

The Honest Checks

Ten questions about your business, what you will usually be told about each, and what we will do instead.

You know your business better than anyone who will ever advise you. Some of these ten you will answer in a second; some you may not have had time to look at. Either way, this is a working guide, not a test. Beside each question is what a coach or adviser will typically tell you to do, and then what we will actually do with you at Incrementum, starting in the free two hours.

1. Do you know your profit for last month, and what moved it?

What you will usually be told

Get to know your numbers. Meet your accountant more often. Set a profit goal and review it monthly.

What we will do

Put your latest figures into the Profit Simulator with you and show, line by line, where last month's profit came from and what would move it next month: price, volume, cost or mix. If you already know your P&L well, we go straight to the levers. If you do not, you will within the hour, and you keep the tool.

2. Which of your products or services makes money, and which is carried?

What you will usually be told

Focus on your core offer. Cut what is not working.

What we will do

Put a margin beside everything you sell and look at it together. Some things that look weak are the door to your best customers; some that look busy lose money on every sale. We decide which is which on the numbers, not on a feeling, and you leave with a list of what to price up, what to keep and what to stop.

3. What does it cost you to win a customer, and what is one worth over a year?

What you will usually be told

Work out your customer acquisition cost and lifetime value.

What we will do

Work them out with you from what you actually spend and what customers actually pay, in your figures, on one page. Then we set the ceiling on what you can afford to spend to win one, so every marketing decision after that has a number behind it.

4. Of the people who land on your website, how many pick up the phone, and why do the rest leave?

What you will usually be told

Improve your online presence. Get more traffic. Post more often.

What we will do

Run your own site through the Website Health Check while you watch. It reads your page as a stranger does and tells you plainly whether it interrupts them, holds them, teaches them something and asks them to act. You see what a visitor sees, and you get the changes in the order that matters, not a list of everything.

5. Could a stranger say in ten seconds what you do, who it is for and why you?

What you will usually be told

Refine your value proposition. Work on your brand.

What we will do

You say it out loud to me the way you would at a counter. We check whether your website, your van, your invoice and your voicemail say the same thing, because they rarely do. We write the one version that works in your words, and you put it everywhere.

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6. Do your customers come back and bring others, and do you know why or why not?

What you will usually be told

Ask for reviews. Start a loyalty scheme. Improve customer service.

What we will do

Walk through what happens after the sale in your business, the follow-up, the thank you, the way a problem is handled, and find the two or three moments that decide whether someone returns. This is the customer experience work behind two of my books, and it is the cheapest growth most businesses ever get.

7. If you took two weeks off, would the business run, slow down or stop?

What you will usually be told

Delegate more. Build systems. Work on the business, not in it.

What we will do

Map who does what today and where everything runs through you. Pick the one thing to move off your desk first, agree how, and set a date. Working alongside you, I can carry some of it myself while it moves. The next fortnight away becomes a plan, not a wish.

8. Is there one problem you have known about for more than six months and not fixed?

What you will usually be told

Set a deadline. Be accountable. Stop procrastinating.

What we will do

Assume it is not laziness, because it almost never is. We take the problem apart on paper into the part you can fix this week, the part that needs a decision and the part that needs help. Most of them are smaller than they feel once they are written down, and the ones that are not become the first job in the plan.

9. If you had ten extra hours a week, where would they earn the most?

What you will usually be told

Manage your time. Prioritise. Say no more often.

What we will do

Work out where ten hours would make the most money in your business, then trace back through the checks above to find which one gives you those hours. Time is a result of how the business runs, so we fix the running, not the diary.

10. Do you want someone to hold you to a plan you already have, or someone to find out what is actually wrong and help fix it?

What you will usually be told

Coaching will keep you accountable and motivated.

What we will do

Answer honestly. If you have a sound plan and need discipline, a good coach may be right for you and I will say so. If the problem is in the numbers, the sales, the customers or the way the business runs, that is what I do. Two free hours, a written plan you keep either way, and then two ways forward if you want a hand: work with me, where you run the business and I run the plan, or work alongside me, where I come in for the days you need.

Two free hours, in person or online. Bring your numbers and your website address. Book at incrementum.ie.