FREE DOWNLOAD · SELF-ASSESSMENT

The operational story diagnostic

Seven signs that a technology, hardware or manufacturing business has outgrown its operating system — with the test that tells you whether each one is true of you today. Work through them honestly with your leadership team; the pattern usually matters more than any single point.

You may recognise the point at which…

Every important operational decision still comes back to you.
The founder becomes the bottleneck. Throughput is capped by one calendar, and the leadership team defers rather than owns. Test: how many decisions last week could only you make?

Engineering is driving product release but nobody owns industrialisation.
Designs reach release without a route to volume: no stage-gate exit criteria, no DFM closure, no CEM readiness. Test: who is accountable for the transition from EVT to PVT?

Sales forecasts are moving faster than manufacturing capacity.
Commercial commitments outrun build, supply and labour capacity. Test: is there one rolling demand-versus-supply view both sales and operations sign?

The board asks questions about cost, supply risk or scale that nobody can answer confidently.
The numbers are assembled from scratch for each meeting. Test: can you produce landed cost, lead-time risk and capacity headroom from a trusted source today?

The same quality and delivery problems keep returning.
Corrective action closes the symptom, not the cause. Test: what proportion of CAPAs raised six months ago are closed with evidence?

You are preparing for Series A, B or PE diligence and the operational story is weaker than the commercial one.
Investors discount what they cannot verify. Test: would your operating plan, scorecard and supply chain stand up to a diligence data room?

You need senior operational leadership, but cannot yet justify another £300k+ executive hire.
The need is real; the full-time seat is not yet. Test: how many days a week of genuine executive operating ownership would change the trajectory?

How to score it

— Score each of the seven points from 0 (fully true of us today) to 3 (not true at all).

— 0–10: founder-dependent — the operation runs through you, and growth costs more than it earns.

— 11–15: straining — capable people, but the operating system is behind the business.

— 16–21: structured — solid foundations with named gaps to close.

— Take the same assessment interactively at gjm-consultants.com/fractional-coo

What happens in the first 90 days

Weeks 1–4 · Diagnose

A structured review of processes, people, systems, suppliers, metrics and risk. You get an honest picture of where the operation stands and what matters most.

Weeks 5–8 · Design

Agree the operating priorities: what gets fixed, built or changed, in what order, with named owners and measures. A working plan, not an 80-page report.

Weeks 9–13 · Run

The management cadence starts — operating reviews, KPI reporting and issue resolution on a rhythm. Quick wins land while the structural work is set in motion.

Next step: a 30-minute discovery call

No charge, no pitch. We work through the points above against your business and you leave with a view on whether a fractional COO is the right answer — and what the first 90 days would target.

Book directly: gjm-consultants.com/fractional-coo#book-a-call
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