
GROWTH GRID · FREE EDITION

Small Business Systems Snapshot

A 10-minute diagnostic that shows you the weakest part of how your business wins and keeps customers — so you know what to fix first.

- 10 minutes, on paper
- Four pillars, one score
- One clear next step

For UK sole traders, service businesses and small local firms. Self-scored — nothing is submitted anywhere. Not advice, and no promise of leads, sales or results.

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Tap a line to jump to that page.

What this is

Most small businesses don't fail from lack of effort. They stall because the work that wins and keeps customers is held together by memory, good intentions and a busy inbox — so a normal bad week undoes a good one.

This Snapshot is a short, honest look at four parts of your business that quietly decide whether your effort compounds or resets: **Direction**, **Structure**, **Flow** and **Stability**. You score yourself on sixteen plain questions. The lowest pillar is the one to fix first.

Who it's for

- Sole traders and one-person businesses
- Local service firms — trades, cleaning, gardening, beauty, repairs, installers, tutors, therapists, consultants
- Small firms (up to about ten people) that get enquiries but lose some of them to slow or scattered follow-up
- Owners who aren't technical and want a clear starting point, not a stack of software

WHAT THIS IS NOT

- Not a promise of leads, sales, income or results. It's a mirror, not a machine.
- Not business, legal or financial advice.
- Not a data-collection form — you fill it in yourself and keep it. Nothing is submitted by completing it.

How to use this Snapshot

1. **Read this page and the next one first.** Two minutes. It makes the scoring honest.
2. **Score the four diagnostics.** Sixteen questions, one to five each. Answer for how things actually are on a normal week — not your best week.
3. **Add up each pillar** (four questions, so 4–20) and then the **overall total** (4×20, so 16–80).
4. **Find your bottleneck.** It's simply your lowest pillar. Start there.
5. **Use the 7-day reset** to install one improvement in that pillar.

How to score each question (1–5)

Score	Means	What it looks like
1	Not there	This doesn't happen at all, or only by luck
2	Weak	It happens sometimes, differently each time, and often gets missed
3	Shaky	It works on a good week and falls over on a busy one
4	Working	It mostly happens the same way without you thinking about it
5	Strong	It runs reliably with little effort, even when you're busy or away

BE HONEST

The value of this Snapshot comes from accuracy, not optimism. A low score isn't a judgement — it's the fastest route to a fix.

What the pillar totals mean (out of 20)

Pillar score	Band	What to do
4–9	Weak	This is where progress leaks. Fix this pillar first.
10–13	Shaky	Holds on a calm week, fails on a hard one. Reinforce it.
14–17	Working	Mostly solid. Tighten the one question you scored lowest.
18–20	Strong	Leave it alone and protect it. Spend your time elsewhere.

What the overall total means (out of 80)

Overall	Where you are	Focus
16–39	Mostly manual and fragile	Pick your lowest pillar and install one system this week. Nothing else.
40–55	A part-built system	One or two pillars are carrying the rest. Reinforce the weakest.
56–70	A working system with gaps	You're close. Smooth the friction in your lowest pillar.
71–80	A strong system	The job changes from fixing to scaling. Keep the weekly review going.

The four pillars

Every stalled small business is weak in at least one of these four places. Together they are the path a customer travels from never having heard of you to being a happy, repeat, referring customer.

Pillar	The question it answers	When it's weak, you feel...
Direction	Do you know exactly what you sell, to whom, and what result matters most right now?	Busy but scattered; chasing every type of job; hard to explain what you do
Structure	Is there one place where enquiries, your offer and your standard replies live?	Rebuilding from your inbox every week; forgetting who you owe a reply
Flow	Does one step connect to the next — capture, acknowledge, follow up, book — the same way every time?	Leads go quiet; you only chase the ones you happen to remember
Stability	Would this still run on a bad week, and do you know what's actually working?	A scramble most weeks; no idea where your last customers came from

“Effort without a system feels like progress — until a busy week resets it.”

The Snapshot measures where that reset is happening. Score the four diagnostics that follow.

Direction diagnostic

Direction measures clarity, not ambition. Score each question 1–5 for how true it is on a normal week.

Direction diagnostic	Score 1–5
1. You can say, in one plain sentence, what your business does, who it's for, and roughly what it costs.	—
2. You know the single result that matters most for the next 30 days (for example: book six jobs, sign three retainer clients, fill the diary for next month).	—
3. It's clear which kind of customer or job you want more of — and which you'd rather turn down.	—
4. A stranger reading your website, Google listing or profile would understand your offer in under 30 seconds.	—
Direction total (add the four scores)	___ / 20

If you scored 2 or below on question 1, start your fixes here regardless of your other totals — nothing downstream works without it.

Structure diagnostic

Structure measures whether your business has a memory outside your head.

Structure diagnostic	Score 1–5
1. There is one place — a sheet, a CRM, a notebook — where every new enquiry is written down the moment it arrives.	—
2. You have a single 'home base' document that holds your offer, your prices, and your standard replies.	—
3. You can see, right now, every open enquiry and quote and what stage each one is at.	—
4. If you were away for a week, someone else could find what they need to keep things moving.	—
Structure total (add the four scores)	___ / 20

Flow diagnostic

Flow measures whether one step connects to the next without you pushing every time.

Flow diagnostic	Score 1–5
1. When an enquiry comes in, the customer gets a clear acknowledgement the same day — even if the full answer comes later.	___
2. There is a set follow-up you use for people who don't reply, rather than letting them go quiet.	___
3. Each piece of content, ad or listing points to one obvious next step (a form, a call, a booking link).	___
4. From first contact to a booked job, the steps are the same every time.	___
Flow total (add the four scores)	___ / 20

Stability diagnostic

Stability measures whether the system survives a normal week — and whether you can see what's working.

Stability diagnostic	Score 1–5
1. Enquiries would still be captured and acknowledged if you had a bad week or took a few days off.	___
2. You know where your last five customers actually came from.	___
3. You check a small set of numbers each week (enquiries, quotes sent, jobs won).	___
4. Running the business feels steady most weeks, rather than a scramble.	___
Stability total (add the four scores)	___ / 20

Your Snapshot result

Copy your four pillar totals in, add the overall total, and write the band from the tables on the ‘how to score’ pages. This is not a grade — it's a starting point.

Pillar	Your score	Band
Direction	___ / 20	_____
Structure	___ / 20	_____
Flow	___ / 20	_____
Stability	___ / 20	_____
Overall	___ / 80	_____
Your bottleneck = the lowest pillar		_____

Your bottleneck map

Fill in the bars to match your pillar totals. The shortest bar is where your next system must be installed.



“Begin with the lowest score. Not everything — one thing.”

What your lowest pillar is telling you

If your lowest pillar is...	The real problem is usually...	So the fix is...
Direction	You're saying yes to too many kinds of work, so your message and your week both scatter.	Narrow it. One sentence, one 30-day outcome, one ideal customer.
Structure	The business lives in your head and your inbox, so every week starts from zero.	Give it a memory. One enquiries list, one home-base document.
Flow	People reach you, then fall through a gap because the next step isn't automatic.	Make the path the same every time: capture → acknowledge → follow up → book.
Stability	It works when you're on form and breaks when life gets in the way, and you can't see why.	Protect the basics for a bad week, and measure four numbers weekly.

One immediate fix per pillar

Do the one that matches your lowest pillar today. The others can wait for the 7-day reset.

DIRECTION — WRITE THE ONE SENTENCE

Fill in: *"I help [who] in [area] with [job]."* Add a rough price range only if you know it and it helps buyers decide — your figures, not ours. Example shape: *"I help homeowners in Liverpool find the right next step for common roofing problems, with a clear acknowledgement and appropriate local contractor follow-up."* Put your version at the top of your website, your Google Business Profile and your social bios today.

STRUCTURE — MAKE THE ENQUIRIES LIST

One sheet (paper or a free spreadsheet). Columns: **Date · Name · Contact · Job · Source · Stage · Next action · Next date**. Every new enquiry goes in it before you do anything else. Add your last ten enquiries from your phone and inbox now.

FLOW — WRITE YOUR SAME-DAY REPLY

One message you can send quickly after any enquiry — aim for the same day: *"Thanks [name] — got your message about [job]. I'll come back to you with [a quote / some dates / a few questions] by [time / tomorrow morning]."* Save it in your notes so you can paste it fast. Same-day is a good target to aim for, not a promise you have to keep every time.

STABILITY — THE FRIDAY FOUR NUMBERS

Every Friday, about fifteen minutes, write down four numbers: **enquiries this week · quotes or proposals sent · jobs or clients won · where they came from**. Four weeks of this tells you more than any dashboard.

Your 7-day basic reset

Thirty to sixty minutes a day. It installs one real improvement in your weakest pillar. It is not about speed — it's about building something that holds.

Day	Do this	You'll have
1	Total each pillar, circle the lowest. Read the fix for that pillar.	Your bottleneck, named
2	Direction: write and publish the one-sentence offer on your site, Google listing and bios.	A clear message in three places
3	Structure: build the one enquiries list. Add your last ten enquiries.	A live list of every open job
4	Flow: write your same-day acknowledgement + a 3-step follow-up (day 2, day 5, day 10).	A follow-up you can't forget
5	One route in: pick one place people find you and make sure it points to one clear next step.	One tidy way in
6	Set ONE reminder or auto-reply — nothing that sends money, makes a promise, or messages a customer without you seeing it.	One safe piece of automation
7	Fill the four numbers. Book a recurring 15-minute Friday review.	A weekly check that keeps it honest

AUTOMATE CAREFULLY

Only automate things that are safe to get slightly wrong: reminders, internal notes, a first 'we got your message' reply. Anything that quotes a price, books a slot, takes a payment or contacts a customer with a commitment stays behind a human check.

Your system on one page

This is the whole journey. Every pillar you scored maps onto part of it. When a customer falls out, they fall out at one of these steps — usually the same step every time.

Step	What happens	Pillar	The common failure
1	Someone finds you (listing, referral, content, ad)	Direction	The message is vague, so the wrong people enquire
2	They send an enquiry	Flow	It arrives and nothing acknowledges it
3	You write it down	Structure	It lives only in your inbox or your head
4	You acknowledge the same day	Flow	Hours or days pass; they message a competitor
5	You check it's the right job and you have capacity	Direction	You take work you shouldn't, or lose work you could have done
6	You send a quote or proposal	Structure	It's re-written from scratch every time
7	You follow up if they go quiet	Flow	You only chase the ones you remember
8	They book — you deliver	Stability	Delivery is a scramble because nothing was planned
9	You ask for a review and log the source + value	Stability	No review, no record — so you never learn what works

Your next step

The Snapshot shows you **where** the system breaks. The **Growth Grid Systems Playbook — Small Business Edition** is the step-by-step build for fixing it: the enquiry list, the acknowledgement, the follow-up sequence, the simple content-to-enquiry route, the four-number dashboard, and a 7-day and 30-day plan — with templates you can copy.

Your lowest pillar	What the Playbook installs for it
Direction	Ideal-customer statement, offer statement, a 30-day outcome you can measure
Structure	The Control Panel document, the enquiry capture list, a simple offer ladder
Flow	Acknowledgement template, a 3-step follow-up sequence, a content-to-enquiry route
Stability	The four-number weekly review, responsible-automation checklist, human-approval points

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Not ready for the Playbook?

Do the 7-day reset on your own first. Then re-run this Snapshot in about three months — your lowest pillar will usually have moved, and the next one will be clear.

Keep it honest — re-check each quarter

A system isn't finished; it drifts. Book a repeat of this Snapshot every three months and keep a short record so you can see the trend rather than guess at it.

Date	Direction /20	Structure /20	Flow /20	Stability /20	Overall /80	Lowest pillar → fix installed

Three questions for the review

- Which pillar moved the most, and what did I actually change?
- Where is chaos still getting into the week?
- What one system would make the biggest difference in the next 90 days?

HONEST TERMS

- This Snapshot is self-scored. Your answers stay with you — completing it submits nothing anywhere.
- Growth Grid does not promise leads, sales, income or business results. This tool helps you see where your own system is weak so you can decide what to fix.
- Growth Grid Roofing is our own current live pilot of these systems in a real local service business — a work in progress, not a finished case study.
- Any tools we name later carry a plain note if a link is an affiliate link.

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