

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR FOUNDERS AND OPERATORS

Fractional COO Readiness Diagnostic

A structured assessment for 10-100 person companies

Five categories. Fifteen questions.

One clear picture of where your operations stand.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Why This Diagnostic Exists

Most founders do not wake up one day and decide their operations are broken. It happens gradually.

The team grows. Informal systems that worked at ten people start showing cracks at twenty-five. Decisions that used to happen in a hallway conversation now take three meetings and still do not get made cleanly. Good people get hired and underperform, not because they are the wrong people, but because the environment around them was never built to support them.

By the time it feels like a real problem, the cost is already significant. Attrition. Stalled growth. A founder still carrying operational weight they thought they had delegated two years ago.

This diagnostic is designed to help you see where you actually are. Not where you think you are, and not where you want to be. Where you are right now, across the five operational dimensions that determine whether a growing company can scale without breaking.

It takes less than ten minutes. The score will tell you something useful. More importantly, the sections where you score lowest will tell you exactly where the constraint is.

That is where the work starts.

HOW TO SCORE EACH STATEMENT

- 1 = This is not true of us right now
- 2 = This is partially true, or inconsistently true
- 3 = This is consistently true across the organization

Be honest. The value of this diagnostic is in the accuracy of your answers, not the score.

Priorities and Alignment

1.1 — Our top three organizational priorities this quarter are documented and visible to the full team, not just leadership.

1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

1.2 — When priorities shift, the change is communicated clearly and people adjust their work without significant confusion or rework.

1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

1.3 — If I asked five people at different levels of my organization what we are focused on right now, I would get consistent answers.

1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

Section score: _____ / 9

Ownership and Accountability

2.1 — Every significant initiative or workstream has a single named owner who is accountable for the outcome, not just the activity.

- 1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

2.2 — When something falls through the cracks, we can quickly identify why and who was responsible, rather than discovering it was nobody's job.

- 1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

2.3 — Accountability in our organization is structural — built into how we assign and track work, not dependent on individuals chasing each other down.

- 1 Not true 2 Partially true 3 Consistently true

Section score: _____ / 9

Decision-Making

3.1 — Decisions get made at the right level. People with the context and authority to decide something are making it, without unnecessary escalation.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

3.2 — We have clarity on which decisions require my direct input and which do not. That line is understood by the team, not just by me.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

3.3 — When I am unavailable for a week, decisions that need to be made get made. Work does not stall waiting for me.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

Section score: _____ / 9

Systems and Infrastructure

4.1 — We have operational systems that are documented, followed, and do not depend on any single person's memory or habits to function.

1 Not true

2 Partially true

3 Consistently true

4.2 — When we bring on a new team member, there is a clear operational foundation for them to plug into. They are not learning the job by asking around.

1 Not true

2 Partially true

3 Consistently true

4.3 — Our systems have kept pace with our growth. What worked at our previous stage still works at our current one, or we have intentionally updated it.

1 Not true

2 Partially true

3 Consistently true

Section score: _____ / 9

Founder Dependency

5.1 — I am spending the majority of my time on work that genuinely requires my judgment, not on operational decisions that should belong to someone else.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

5.2 — My team can execute on our core work for two to three weeks without me in every conversation, and quality does not meaningfully drop.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

5.3 — When I look at what is on my plate, I can honestly say that most of it is where I create the most value for this organization.

- 1** Not true **2** Partially true **3** Consistently true

Section score: _____ / 9

What Your Score Means

YOUR TOTAL SCORE

Add your five section scores together

_____ / 45

36 to 45

Strong Foundation

Your operational infrastructure is in reasonably good shape. You have built or are building the systems, clarity, and team capability that growing companies need. A Fractional COO engagement at this stage would likely focus on optimization, scaling existing systems, or preparing for the next stage of growth rather than building from scratch. If specific sections scored significantly lower than others, those are the areas worth

25 to 35

Gaps Are Present

You have some operational foundation but meaningful gaps exist. These gaps may not be causing a crisis today, but they are likely slowing you down in ways that are hard to attribute directly. Decisions are taking longer than they should. Good people may be frustrated. The founder is probably more involved in day-to-day operations than is healthy for the organization. This is the range where Fractional COO support creates the

Below 25

Operational Debt Is Accumulating

The operational foundation has not kept pace with the organization. What you are experiencing as people problems, communication problems, or execution problems are likely symptoms of a structural gap underneath them. The cost is real and it compounds. Attrition, stalled growth, founder exhaustion, and missed revenue are all downstream of the conditions this score reflects. This is not a critique of how the

WHAT COMES NEXT

Your Score Is a Starting Point, Not a Verdict

I work with founders and operators at 10-100 person companies who are serious about closing the gap between where their operations are and where they need to be. Not with a framework dropped in a slide deck, but with hands-on operational leadership that builds the actual infrastructure: the decision systems, the ownership structures, the cross-organizational visibility, and the clarity that lets a team execute without the founder in every conversation.

The engagements are retainer-based and scoped to what the company actually needs. Some founders need a full operational build. Some need a specific system designed and adopted. Some need a clear-eyed outside perspective on where the real constraint is before anything else.

If your score surfaced something worth a conversation, I would be glad to have it.

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Travis Cox is a Fractional COO working with founders and operators at 10-100 person companies. He builds, scales, and optimizes the operational systems that growing companies run on.