

FINANCIAL HEALTH

A CEO doesn't need every number, but must know the ones that tell the story.

- **Revenue** - Top line growth (YoY, QoQ). Are we growing faster than inflation and competitors?
- **Gross margin** - % of revenue left after direct costs. Is pricing power holding?
- **EBITDA & Net Margin** - Are we profitable and structurally efficient?
- **Cash Conversion Cycle (CCC)** - How fast cash comes back in after spending it.
- **Leverage** - Debt/EBITDA ratio; under 3x is healthier for SMEs.
- **Liquidity** - Current ratio ($\geq 1.2x$) and working capital sufficiency.

CEO question: If revenue stopped for 60 days, could we survive?

STRATEGIC FOCUS

- **Vision** - Is the 3-5 year direction clear and compelling?
- **Core Strategy** - Are we cost leader, product innovator, or niche specialist?
- **Market Trends** - What's happening with regulation, technology, and demand?
- **Capital Allocation** - Every £/\$ goes to either:
 1. Growth (new markets, sales, R&D)
 2. Efficiency (automation, systems, training)
 3. Stability (debt service, reserves, compliance)

CEO QUESTION: ARE WE INVESTING TODAY IN THE THINGS THAT CREATE TOMORROW'S ADVANTAGE?

PEOPLE & CULTURE

The CEO sets tone, hires the future, and safeguards culture.

- **Leadership Bench** - Who replaces you? Who replaces them?
- **Talent Strategy** - % A-players in key roles; are we hiring for tomorrow's business?
- **Engagement Metrics** - Retention rate, turnover cost, pulse surveys.
- **Culture** - Do behaviours match the values on the wall?

CEO question: Would your top 10 employees stay if a competitor called them tomorrow?

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

No company grows in isolation.

- **Customers** - Concentration risk (CR1 >25% = red flag).
- **Suppliers** - Dependency risk; dual-source critical inputs.
- **Lenders/Investors** - Do they see you as credible, transparent, "fundable"?
- **Regulators & Community** - Compliance and reputation are silent growth levers.
- **Brand** - Is market perception aligned with strategy?

CEO question: If we lost our biggest customer, supplier, or lender - how fast could we adapt?

OPERATIONAL PULSE

Execution makes or breaks strategy.

- **Capacity vs Demand** - Can operations scale 20-30% without breaking?
- **Efficiency** - OEE (overall equipment effectiveness), utilisation, cost per unit.
- **Technology Leverage** - Where can AI, automation, or digital tools cut costs or open new revenue?
- **Risk Dashboard** - Top 5 operational risks with owner + mitigation.
- **Core KPIs** - Keep a dashboard of:
 - Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)
 - Lifetime Value (LTV)
 - Sales Conversion Rate
 - Churn/Retention
 - Productivity per head

CEO QUESTION: IF DEMAND DOUBLED TOMORROW, WHERE WOULD WE BREAK FIRST?

CEO MINDSET & LEADERSHIP HABITS

The company reflects you more than you think.

- **Time Allocation** - Spend 70% on future (strategy, growth), 30% on today (operations, crisis).
- **Communication** - Clear, repeated, consistent. If you're tired of saying it, they're just hearing it.
- **Decision-Making** - Use data, trust instincts, but avoid paralysis.
- **Resilience** - Build personal routines: sleep, exercise, mentors, reflection.
- **Measure What Matters** - Focus on 5-7 metrics that truly drive results.

CEO question: If I disappeared for 3 months, would the company still move toward the vision?