

FREE M&A DIAGNOSTIC

THE ASCEND M&A READINESS SCORE

AMBITION IS NOT THE SAME AS READINESS.

Most people do not struggle in M&A because they cannot find information. They struggle because the destination is vague, the numbers do not support the ambition, the blind spots are hidden and nobody is challenging whether they are actually ready to move.

**This score is designed to expose the gap
between wanting to move and being ready to move.**

- Score what you can evidence today - not what you hope will be true.
- A lower score is not failure. It simply shows where the work needs to happen.
- The expensive mistake is discovering the gap only after a live opportunity appears.

WHO THIS IS FOR

If you recognise yourself below, keep going.

ASPIRING ACQUIRER

You want to buy a business but are unsure whether your criteria, funding or execution are genuinely ready.

BUSINESS OWNER

You want to grow through acquisition and need to know whether your current business can support the next move.

OWNER PREPARING FOR EXIT

You want to improve value, reduce dependency and understand whether the business is truly buyer-ready.

If that sounds like you, continue - the next two pages will show where the gaps are before they become expensive.

DIRECTION

READINESS

Do you know exactly what outcome you are trying to create?

CAPABILITY

READINESS

Can your time, finances and support network carry the journey?

MOMENTUM

READINESS

Are you consistently turning intention into measurable activity?

READINESS SCORE | QUESTIONS 1-6

Score what is true today.

0 = NOT AT ALL 1 = WEAK 2 = DEVELOPING 3 = STRONG 4 = VERY STRONG

01 DIRECTION

0 1 2 3 4

Can you explain the destination in one sentence?

Not the dream. The commercial outcome you are actually trying to create.

02 CRITERIA

0 1 2 3 4

Have you defined what a good opportunity looks like?

A buy box, growth criteria or exit outcome that rejects as well as attracts.

03 FINANCIAL VISIBILITY

0 1 2 3 4

Do you understand the numbers that determine what is realistic?

Cash, profit, debt capacity, working capital and funding headroom.

04 DECISION RULES

0 1 2 3 4

Do you know what would make you say no?

Without walk-away rules, emotion starts making decisions for you.

05 CAPACITY

0 1 2 3 4

Do you genuinely have the time and management bandwidth to execute?

M&A adds work before it adds value.

06 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

0 1 2 3 4

Do you know which advisers you will need and when?

Legal, finance, tax, DD, lenders and other specialists.

RUNNING TOTAL

Add the six scores on this page. Maximum = 24.



READINESS SCORE | QUESTIONS 7-12

Score what is true today.

0 = NOT AT ALL 1 = WEAK 2 = DEVELOPING 3 = STRONG 4 = VERY STRONG

07 M&A JUDGEMENT

0 1 2 3 4

Could you confidently assess a live opportunity today?

Enough knowledge to ask the right questions and recognise what you do not know.

08 FUNDING / CAPITAL

0 1 2 3 4

Do you understand your realistic capital routes?

Not a wish list - a route you could actually pursue.

09 EXECUTION RHYTHM

0 1 2 3 4

Are you consistently doing the activity required?

Searching, reviewing, preparing, improving or progressing every week.

10 ACCOUNTABILITY

0 1 2 3 4

Is anybody challenging your assumptions and holding the plan together?

Independent challenge is often what stops drift.

11 RISK AWARENESS

0 1 2 3 4

Do you understand the biggest risks in your chosen route?

Deal risk, business risk, owner dependency, concentration and execution risk.

12 MOMENTUM

0 1 2 3 4

Can you evidence meaningful progress in the last 30 days?

Learning does not count unless it changes what you do.

RUNNING TOTAL

Add the six scores on this page. Maximum = 24.

YOUR RESULT + WHO YOU WOULD WORK WITH

Your score is only useful if you act on it.

The score tells you where the gaps are. Ascend helps you decide which ones matter first, what to do next and how to keep moving without turning the journey into another pile of information.



WORK DIRECTLY WITH

CHARLIE TANNER

Charlie is a Personal M&A Advisor who works directly with a deliberately limited number of clients. His role is to bring structure, judgement, challenge and accountability to the decisions that matter.

PERSONAL. DIRECT. DELIBERATELY SELECTIVE.

PERSONAL ACQUISITIONS & EXITS

6 acquisitions | 5 personal exits

£20m acquired enterprise value | £9m exited enterprise value

First-hand experience of buying, owning, growing and exiting businesses.

BROKERAGE / TRANSACTION EXPERIENCE

38 transactions | £75m+ advised transaction value

Buy-side and sell-side transaction exposure

Built and exited an M&A brokerage, giving Charlie visibility of how buyers and sellers approach a deal.

CURRENT ADVISORY POSITION

Personal M&A Advisor | Private investment owner / acquirer

Direct client relationship - no junior hand-off

Today the focus is direct advisory, practical structure and a deliberately selected toolkit.

TOTAL SCORE

OUT OF 48

READINESS %

0-39%

FOUNDATIONS REQUIRED

Ambition is ahead of preparation.

40-59%

DEVELOPING

Important gaps still need work.

60-79%

BUILDING READINESS

Progress is real; remaining gaps matter more.

80-100%

EXECUTION READY

Shift from preparation towards action.

START YOUR ASCEND JOURNEY | ascendbusiness.co.uk | info@ascendbusiness.co.uk