ready, with all portability and training-use clauses known.
- ☐ 08 Compliance and quality record clean, with every severity-1 item closed and documented.
- ☐ 09 Prior predictions and their outcomes assembled — a track record of accurate forecasting is itself a valuation input.
- ☐ 10 The three things a hostile diligence team will find identified now, and either fixed or disclosed on our own timing.
- ☐ 11 Management incentives aligned to the process and communicated before rumour outruns it.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> Every reported number reconciles to the driver tree, and the three findings a hostile team would surface are known to us first.

D4 Post-Acquisition Integration

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Close	Named integration owner, not the deal team	Close plus 90 days	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Run checklist B1 on the acquired business. It is a business you have just taken over, whatever the deal narrative says.
- ☐ 02 One driver tree built across both entities. Two decompositions is two companies.
- ☐ 03 Metric definitions reconciled explicitly. The acquired business computes at least one shared metric differently; find it now rather than in a restatement.
- ☐ 04 Covenants applied to the combined entity, particularly concentration and vendor dependency.
- ☐ 05 The synergy case decomposed into named actions with owners and dates. An unowned synergy is a number in a model.
- ☐ 06 Every synergy that frees cash names its convex destination, in the same forum, on the same day.
- ☐ 07 Cadence installed on the acquired business within thirty days: huddle, ship list, war room, one scorecard.
- ☐ 08 Keeper test run on the acquired leadership within the first cycle, honestly, including on the people who sold to us.
- ☐ 09 Customer and partner commitments made by the seller inventoried and honoured or renegotiated openly.
- ☐ 10 Retention risk on both sides addressed by conversation, not by assumption. Acquirer attrition is as damaging as target attrition and less anticipated.
- ☐ 11 Integration cost tracked against the number underwritten at the deal, with variance reported at the MBR.
- ☐ 12 Day-90 gate: the thesis is tested against measured evidence, and the journal prediction reviewed.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> One driver tree, one set of metric definitions, one cadence. Until then there are two companies with a shared bank account.

D5 Credit Facility or Warehouse Line

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any debt facility under negotiation	CFO	Term sheet to close	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Every covenant modelled against the bear case, not the base case. Covenants are written for the bad scenario and only bind there.
- ☐ 02 Headroom at signing calculated in months at current trajectory, and the point at which it binds identified.
- ☐ 03 Cure rights, cure periods and equity-cure mechanics understood precisely, in the actual language.
- ☐ 04 Cross-default and cross-acceleration provisions mapped against every other obligation.
- ☐ 05 The reporting burden costed in hours per month and assigned to a named owner before signing.
- ☐ 06 Advance rates, eligibility criteria and concentration limits inside the facility modelled against realistic portfolio composition.
- ☐ 07 Change-of-control, key-person and material-adverse-change clauses read aloud in the review meeting.
- ☐ 08 The lender's behaviour in a downturn diligenced through references we source ourselves, unscripted.
- ☐ 09 The scenario named in which this facility becomes the reason we lose control of the business, and its probability assessed honestly.
- ☐ 10 Pricing compared on all-in cost including fees, unused-line charges and the cost of the reporting burden.
- ☐ 11 Decision journal entry with the covenant headroom prediction and its review date.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

Every covenant has been modelled against the bear case and the binding point is a known date, not an unknown risk.

D6 Major Capital Expenditure

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A capital commitment above the materiality threshold	Named executive	Proposal to signature	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The driver-tree node it moves named, with the mechanism and the expected movement quantified.
- ☐ 02 Base rate checked: what did the last ten projects of this type, at this scale, actually cost and deliver against plan?
- ☐ 03 Reversibility assessed. What is this worth if we stop halfway, and what does stopping cost?
- ☐ 04 Capacity assumption tested against realistic demand, not planned demand. Overbuilt capacity is illiquid and permanent.
- ☐ 05 Total cost modelled including commissioning, training, downtime during transition and ongoing maintenance.
- ☐ 06 Runway effect modelled. Does this commitment move us inside the runway covenant under the bear case?
- ☐ 07 Phasing considered: can this be staged so that later tranches release on measured evidence?
- ☐ 08 Alternative of buying the capability or orchestrating around it evaluated and documented as rejected.
- ☐ 09 Pre-mortem filed and red-team memo commissioned.
- ☐ 10 Decision journal entry with predicted outcome, cost, timing and review date.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

The staging option has been evaluated explicitly and rejected in writing, or adopted. Unstaged capital is a bet with no gate.

PART E

People

Seven checklists. A senior hire is the most asymmetric position most operating portfolios ever hold — downside conservatively five to fifteen times annual compensation, upside compounding for years. These checklists exist because that asymmetry deserves the same rigour as a capital deployment, and rarely receives it.

E1 Opening a Role

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Someone requests headcount	CEO	Request to requisition	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The automation-and-orchestration review completed and documented. What was attempted, and what was the measured limit?
- ☐ 02 Vendor and orchestration options evaluated before headcount, and documented as rejected with reasons.
- ☐ 03 If the review failed into a hire, the one-paragraph postmortem written naming the measured limit.
- ☐ 04 The outcome scorecard written before sourcing: three to five measurable outcomes over twelve months, each traced to a driver-tree node with a baseline and a target.
- ☐ 05 Competency block added: quantifies instinctively, designs experiments with pre-registered metrics, runs the weekly review to standard work, multiplies own output with tooling.
- ☐ 06 The loaded, compounded ten-year cost of the seat stated honestly, not the salary.
- ☐ 07 What we are stopping to fund it named.
- ☐ 08 The revenue-per-FTE effect at twelve months modelled if the hire works perfectly.
- ☐ 09 Single-threaded ownership confirmed — which metrics move to this person's name on day one.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The automation review is on file and the outcome scorecard is written. No requisition opens without both.

E2 Senior Search

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A requisition opens	Hiring manager	Requisition to offer	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Matrix weights fixed before the first candidate conversation, so nobody can lobby them upward later.
- ☐ 02 Anchored rubric written: every score point defined by observable behaviour, not by adjectives.
- ☐ 03 Same questions, same order, same rubric, every candidate. Structure is the entire source of validity.
- ☐ 04 Every interviewer scores independently, in writing, submitted before any group discussion.
- ☐ 05 Every finalist completes a paid, time-boxed work sample of the actual job, blind-scored where feasible.
- ☐ 06 References arranged through the candidate: "please set up a call with your manager from that role." The arranging behaviour is itself signal.
- ☐ 07 Reference claims triangulated across at least three sources. One enthusiastic champion and two awkward silences is a finding.
- ☐ 08 Weighted composite computed before the debrief conversation begins.
- ☐ 09 If the composite is below the threshold, this is a no-hire regardless of the enthusiasm in the room.
- ☐ 10 The 90-day plan with pre-registered criteria drafted and agreed with the candidate before the start date.

- ☐ 11 Decision journal entry with the composite, the predicted 12-month performance, and the review date.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The weighted composite is at or above the threshold and every interviewer scored independently. The empty seat is cheaper than the wrong occupant.

Note. A century of selection research is consistent: structured interviews, ability measures and work samples predict; unstructured conversation, credentials and years of experience barely do. Charisma is precisely the variable this process exists to control.

E3 First 30 Days

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A new hire starts	Their manager	30 days	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Run checklist B3 for any executive-level hire. This list is the general case.
- ☐ 02 Scorecard handed over on day one, unchanged from the version used in the search.
- ☐ 03 Metrics carrying their name identified explicitly, with no shared ownership.
- ☐ 04 Access and tooling provisioned before day one, scoped to the role.
- ☐ 05 Manual, Culture Guide, Rule Book and Metrics book read in week one.
- ☐ 06 Decision journal and failure archive for their area read in week two.
- ☐ 07 One thing shipped in week one.
- ☐ 08 Week-two and week-six check-ins held against the scorecard.
- ☐ 09 The daily deposit started: one convexity action, one outbound contact, one asset.
- ☐ 10 Any surprise in the role's actual content versus its description surfaced now, not at day 90.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> They can name every metric that carries their name and have shipped something.

E4 The Day-90 Gate

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Ninety days after start	Their manager	The scheduled date	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The 90-day plan opened and the pre-registered criteria read aloud, with their date.
- ☐ 02 Measured results stated against required results, before any discussion of effort or circumstances.
- ☐ 03 Verdict called: scale, iterate or kill. Iterate permits exactly one 60-day recheck.
- ☐ 04 If iterate: the specific gap named against the scorecard in writing, with checkpoints and a hard recheck date.
- ☐ 05 If kill: proceed to E5 within two weeks. Delay after the decision is pure cost and everyone can feel it.
- ☐ 06 Regardless of verdict: which selection signal predicted this correctly, and which did not?
- ☐ 07 The matrix and rubric updated if a dimension proved unpredictive.
- ☐ 08 Journal prediction from the search reviewed against the outcome.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

A verdict has been called and recorded. A gate that almost everybody passes is ceremonial, and ceremonial gates cost more than no gate.

E5 Separation

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Two consecutive keeper-test "no"s, a failed day-90 gate, or a conduct matter	Their manager, with the CEO informed	Decision to conversation: 14 days	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Confirm the standard was met on our side: was a specific gap named against the scorecard, in writing, unambiguously, with a plan and checkpoints?
- ☐ 02 If not, the defect is management’s. The cycle restarts honestly and the separation waits.
- ☐ 03 If yes, the decision is already made. Set the date; do not re-deliberate.
- ☐ 04 Severance set above market norm. Generosity is cheap insurance against litigation risk and against a permanent hostile narrator.
- ☐ 05 Legal and compliance review completed for the jurisdiction.
- ☐ 06 The message written: fit and trajectory, delivered with respect. Not a manufactured cause, not public humiliation.
- ☐ 07 Handover run under B4: every metric, relationship and open commitment reassigned before the last day.
- ☐ 08 Timing chosen to preserve dignity — not on the day of a company celebration, not by message, not by a third party.
- ☐ 09 Team communication prepared: honest, brief, without disparagement, delivered same-day.
- ☐ 10 Access and credentials revoked on a scheduled and verified basis.
- ☐ 11 Post-mortem filed: which interview signal failed, which reference was skipped, which scorecard dimension was waved through.
- ☐ 12 The rubric updated with whatever the post-mortem found.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

The written gap and plan exist from the prior cycle, severance is above market norm, and handover is complete. Every separated person becomes a permanent narrator of how this company treats people.

E6 Reorganisation

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A structural change to reporting lines, functions or decision rights	CEO	Quarterly Reset only, except in crisis	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The problem stated in driver-tree terms. If the reorganisation cannot name the node it moves, it is motion rather than change.
- ☐ 02 Alternatives evaluated and documented as rejected: clarifying decision rights, publishing latency standards, fixing a single-threaded ownership gap. Most reorganisations are decision-rights problems in disguise.
- ☐ 03 New decision rights drafted with latency standards before the structure is announced. Structure without authority is a chart.
- ☐ 04 Every metric on the driver tree re-owned under the new structure. No orphans.
- ☐ 05 Span of control checked — wide enough to force delegation rather than to enable supervision.
- ☐ 06 Key relationships mapped and reassigned deliberately, with introductions made rather than announced.

- ☐ 07 People implications resolved before announcement, with separations handled under E5.
- ☐ 08 Announcement sequence set: affected individuals first, then their teams, then the organisation, then externally.
- ☐ 09 The reversal cost understood. Reorganisations are expensive to undo and organisations remember the last three.
- ☐ 10 A review date set at 90 days to test whether the named node actually moved.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Decision rights are drafted, every metric is re-owned, and affected individuals have been told before anyone else.

E7 Compensation Cycle

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Annual or scheduled review	CEO with people leader	The cycle window	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Every person scored on the same four-dimension rubric used all year: outcomes, decision quality, leverage, trust behaviour.
- ☐ 02 Decision quality scored on artifacts — gate memos, pre-mortems, journal entries — not on how they sounded in meetings.
- ☐ 03 Outcomes interrogated for mechanism: was the number made by buying volume with unprofitable spend?
- ☐ 04 Keeper test answered in writing for every person before any number is set.
- ☐ 05 Anyone carrying two consecutive "no"s handled under E5 before the cycle, not compensated through it.
- ☐ 06 Development allocation set deliberately unequal above the floor, and the floor confirmed universal.
- ☐ 07 Pay decisions checked against retention risk for demonstrated compounders specifically.
- ☐ 08 Every message delivered so that nobody is surprised — by their number, their rating or their trajectory.
- ☐ 09 Calibration across managers run on the rubric, not on advocacy skill.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The keeper test is answered in writing for everyone, and no one receiving a number is receiving new information about their standing.

PART F

Technology and Vendors

Five checklists. Technology procurement is the one process in the business where the counterparty is a professionally engineered persuasion motion. Every item here exists because a specific technique works reliably against unstructured buyers.

F1 Vendor Selection

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any vendor commitment above the materiality threshold	Function head with finance	Requirement to pilot decision	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Matrix weights fixed before any vendor contact. This single step removes most of the sales motion's leverage.
- ☐ 02 Three-year total cost of ownership modelled before hearing any quote: licence, implementation, integration, training, internal maintenance hours, per-seat escalation at scale.
- ☐ 03 The driver-tree node the tool moves named, with the mechanism and how movement would be detected inside sixty days.
- ☐ 04 Two scorers complete the full matrix independently and submit before the evaluation meeting.
- ☐ 05 Divergences of two points or more argued in the meeting, never averaged silently — the disagreement usually locates the ambiguity the vendor engineered.
- ☐ 06 Any single-criterion score of one treated as a veto regardless of composite.
- ☐ 07 Data portability and training-use clauses read aloud in the evaluation meeting. Not summarised.
- ☐ 08 Cost of leaving priced: export rights, integration unwinding, retraining, contractual exit fees.
- ☐ 09 Peak-load architecture interrogated: what happens at ten times today's highest load, and has that ever been tested?
- ☐ 10 Security posture reviewed: current attestation, data-processing agreement, subprocessors, disclosed incident history.
- ☐ 11 Three reference customers at our scale sourced by us and called unscripted. Their curated list is a marketing asset.
- ☐ 12 Any discount deadline treated as data about their quarter rather than about our decision.
- ☐ 13 Pre-mortem filed: it is twelve months on and this implementation failed — adoption collapse, integration overrun, data-quality mismatch each with an owner and an early metric.
- ☐ 14 Decision journal entry with composite scores, pilot metrics and the renewal review date.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Composite is at or above threshold, no criterion scored a one, TCO was modelled before the quote, and a paid pilot with pre-registered metrics has been agreed.

F2 Implementation

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A vendor pilot or rollout begins	Function head	Pilot to production	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Pilot is paid, time-boxed at thirty to sixty days, and scoped to two units or divisions rather than the whole organisation.
- ☐ 02 Success metrics pre-registered on the driver tree, signed before the pilot begins.
- ☐ 03 The shadow spreadsheet system that the tool replaces identified explicitly and scheduled for shutdown. If it survives, adoption has failed.

- ☐ 04 Data migration tested on real volume, with reconciliation to the source of truth before cutover.
- ☐ 05 Integration to existing systems built and tested, including the agent-accessible endpoints that feed automated reporting.
- ☐ 06 Named internal owner assigned for the workflow, not just for the vendor relationship.
- ☐ 07 Training delivered to the people who will actually use it, not to their managers.
- ☐ 08 Rollback path defined and tested before cutover. An untested rollback is a hope.
- ☐ 09 At the pilot gate: adoption and the pre-registered metric measured against the criterion, read aloud.
- ☐ 10 Expansion proceeds region by region or unit by unit, re-validating adoption at each step.
- ☐ 11 Implementation cost tracked against the modelled TCO, with variance reported.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> The pilot met its pre-registered adoption and driver-tree criteria, and the shadow system it replaces has a shutdown date.

F3 AI Agent Deployment

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any agent workflow proposed for production	Function head	Proposal to production	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The question asked and answered: what does this workflow look like if intelligence costs pennies — and where does a human still have to sign?
- ☐ 02 Exactly one named human owner assigned. An agent without an owner drifts and manufactures false confidence in monitoring that is not happening.
- ☐ 03 Service-level definition written: what the agent ships autonomously (refresh, flag, draft, brief) and what requires a human gate (publish, release, sign).
- ☐ 04 The capability frontier identified honestly: where does this tool make people faster, and where would it make them worse than unassisted?
- ☐ 05 Human gate confirmed on anything customer-visible, partner-visible, financial, legal or scientific.
- ☐ 06 Source manifest required on every external artifact, with the signing human verifying every quantitative claim.
- ☐ 07 Credentials scoped to the service-level definition and nothing more.
- ☐ 08 Every agent action logged against its owner's name, with the log tested rather than assumed.
- ☐ 09 Model and vendor concentration checked against the single-point-of-failure limit, and a second path identified before renewal.
- ☐ 10 Weekly live-sample audit scheduled for any customer-facing workflow — a sample of the cases the system was confident enough not to escalate, not just the escalations.
- ☐ 11 The honest test applied: does this shorten a learning cycle, or does it only generate artifacts faster? The second is overproduction waste.
- ☐ 12 Failure mode defined: what happens when the model is unavailable, repriced or regressed?
- ☐ 13 Decommissioning criteria written. Agents are easier to launch than to retire.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> One named owner, a written service-level definition, a human gate on anything that leaves the building, and a scheduled live-sample audit.

Note. A consumer-finance company's assistant reached the work of roughly 700 agents before the same firm publicly reversed course fourteen months later. The system optimised for resolution speed and cost per contact — both easily measured — while correctness and trust degraded quietly. The weekly live-sample audit is the item that catches that, and it is the item most often skipped.

F4 Platform Migration

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Moving a critical workflow between platforms	Function head	Decision to decommission	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Migration cost modelled fully and added to the TCO of the destination. Migrations are the most systematically underestimated technology cost.
- ☐ 02 Data export from the source tested at full volume before commitment, not assumed from the contract language.
- ☐ 03 Reconciliation plan built: what must match between old and new, to what tolerance, and who signs off.
- ☐ 04 Cutover window chosen away from peak load. The single highest-revenue day of the year is not a test.
- ☐ 05 Peak-load stress test run on the destination at realistic multiples of current volume.
- ☐ 06 Rollback path defined, tested and time-boxed — by what hour do we abandon and revert?
- ☐ 07 Parallel running period defined, with the cost of running both accepted upfront.
- ☐ 08 Every downstream integration and report inventoried and re-pointed, including the ones only one person knows about.
- ☐ 09 Customer- or partner-visible impact identified and communicated before it is experienced.
- ☐ 10 Historical data retention and access decided — what we keep, where, and who can reach it in an audit.
- ☐ 11 Source system decommissioned on a scheduled date, verified, with final export archived.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> Export has been tested at full volume, the rollback is tested and time-boxed, and cutover is scheduled away from peak load.

F5 Renewal and Re-Underwriting

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any vendor contract approaching renewal	Function head	90 days before renewal	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 The original decision journal entry opened and the recorded predictions read. Renewal is judged against what we predicted, never against reconstructed memory.
- ☐ 02 Realised three-year TCO compared to the figure modelled at signature. A large variance is diagnostic of the relationship, not just the cost.
- ☐ 03 The driver-tree metric it was bought to move examined: did it move?
- ☐ 04 Actual adoption measured, not licensed seats. Paying for unused capacity is the most common quiet waste in the software line.
- ☐ 05 The keeper test applied to the vendor: would we sign this today, at full information, at this price?
- ☐ 06 Auto-renewal date and notice period identified now, before it passes silently.
- ☐ 07 Concentration and single-point-of-failure position reassessed.
- ☐ 08 Alternative options priced, even if we intend to renew — a renewal negotiated without an alternative is a price acceptance.
- ☐ 09 If renewing: exit terms improved as a condition, particularly data portability.
- ☐ 10 New predictions recorded for the next renewal review.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

The original prediction has been read and the vendor keeper test answered. Auto-renewal is not a decision.

PART G

Adverse Situations

Ten checklists for the days that decide the year. These are READ–DO without exception. Under pressure, competent people skip steps they have performed many times, and the steps they skip are disproportionately the ones that would have contained the damage. Each begins with a first-sixty-minutes block: run those before anything else, including before assembling the full team.

> **OPERATING DOCTRINE**
> In every adverse situation the same three failures recur: the response is slower than the information, the communication is managed rather than honest, and nobody stops the underlying process while the diagnosis proceeds. The first-hour blocks below exist to make those three failures harder than the correct behaviour.

G1 Runway Compression

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Runway falls below the covenant floor, or is trending to it inside two quarters	CFO with CEO	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Auto-hold takes effect on all outside-zone deployment. The hold precedes the discussion.
- ☐ 02 Rebuild the 13-week rolling forecast from committed outflows only, separating committed from merely planned.
- ☐ 03 Establish the exact date at which cash becomes binding under base and bear cases.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Identify every discretionary outflow and the notice period required to stop it.
- ☐ 05 Identify receivables at risk and their ageing, and any collection lever not yet used.
- ☐ 06 Model the bear case honestly, including the scenario where the largest customer pays late.
- ☐ 07 Rank actions by cash per day of delay, and by the relationship damage each causes. Some cash is too expensive.
- ☐ 08 Identify which positions we would be forced to exit, and which of those only needed time. Forced exits from sound positions is how compression becomes permanent damage.
- ☐ 09 Check every covenant for proximity, and run G2 if any is within tolerance.
- ☐ 10 Decide what we tell lenders, investors and the board — early and honestly. Managed disclosure to a capital provider is the fastest way to lose the option to be helped.
- ☐ 11 Decide what we tell staff. Silence in a visible cash squeeze produces worse rumours than the truth.
- ☐ 12 Set the weekly cash meeting with a named owner, and hold it without exception until the covenant is restored.
- ☐ 13 Reset the bet portfolio before anything else is reinstated. The hold lifts on evidence, not on relief.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The auto-hold is in effect, the forecast is rebuilt from committed outflows, and the binding date is known to the day.

G2 Covenant Breach

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any covenant breached or within tolerance of	Named covenant owner	Immediate	READ–DO

breach			

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 The default action for that covenant takes effect immediately. No discussion precedes the hold.
- ☐ 02 Confirm the breach against the actual definition in the actual document, not against the internal shorthand.
- ☐ 03 Notify the CEO and, where the covenant is contractual, establish the notice obligation and its deadline.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Determine whether this is a genuine breach, a definitional difference or a reporting error. All three occur and the responses differ entirely.
- ☐ 05 If contractual: read the cure rights, cure period and cure mechanics in the actual language, aloud.
- ☐ 06 Assess cross-default and cross-acceleration exposure across every other obligation.
- ☐ 07 Model the position at the next two test dates, so the conversation with the counterparty covers the trajectory rather than the moment.
- ☐ 08 Prepare the counterparty conversation on our own timing. Discovering a breach from the lender is a different negotiation than disclosing it.
- ☐ 09 Identify the actions that restore headroom, ranked by speed and by cost to the business.
- ☐ 10 Record the breach in the decision journal with rule number, circumstance and cost.
- ☐ 11 Root-cause classified: process defect, tooling gap, unclear authority, or conduct.
- ☐ 12 Release conditions written. Only the named covenant owner may lift the hold, and only against the written condition.

> DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL
>
> The hold is in effect, the actual contractual language has been read, and the counterparty is being told by us rather than discovering it.

G3 Quality or Safety Incident

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any severity-1 quality or safety item	Compliance or quality owner	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Stop the line in the affected workflow. Nothing ships until the item is closed.
- ☐ 02 Establish whether anyone is at risk right now, and act on that before anything else in this list.
- ☐ 03 Quarantine affected inventory, batches, versions or output, and stop further distribution.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Determine scope: which units, batches, customers, geographies and dates are affected.
- ☐ 05 Establish the regulatory notification obligation and its deadline. Deadlines here are legal, not conventional.
- ☐ 06 Notify affected customers and partners directly, before they discover it. Speed is the whole of the trust outcome.
- ☐ 07 Root-cause the process failure, not the person. Ask which control should have caught this and why it did not.
- ☐ 08 Assess whether the same failure mode exists in adjacent processes that have not yet failed.
- ☐ 09 Decide on recall, replacement or remediation on the basis of harm avoided, not on cost.
- ☐ 10 Prepare the external statement to say what is true, once, without euphemism.
- ☐ 11 Track and close the item formally. The covenant is zero open severity-1 items, and it does not soften under commercial pressure.
- ☐ 12 Run H5 post-mortem with the specific question: at which gate could this have been caught?

- ☐ 13 Update standard work and error-proofing before the line restarts.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The line is stopped, affected parties have been notified directly by us, and the regulatory obligation is identified with its deadline.

G4 Security Incident

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Suspected or confirmed unauthorised access, data exposure or compromise	Security owner with CEO	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Contain first: isolate affected systems and revoke suspect credentials before investigating.
- ☐ 02 Preserve evidence — logs, images, timelines. Containment must not destroy the record of what happened.
- ☐ 03 Engage legal counsel and, where indicated, external incident response, before internal speculation begins.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Establish what data, systems and accounts are in scope, and whether the access is ongoing.
- ☐ 05 Review agent and service-account credentials specifically. Broad-scoped automation credentials are a common vector and a common blind spot.
- ☐ 06 Determine notification obligations by jurisdiction and data type, with their deadlines. These are legal deadlines.
- ☐ 07 Identify affected customers, partners and staff, and prepare direct notification.
- ☐ 08 Assess third-party and vendor exposure — our compromise may be their obligation and theirs may be ours.
- ☐ 09 Rotate credentials and keys across the estate, not only where compromise is confirmed.
- ☐ 10 Prepare the external statement with counsel: what is known, what is not, what we are doing, when we will next update.
- ☐ 11 Set the update cadence and then keep it. Silence during an active incident is read as concealment.
- ☐ 12 Post-incident: root-cause, close every finding, and re-test.
- ☐ 13 Review the concentration and single-point-of-failure position exposed by the incident.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Containment is complete, evidence is preserved, counsel is engaged, and notification obligations with deadlines are identified in writing.

G5 Regulatory or Legal Inquiry

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any inquiry, notice, subpoena or investigation	General counsel with CEO	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Engage counsel before responding to anything, including informally, including verbally.
- ☐ 02 Issue a litigation or document hold immediately and confirm it has taken effect technically, not just been announced.
- ☐ 03 Designate one single point of contact. Multiple channels to a regulator is how inconsistent positions get created.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Establish the deadline and the precise scope of what has been requested.
- ☐ 05 Confirm the hold covers every system, including messaging, personal devices in scope, and any agent-generated records.
- ☐ 06 Assemble the factual record before forming a position. Positions formed before facts are expensive to revise.
- ☐ 07 Determine disclosure obligations to investors, lenders, the board and insurers, with their timing.
- ☐ 08 Notify insurers within the policy notification window — this is routinely missed and routinely costly.
- ☐ 09 Brief the board with counsel present, on the record.
- ☐ 10 Prepare internal communication: what staff should and should not do, in plain language, without alarm.
- ☐ 11 Prepare external position only with counsel, and never speculate publicly about scope or outcome.
- ☐ 12 Track cost and management time, and report it — inquiries consume more executive capacity than any forecast assumes.
- ☐ 13 Post-resolution: root-cause and close whatever the inquiry surfaced, regardless of the legal outcome.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Counsel is engaged, the hold is technically in effect, and one named point of contact exists.

G6 Reputation Event

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Public criticism, a media inquiry or a viral complaint with material reach	CEO with communications owner	Hours	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Establish the facts before responding. A fast wrong statement is worse than a slower correct one, and irreversible.
- ☐ 02 Determine whether the underlying claim is true. If it is, the response is remedy — not messaging.
- ☐ 03 Identify whether any legal, regulatory or safety obligation is triggered, and run the relevant checklist in parallel.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Assess actual reach honestly. Most reputation events are smaller than they feel from inside the building; a few are larger.
- ☐ 05 Decide whether to respond at all. Amplification is a real cost and silence is sometimes correct — but only when the claim is false and the reach is small.
- ☐ 06 If responding: say what is true, once, without euphemism, and state what we are doing and by when.
- ☐ 07 Notify affected customers, partners and staff directly before they read it elsewhere.
- ☐ 08 Brief the front line with the same words being used externally. Divergent internal and external accounts always surface.
- ☐ 09 Set an update cadence if the matter is ongoing, and keep it.
- ☐ 10 Fix the underlying cause visibly. Reputation is repaired by the remedy, not by the statement about the remedy.
- ☐ 11 Track the effect on the trust index and on the metrics that actually matter — orders, retention, applications — rather than on sentiment volume.
- ☐ 12 Post-event: run H5 and ask whether a leading indicator existed that we ignored.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The facts are established and the claim has been assessed as true or false before any external word is said.

G7 Supply Disruption

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Loss or material impairment of a supplier, input or logistics path	Operations lead	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Establish current cover in days at current run rate, by item.
- ☐ 02 Identify which customers and commitments are affected first, and by what date.
- ☐ 03 Stop any promotional or demand-generating activity that would accelerate depletion of constrained inventory.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Confirm the disruption's expected duration from the supplier directly, and discount their estimate.
- ☐ 05 Identify qualified alternatives and the qualification time for each. Qualification time, not availability, is usually the binding constraint.
- ☐ 06 Model allocation across customers on a stated basis — contractual obligation, strategic priority, or proportional. Decide the basis before the pressure, and state it.
- ☐ 07 Communicate to affected customers early with a realistic date rather than an optimistic one. A missed recovery date costs more than the original shortage.
- ☐ 08 Assess the availability effect: out-of-stock costs both the sale and, often, the customer.
- ☐ 09 Model the cash effect of expedited freight, alternative sourcing premiums and lost volume.
- ☐ 10 Check whether this disruption moves any covenant, particularly runway.
- ☐ 11 Review the concentration covenant that permitted this exposure, and whether it was within limit or drifted.
- ☐ 12 Post-recovery: qualify a second source before the next renewal, not after the next disruption.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Cover in days is known by item, affected customers have been told with a realistic date, and the allocation basis has been decided and stated.

G8 Unplanned Loss of a Key Person

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Sudden departure, incapacity or death of someone with owned metrics or relationships	CEO	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 If this is a death or serious illness, handle the human situation first and completely. Everything below waits.
- ☐ 02 Identify every metric, initiative, gate, workflow and relationship carrying their name.
- ☐ 03 Assign an interim single owner to each, today. Unowned is the only unacceptable state.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Identify open commitments they held — to customers, partners, staff and counterparties — including informal ones.
- ☐ 05 Secure access continuity: credentials, systems, agent ownership, signing authority. Balance this against dignity and legal constraint.
- ☐ 06 Identify relationships where we were single-threaded, and make introductions immediately rather than waiting for a natural moment.
- ☐ 07 Communicate to staff, customers and partners promptly and with appropriate care. Rumour moves faster than sensitivity allows for.

- ☐ 08 Assess whether any covenant, contract or facility contains a key-person provision that has now been triggered.
- ☐ 09 Decide interim structure explicitly rather than letting work distribute by gravity. Gravity assigns work to whoever is most agreeable, not most able.
- ☐ 10 Begin the search under E1 and E2 once the interim structure is stable — not in the first week.
- ☐ 11 Review succession exposure across every other seat whose sudden loss would be a company-level event.
- ☐ 12 Capture whatever undocumented process existed in their head, from the people who worked closest to them, while memory is fresh.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Every owned metric, relationship and commitment has an interim single owner as of today.

G9 Suspected Fraud or Financial Irregularity

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any credible indication of fraud, misstatement or misappropriation	CEO with general counsel and audit chair	Immediate	READ–DO

FIRST 60 MINUTES — DO THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ 01 Do not confront the suspected individual. Preserve the record first; confrontation destroys evidence and forewarns.
- ☐ 02 Engage counsel before any internal investigation begins, so that privilege and process are protected from the outset.
- ☐ 03 Preserve records and restrict access quietly, without announcing the reason.

THEN

- ☐ 04 Notify the audit chair or board immediately. This is one of the few matters where management does not control the timeline.
- ☐ 05 Establish independence: whoever investigates must not report to anyone within the suspected chain.
- ☐ 06 Scope the exposure: what is potentially misstated, over what period, and what is the maximum plausible amount.
- ☐ 07 Determine obligations to auditors, lenders, insurers and regulators, with their deadlines.
- ☐ 08 Assess whether any published financial information is affected, and take advice before any restatement decision.
- ☐ 09 Preserve the evidentiary chain to the standard required if this becomes a legal matter.
- ☐ 10 Decide on interim controls that prevent continuation without signalling the investigation.
- ☐ 11 Root-cause the control failure: which control should have caught this, and was it absent, bypassed, or overridden?
- ☐ 12 Only when the record is secure, address the individual, with counsel and process.
- ☐ 13 Post-resolution: rebuild the control, test it, and disclose the remediation to whoever needs to rely on it.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Counsel is engaged, records are preserved, the board or audit chair has been notified, and nobody has been confronted.

G10 Missing the Number

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
A period result misses plan materially	CEO with CFO	Within the reporting cycle	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Identify which driver-tree node moved and by how much. Which node — not why, yet.

- ☐ 02 Establish whether a leading indicator moved first, and when. If one did, the failure is that we did not act on it.
- ☐ 03 If no leading indicator moved, identify which one should have existed and does not. Build it before the next cycle.
- ☐ 04 Decompose by cohort. Aggregate misses conceal whether the problem is new business, retention, price, mix or a single account.
- ☐ 05 Separate the miss into what we controlled and what we did not, honestly and without using the second to excuse the first.
- ☐ 06 Test whether the number was being propped up in prior periods by spend that has now stopped working.
- ☐ 07 Name the mechanism. A category headwind and a competitive dynamic are not mechanisms.
- ☐ 08 Identify the smallest reversible action that tests the proposed mechanism this week.
- ☐ 09 Communicate to the board, lenders and staff before they infer it. Early and specific beats late and complete.
- ☐ 10 Reforecast honestly, including the case where the mechanism persists.
- ☐ 11 Check whether the miss moves any covenant, and run G1 or G2 if so.
- ☐ 12 Record the revised prediction in the decision journal with its review date.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
>
> The node is identified, the mechanism is named rather than narrated, and the leading-indicator gap is either found or built.

PART H

Governance

Six checklists for the recurring obligations that carry the highest scrutiny and the least tolerance for improvisation.

H1 Board Meeting

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Scheduled board meeting	CEO with CFO	Pack out five business days prior	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Prior-period predictions assembled and compared against outcomes. Bring this unprompted; a track record of accurate forecasting is itself an asset.
- ☐ 02 Every number in the pack reconciled to the driver tree. One decomposition, no exceptions.
- ☐ 03 Gross and net stated wherever a revenue claim appears.
- ☐ 04 Every claim sourced. Any commissioned research presented as independent analysis removed or relabelled.
- ☐ 05 The three numbers a hostile, well-informed reader attacks first identified and addressed in the pack rather than in the room.
- ☐ 06 Covenant position stated with headroom in months at current trajectory.
- ☐ 07 Concentration disclosed with the diversification plan and its dates.
- ☐ 08 Kill list included: what was stopped this period and what it taught. Boards that only see launches learn nothing about judgment.
- ☐ 09 Every gate override in the period listed with its written override case.
- ☐ 10 Questions we expect and cannot currently answer identified, with a named person drafting the answer before the meeting.
- ☐ 11 Decisions requested stated explicitly and separately from information provided.
- ☐ 12 Pack distributed five business days ahead so the meeting can be about decisions rather than about reading.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Prior predictions are in the pack with their outcomes, and every number reconciles to the tree.

H2 Month-End Close

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Period end	CFO	The close calendar	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 All accruals booked, particularly promotional and trade accruals matched to the events that generated them.
- ☐ 02 Deductions reconciled by reason code, with anomalies flagged rather than absorbed.
- ☐ 03 Returns and allowances reconciled at item level, and any item above its cap flagged.
- ☐ 04 Gross-to-net waterfall produced and compared to the prior period, with every moving line explained.
- ☐ 05 Cohort cuts produced alongside aggregates. The close is not complete when the aggregate ties.
- ☐ 06 Every driver-tree node populated, with no residual bucket.
- ☐ 07 Metric definitions confirmed unchanged, or any change logged and communicated before publication.
- ☐ 08 Cash reconciled and the 13-week forecast refreshed.
- ☐ 09 Covenant positions computed and prepared for attestation.

- ☐ 10 Every published figure signed by its named human owner, including those produced by agents.
- ☐ 11 Variance commentary written in mechanisms, not adjectives.
- ☐ 12 Close calendar variance recorded so the process itself improves.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Every driver-tree node is populated with no residual, and every published figure carries a named signature.

H3 Audit Preparation

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Audit or examination scheduled	CFO	From scheduling	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Prior-year findings reviewed and each confirmed closed with evidence, not with intent.
- ☐ 02 Revenue recognition policy documented and applied consistently, with any judgment areas identified proactively.
- ☐ 03 Promotional accruals and their supporting event-level evidence assembled. This is the most commonly challenged area in consumer businesses.
- ☐ 04 Related-party transactions identified and documented completely.
- ☐ 05 Contracts with unusual terms assembled: change of control, exclusivity, minimum volume, revenue share.
- ☐ 06 Control documentation current, with any control that changed in the period noted and explained.
- ☐ 07 Access and segregation-of-duties reviews completed, including for service and agent accounts.
- ☐ 08 Estimates and judgments documented with their basis, so the auditor tests the reasoning rather than reconstructs it.
- ☐ 09 Known issues surfaced to the auditor by us, on our timing. Findings we disclose cost less than findings they discover.
- ☐ 10 One named coordinator for all requests, with a tracked log and response deadlines.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> Prior-year findings are evidenced as closed, and known issues have been surfaced by us rather than left to be found.

H4 Annual Planning

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
The planning cycle	CEO	Ahead of the Annual Offsite	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Prior-year plan compared to outcome, node by node, before any new number is proposed.
- ☐ 02 Base rates established for every material growth assumption. Where an outside view exists, it outranks the inside view by default.
- ☐ 03 Every plan number traced to a driver-tree node with a stated mechanism, not to a growth percentage.
- ☐ 04 The convex portfolio sized explicitly as a line, not left as the residual after everything else is funded.
- ☐ 05 Survivorship stress test run against a severe decline scenario before allocation is finalised.
- ☐ 06 Concentration trajectory modelled at plan volumes — does success itself breach a covenant?
- ☐ 07 Headcount plan run through the automation review discipline before it enters the model.
- ☐ 08 The stop-doing list for the coming year drafted alongside the do list. Plans that only add are not plans.
- ☐ 09 WIP capacity checked against the initiative slate. More initiatives than capacity is a plan to do none of them well.
- ☐ 10 Pre-mortem run on the plan itself: it is a year from now and we missed badly, why?

- ☐ 11 Predictions recorded so next year's cycle begins with this year's accuracy.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> The stress test has been run, the convex portfolio is sized as a line, and every number traces to a node with a mechanism.

H5 Post-Mortem

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
Any material failure, incident, kill or surprise	The owning forum	Within two weeks	READ–DO

- ☐ 01 Establish the timeline factually before any interpretation. What happened, in what order, known by whom, when.
- ☐ 02 Open the pre-mortem, if one exists. Was this failure mode named in advance, and if so, why did the early metric not surface it?
- ☐ 03 Identify the gate at which this could have been caught, and why it was not.
- ☐ 04 Classify the failure: evidence, reasoning, or base rate ignored. These have different remedies.
- ☐ 05 Identify which rule, if enforced, would have prevented it — and whether it was a covenant, a standard or a default.
- ☐ 06 Root-cause the process, not the person. The only personnel finding available here is conduct, and it must be named explicitly if it applies.
- ☐ 07 Ask whether the same failure mode exists in adjacent processes that have not yet failed.
- ☐ 08 Decide the specific process change, with an owner and a date. "Be more careful" is not a finding.
- ☐ 09 Update the relevant checklist, rubric or rule, and log the amendment.
- ☐ 10 File in the failure archive, specific enough to be useful to someone who was not present.
- ☐ 11 Review the journal prediction associated with the decision, if there was one.

> **DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL**
> A specific process change exists with an owner and a date, and the relevant checklist or rule has been amended and logged.

Note. Blameless on outcome, accountable on process. Nobody is judged for a hypothesis that turned out wrong; everybody is judged for a criterion never written or a result never faced.

H6 Standing Weekly Personal Review

TRIGGER	OWNER	CLOCK	MODE
End of each week, every operator	You	20 minutes	DO–CONFIRM

- ☐ 01 Ship-list commitments reviewed: shipped or not shipped, binary, honestly.
- ☐ 02 Misses classified: capacity, dependency or scoping. The pattern over eight weeks matters more than any single week.
- ☐ 03 Daily deposits counted: convexity actions taken, outbound contacts made, assets shipped.
- ☐ 04 Any bad news being held reviewed. If anything has been waiting more than a day, escalate before the weekend.
- ☐ 05 Metrics carrying your name checked — did any move without you noticing?
- ☐ 06 Any average you presented this week that you did not decompose identified, and decomposed now.
- ☐ 07 Any commitment made to a customer, partner or colleague this week logged with its date.
- ☐ 08 Next week's single highest-convexity action identified and blocked before the calendar fills.

DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL

Nothing is being held. The single highest-convexity action for next week is in the calendar.

Building Your Own

These fifty-seven will not cover every situation your business faces, and they are not meant to. When you write a new one, five rules apply.

Rule	Why
Five to nine items per pause point	Beyond nine, the list stops being run and starts being filed. If you need more, split it into two pause points.
Keep the uncomfortable items	The value is concentrated in the two or three steps everyone is tempted to skip. When you shorten a list, delete the obvious ones.
Binary items only	Anything that can be partially satisfied has been written badly. Split it until each item is done or not done.
Name the gate	Every list ends with the condition under which work proceeds. A list without a stop condition is a set of suggestions with boxes.
Write it after the failure, amend it at the retrospective	The best checklists are written by people who have just paid for the missing item. The worst are written in advance by people imagining what might go wrong.

Discipline is not remembering to do the right thing. It is building the system that makes forgetting expensive and following cheap.