SOSP

OPS FOR SCALE

Founder Dependency Audit

10 questions that tell you whether your business is structurally people-led or system-led and where your highest-leverage gaps are.

SOSP Consulting Group · FDI Founders & CEOs · SME Vietnam · Team size: 20–70

HOW TO USE THIS AUDIT

Read each question. Decide honestly: does the **PEOPLE-LED** or **SYSTEM-LED** description more accurately reflect how your business operates today? Count your system-led answers at the end.

Do not answer based on what you intend to build, or what your org chart implies.

*Answer based on **what would actually happen today** if you were unreachable for two weeks.*

I. THE 10 DIAGNOSTIC DIMENSIONS

#	Dimension	What it diagnoses
01	Decision Rights	Who holds authority and is it explicit or assumed?
02	Process Ownership	Are processes documented and owned, or just performed?
03	Onboarding Speed	How fast can a role be transferred without knowledge loss?
04	Execution Consistency	Does output quality depend on who is present?
05	Communication Design	How does strategic intent reach the execution layer?
06	Governance Rhythm	What catches deviations without your involvement?
07	Role Architecture	Is each role defined by outcomes or by the person in it?
08	Delegation Structure	Do decision rights cascade or does everything escalate?
09	Localization Fit	Is your operating model designed for Vietnam or imported?
10	Scaling Readiness	Does your architecture absorb growth or break under it?

II. THE AUDIT

01 — DECISION RIGHTS | When a non-routine situation arises and you are unreachable, what happens?

PEOPLE-LED
The team waits, escalates to the next available senior person, or makes a guess and hopes for the best.

SYSTEM-LED
The team refers to a defined decision framework or escalation protocol and resolves it within their authority level.

02 — PROCESS OWNERSHIP | For your 3 most critical operational processes, can you name the owner, the documented steps, and the output metric for each?

PEOPLE-LED
You can name people, but steps live in their heads. Metrics are tracked informally, if at all.

SYSTEM-LED
Each process has a named owner, a documented workflow, and a measurable output reviewed on a regular cadence.

03 — ONBOARDING SPEED | If a key team member left tomorrow, how long would it take a replacement to reach acceptable execution quality in that role?

PEOPLE-LED
Months, because the outgoing person carries undocumented knowledge, relationships, and informal authority.

SYSTEM-LED
Weeks, because the role has a design document, a process map, and a structured onboarding path.

04 — EXECUTION CONSISTENCY | Does the quality of work in your business vary significantly depending on who is present on a given day?

PEOPLE-LED
Yes. Output quality and decision speed noticeably shift when certain people are out.

SYSTEM-LED
No. Execution is consistent because it is governed by process, not by individual presence.

05 — COMMUNICATION DESIGN | When you communicate a strategic direction or operational change, how does it reach the execution layer?

PEOPLE-LED
You communicate to managers, who translate informally to their teams. What reaches the front line is a filtered, distorted version.

SYSTEM-LED
There is a defined communication cascade: intent is encoded into updated SOPs, role briefs, or protocols before rollout.

06 · GOVERNANCE RHYTHM | Outside of your presence, what structured mechanisms exist to catch execution deviations and correct them?

PEOPLE-LED

Issues surface when they become visible to you, usually too late. There is no proactive detection layer.

SYSTEM-LED

Defined review cadences (weekly ops reviews, KPI dashboards, team leads reporting against outputs) function without your involvement.

07 · ROLE ARCHITECTURE | For any role in your organization, can you describe what 'good' looks like without referring to the person currently in it?

PEOPLE-LED

You describe the current person's strengths. The role itself has no independent definition of success.

SYSTEM-LED

Each role has documented outcomes, decision rights, interfaces, and capability requirements separate from who fills it.

08 · DELEGATION STRUCTURE | In the last 30 days, how many decisions were brought to you that should have been made one level below?

PEOPLE-LED

Many. Your team escalates because decision rights are unclear, or because they have learned you prefer to decide.

SYSTEM-LED

Few. Decision rights are explicit by tier. Your team knows exactly which decisions are theirs to make and makes them.

09 · LOCALIZATION FIT | How does your operating model account for the specific context of operating in Vietnam: decision culture, communication norms, team expectations?

PEOPLE-LED

It largely doesn't. You rely on specific local individuals to bridge the gap informally.

SYSTEM-LED

Your operating model has been deliberately adapted: governance style, communication structures, and role expectations reflect the local context explicitly.

10 · SCALING READINESS | If your business doubled in headcount over the next 12 months, would your current operational architecture hold or require rebuilding?

PEOPLE-LED

It would require rebuilding. The current model scales on people capacity, not structural design; doubling people doubles coordination cost.

SYSTEM-LED

It would hold. Processes are standardized, roles are designed, governance is documented. The architecture absorbs growth.

III. SCORING YOUR RESULTS

Count the number of questions where the system-led description more accurately reflects your current reality.

8–10 system-led	Your operational architecture is largely functioning. Focus on the 1–2 gaps your answers revealed, they are your current ceiling.
5–7 system-led	You have functional pockets but structural gaps. These gaps are showing up as recurring problems you keep solving manually. Prioritize the highest-frequency friction points.
3–4 system-led	Your business is operating on individual capacity, not structural design. Growth will increase cost and fragility before it increases output. The architectural rebuild needs to start now.
0–2 system-led	Your business is fully people-led. This is not unusual at 20–40 pax but it is a hard ceiling. Every growth initiative will hit it. The priority is not hiring. It is architecture.

IV. WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR GAPS

Your audit is a structural diagnosis, not a performance evaluation. The goal is to locate the highest-leverage gaps, the places where the absence of architecture is creating the most friction, overhead, or risk.

For each question where you answered people-led, identify the concrete structural element that is missing:

1. **Decision rights gap:** Define which decisions belong at which level. Write it down. Test it for 30 days.
2. **Process ownership gap:** Assign a named owner and a measurable output to the process. Not a task list, an outcome.
3. **Governance rhythm gap:** Design one structured review cadence that runs without your involvement. Start with weekly.
4. **Role architecture gap:** Write the outcome definition for the role before you write a JD. What does 'done well' look like, independent of the person in the role?

The sequence matters.

Start with decision rights.

Everything else such as delegation, process ownership, governance, becomes easier once decision rights are explicit.

SOSP **SOSP Consulting Group · Smart Operations Success Partner**
Operational architecture for FDI founders and CEOs building businesses in Vietnam.