

**GROUND
WORK**

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Print this. Write in it. Answer honestly.

Each section covers one area of how your business operates. The questions are designed to surface what you already know but may not have named yet.

01 PROCESS	02 TOOLS	03 NUMBERS	04 AI	05 PEOPLE	06 CLIENTS	07 STRATEGY
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How to use this workbook.

Groundwork covers areas of how a solo business operates. Each section opens with a short description of what that area involves, followed by five questions.

The questions are designed to be answered honestly. They will help surface things you have probably known for some time but never put a name to. Use the space provided to write. Not to present a polished answer, but to think on paper.

There are no scores. No results page. No prescribed next steps. When you finish, you will know where the business is on solid ground and where it is not.

What you do with that is up to you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I provide operational protection as a service, learnt and built from 20 years inside four Fortune 500 companies, and two companies built from scratch across borders. I work with solopreneurs and founders who are hiring across countries, managing distributed teams, and building businesses that need to run whether they are in the room or not.

SECTION 1 . PROCESS DESIGN

How Your Work Moves.

01

Every seamless business runs on a process someone designed deliberately. If that design never existed on paper, chances are it does not exist at all. It lives in your head, in your habits, and in the goodwill of people who have learned to work around the gaps. That is not a process. That is a risk.

QUESTIONS

01. Which part of your business runs the same way every time, and which part depends on the client's demand and status?

02. Which client has experienced the consequence of a process you knew needed fixing?

03. Which parts of your business run on you remembering to do them?

04. Could someone you hired follow your process without asking you a single question?

05. What process have you been meaning to document or revamp for over a month now?

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SECTION 2 . TECHNOLOGY AND STACK

Your Tools.

02

Most solopreneurs accumulate tools. One for projects, one recommended, one that was on offer. The stack grows. The cost grows. The overlap grows. A well-configured set of tools runs the routine work without your involvement. Most stacks do not.

QUESTIONS

01. What tools are you currently paying for, and when did you last review what your stack costs monthly?

02. Who else has access to your tools right now, and when did you last check that list?

03. Which tool would bring your business to a stop if it went down today, and do you have any backup plan for that?

04. If you cancelled every subscription tonight, which ones would you rebuild tomorrow and which ones would you not notice?

05. Which part of your stack are you paying for monthly that you set up in a hurry, or were excited to test, and have never gone back to review?

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SECTION 3 . FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

03

Your Numbers.

Most solopreneurs are the cheapest resource in their business. They hire themselves for everything, pay themselves last or not at all, and absorb the shortfall quietly. Revenue looks healthier than it is because the founder's time does not appear as a cost. Most are also charging rates they set some time ago, for reasons that no longer apply.

That is not a sustainable financial model. It is a calculation with a missing number.

QUESTIONS

01. When did you last pay yourself first, before every other expense, and what stopped you every other time?

02. Have you calculated what your business costs to run monthly, not what you hope it costs, but what it actually costs?

03. If your best client referred someone identical tomorrow, would you quote them the same rate you quoted the original?

04. Are you charging what the work costs you or what you think they will say yes to?

05. What is your actual process when a client pays late, and have you ever had to use it?

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SECTION 4 . PROMPT DESIGN

Your AI Workflow.

04

AI was sold as the solution. What that pitch left out was the part where critical thinking and diverse intelligence, the two things most essential to good business, are still entirelyly human work.

AI handles the time consuming. It does not handle the consequential. Most solopreneurs have not yet drawn that line.

QUESTIONS

01. Have you given your AI tools enough context about your business, your voice, and your clients to produce anything genuinely useful?

02. Which tasks do you currently use AI for, and what percentage of that output do you use without significant editing?

03. Have you put anything in writing about how AI can and cannot be used by people working under your brand?

04. Which decision in your business have you made based on AI output that you did not verify independently?

05. If a client asked you whether their information had ever been used in an AI prompt, what would your answer be?

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SECTION 5 . PEOPLE OPERATIONS

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The People You Hire

A distributed team of freelancers and contractors is not the same as a stable workforce. Access permissions, contractual coverage, knowledge transfer, and cross-border obligations. These are operational concerns, not HR ones. Most informal arrangements work until they do not.

QUESTIONS

01. Who in your current team, if they left this week, would leave a gap you could not fill for a month?

02. Have you ever shared client information with a contractor without a confidentiality clause in place?

03. If a contractor replicated your business model and used it with their own, what protection do you have?

04. Have you ever hired someone across a border without considering what that means legally for both of you?

05. When a contractor leaves, is there a process for what gets handed back, revoked, and documented, or does it depend on how the relationship ended?

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SECTION 6 . CLIENT OPERATIONS

06

The People Who Hire You

Many of your clients arrived through someone you know. A referral, a shared community, a reputation that took years to build. It is why boundaries feel like betrayal, scope drift gets absorbed quietly, and the money conversation never quite happens. Those who did not arrive that way bring a different risk. No shared context, no goodwill buffer when things get uncomfortable.

Either way, structure protects the engagement. Most do not have one.

QUESTIONS

01. Do you have a qualification process for new clients, or does a referral make that feel unnecessary?

02. Is there a client you have kept longer than you should have because of who referred them?

03. Has a project ever expanded beyond what was originally discussed, and was that conversation had before the work began or after?

04. Have you ever discounted your rate for someone in your network and regretted it silently?

05. Do the people referring you understand your work well enough to refer the right kind of client?

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SECTION 7 . STRATEGIC DIRECTION

07

What You Are Building

Do you still remember why you started? Or did the course change somewhere along the way, trying to make things comfortable for people? The vision is usually still there. The gap is between that vision and what the business has quietly become.

QUESTIONS

01. How do you describe your business to people, and how close is it to what you actually do every day?

02. What are you still carrying personally that the business should have absorbed by now?

03. Which opportunity have you been putting off because the ground does not feel steady enough?

04. What would you build next if you were not still fixing what should already be working?

05. What does your business need to look like in two years, and what is standing between that and today?

NOTES

GROUND WORK

If something in here needs
work, that is where we start.