



The 10 Things I Look For First When a Business Feels Harder to Run Than It Should

A practical guide to the pressure points that quietly reduce profit and pull the owner back into the day-to-day.

The 10 Things I Look For First

A practical guide to some of the common issues I see that quietly reduce profit, create unnecessary pressure and pull the owner back into the day-to-day.

1. Does Everything Still End Up With You?

Many business owners tell me they have a team around them, yet most important decisions, customer issues, approvals and problem solving still land on their desk. When everything flows through the owner, growth slows, decisions get delayed and the business becomes dependent on one person.

Question: If you took four weeks off tomorrow, what would stop?

2. Are You Working Harder But Not Seeing It In The Numbers?

Revenue has increased. The team is busy. Customers are being looked after. But profit isn't improving at the same rate. This is often a sign that hidden profit leaks have crept into the business through pricing, rework, inefficiencies or poor customer mix.

Question: Has your effort increased faster than your profitability?

3. Do You Know What Actually Makes You Money?

Many businesses can tell me who their biggest customers are. Far fewer can confidently tell me which customers create the most profit, which services generate the best returns, or where future growth should come from. Without that visibility, it's easy to work harder in the wrong areas.

Question: If you had to grow one part of the business next year, would you know exactly where to focus?

4. Where Does Your Time Actually Go?

Most owners know they're busy. Few know exactly where their week disappears. I often find owners spending significant time solving other people's problems, chasing information, handling avoidable interruptions, and revisiting the same issues repeatedly. These small drains add up quickly.

Question: What percentage of your week is spent on work only you can do?

5. Do You See Problems Early Enough?

When reporting is delayed or information is unclear, issues tend to be found after they've already become expensive. The best businesses identify problems early and make adjustments before they affect profit, cash flow or customers.

Question: How quickly do you know when something is off track?

6. Is Growth Creating More Complexity Than Value?

Growth is exciting. But growth without structure often creates more interruptions, more staff issues, more customer demands and more owner involvement. The business becomes larger but not necessarily better.

Question: Is your business becoming easier to run as it grows?

7. Are Your Systems Helping Or Hindering?

This isn't about having the latest software. It's about whether information is easy to find, tasks are followed through and the team can work effectively without constant supervision. Good systems reduce friction. Poor systems create it.

Question: How often do people need to ask someone else for information they should already have?

8. Is Your Team Taking Ownership?

Many owners don't need more staff. They need more accountability. When responsibilities aren't clear, the owner often becomes the default escalation point for everything.

Question: How often does your team bring you problems rather than solutions?

9. Do The Right Things Actually Get Done?

Most owners I speak with aren't short of ideas. They already know several things that need attention. The problem is that day-to-day demands keep taking priority, responsibility isn't clear, or nobody has the capacity to drive the change through. Good opportunities can sit untouched for months simply because there is no time or ownership to make them happen.

Question: What important improvement has been sitting on your list for more than three months? (Often the opportunity already exists inside the business.)

10. Is The Business Giving You The Life You Wanted?

This is the question many owners avoid. The business may be profitable. The team may be good. The future may look positive. But if the business only works because you're carrying the pressure, constantly available and unable to switch off, something important still needs attention.

Question: Is the business working for you, or are you working for the business?

These are some of the common signs I see when a business has become harder to run than it should be. The causes are different in every business, which is why the next step is understanding what's really going on beneath the symptoms.

There Are a Few Ways to Go From Here

Depending on how much support you need right now. Not sure? Start with a short, no-pressure conversation and we'll work out what makes sense together.

Book a Conversation with Ian — calendly.com/profitpt/30-min-gameplan-call

Want to Explore?

For a personalised view of your business.

A short conversation with me — free

Take the 5-minute Assessment — free — profitpoint.com.au/assessment

Business Insights Report — \$495 — a self-guided online review with a personalised 12-page report (email ian@profitpoint.com.au for the link and payment options)

Want Clarity?

For a deeper, expert-led look at what's really going on.

Profit & Operations Review — \$1,495 (or on-site option \$2,200) — my expert analysis and recommendations for your next best things to focus on

Operational Blueprint — \$5,000 — the full plan: priorities, sequence, step-by-step roadmap

Want Help Getting It Done?

For hands-on support turning the plan into action.

Execution Support — from \$1,750/day — hands-on help to make it happen faster

90-Day Business Reset — \$25,000 — the complete package and program from diagnosis through to hands-on implementation with you

Check out the website — profitpoint.com.au/fractional-coo — for more details and information.

I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your business.

Regards,
Ian

Ian Woodhouse

Business Advisor and FCOO
Profitpoint Business Solutions
Ph: 0412 823 942