



LOCKDOWN BUSINESS HEALTH CHECK

ENSURE YOUR BUSINESS IS ON THE
RIGHT TRACK AFTER LOCKDOWN

IN THIS GUIDE

Charles Darwin once said, “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” It’s exactly the same in business. You have to respond to change.

Especially in these, unprecedented times. Success and dominance before lockdown does not necessarily guarantee success after it, in the brave new world that awaits. Businesses have to respond. Immediately. You can’t live in the past or turn back the clock. Technology, taste, the environment and the economy are all volatile. Which means you have to adapt or reinvent your business and your products or services. Businesses today are facing a stark reality: **evolve or die**.

Life after lockdown will inevitably be different, and as a result, so will the business landscape. Maybe even the market you operate in will have changed. Perhaps it may even be unrecognisable. So now, more than ever, it might be time to put our own businesses under the microscope.

IN THIS GUIDE

However, trying to find out exactly where your business is currently and where it needs to go, can often feel like navigating a maze of unhelpful information, often with someone trying to sell you something at the end of it.

So, I wanted to do something a little bit different. Using my own time in lockdown, I decided to put together this no-nonsense, practical guide to help SME's analyse where they are at the moment with their business, laying bare any issues so they know what needs to change or improve, to ensure they have the best chance of not just surviving but actually thriving after lockdown.

Think of it as a kind of MOT or a health check for your business. In simple terms, it is a set of key questions about your business split into relevant sections that you need to really think about before answering. Remember to answer honestly. Honest answers are crucial to improving your business. It will cause you to think, perhaps about issues you never even knew existed.

Most of all I hope you find it useful. If there's something you would like to ask, please reach out to us at:

hello@propelmarketing.design
and we can chat.

Here's to ensuring your business is on the right track after lockdown!

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INTRODUCTION

Propel Marketing & Design was founded after decades of experience working in the marketing industry on some of the UK's most successful and prestigious brands. We brought with us a vision to help all businesses attract more customers, achieve tangible results and most importantly build their business.

We understand that running a business is time consuming and sometimes even hectic, to say the least. So while we are all in lockdown, with all its obvious disadvantages, it does present us with some time for reflection. A rare opportunity to work on the business, rather than in it. Time to take a step back and look at the big picture. Time to look for opportunities for improvement and new developments. To adapt or change and improve our business offering outwith the public eye, while everyone is otherwise engaged. All of which can help inform longer term strategy and ensure your business comes out of lockdown ready and fully equipped for the new normal, whatever that may be.

INTRODUCTION

Every business knows instinctively what it does well. Really well. What you need to know however, and can learn most from, is what you're not doing so well and where there is room for improvement across the entire business. It takes courage to look in the mirror and see ourselves as others see us. But, that is where you will find the greatest opportunities for development and growth and new ways to make your business and brand resonate with both existing and a completely new generation of customers who will represent your businesses long term future.

By going through this health check section by section, you will uncover the obvious opportunities and threats that are under your nose. It will open up your thinking to the bigger picture and ensure you know where your business is going when lockdown is over. Although, like everything else in life, there may be bits that are more relevant than others, but commit to answering all of these questions and I promise it will be time well spent and will form the basis of your plan for moving forward after lockdown!

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR HEALTH CHECK

Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of each page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action. When you have completed your business health check it will show you directly which areas of your business needs attention.

SECTION 1

OUR BUSINESS

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your business. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 1: OUR BUSINESS

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Our business will continue in the same direction as before	1	2	3	4	5
2.	There are no new challenges that lie in our way	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Our business has been positively impacted by COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Our offering has not/will not change(d)	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Our supply chain has not/will not change(d)	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Our business has gained awareness in recent times	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Our vision for the business has not/will not change(d)	1	2	3	4	5
8.	There are no obvious barriers that will prevent our vision from becoming a reality	1	2	3	4	5
9.	We haven't found it necessary to make changes that may affect customers perceptions of our business	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The current Covid-19 Challenge will not influence the way we do business in the future	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 2

OUR SALES

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your sales. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 2: OUR SALES

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Company sales have risen steadily in the past 2 years	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Since COVID-19 company sales have increased	1	2	3	4	5
3.	We are attracting enough of the right type of customers	1	2	3	4	5
4.	We have increased our customer based in the past 12 months	1	2	3	4	5
5.	We are continuously persuading potential customers to overlook our competitors and come to us	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Our market share has increased over the past 2 years	1	2	3	4	5
7.	There are no parts of our business that are unprofitable	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Our company, products or service offerings have not changed or improved in recent years	1	2	3	4	5
9.	We are not about to add any products or services that will dramatically alter our offering	1	2	3	4	5
10.	We make it clear what we do better than anyone else and why customers should choose us	1	2	3	4	5
						TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 3

OUR MARKET

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your market. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 3: OUR MARKET

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. There has been no dramatic changes in our market	1	2	3	4	5
2. Demand for our offering has increased	1	2	3	4	5
3. Our market is growing	1	2	3	4	5
4. Our market is less competitive than ever	1	2	3	4	5
5. The level of interest in our offering has increased	1	2	3	4	5
6. There are no threats that exist within the market for our business	1	2	3	4	5
7. Our pricing is an accurate reflection of our position in the market	1	2	3	4	5
8. Our brand fits really well in our market place currently	1	2	3	4	5
9. We completely understand the main reasons why prospects choose to buy from us	1	2	3	4	5
10. We completely understand the main reasons why prospects choose not to buy from us	1	2	3	4	5
					TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 4

OUR CUSTOMERS

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your customers. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 4: OUR CUSTOMERS

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	The number of products and the nature of our offerings make complete sense to all our customers	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Our offering is clear and easily understood by our customers	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Our customers needs have not changed since COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Our customers are less price-sensitive than before	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Our customers no longer value the same things	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Our typical customer has not changed over the years	1	2	3	4	5
7.	All of our customers are equally profitable	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Our customers associate us with the absolute best quality	1	2	3	4	5
9.	We clearly communicate the functional benefits customers receive from our products/services via our marketing collateral	1	2	3	4	5
10.	We offer our customers something that our competitors do not	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 5

OUR COMPETITORS

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your competitors. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 5: OUR COMPETITORS

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Our brand is more dominant than competitors in our market place	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Our products/services are superior to our competitors	1	2	3	4	5
3.	We are currently facing weaker competition	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Our competitors have not made any improvements in the past 3 years	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Our competitors will not be launching any new products/services?	1	2	3	4	5
6.	In recent years our competitors have made no improvements to their marketing	1	2	3	4	5
7.	In recent years our competitors have not launched any new promotions	1	2	3	4	5
8.	In recent years our competitors have decreased their marketing activities	1	2	3	4	5
9.	We have a greater share of the market compared to our main competitor	1	2	3	4	5
10.	We are continuously persuading potential customers to overlook our competitors and come to us	1	2	3	4	5
						TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed

30 - 40 Some action may be needed

20 - 30 Action Needed

10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 6

ROUTES TO MARKET

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your routes to market / distribution channels. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 6: ROUTES TO MARKET

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	We will not have to change how and where we currently sell our products/services	1	2	3	4	5
2.	How we currently market and advertise our products/services is perfect	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Our marketing communications (adverts, web site, social media channels, business cards, brochures, sales literature, signage, vans etc) are uniformly consistent and competitive in terms of look, tone of voice, character and brand message	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Our marketing communications including our website, adverts, brochures and social media channels etc. make it clear what we do better than anyone else	1	2	3	4	5
5.	We have never found it necessary to use various versions of our brand name, logo, and tagline across all of our marketing	1	2	3	4	5
6.	We now have some new-found advantages in our marketplace	1	2	3	4	5
7.	We are more successful than our main competitor in our current market	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Our brand is stronger than competitors brands in our market	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Our brand inspires potential customers to overlook the competition and come to us	1	2	3	4	5
10.	All products/services that we've added (or plan to add) fit well under our brand	1	2	3	4	5
						TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 7

OUR BRAND

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding your brand. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 7: OUR BRAND

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	Our brand identity accurately reflects the quality, character, personality, tone and sophistication of the business we've become	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Our brand identity accurately reflects our vision of where we want the business to go	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The distinguishing characteristics of our brand are of increasing interest to consumers	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Our prospects perception of our brand is aligned with our brand vision, values and offerings	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Our brand identity (your name, logo, tagline, and other identifying elements) is distinctive and competitive in terms of quality, sophistication and consistency	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Our tagline accurately conveys our brand positioning and what makes us unique	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Our brand identity looks clean, professional, modern and contemporary	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Our brand has not dated and is in keeping with current market and cultural tastes and trends	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Our brand is well recognised amongst those we target as customers	1	2	3	4	5
10.	If we were starting our business today, this would this be the brand solution we would come up with	1	2	3	4	5
						TOTAL

40 - 50 No action needed
 30 - 40 Some action may be needed
 20 - 30 Action Needed
 10 - 20 Immediate action needed

SECTION 8

NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

On the following page you will find ten simple questions regarding new opportunities in your market. Beside each question, simply circle the number that best describes your feelings, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Once you have answered all the questions, simply add up the total in the row provided. The table at the bottom of the page will then tell you, based on your score, if you need to take any action.

SECTION 8: NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE/ NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1.	The sectors which could benefit most from our offering has changed	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Our offering can be adapted to better meet consumers current needs	1	2	3	4	5
3.	There are opportunities that exist within the current market for our business	1	2	3	4	5
4.	We can launch or extend our brand into new markets	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Our current market is shrinking	1	2	3	4	5
6.	We should be developing new products within other markets	1	2	3	4	5
7.	We have different types of customers with different wants, needs and desires	1	2	3	4	5
8.	There are other types of customers we could potentially sell to	1	2	3	4	5
9.	We are not attracting enough of the right type of (ideal) customers	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Our brand is not as well recognised among those we target as ideal customers as we would like	1	2	3	4	5
						TOTAL

10 - 20 Little to no opportunities
 20 - 30 There may be a few opportunities
 30 - 40 Some opportunities available
 40 - 50 Many opportunities available

SECTION 9

CONCLUSION

Once you have completed your business health check, go through each section again and take note of which areas of your business needs action taken and in particular, which action is most urgent. Then review the new market opportunities open to you and start to formulate your plan to ensure your business is on the right track after lockdown.

SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

If your answers to some, or all of these questions have got you thinking, please don't panic. But don't ignore it either. Think of it as an early warning sign. There may be trouble ahead, as the song goes!

In our experience however, good business people are adaptable and strong at turning negatives into positives. They're also quick to seize any new and unexpected opportunities to become better than the rest. To thrive where others flounder.

On the following pages we've printed a helpful Business Health Checklist. Be sure to take the time to come back to it every now and again to check if you are on track, to re-evaluate your current situation and to remain inspired.

YOUR BUSINESS HEALTH CHECKLIST

- ✓ Our customers and suppliers have been made aware of our operational status (even if unchanged) and any changes to our business
- ✓ All stakeholders understand how our business has reacted to Covid-19 and evolved
- ✓ We have put in place measures to respond to the uncertainty in the economy
- ✓ We have researched all grant funding that may be available to us in the wake of Covid-19 to help get our business back on track after lockdown
- ✓ We have updated our social media and google business pages to reflect all changes to our business (opening times, changes in distribution channels etc.)
- ✓ We have utilised this time to create and put in place a social media strategy to raise our brand awareness during and after lockdown
- ✓ We will adapt our offering to better meet consumers current needs
- ✓ We will identify and eradicate any unprofitable areas of our business
- ✓ We will look for opportunities to launch or extend our brand into new markets
- ✓ We will look for opportunities to improve our products or service offerings
- ✓ We will explore any new-found advantages we may now have in our marketplace
- ✓ We will segment our market to target specific types of customers with tailored offerings
- ✓ We will explore any opportunities to offer our customers something that our competitors do not
- ✓ We will ensure that all our offerings are clear and easily understood by our prospects
- ✓ We will put a plan in place to ensure we are attracting enough of the right type of customers
- ✓ We are taking the appropriate steps to increase our customer base

YOUR BUSINESS HEALTH CHECKLIST

- ✓ We will develop a plan to increase our market share
- ✓ We will ensure our brand is well recognised amongst those we target as customers
- ✓ Our pricing is an accurate reflection of our company image and our position in the market place
- ✓ We have reviewed our previous marketing efforts in order to establish what has delivered the greatest return on investment in the past
- ✓ All of our marketing collateral (website, social media channels, brochures, adverts, sales literature etc) are consistent in look and feel and make it clear what we do better than anyone else and why customers should choose us
- ✓ Our website is modern, professional, secure, lead generating and provides a great user experience
- ✓ Our messaging is consistent between our digital and traditional marketing platforms
- ✓ Our brand is still appropriate and relevant in light of the Covid-19 outbreak
- ✓ Our branding still accurately reflects the tone and personality of our business and the quality we deliver to customers
- ✓ Our branding is clean, professional, modern and contemporary and does not look old or outdated in any way
- ✓ Our brand identity still accurately reflects our company mission, vision, and values and where we are headed
- ✓ Our logo is always consistent wherever it appears (website, signage, business cards, vehicles etc.).

SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

This Business Health check whilst it may not be completely scientific, is certainly a good ready reckoner and it's a great starting point to let you know if your business needs to start evolving. If you need any help or advice in figuring out the where and how, then perhaps we can help.

Also, there are several sources of grant funding available from local authorities around the UK right now that may either completely or part fund professional external experts to help plan strategies for business development and growth. Some may even cover the cost of the implementation of your plan.

From our guides, to our workshops and one-on-one consulting, we're dedicated to helping SME's fulfill their greatest potential and build a strong and sustainable business. So we hope you enjoyed this business health check. If you have any questions or if you need help developing and implementing a plan of action, then please get in touch at:

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We would love to hear from you!



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