

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

1. How many of your **critical core** processes are fully **documented**?

- A** None
- B** Some
- C** Roughly half
- D** Most
- E** All

2. How often do you **review and update** your process documentation?

- A** Never
- B** Once a year
- C** Twice a year
- D** Quarterly
- E** Monthly

3. Can your **team access process** documentation?

- A** No documentation exists
- B** In someone's head
- C** In files, hard to find
- D** In shared folder
- E** In a searchable system

4. How **standardized** are your **workflows** across departments?

- A** No standards: we're too small for separate departments
- B** Different in every dept
- C** Some consistency
- D** Mostly standardized
- E** Fully standardized

5. Do you have a written plan for who runs the organization if you're unexpectedly unavailable for 2+ weeks (**contingency plan**)?

- A** No, but this makes sense as something we should do
- B** Discussed verbally
- C** Draft document
- D** Complete plan
- E** Tested and updated plan

6. How many roles have written **job descriptions**?

- A** 0-20%
- B** 21-40%
- C** 41-60%
- D** 61-80%
- E** 81-100%

7. Are **program management procedures** documented?

- A** Not at all
- B** Partially
- C** Mostly
- D** Fully
- E** Fully documented + trained

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES CONTINUED

8. How are **partner relationships** managed?

- A** Ad-hoc, no system
- B** Emails/calls
- C** Spreadsheet
- D** Basic software
- E** We have access to our partner's system

9. Is your **decision logic** documented — how you determine what services are appropriate, eligibility for different programs, which grant funding sources to apply, which donors to pursue?

- A** No documentation
- B** In founder's head
- C** Some programs and services are documented
- D** Some grant cycle and donor relationships are documented
- E** Everything is documented.

10. How often do you review decision logic and processes for improvement?

- A** Never
- B** Once a year
- C** Twice a year
- D** Quarterly
- E** Continuously

TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION

11. What system do you use to manage **client, donor and partner** information?

- A** Pen/paper
- B** Spreadsheets
- C** Only that which is required by grants
- D** We have a donor management system
- E** We have an integrated system for all three, with team-wide adoption

12. How **integrated** are your **infrastructure systems** (e.g. client, donor, partner information, accounting, IT, HR, etc.)?

- A** Not at all
- B** A few systems (specify)
- C** Some systems (specify)
- D** Mostly systems (specify)
- E** Fully integrated ecosystem

13. Can key **staff work remotely** with full system access?

- A** No remote access
- B** Limited access
- C** Most systems accessible
- D** Full access, some limitations
- E** Complete remote capability

TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION CONTINUED

14. How do you **back up** critical organization data?

- A** No backups
- B** Occasional manual backups
- C** Regular manual backups
- D** Automated local backups
- E** Cloud + local automated backups

15. What percentage of your **paper processes** are digitized?

- A** 0-20%
- B** 21-40%
- C** 41-60%
- D** 61-80%
- E** 81-100%

16. If you stepped away from the organization tomorrow, would someone else have **access** to all **critical system passwords**, vendor logins, and admin accounts?

- A** No one else has access
- B** One person has partial access
- C** Key staff have most access, undocumented
- D** Key staff have full access, partially documented
- E** Fully documented in a secure password manager, multiple people have access

17. How **automated** are your repetitive organization tasks (e.g. data entry, time cards, donations received, grant compliance obligations, etc.)?

- A** 0-20% (specify)
- B** 21-40% (specify)
- C** 41-60% (specify)
- D** 61-80% (specify)
- E** 81-100% (specify)

18. Do you **track client and/or donor interactions** digitally?

- A** Not at all
- B** Some tracking in email
- C** Partial CRM tracking
- D** Most interactions tracked
- E** Full interaction history in CRM

19. Can you **generate any reports** automatically?

- A** No, all manual
- B** Some manual reports (specify)
- C** Semi-automated reports (specify)
- D** Most reports automated (specify)
- E** Real-time dashboards (specify)

20. How current is your **technology stack**?

- A** 10+ years old (specify)
- B** 6-10 years old (specify)
- C** 3-5 years old (specify)
- D** 1-2 years old (specify)
- E** Current, regularly updated (specify)

FINANCIAL VISIBILITY

21. How quickly can you generate accurate **financial statements**?

- A** Can't without accountant
- B** 2-4 weeks
- C** 1 week
- D** 1-3 days
- E** Real-time dashboard

22. Do you have a formal **budgeting** process?

- A** No budget
- B** Annual rough budget
- C** Annual detailed budget
- D** Quarterly budget reviews
- E** Monthly budget vs. actuals

23. Can you see **sustainability (costs covered)** by program or service area?

- A** No visibility
- B** Rough estimates
- C** Annual analysis
- D** Quarterly reports
- E** Real-time profit tracking

24. How many people can **access financial data** without you?

- A** Only me (founder)
- B** 1 person
- C** 2-3 people
- D** Finance team
- E** Multiple departments (controlled access)

25. Do you track Key Performance Indicators (**KPIs**) regularly?

- A** No KPIs tracked
- B** Informal tracking
- C** Monthly review
- D** Weekly review
- E** Daily dashboard

26. Is your financial **forecasting** documented and systematic?

- A** No forecasting
- B** Ad-hoc estimates
- C** Annual forecast
- D** Quarterly rolling forecast
- E** Monthly rolling forecast + scenarios

27. How **transparent** are financial results with your team?

- A** Not shared
 - B** Shared occasionally
 - C** Quarterly
 - D** Monthly
 - E** Weekly/real-time access
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FINANCIAL VISIBILITY CONTINUED

28. Do you have **cash flow** projection ability?

- A** None
- B** Manual spreadsheet, rarely updated
- C** Monthly projections
- D** Weekly projections
- E** Real-time cash forecasting

29. Status of your **accounting systems**?

- A** Paper/desktop only
- B** Desktop, limited access
- C** Cloud, rarely used
- D** Cloud, regularly used
- E** Cloud, fully adopted + integrated

30. How frequently do you review financial performance with the Board?

- A** Never
- B** Annually
- C** Quarterly
- D** Monthly
- E** Weekly

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

31. Is there someone (in or outside the organization) identified to **take over your key responsibilities** — whether that's a family member, employee, or a similar nonprofit?

- A** No successor identified
- B** Potential successor, untrained
- C** Successor identified, training started
- D** Successor trained on most tasks
- E** Successor ready, fully trained

32. What percentage of your **unique** organization **knowledge** is documented?

- A** 0-20%
- B** 21-40%
- C** 41-60%
- D** 61-80%
- E** 81-100%

33. Do you have a **formal succession plan** document?

- A** No plan
- B** Discussed verbally
- C** Draft plan
- D** Formal plan
- E** Formal plan + legal documents

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER CONTINUED

34. How often do you **delegate decision-making** to your team?

(Is one person enough to educate on running the organization or do you need 2 or 3 delegates to properly transfer the knowledge to?)

A Rarely, I decide everything

B Occasionally

C Sometimes

D Often

E Routinely, I'm rarely needed

35. Are **key relationships** (customers, vendors, partners) documented?

A Not at all

B Partially in founder's head

C Some documentation

D Mostly documented

E Fully documented in CRM

36. Do you have a **training** program for new leadership?

A None

B Informal, ad-hoc

C Basic training

D Structured program

E Comprehensive leadership development

37. How many **critical** decisions can be made **without** your involvement?

A 0-20%

B 21-40%

C 41-60%

D 61-80%

E 81-100%

38. Are your **unique processes**, custom techniques, or trade secrets documented somewhere other than your head?

A None documented

B Some notes

C Partial documentation

D Mostly documented

E Fully documented + protected

39. Can your organization **operate for 30 days** without you?

A Not at all

B With major issues

C With some issues

D Mostly smoothly

E Completely smoothly

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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER CONTINUED

40. Is your successor or a key team member **actively shadowing** your work and decision-making — formally or informally?

- A** None
- B** Informal
- C** Scheduled sessions
- D** Structured program
- E** Full leadership pipeline

OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

41. How dependent are **daily operations** on your personal involvement?

- A** Fully dependent
- B** Heavily dependent
- C** Moderately dependent
- D** Minimally dependent
- E** Fully independent

42. Who can **sign contracts** without your approval?

- A** Only me
- B** 1 person (limited)
- C** 2-3 people (certain limits)
- D** Leadership team (defined limits)
- E** Multiple people (clear authority matrix)

43. Can your organization **make payroll** without your direct involvement?

- A** No, I must be involved
- B** Only with my approval
- C** Mostly automated, I review
- D** Fully automated, I'm cc'd
- E** Fully automated, independent

44. What percentage of your top **funder relationships** are tied personally to you — meaning they'd likely be at risk, if you left the organization?

- A** 81-100%
- B** 61-80%
- C** 41-60%
- D** 21-40%
- E** 0-20%

45. Is there a **formal management structure** with clear reporting lines?

- A** None, flat
- B** Informal structure
- C** Basic structure
- D** Clear structure
- E** Documented structure + decision matrix

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OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE Continued

46. Can **senior staff hire/fire** without your approval?

- A** No
- B** Only with my approval
- C** With approval for certain roles
- D** Yes, with limits
- E** Yes, full authority with guidelines

47. How many **vendors** are tied specifically to your **personal relationships**?

- A** 81-100%
- B** 61-80%
- C** 41-60%
- D** 21-40%
- E** 0-20%

48. Are **financial approval limits** clearly defined for each role?

- A** No limits defined
- B** Informal understanding
- C** Basic limits
- D** Detailed approval matrix
- E** Documented + enforced approval workflow

49. Can your organization **handle a crisis** (*client issue, funder stopping unexpectedly*) without you?

Issues can be as simple as inappropriate communication with a key donor or sending the wrong amount on an invoice.

- A** Not at all
- B** With major struggles
- C** With some struggles
- D** Mostly capable
- E** Fully capable

50. If you retired tomorrow, what percentage of your funders and key relationships would the **organization retain** through the first year?

- A** Less than 40%
- B** 40-60%
- C** 61-75%
- D** 76-90%
- E** 91-100%

Depending on your answers, and the degree to which your organization is dependent on you, should drive next steps to ensure that any transition would not put the entire nonprofit at risk.

Without addressing these issues, founder-led nonprofit successions have a 70% failure rate.