BEFORE YOU COMMIT

12-Point Deal Check

Better questions. Clearer assumptions.

A practical first pass for buying a business, reviewing a property, or evaluating a partnership.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

For each point, mark Verified, Open or Not applicable. Record the evidence and the next question. A checkmark means you have supporting evidence; it does not mean the deal is safe.

One unresolved issue can matter more than eleven checked boxes. Use the worksheet to decide what needs further investigation.

Educational checklist only. It does not assess a specific deal or replace legal, tax, accounting, engineering or regulated investment advice. No outcome or return is guaranteed.

CLARIFY THE FACTS

01 Define the decision

Write exactly what you are buying, the price, your role and the deadline. Separate assets, shares, property and goodwill.

Request: asset list, ownership structure and draft terms.

Pause if the deal changes depending on who explains it.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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02 Verify the seller and ownership

Confirm who owns the assets and who can authorize the sale. Identify liens, disputes and third-party approvals.

Request: ownership records, lien searches and required consents.

Pause if authority to sell or clean transfer is unclear.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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03 Reconcile the revenue

Compare reported sales with bank deposits, tax filings and source records. Ask what is recurring, concentrated or unusual.

Request: monthly statements and supporting sales records.

Pause if material differences cannot be explained.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

TEST THE OPERATING REALITY

04 Normalize the real profit

Separate one-time items from recurring costs. Challenge add-backs and include realistic staffing and owner replacement costs.

Request: detailed expenses and evidence for each add-back.

Pause if profit depends on costs you will still have to pay.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

05 Business or another job?

List the seller's weekly hours, responsibilities and relationships. Model the cost of replacing that work.

Request: owner task log, staffing plan and handover commitments.

Pause if the business cannot operate without unpaid owner labor.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

06 Test customer and supplier dependence

Look for concentration, contract expiry, cancellations and relationships that may leave with the seller.

Request: concentration reports and material agreements.

Pause if a lost customer or supplier would break the plan.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

CHECK THE CASH

07 Read the lease and obligations

Check assignment, renewal, rent increases, guarantees, maintenance and termination rights. For property, verify title and permitted use.

Request: lease, amendments, title and relevant approvals.

Pause if you assume rights that are not documented.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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08 Price the property economics

Use collected rent, realistic vacancy, taxes, insurance, management, maintenance and reserves. Keep financing separate from operating income.

Request: rent roll, leases, expenses and inspection findings.

Pause if the return works only with full occupancy or no repairs.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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09 Fund the whole transaction

Add fees, inventory, working capital, immediate repairs and reserves to the purchase price. Document financing terms and guarantees.

Request: sources-and-uses schedule and lender terms.

Pause if cash runs out after closing.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

CHALLENGE THE DECISION

10 Run a downside case

Reduce revenue or rent, raise costs and delay the handover. Calculate cash after debt payments and the additional cash required.

Request: base and downside models with visible assumptions.

Pause if a modest setback makes obligations unaffordable.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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11 Plan control, transition and exit

Agree decision rights, reporting, handover, dispute process and exit mechanics. Confirm what is actually enforceable with counsel.

Request: transition plan and draft governance/exit terms.

Pause if a disagreement has no workable resolution path.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

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12 Get an independent second opinion

List unresolved questions and evidence gaps. Ask someone outside the transaction to challenge the assumptions before committing.

Request: written open-items list and appropriate specialist reviews.

Pause if urgency replaces evidence or questions are discouraged.

[ ] Verified [ ] Open [ ] N/A Evidence / next question:

YOUR NEXT DECISION

Turn uncertainty into a question.

Deal / decision:

The three assumptions that matter most:

Evidence still missing:

Who will verify it and by when:

What would make me pause or walk away:

Want a second perspective?

Explore Naor Gozlan's current consultation options at yourexpertonline.com. Bring your questions and the records behind the numbers.

This checklist is a starting point, not a pass/fail score or a recommendation to transact.