



BUSINESS FITNESS TEST

Demo Co



A2YChamber
ANN ARBOR / PLYMOUTH REGIONAL CHAMBER

**COMCAST
BUSINESS**

SPARK
@nn arbor usa



1 Introduction

This is your personalized fitness assessment provided by Virtual Business Advisor. Use the assessment as an operational plan for organizational development and review these questions frequently ensuring continuous improvement.

This assessment provides ‘food for business thought’ of typical challenges companies encounter.

2 Business Fitness

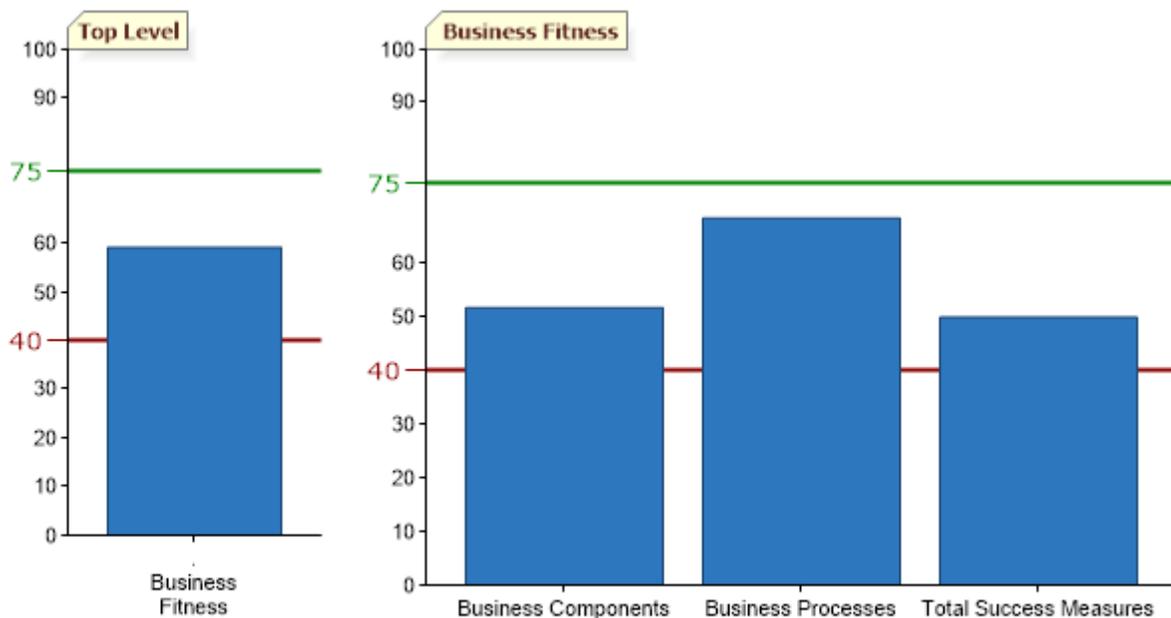
Our questions were designed to assess your overall health and fitness. We define health and fitness as “overview of the total business and identify critical areas that need addressing.” Business profitability and growth can be constrained by dysfunctional processes, communication, and inadequate resources. Enabling proactive utilization of our assessment tool will enable continuous improvement of the challenges and strengths identified.

In order to help make the most of the information provided in this assessment, we have provided ideas and resources that you should take advantage of.

3 High Level Executive Summary

The results highlight the areas that need attention.

- If you have reached the **green line**, you have most things in place under this category.
- If you fall below the **red line**, consider serious and urgent attention to these areas that are holding you back.



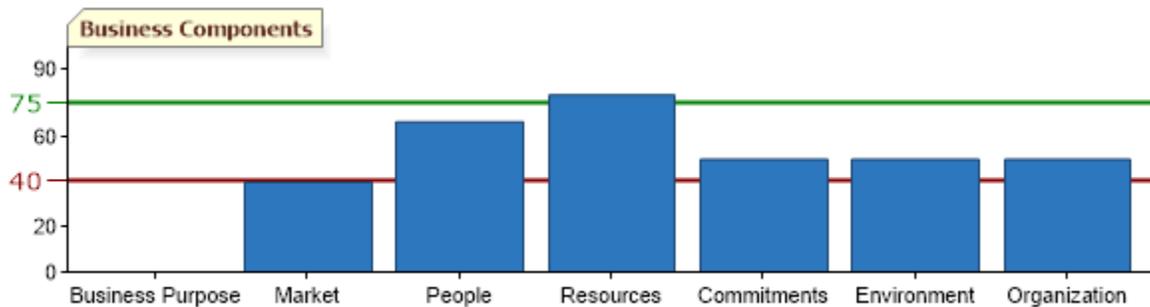
4 Detailed Results

Drilling down further enables you to get focused on the real issues you need to address. **As a reminder:**

- If you have reached the **green line**, you have most things in place under this category.
- If you fall below the **red line**, consider serious and urgent attention to these areas that are holding you back.

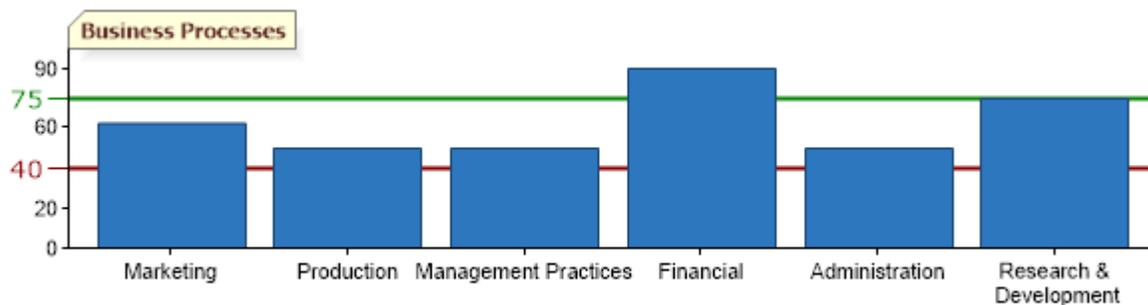
4.1. BUSINESS COMPONENTS

A business is made up of its component parts and then the processes that drive these parts. This first section audits the components to identify what is missing or needs attention. You then go on to evaluate the processes



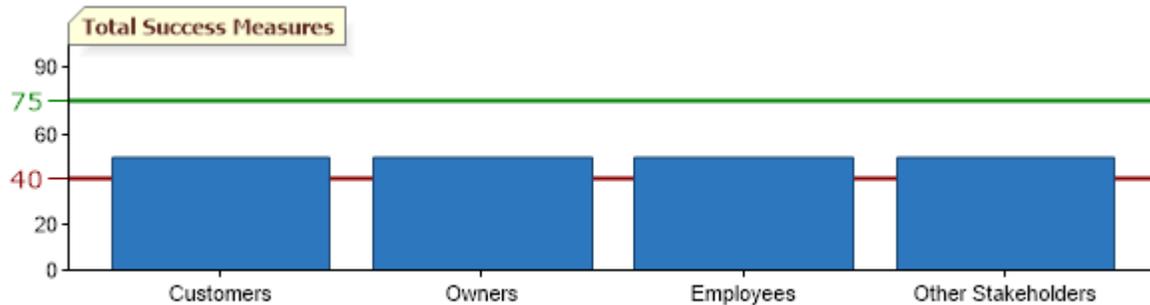
4.2. BUSINESS PROCESSES

These are the systems and methods that the organization uses to drive the components and resources to get things done.



4.3. TOTAL SUCCESS MEASURES

This answers the question 'How well is the organization doing today at meeting stakeholder needs?'



5 Benchmark

This chart looks at your **profile of strengths and weaknesses** against two types of benchmarks:

- The first is against the ideal or best practice which is 100 on this scale.
- The second benchmark is against companies like you which average out as per the light blue profile.

It is important that you know your relevant strengths against other companies but it is even more important to show where you are in organizational fitness relative to where you want to be.



6 Responses and Suggestions

The table below gives suggestions and links to organizations, training courses, and online materials that will help improve your business particularly in the areas where you have identified weaknesses. The resources are listed in the order of priority:

- Sections labeled in **red**, are priority areas to work on. Consider exploring these areas first before moving on.
- Sections labeled in **orange** are opportunities for improvement. After you have addressed the priority areas, take a look at other aspects of your business that could be improved.
- Sections labeled in **green** are your strengths. You excel in these particular areas so keep up the good work!

PRIORITY AREAS TO WORK ON

Ref	Question	Response
A1.1	Do you have a clear business purpose?	No
	<p><i>This must be a business purpose defined in terms of the client's requirements and needs. This SHOULD NOT be a description of what the business currently does. Instead, it must be a description of the problem that the client wants solved when they use the service/product that the company is offering.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Business Plan Guidelines Access this website to find new insights and delve into core issues that affect every aspect of business management. Specifically, this link will direct you to Entrepreneur.com's Business Plan Guidelines page, where you are able to access articles that will provide you with tips creating a business plan.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Creating a Business Plan Infographic This infographic provides a visual outline with 10 guidelines for how to create a solid business plan.</p> <p>Michigan Business One Step: Writing the Business Plan Michigan Business One Stop is a website created by the State of Michigan (Michigan.gov) that is full of full of advice and resources for business to access. With this link in particular, you will be coached in how to write a complete business plan and, in addition, you will be able to access sample business plans for the Michigan Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC).</p> <p>US Small Business Administration: Create Your Business Plan The SBA assists Americans with starting, building, and growing businesses. With this link, you will find step by step guidelines for writing a business plan, as well as other related resources.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Business Planning The SME Toolkit offers a wide range of resources to help entrepreneurs, business owners, and managers start, finance, formalize, and grow their businesses. Click here to access guidelines to assist you with your business plan.</p>	

A1.2 Do you have clear promises to your clients?

No

Every business must clearly outline the promises it is making to its customers/clients. These promises outline what clients can expect in the way of performance and services delivered. The promises also highlight to staff what the core requirements are for the business to perform for their customers. Staff must buy into these promises. Promises also give a foundation on which many of the business' systems are built because systems will probably be required to ensure the promises are kept reliably. Promises should be as specific as possible and cover the core values and deliverables the company has to offer.

Suggested Resources

[Gaebler Ventures: Market Research](#)

With this link, you will get to know your market, understand people's buying behaviors, and base your product or marketing plan on that knowledge.

[US Small Business Administration: Understand Your Market](#)

Useful tips and resources that will help you learn about your customers, competitors and your industry.

A1.3 Do you have a clear vision for the business?

No

A clear vision means a specific place you want the business to be at a specific time in the future. It is important to keep this up to date.

Suggested Resources

[Entrepreneur.com: Business Plan Guidelines](#)

Access this website to find new insights and delve into core issues that affect every aspect of business management. Specifically, this link will direct you to Entrepreneur.com's Business Plan Guidelines page, where you are able to access articles that will provide you with tips creating a business plan.

[Entrepreneur.com: Creating a Business Plan Infographic](#)

This infographic provides a visual outline with 10 guidelines for how to create a solid business plan.

[Michigan Business One Step: Writing the Business Plan](#)

Michigan Business One Stop is a website created by the State of Michigan (Michigan.gov) that is full of full of advice and resources for business to access. With this link in particular, you will be coached in how to write a complete business plan and, in addition, you will be able to access sample business plans for the Michigan Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC).

[US Small Business Administration: Create Your Business Plan](#)

The SBA assists Americans with starting, building, and growing businesses. With this link, you will find step by step guidelines for writing a business plan, as well as other related resources.

[SME Toolkit: Business Planning](#)

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A2.1

Have you done research to establish that your products /services are well defined?

No

Well defined products are easier to track, market, and understand.

Suggested Resources

[US Small Business Administration: Understand Your Market](#)

Useful tips and resources that will help you learn about your customers, competitors and your industry.

[Entrepreneur.com: Conducting Market Research](#)

This article will provide you with steps and advice on how to conduct quality market research.

[Projections Central](#)

Projections Central is a market intelligence tool that contains valuable information for growing businesses. Information on this site compares employment growth for an occupation within different states and it allows for projected employment growth among occupations to be compared within one state.

[Reference USA](#)

Reference USA is a leading service provider in business and consumer research. By using Reference USA, you will be able to create market plans and conduct competitive analysis.

A2.2

Do you have evidence that the products/services are priced to meet the market?

Strongly Negative

Products need to be priced to meet market expectations. This is often contravened by businesses that are afraid of losing customers from over-pricing. This occurs when the company's market position and definition is not well defined and pricing is used as the main competitive advantage.

Suggested Resources

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[Entrepreneur.com: Conducting Market Research](#)

This article will provide you with steps and advice on how to conduct quality market research.

A2.5

Do you know who your competitors are and what your competitive edge is?

No

You need to know who your competitors are before you can do any further analysis on competition. What basis are you competing on? Your edge is important to define your position in the market against your competitors.

Suggested Resources

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With this link, you will get to know your market, understand people's buying behaviors, and base your product or marketing plan on that knowledge.

[US Small Business Administration: Understand Your Market](#)

Useful tips and resources that will help you learn about your customers, competitors and your industry.

[Entrepreneur.com: Conducting Market Research](#)

This article will provide you with steps and advice on how to conduct quality market research.

[Entrepreneur.com: Competitive Advantages](#)

These articles will help you determine your competitive advantage and think about other ways to stand out.

A5.2

Do you have any personal or business contractual commitments that may affect the business?

Yes

,Personal contractual commitments may prevent the business from certain strategic options, if for example you are under a restraint of trade agreement from a previous position.

Suggested Resources

[Entrepreneur.com: Financial Guidelines](#)

When business owners need answers, Entrepreneur.com is their source for solutions. Visitors access the website to find new insights and delve into core issues that affect every aspect of business management. Specifically, this link will direct you to Entrepreneur.com's Financial Guidelines page where you are able to access articles that will provide you with tips on financing your business.

[Gaebler Venture: Financial Guidelines](#)

Gaebler.com is a news and information website that provides useful news and information to small business owners, entrepreneurs, and others who are interested in business. This link will direct you to Gaebler Venture's Financial Guidelines page on which you will find financial advice.

[Ann Arbor SCORE: Business Resources](#)

Ann Arbor SCORE is a premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. On this "Business Resources" page, you will find resources that will provide you with tips on the financial elements of owning and operating a business. You can also speak to a SCORE advisor for advice on how to approach and tackle these issues.

A6.1

Are there any issues with the local ordinances or other restrictions that threaten the business?

Yes

There can be many different issues that threaten the business in the local community (e.g. noise restrictions, objections to expansion of buildings or facilities, etc.).

Suggested Resources

[Washtenaw County: Business Services](#)

With this link, you will be directed to Washtenaw County's official webpage. Here, you will find a wealth of services and resources that are able to assist growing businesses in their efforts. Contacts at the county can also put you in touch with your local or regional government representatives to assist with any issues or disputes.

[Ann Arbor SPARK Business Development Specialist](#)

Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Team is well connected with the local and regional community. The team can assist with any local disputes or issues you may have with the municipality your company resides in.

[Ann Arbor SCORE: Business Resources](#)

Ann Arbor SCORE is a premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. On this "Business Resources" page, you will find resources that will provide you with tips on the financial elements of owning and operating a business.

A6.4

Do you have all the licenses, qualifications, memberships, and/or permits needed to operate your business?

No

Many businesses need licenses and/or permits from government and local government. You may also need special qualifications and/or professional memberships before you can practice.

Suggested Resources

[US Patent and Trademark Office](#)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is the federal agency for granting U.S. patents and registering trademarks. In Michigan, the USPTO office is located in downtown Detroit.

[Procurement Technical Assistance Centers](#)

There are 11 Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) located throughout the state of Michigan. The PTACs' professionals assist companies throughout the entire procurement process

[Ann Arbor SCORE: Business Resources](#)

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[Ann Arbor SPARK Business Development Specialist](#)

Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Team is well connected with the local and regional community. The team can assist with connection you to various clubs, organizations, and certification agencies to ensure that you are ready to operate your business.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Ref

Question

Response

A3.3

Do you have a pipeline of new skilled people in the wings?

Somewhat

This is more important for businesses that are aggressively growing, but all need it to some extent. The process should have skilled people at each stage in the recruitment process before the skills are demanded in the organization.

Suggested Resources

[Ann Arbor SPARK: Talent Team](#)

If you are an employer looking to fill a critical role in your organization, Ann Arbor SPARK provides a number of talent-related resources. SPARK assists innovative companies with finding and attracting talent. Connect with SPARK's Talent team and utilize the available tools to discover talent critical to business growth.

[Michigan Economic Development Corporation: Pure Michigan Talent Connect](#)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)'s Pure Michigan Talent Connect is an online marketplace connecting Michigan's job seekers and employers, and serves as a central hub linking all public and private stakeholders who support Michigan's workforce. Pure Michigan Talent Connect serves as the state's labor exchange system.

[Michigan Works!](#)

Michigan Works! exists to meet the talent demands of local employers and to respond to the unique needs of each community. The system is made-up of 25 regional Michigan Works! Agencies, focusing on the needs of job makers and developing talent for the 21st Century economy.

[Washtenaw Community College: Workforce Development](#)

Washtenaw Community College is a valuable source for developing and enhancing the skills of various workforces. The Workforce Development Program offers many training courses and classes to develop and enhance the skills of employees.

Ref	Question	Response
A3.5	<p>Do you have good advisors in the legal, financial, tax, and business areas?</p> <p><i>Good advice in specialist areas is critical, particularly to smaller businesses that do not have all the expertise in house.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>A2Y Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Howell Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Consider seeking professional legal or financial advice. Chamber of Commerce Membership Directories list local legal and financial service providers that may be able to assist.</p> <p>Ann Arbor SCORE: Business Resources</p> <p>Ann Arbor SCORE is a premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. On this “Business Resources” page, you will find resources that will provide you with tips on the financial elements of owning and operating a business.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Legal & Insurance</p> <p>The SME Toolkit offers free business management information and training for small and medium enterprises. The SME Toolkit offers a wide range of resources to help entrepreneurs, business owners, and managers start, finance, formalize, and grow their businesses.</p> <p>Ann Arbor Insurance Requirements</p> <p>Ann Arbor Insurance Associates, LLC is a full-service insurance agency with a highly skilled team of agents dedicated to meeting all of our clients’ needs for personal and business insurance. With this link, you will be directed to agents specializing in Business Insurance who are experienced with developing dependable insurance plans.</p>	<p><i>Somewhat</i></p>

Ref	Question	Response
A4.1	<p>Are all your facilities suitable?</p> <p><i>Are the office, production, and warehousing facilities suitable in terms of their size, nature, and location?</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Finding & Choosing a Business Location</p> <p>These articles will help you determine the type of facility and location you may need for your business and how to go about obtaining it.</p> <p>BizFilings: Making Business Facility Decisions</p> <p>This article will offer your advice and guidelines for choosing the right space for your business.</p> <p>Ann Arbor Board of Realtors</p> <p>The Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors® is the Trade Association for the Washtenaw County, Michigan REALTORS®.</p> <p>Ann Arbor SPARK: Business Development Specialist</p> <p>Ann Arbor SPARK is a non-profit organization dedicated to the economic prosperity of the greater Ann Arbor region. Whether you're looking to locate your business in the Ann Arbor Area, grow your business or start a new business – SPARK is staffed with a team of experts committed to meeting your needs.</p> <p>Michigan Realtors</p> <p>Michigan Realtors Association is Michigan's largest professional real estate trade association.</p> <p>Zoom Prospector</p> <p>ZoomProspector is an online tool that simplifies the process of site selection analysis so that companies can quickly identify the optimal location for their business start-up, expansion, or relocation.</p> <p>Washtenaw County: Business Services</p> <p>With this link, you will be directed to Washtenaw County's official webpage. Here, you will find a wealth of services and resources that are able to assist growing businesses in their efforts.</p>	<p><i>Neutral</i></p>
A4.2	<p>Is all your plant and equipment suitable?</p> <p><i>Is all your plant and equipment suitable for the job, i.e. Production plant, computers, tables, desks, meeting rooms, networking, phone and internet systems, climate control, lunch rooms and staff facilities, lighting and general workstation ergonomics.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>BizFilings: Making Business Facility Decisions</p> <p>This article will offer you advice and guidelines for choosing the right space for your business.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Finding & Choosing a Business Location</p> <p>These articles will help you determine the type of facility and location you may need for your business and how to go about obtaining it. With this link, you will be directed to Washtenaw County's official webpage. Here, you will find a wealth of services and resources that are able to assist growing businesses in their efforts.</p>	<p><i>Somewhat</i></p>

Ref

Question

Response

A4.3

Are your suppliers reliable?

Somewhat

Do your suppliers provide reliable service within acceptable parameters of quality and delivery timeframes?

Suggested Resources

[Michigan Economic Development Corporation: Pure Michigan Business Connect](#)

Pure Michigan Business Connect is a private initiative developed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation that connects Michigan businesses by introducing them into the purchasing pipelines of the state's larger companies. Professional assistance is available to small businesses and start-ups at little or no charge, including legal, accounting, Web development and human resource assistance.

[A2Y Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory](#)

[Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory](#)

[Howell Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory](#)

Consider seeking professional legal or financial advice. Chamber of Commerce Membership Directories list local legal and financial service providers that may be able to assist.

A7.1

Is the ownership structure appropriate for the type of business and the level of protection required?

Somewhat

Private ownership, limited liability company, trust structures, etc. are all possible and you need to know which is best for your business.

Suggested Resources

[Gaebler Ventures: Forming a Legal Entity](#)

Take a look at various legal entities, from sole proprietorships to corporations to help you choose the best form of legal entity for your business.

Ref

Question

Response

A7.2

Are people's responsibilities and targets well defined?

Somewhat

For a business to operate effectively everybody's role must be well defined and the targets they are to achieve must be well set out.

Suggested Resources

[Entrepreneur.com: Business Plan Guidelines](#)

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[US Small Business Administration: Create Your Business Plan](#)

The SBA assists Americans with starting, building, and growing businesses. With this link, you will find step by step guidelines for writing a business plan, as well as other related resources.

[SME Toolkit: Business Planning](#)

The SME Toolkit offers free business management information and training for small and medium enterprises. The SME Toolkit offers a wide range of resources to help entrepreneurs, business owners, and managers start, finance, formalize, and grow their businesses.

A7.3

Do you know and report on your critical success factors and are they tracked?

Somewhat

Every business has a small number of things (2-5) that are critical to their success. These must be identified, tracked, and managed carefully.

Suggested Resources

[Entrepreneur.com: Tracking Your Business Success](#)

This article will provide you with three, easy to use financial tools that will help you track your business success.

[Entrepreneur.com: The Best Online Tools for Managing Your Business Contacts](#)

This article outlines specific and affordable online CRM management systems that will assist you in organizing your business contacts and tracking of successes.

Ref	Question	Response
A7.4	<p>Are you adequately protected with shareholder, key man, and general insurance?</p> <p><i>There is often a case for protection against risks that insurance can cover for.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>A2Y Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Howell Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Consider seeking professional legal or financial advice. Chamber of Commerce Membership Directories list local legal and financial service providers that may be able to assist.</p> <p>Small Business Development Centers</p> <p>Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) provide assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs throughout the United States and its territories..</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Legal & Insurance</p> <p>The SME Toolkit offers free business management information and training for small and medium enterprises. The SME Toolkit offers a wide range of resources to help entrepreneurs, business owners, and managers start, finance, formalize, and grow their businesses.</p> <p>Ann Arbor Insurance Requirements</p> <p>Ann Arbor Insurance Associates, LLC is a full-service insurance agency with a highly skilled team of agents dedicated to meeting all of our clients' needs for personal and business insurance. With this link, you will be directed to agents specializing in Business Insurance who are experienced with developing dependable insurance plans.</p>	Somewhat
B1.2	<p>Do you have a well-defined process for acquiring new clients or new business?</p> <p><i>The new business pipeline is crucial to the long term survival and success of any organization. Too many leave this part of the business to chance.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Sales Prospecting</p> <p>Useful articles that will provide you with insight and advice on how to find new prospects for your sales.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: How to Sell</p> <p>A collection of articles covering topics from getting sales leads to closing the sale.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
B1.3	<p>Is your sales process refined and efficient?</p> <p><i>A sales process should be refined and efficient to take a prospect from interest to sale through to delivery of product / service and payment.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: How to Sell</p> <p>A collection of articles covering topics from getting sales leads to closing the sale.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Sales How-To</p> <p>Useful articles and guidelines to assist you designing sales plans.</p>	Somewhat
B1.4	<p>When customers or prospects raise a question, problem, or issue, do you have a system to follow through to completion?</p> <p><i>Following through to completion for a customer is crucial if customers are to feel like your business has their interests at heart.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Customer Service</p> <p>A collection of articles on how to build successful customer service platforms and keep customers satisfied.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Customer Service</p> <p>This link will direct you to a page full of articles that will offer you guidance and advice on how to provide your customers with quality customer service.</p>	Somewhat
B2.1	<p>Do you have an effective and efficient job costing and job management system?</p> <p><i>Service delivery is all about completing jobs effectively and efficiently for clients. These jobs need to be invoiced correctly and have all associated costs tracked so that the efficiency and profitability of operations can be tracked.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Procurement, Inventory and Production</p> <p>These website offers free tools to improve demand forecasting and production processes, control inventory and materials, manage vendors and suppliers, and conduct audits.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Operations Management</p> <p>Articles covering best practices for production, inventory, supply chain, materials management, purchasing, logistics and other topics related to operations.</p> <p>Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center: Resources and Downloads:</p> <p>The MMTC assists small and medium-sized businesses through personalized services fitted to meet the needs of clients. This page shows the list of services and resources offered, many of which apply to production, procurement and inventory management.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
B2.2	<p>Do you have a formal production planning system?</p> <p><i>Having a formal production planning system, no matter how simple, is important to ensure problems and unforeseen opportunities are managed appropriately. This type of management is a marketing tool!</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Procurement, Inventory and Production</p> <p>These website offers free tools to improve demand forecasting and production processes, control inventory and materials, manage vendors and suppliers, and conduct audits.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Operations Management</p> <p>Articles covering best practices for production, inventory, supply chain, materials management, purchasing, logistics and other topics related to operations.</p> <p>Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center: Resources and Downloads:</p> <p>The MMTC assists small and medium-sized businesses through personalized services fitted to meet the needs of clients. This page shows the list of services and resources offered, many of which apply to production, procurement and inventory management.</p>	Somewhat
B2.3	<p>Are your inventory systems accurate and up-to-date?</p> <p><i>Having accurate and up-to-date inventory systems are vital to the successful operation of a business that depends on inventories.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Procurement, Inventory and Production</p> <p>These website offers free tools to improve demand forecasting and production processes, control inventory and materials, manage vendors and suppliers, and conduct audits.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Operations Management</p> <p>Articles covering best practices for production, inventory, supply chain, materials management, purchasing, logistics and other topics related to operations.</p> <p>Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center: Resources and Downloads:</p> <p>The MMTC assists small and medium-sized businesses through personalized services fitted to meet the needs of clients. This page shows the list of services and resources offered, many of which apply to production, procurement and inventory management.</p> <p>A2Y Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Howell Area Chamber of Commerce: Membership Directory</p> <p>Consider seeking professional legal or financial advice. Chamber of Commerce Membership Directories list local legal and financial service providers that may be able to assist.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
B2.4	<p>Do you have reliable source(s) for raw materials and components used in the production process?</p> <p><i>Having reliable and cost effective sources for raw materials and components is crucial to production and delivery of products to specification and on time.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Procurement, Inventory and Production</p> <p>These website offers free tools to improve demand forecasting and production processes, control inventory and materials, manage vendors and suppliers, and conduct audits.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Operations Management</p> <p>Articles covering best practices for production, inventory, supply chain, materials management, purchasing, logistics and other topics related to operations.</p> <p>Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center: Resources and Downloads:</p> <p>The MMTC assists small and medium-sized businesses through personalized services fitted to meet the needs of clients. This page shows the list of services and resources offered, many of which apply to production, procurement and inventory management.</p>	Somewhat
B2.5	<p>Do your dispatch people ship orders accurately?</p> <p><i>It's not unusual to have dispatch departments with a low accuracy level. In these situations orders are missed or shipped inaccurately with wrong products, wrong amounts, and inaccurate delivery addresses. All these problems lower the level of trust the client has in the business.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Procurement, Inventory and Production</p> <p>These website offers free tools to improve demand forecasting and production processes, control inventory and materials, manage vendors and suppliers, and conduct audits.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Operations Management</p> <p>Articles covering best practices for production, inventory, supply chain, materials management, purchasing, logistics and other topics related to operations.</p> <p>Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center: Resources and Downloads:</p> <p>The MMTC assists small and medium-sized businesses through personalized services fitted to meet the needs of clients. This page shows the list of services and resources offered, many of which apply to production, procurement and inventory management.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
B3.1	Do you have regular communication with your core team?	Somewhat
<p><i>Regular communication is crucial and should consist of meetings, newsletters, and events that encourage both formal and informal exchanges between people.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Employee Management</p> <p>Tips for performance appraisal, providing employee feedback, retaining your top employees, setting goals for employees, delegating, outsourcing, and more.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Business Management</p> <p>Helpful articles covering topics that include leadership, management and operations, and case studies and personal stories from top leaders in business.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Entrepreneurial Leadership</p> <p>Find out more about leadership attributes and what it takes to be an effective business leader.</p>		
B3.2	Do you have a program for staff training, both in-house and external?	Somewhat
<p><i>Ongoing staff training is an important component of continuous improvement and is a vital element in maintaining staff morale at high levels.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Michigan Works! Employers Services</p> <p>Michigan Works! exists to meet the talent demands of local employers and to respond to the unique needs of each community. Click here to find assistance for employers, as provided by Michigan Works!</p> <p>Ann Arbor SPARK: Talent Team</p> <p>If you are an employer looking to fill a critical role in your organization, Ann Arbor SPARK provides a number of talent-related resources. SPARK assists innovative companies with finding and attracting talent. Connect with SPARK's Talent team and utilize the available tools to discover talent critical to business growth.</p> <p>Washtenaw Community College: Workforce Development</p> <p>Washtenaw Community College is a valuable source for developing and enhancing the skills of various workforces. The Workforce Development Program offers many training courses and classes to develop and enhance the skills of employees.</p>		

Ref	Question	Response
B4.8	<p>Do you track profitability at the lowest sensible level?</p> <p><i>Each business is different, but typically profitability should be able to be tracked at a Product Group, Customer, Department, Project, or other such level. Higher levels of reporting may be possible too, (e.g. Branch or Division levels).</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Financial Guidelines</p> <p>When business owners need answers, Entrepreneur.com is their source for solutions. Visitors access the website to find new insights and delve into core issues that affect every aspect of business management. Specifically, this link will direct you to Entrepreneur.com’s Financial Guidelines page where you are able to access articles that will provide you with tips on financing your business.</p> <p>Gaebler Venture: Financial Guidelines</p> <p>Gaebler.com is a news and information website that provides useful news and information to small business owners, entrepreneurs, and others who are interested in business. This link will direct you to Gaebler Venture’s Financial Guidelines page on which you will find financial advice.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Accounting & Finance</p> <p>Learn how to understand the basics of accounting and finance. Topics include how to fund your business, organize books, and more.</p>	Somewhat
B4.9	<p>Are all assets tracked and managed effectively?</p> <p><i>Effective management of assets means knowing which assets belong to the business, where they are located, and where costs are to be attributed (e.g. depreciation).</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Financial Guidelines</p> <p>When business owners need answers, Entrepreneur.com is their source for solutions. Visitors access the website to find new insights and delve into core issues that affect every aspect of business management. Specifically, this link will direct you to Entrepreneur.com’s Financial Guidelines page where you are able to access articles that will provide you with tips on financing your business.</p> <p>Gaebler Venture: Financial Guidelines</p> <p>Gaebler.com is a news and information website that provides useful news and information to small business owners, entrepreneurs, and others who are interested in business. This link will direct you to Gaebler Venture’s Financial Guidelines page on which you will find financial advice.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Accounting & Finance</p> <p>Learn how to understand the basics of accounting and finance. Topics include how to fund your business, organize books, and more.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
B5.1	Are your administration systems well-resourced and well run?	Somewhat
<p data-bbox="212 302 1437 422"><i>Administration systems are often the last on the priority list and in smaller business are carried out intermittently and/or at night as the last thing. Preferably administration must be done efficiently and regularly to keep everything up to date.</i></p> <p data-bbox="212 428 1437 464">Suggested Resources</p> <p data-bbox="212 470 1437 506">Gaebler Ventutres: Technology</p> <p data-bbox="212 512 1437 600">This resource offers hundreds of articles on small business technology, including accounting and financial software, business management software, office productivity software, and others.</p>		
B5.2	Do you have a Customer Relationship Management tool?	Somewhat
<p data-bbox="212 659 1437 779"><i>CRM systems allow you to keep track of all customers and prospects. All phone calls, meetings, correspondence, emails, reports etc. by anybody in the organization should be kept in a common repository.</i></p> <p data-bbox="212 785 1437 821">Suggested Resources</p> <p data-bbox="212 827 1437 863">Entrepreneur.com: The Best Online Tools for Managing Your Business Contacts</p> <p data-bbox="212 869 1437 947">This article outlines specific and affordable online CRM management systems that will assist you in organizing your business contacts and tracking of successes.</p> <p data-bbox="212 953 1437 989">Gaebler Ventures: Importance of Customer Relationship Management</p> <p data-bbox="212 995 1437 1079">This article will provide you with information in regards to the importance of Customer Relationship Management and give you advice on how to make the most of your CRM system.</p>		
B5.3	Are the business' non-financial filing systems efficient?	Somewhat
<p data-bbox="212 1138 1437 1257"><i>Non-financial business records need to be filed in an efficient system for filing and retrieval of information. Typical examples are project files, customer correspondence, supplier correspondence, etc.</i></p> <p data-bbox="212 1264 1437 1299">Suggested Resources</p> <p data-bbox="212 1306 1437 1341">Small Business Development Center: Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business</p> <p data-bbox="212 1348 1437 1535">The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) enhances Michigan's economic well-being by providing counselling, training, research, and advocacy for new ventures, existing small business, and innovative technology companies. With this link, you will find the MI-SBTDC's Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business, which includes information that is both general and specific to Michigan.</p> <p data-bbox="212 1541 1437 1577">Michigan Business One Step: Writing the Business Plan</p> <p data-bbox="212 1583 1437 1724">Michigan Business One Stop is a website created by the state of Michigan (Michigan.gov) that is full of full of advice and resources for business to access. With this link in particular, you will be coached in how to write a complete business plan and, in addition, you will be able to access sample business plans for the Michigan Small Business Development and Technology Center (MI-SBTDC).</p> <p data-bbox="212 1730 1437 1766">US Small Business Administration: Create Your Business Plan</p> <p data-bbox="212 1772 1437 1862">The SBA assists Americans with starting, building, and growing businesses. With this link, you will find step by step guidelines for writing a business plan, as well as other related resources.</p>		

Ref	Question	Response
B5.4	<p>Do you have reliable backup systems for critical information, especially computer based information?</p> <p><i>Having reliable backups for critical information, both paper and computer based, is essential insurance against disaster. Backups need to be supported by disaster recovery plans.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Small Business Development Center: Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business</p> <p>The Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) enhances Michigan’s economic well-being by providing counselling, training, research, and advocacy for new ventures, existing small business, and innovative technology companies. With this link, you will find the MI-SBTDC’s Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business, which includes information that is both general and specific to Michigan.</p> <p>Michigan Business One Stop: Writing the Business Plan</p> <p>Michigan Business One Stop is a website created by the state of Michigan (Michigan.gov) that is full of full of advice and resources for business to access. With this link in particular, you will be coached in how to write a complete business plan and, in addition, you will be able to access sample business plans for the Michigan Small Business Development and Technology Center (MI-SBTDC).</p> <p>US Small Business Administration: Create Your Business Plan</p> <p>The SBA assists Americans with starting, building, and growing businesses. With this link, you will find step by step guidelines for writing a business plan, as well as other related resources.</p>	Somewhat
B6.1	<p>Do you have a program in place to develop new products and new markets?</p> <p><i>New products need to be developed regularly to continue to meet the needs of the client within the purpose of the business.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Business Strategies</p> <p>This resource offers articles and best practices to help you continue to innovate and grow as a company. Topics include strategic planning, expansion business strategies, globalization business strategies and business strategy implementation.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Grow Your Business</p> <p>This resource offers a variety of articles on the topics of innovation, human resources, growth strategies, and many more.</p>	Somewhat

Ref	Question	Response
C1.1	<p>Are customers receiving full value from the products and services offered with all safety issues addressed and in a caring relationship with the business?</p> <p><i>Customers need to be receiving full value, with all safety concerns addressed, and they must feel cared for and treated with respect and integrity.</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Customer Service</p> <p>These articles cover CSR training, customer service skills, and much more.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Customer Service</p> <p>This resource offers free tips, tools, and templates to help you ensure that your customers have the best experience with your business.</p>	<p><i>Neutral</i></p>
C2.1	<p>Is the business meeting income, return on investment, capital gain, and lifestyle expectations of the owners?</p> <p><i>Owners look for income, return on investment, and lifestyle requirements from a business. Is the business delivering on these?</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Business Strategies</p> <p>This resource offers articles and best practices to help you manage the expectations of the company owners.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Family Business</p> <p>This resource lends some insight and provides articles and advice related to running a family business.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Forming a Legal Entity</p> <p>This resource offers articles and advice related to legal requirements and expectations of different business structures. Depending on your legal entity, you may have certain obligations to the owners of the business.</p>	<p><i>Neutral</i></p>

Ref	Question	Response
C3.1	Are the expectations of employees being met in terms of financial rewards, recognition of the value they are contributing, a safe work environment and supportive social culture?	Neutral
	<p><i>Employees need to be paid well, recognized for their contribution, be in a safe environment within a supportive and positive social culture. Is the business delivering on these expectations?</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Human Resources</p> <p>This resource offers articles on a number of employee/employer related topics.</p> <p>Entrepreneur.com: Human Resources</p> <p>Numerous news articles, case studies and personal testimonies related to managing employees.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Human Resources</p> <p>Everything you need to know about human resources (HR): interviewing, hiring and termination, employee insurance, payroll and benefits for your staff and temps.</p>	

C4.1	Other stakeholders include government, community, environment and special interest groups. Are the expectations of these stakeholders being addressed?	Neutral
	<p><i>There can be many and varied other stakeholders in a business. The most common are government (national and local), local community (your neighbors), the environment, and other special interest groups. Are the expectations of these stakeholders identified and are they being met?</i></p> <p>Suggested Resources</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Business Strategies</p> <p>This resource offers articles and best practices to help you to manage expectations of other stakeholders.</p> <p>SME Toolkit: Family Business</p> <p>This resource lends some insight and provides articles and advice related to running a family business.</p> <p>Gaebler Ventures: Forming a Legal Entity</p> <p>This resource offers articles and advice related to legal requirements and expectations of different business structures. Depending on your legal entity, you may have certain obligations to other stakeholders of the business.</p>	

YOUR STRENGTHS

Ref	Question	Response
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Ref	Question	Response
A2.3	Do you have an appropriate channel for your products to get to your customers?	Yes
<p><i>Having an appropriate channel for your products is vital. It's no good having great products with great gross margins if customers can't find or get the products. Products (and services) must be made available to the customer in an appropriate and cost effective way.</i></p>		
A2.4	What's your brand awareness amongst your targeted customers?	Leader
<p><i>Your brand awareness in the targeted market is important as it defines your position and potential.</i></p>		
A3.1	Do you have a dynamic visionary committed to achieving the purpose of the business?	Yes
<p><i>Having a person committed to achieving the business purpose of the organization is critical to the long term success. No matter what the size of the organization, a visionary and a leader is needed somewhere to keep the whole business on track.</i></p>		
A4.4	Do you have funding available?	Yes
<p><i>Do you have additional funds available or funding capability to survive downturns and make the most of new opportunities?</i></p>		
A4.5	Do you have a positive cash flow?	Yes
<p><i>Cash flow is critical to the overall survival of any business. Cash flows should be positive and backed by cash reserves.</i></p>		
A4.6	Do you understand the credit environment that you operate in?	Yes
<p><i>This understanding helps you assess the credit risk you face in terms of suppliers who you need to pay and the payments you expect from customers.</i></p>		
A4.7	Do you have or are you able to obtain all the technology you need to deliver your products and services?	Yes
<p><i>You need to have access to, or be able to develop all the technology that is needed. The technology needs to live up to expectations too. If it does not, then your company is at serious risk of under-delivering on promises and leaving your customers disillusioned.</i></p>		

Ref	Question	Response
A5.1	Do you have any personal or business financial commitments that could affect the business?	No
<p><i>Personal or business financial commitments may affect the business because the financial demands may draw funds that are badly needed away from the business.</i></p>		
A6.2	Are there any legal constraints that affect the business?	No
<p><i>Legal constraints may limit the business and its operations.</i></p>		
A6.3	Are there any international trends or changes that threaten the business?	No
<p><i>Changes in international markets and other international events may affect the business especially in the long term.</i></p>		
B1.1	Do you have a process for keeping in touch with your market and potential customers?	Yes
<p><i>Keeping in touch with the market is crucial to long term survival and success. The process may be formal with market research; (newsletters, etc.) or it may be informal through social media or regular meetings with people in the industry.</i></p>		
B4.1	Do you do daily or at least weekly bank reconciliations and cash forecasting?	Yes
<p><i>Regular bank reconciliations are essential to managing cash properly.</i></p>		
B4.2	Is your invoicing system efficient and accurate?	Yes
<p><i>Invoicing systems should be efficient and effective even if manual. They should allow accurate and timely creation of invoices from orders or sales.</i></p>		
B4.3	Do you have a debt collection program?	Yes
<p><i>Debt collection can be a problem area for many businesses. If debt collection is well planned and managed then the process can be forgotten or neglected, resulting in overdue debtors that are higher than necessary. Also when clients get 'used' to not paying regularly they get trained into poor payment habits and this can be difficult to change.</i></p>		

Ref	Question	Response
B4.4	Do you have clear End of Month procedures?	Yes
	<i>Clear end of month procedures are important to close a month off and produce the reports that management need.</i>	
B4.5	Do you have clear End of Year procedures?	Yes
	<i>End of year procedures should close down a year ready for tax accounting purposes, produce the reports required for management, and do whatever processing the information system requires starting a new financial year.</i>	
B4.6	Do you have processes in place to complete Tax, Company, and Statistics reporting requirements?	Yes
	<i>Sales Tax, Payroll, Income, and other tax systems must be recorded and reported in an accurate and timely fashion.</i>	
B4.7	Do you budget sales and expenses on a monthly basis?	Yes
	<i>Budgeting is an important tool in determining if business plans are on track or not.</i>	
B4.10	Have you evaluated your tax situation to minimize the tax payments due?	Yes
B6.2	Do you have a program of on-going product development and refinement?	Yes
	<i>Existing products can always be developed and refined.</i>	

7 Conclusion:

It is recommended that you develop this document to become your working plan for improvement by developing your own activities in the critical areas identified. You should then retake the assessment to check on progress and ensure that you are improving your fitness levels.