Nikolas Gannon | Free resource

Process and SOP audit checklist

Check whether a new starter could do the job from your written process, and where the knowledge lives with one person

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Workflow automation for small service businesses

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Free to copy and use

How to use this checklist

Most small businesses run on knowledge that lives in one or two people's heads. This checklist shows where that is true, and whether your written process would survive a sick day, a holiday or a resignation.

What it is	A test of whether each important task is written down well enough for a new person to follow.
Who it's for	Owners, managers and team leads who want the business to run without depending on one person.
How long	About an hour, with the person who knows the most in the room.
What you need	Your current documents, if any, and the people who actually do the work.

Why it matters

When the process lives in one head, the business stalls when that person is away. New staff take months to learn what could have been written down. And the person who knows the most is the one who can least afford to stop working to explain it.

How scoring works

Each section has five statements. Score each one honestly:

0 No, or we don't know

1 Sometimes, or it depends who is working

2 Yes, every time, and we could show you

If you are unsure, score it lower. Low scores show you what to fix first.

01 Visibility

0 = no · 1 = sometimes · 2 = yes, every time

Score each statement	0	1	2
The most important recurring tasks are written down somewhere	◯	◯	◯
The documents are easy to find, searchable, in the tool the team already uses	◯	◯	◯
A new person could follow the written process without asking	◯	◯	◯
Exception cases are documented, not just the happy path	◯	◯	◯
The documents have an owner, and a date they were last updated	◯	◯	◯

Section score _____ / 10

02 Single points of failure

0 = no · 1 = sometimes · 2 = yes, every time

Score each statement	0	1	2
No critical task can only be done by one person	◯	◯	◯
If the key person is away, the team knows who covers what	◯	◯	◯
Logins and access are shared, not locked to one person's account	◯	◯	◯
There is a written handover note for the key roles	◯	◯	◯
New starters are not trained only by asking the most senior person	◯	◯	◯

Section score _____ / 10

03 New starters

0 = no · 1 = sometimes · 2 = yes, every time

Score each statement	0	1	2
There is a written first two-week plan for a new starter	◯	◯	◯
The plan has checkpoints: what they should be able to do by day 5, 10 and 14	◯	◯	◯
The first week is not just watching and being told	◯	◯	◯
Drafts and mistakes in the first weeks are expected and reviewed, not feared	◯	◯	◯
A new starter can take calls or do the core task alone within two weeks	◯	◯	◯

Section score _____ / 10

04 Keeping it current

0 = no · 1 = sometimes · 2 = yes, every time

Score each statement	0	1	2
Documents are updated when the process changes, on the same day	◯	◯	◯
There is a habit of reviewing the top processes twice a year	◯	◯	◯
Staff can suggest improvements without a meeting	◯	◯	◯
The team knows the documents are the truth, not just a formality	◯	◯	◯
The process is actually followed, not just written	◯	◯	◯

Section score _____ / 10

Your scorecard

Copy each section score across. The lowest section is your first fix.

Section	Score	Status
1. Visibility	_____ / 10	
2. Single points of failure	_____ / 10	
3. New starters	_____ / 10	
4. Keeping it current	_____ / 10	
Total	_____ / 40	

8 to 10 Working **5 to 7** Partly working **0 to 4** Not working

Your three biggest gaps

01

02

03

What good looks like

In my previous role, the process was written down before two new starters arrived. One was doing the core task with confidence in about two weeks, while the full workload kept running.

Next steps

- Start with the single point of failure that would hurt most if the person left
- Write that process with the person who does it, in their words
- Put it where the team already looks, not in a binder
- Mark the next review date on the calendar

About Nikolas Gannon

Nikolas Gannon

I find where small businesses lose hours and money to repeated admin, and I build the simpler system. Workflows, websites and systems, built in the tools you already use.

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BASED IN

Sydney, working across Australia