Data Compass

101

Practical Data Analytics Questions for Business Leaders

A practical executive guide & diagnostic blueprint
for owner-led businesses

Ask better questions.
Understand the information behind the answer.

SIX LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

CEO & executive / Sales / Marketing
Operations / Finance / HR & people

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Clearer decisions start with better questions.

Most business leaders recognize that they should be "data-driven." However, the main challenge facing CEOs, Founders, and Functional Leaders isn't a lack of numbers-it is an overwhelming excess of data paired with a shortage of clear, actionable insights. Leaders often find themselves drowning in vanity metrics while missing the critical operational and financial truths that drive sustainable growth.

True analytical clarity begins not with software or dashboards, but with asking the right questions. This guide outlines 101 essential questions across every key business function. Each question is designed to expose operational bottlenecks, highlight profit drivers, and eliminate blind spots. For each question, we define why it's asked, what it answers, and the prerequisites and baseline parameters required before querying your systems.

CHOOSE YOUR STARTING POINT

Start with the questions relevant to your role and business. Use the data and definition prompts to identify what you know, what you can check and what you would need to capture.

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01 / QUESTIONS 1-3

CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

1 What is our true fully burdened Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) compared to our 12-month Customer Lifetime Value (LTV)?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates the long-term unit economics and scalability of the business model.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether customer acquisition generates net value or burns capital over a 12-month period.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Must include all headcount, software, agency fees, and marketing spend in CAC; define LTV based on realised gross margin, not top-line revenue.

2 What is our net revenue retention (NRR) rate across existing customer cohorts?

WHY IT MATTERS Gauges product-market fit and customer retention strength independent of new acquisition.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether the business can grow organically even if new customer acquisition pauses.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Track starting recurring revenue, add expansion revenue, subtract churn and contraction over a set 12-month window.

3 Which customer segments represent the top 20% of net margin contribution, and what traits do they share?

WHY IT MATTERS Applies the Pareto principle to identify high-yield customer profiles and guide resource allocation.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where strategic focus and sales targeting should be concentrated for optimal profitability.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Customer profitability tracking including servicing costs, return rates, and support overhead.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

4 What is our runway in months under baseline, optimistic, and conservative cash burn scenarios?

WHY IT MATTERS Protects the enterprise against market volatility and operational disruption.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much financial resilience and time the business has before requiring external capital or cost reduction.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Standardised cash-basis reporting and agreed variable cost models for each scenario.

5 What percentage of our total revenue is dependent on our top 3 clients or revenue channels?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies client concentration risk that threatens business continuity.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The degree of vulnerability the organisation faces if a key relationship ends.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Revenue attribution broken down by unique client group and acquisition channel.

6 What is our payback period on customer acquisition costs across each main customer segment?

WHY IT MATTERS Determines working capital efficiency and liquidity drag from acquiring new business.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How many months it takes to break even on the investment made to gain a customer.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Monthly net gross margin per customer segment aligned with initial acquisition cost.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

7 What is our gross margin percentage trend over the last eight quarters?

WHY IT MATTERS Detects structural margin erosion before it impacts net profitability.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether top-line growth is translating into sustainable underlying profits or getting diluted by rising direct costs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent COGS (Cost of Goods/Services Sold) accounting methods across all quarters.

8 What is the variance between our annual strategic forecast and actual operational performance by quarter?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures organisational predictability and executive forecasting accuracy.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether financial plans are reliable or built on overly optimistic assumptions.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Locked baseline annual forecasts with documented variance thresholds (e.g., +/- 5%).

9 How does our current EBITDA margin compare to industry peers of similar scale?

WHY IT MATTERS Benchmarks overall operating efficiency and market competitiveness.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether the company operates efficiently compared to broader market standards.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Normalised financial metrics adjusted for non-recurring expenses and owner compensation.

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01 / QUESTIONS 10-12

CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

10 What is our overall ROI on technology and data infrastructure investments over the past 24 months?

WHY IT MATTERS Ensures tech stack investments yield measurable productivity or revenue improvements.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether software and data spending generate tangible operational returns or add excess overhead.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Comprehensive audit of software licensing costs, implementation fees, and associated labour savings.

11 What proportion of our total capacity is currently utilized across core business operations?

WHY IT MATTERS Informs capital allocation decisions regarding expansion, hiring, or downsizing.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much operational headroom remains before service delivery or product quality declines.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Defined maximum volume metrics for key delivery channels and staffing levels.

12 What is our churn rate broken down by customer tenure cohorts (0-90 days, 90-365 days, 1+ years)?

WHY IT MATTERS Pinpoints whether retention problems stem from onboarding/expectations or long-term value decline.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Exactly when and why customers disengage during their relationship lifecycle.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Accurate customer start dates, cancellation dates, and exit survey reason mapping.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

13 What is our revenue growth rate relative to our total headcount growth rate?

WHY IT MATTERS Assesses operational leverage and organisational efficiency as the business scales.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether the business is growing efficiently or simply adding headcount to increase revenue.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) tracking paired with accrued revenue data.

14 What is our cash conversion cycle (CCC) measured in total days?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates how quickly capital spent returns to the bank as collected profit.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How long cash is tied up in inventory and receivables, allowing for the time taken to pay suppliers. A shorter cycle does not itself establish profit.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Integrated Days Inventory Outstanding (DIO), Days Sales Outstanding (DSO), and Days Payable Outstanding (DPO) metrics.

15 What proportion of our quarterly growth comes from expansion/upsell vs. net new logo acquisition?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates growth mix and identifies over-reliance on top-of-funnel acquisition.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether existing account management or net-new sales drive business momentum.

DATA & DEFINITIONS CRM pipeline tracking separated into Net New, Cross-sell, Upsell, and Renewal deals.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

16 What is our net promoter score (NPS) or customer satisfaction (CSAT) score among our top tier revenue accounts?

WHY IT MATTERS Predicts retention risks within key accounts that generate disproportionate profit.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The true relationship health of core commercial partnerships.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Regular automated CSAT/NPS survey triggers linked directly to account CRM records.

17 What is our regulatory and data compliance exposure score across our data storage infrastructure?

WHY IT MATTERS Mitigates financial, legal, and reputational risk from data management practices.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where security vulnerabilities or non-compliance risks (e.g., GDPR, CCPA) exist in company records.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Periodic data governance audits and permission access logs.

18 What is our average net cash burn per product line or service tier?

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents profitable business divisions from subsidizing failing or unprofitable units indefinitely.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which offerings consume cash and which generate it over the chosen period.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Allocate actual cash inflows and cash outflows consistently by product or service. Net cash burn is outflows minus inflows; a negative result represents net cash generation. Allocated accounting profit is a different measure.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

19 What is our win rate against our top 3 primary market competitors?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures competitive positioning and value proposition strength in the open market.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How effectively the value proposition performs in direct competitive evaluation.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Required "Competitor Lost To / Won From" fields in CRM opportunity management.

20 What is the ratio of operational fixed overhead to variable revenue-generating expense?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures cost structure flexibility during economic downturns or demand shifts.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How easily operating expenses can adapt if market demand fluctuates.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Clear categorization of general administrative costs vs. variable execution costs in GL.

21 How long does it take for a strategic decision to transition from approval to full operational execution?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures organisational agility and executive implementation speed.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where operational inertia, governance friction, or communication gaps delay execution.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Milestone project tracking with clear initiation and completion criteria.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

22 What is our total single-point-of-failure risk score across key executive and operational roles?

WHY IT MATTERS Highlights key-person dependency risks that threaten business resilience.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which critical operations would stall if a single individual left the organisation.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Skill matrix audits and process documentation reviews across departments.

23 What is our customer concentration risk by geographic region or industry sector?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies macro-environmental risks outside the company's direct control.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Exposure to regional economic downturns or industry-specific slumps.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Categorized client master files updated with accurate industry sector and regional tags.

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CEO & executive leadership

Business health, capital efficiency and strategic decisions.

24 What is our current ratio of pipeline value generated relative to quarterly revenue targets?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates medium-term financial predictability and target viability.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether current pipeline coverage is sufficient to meet future financial goals.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Define the qualifying stages, forecast period and remaining revenue target. State whether pipeline is unweighted or probability-weighted; use the same basis in each comparison.

25 What is the total enterprise cost of operational rework, errors, and credit notes issued per quarter?

WHY IT MATTERS Exposes hidden margin leakage caused by execution errors, poor quality control, or miscommunication.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much revenue is lost due to operational mistakes and remedial service delivery.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Standardised logging of credit notes, concessions, and internal rework hours in financial software.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

26 What is our true sales velocity by lead source and deal size category?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures the speed at which qualified leads convert into realised revenue.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The estimated value of sales generated per day for a consistently defined opportunity cohort.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Sales velocity = (number of qualified opportunities x win rate x average deal value) / average sales cycle in days. Express win rate as a decimal; use compatible cohorts and periods.

27 What is our stage-by-stage pipeline conversion rate across the sales funnel?

WHY IT MATTERS Pinpoints exact drop-off points within the sales process.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether sales performance issues stem from initial qualification, discovery, proposing, or closing.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Strictly defined CRM stage exit/entry criteria enforced across the sales team.

28 What is the win rate difference between sales-qualified leads (SQLs) and self-sourced sales opportunities?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates marketing alignment vs. outbound sales effectiveness.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which lead origination method drives higher conversion rates and deal quality.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Clear deal source attribution fields mandated upon opportunity creation.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

29 What is our average discount percentage offered by sales rep, and how does it correlate with deal win rate?

WHY IT MATTERS Detects unnecessary discounting practices that erode gross margin.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether discounting is associated with higher win rates and how it affects gross margin. Correlation alone does not establish that discounting caused a win.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Standard list pricing tracking compared against final negotiated agreement value.

30 What percentage of pipeline opportunities haven't had a recorded next activity or contact in over 14 days?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies pipeline bloat and unmanaged, stagnant opportunities.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much of the reported pipeline is active vs. abandoned or stalled.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Automated activity tracking linked between email/calendar platforms and CRM.

31 What is the average ramp-up time for a new sales rep to reach full quota productivity?

WHY IT MATTERS Improves sales capacity planning and hiring model accuracy.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How quickly new sales hires generate net return on their compensation investment.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Historical rep onboarding tracking paired with monthly quota attainment performance.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

32 What is our deal win/loss ratio broken down by primary decision-maker job title?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies which executive buyer personas align best with the product's value proposition.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Who the sales team should target to maximise conversion rates.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Mandatory contact role categorization within CRM deal records.

33 What percentage of total pipeline volume is generated by the top 20% of sales representatives?

WHY IT MATTERS Exposes rep performance variance and reliance on top performers.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether sales success relies on repeatable systems or individual standout efforts.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Individual performance reporting normalised by assigned territory or quota size.

34 What is the average length of our sales cycle for closed-won deals vs. closed-lost deals?

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents reps from over-investing time in deals unlikely to close.

WHAT IT ANSWERS At what time threshold a lingering prospect becomes a low-probability deal.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Time-stamped deal lifecycle tracking from lead creation to final status.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

35 What is the conversion rate of proposals/quotes delivered to signed contracts?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates proposal effectiveness, pricing alignment, and closing efficiency.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether deal drop-offs occur due to pricing, timing, or value alignment after proposal delivery.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Proposal generation tracking linked directly to deal status changes.

36 How many touchpoints (emails, calls, meetings) are required on average to close a winning deal?

WHY IT MATTERS Establishes activity benchmarks for sales engagement strategies.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The average recorded volume and mix of contact on won deals. This describes observed activity; it does not establish the optimal cadence or prove each touch was necessary.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Integrated telephony, email, and meeting logging within CRM software.

37 What is our customer expansion/upsell revenue win rate within 6 months of initial deal closing?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures post-sale handoff quality and immediate cross-sell opportunity.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How effectively initial promises align with actual onboarding performance to allow account growth.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Clear distinction between initial contracts and secondary expansion orders.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

38 What percentage of inbound sales inquiries receive a response within 1 hour, 24 hours, or >24 hours?

WHY IT MATTERS Response speed directly impacts lead conversion rates.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether sales team response times are helping or hurting conversion performance.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Lead creation time, first actual sales-response time and a defined calendar-hours or business-hours clock. A logged task or automated acknowledgement is not automatically a human response. Report unanswered enquiries separately.

39 What is our average contract duration, and how does it vary by customer size?

WHY IT MATTERS Assesses cash flow stability and long-term revenue commitments.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether buyers prefer flexible short-term options or multi-year terms.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Record contract start and end dates, duration in months, and customer size. Annual contract value (ACV) is a monetary measure and must be reported separately from duration.

40 What percentage of lost deals are categorized with verified reasons (e.g., price, features, competitor) vs. "no decision"?

WHY IT MATTERS Exposes whether losses stem from competitive gaps or an inadequate sense of urgency.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Why prospects choose not to buy, guiding sales enablement adjustments.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent closed-lost reason categories, evidence where available, and a separate unknown or unverified category. A mandatory field alone does not verify a customer's reason.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

41 What is the ratio of sales activity volume to pipeline generation by sales rep?

WHY IT MATTERS Distinguishes between meaningful sales outreach and low-impact activity.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which activities (calls, custom emails, LinkedIn outreach) actually generate pipeline opportunities.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Standard activity logging paired with opportunity creation sources.

42 What is our pipeline slippage rate (deals pushed from expected close month to future months)?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures sales forecast accuracy and pipeline health.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How frequently reps misjudge prospect purchase timelines or closing commitment.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Historical tracking of close-date adjustments on CRM opportunity records.

43 What is our customer retention rate for deals brought in by specific sales reps?

WHY IT MATTERS Detects if reps close low-quality accounts simply to hit quota targets.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which sales reps consistently bring in long-term, high-retention accounts.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Linking originating sales rep fields to long-term account churn metrics.

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Sales leadership

Enquiry quality, deal progression and sales performance.

44 What is the average value of deals created in the pipeline vs. the final value of deals closed?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates initial scoping accuracy and deal value erosion over time.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether reps inflate early-stage pipeline estimates before scope reduction occurs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS CRM snapshot data comparing initial estimated value to final deal amount.

45 What is the cost of sales as a total percentage of new annual contract value generated?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates sales team efficiency and direct selling cost structures.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much capital is spent on sales commissions, salaries, and tools to secure each dollar of revenue.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Fully burdened sales department cost tracking combined with total closed-won contract value.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

46 What is our Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) by specific acquisition channel (Paid Search, Paid Social, Organic, Referral, Events)?

WHY IT MATTERS Directs marketing budgets toward the most cost-effective channels.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which acquisition channels acquire customers efficiently and which overcharge for conversions.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Channel-level spend tracking (ad spend + agency fees) mapped directly to customer conversion data.

47 What is our multi-touch attribution distribution across high-value converted leads?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates the impact of touchpoints across the buyer journey, beyond simple first-touch or last-touch models.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How an agreed attribution model allocates credit across recorded touchpoints. Allocated credit is not proof that a touchpoint caused the sale.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent touchpoint capture, identity matching, lookback window and attribution rules. UTMs, CRM and web analytics support the recorded view; missing or offline activity can limit completeness.

48 What percentage of total marketing-generated leads meet our defined Sales Qualified Lead (SQL) criteria?

WHY IT MATTERS Assesses marketing target precision and lead quality over simple volume.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether marketing efforts generate genuine sales opportunities or unhelpful lead volume.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Formally agreed SQL criteria established between marketing and sales teams.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

49 What is our Cost Per Qualified Inquiry/Opportunity across each active marketing campaign?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates marketing efficiency based on business opportunities rather than top-of-funnel clicks.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which specific marketing campaigns generate real sales opportunities at an acceptable cost.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Campaign tag parameters (UTM parameters) linked to opportunity generation in CRM.

50 What is the conversion rate of website visitors to initial contact inquiries by landing page?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies conversion rate optimization (CRO) opportunities on key digital properties.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which landing pages effectively convert traffic and which lose potential buyers.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Web analytics goal configuration mapped across all form submissions and booking links.

51 What is the 12-month Customer Lifetime Value (LTV) broken down by initial acquisition channel?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies channels that bring in long-term, profitable customers vs. high-churn buyers.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where marketing capital should be spent to acquire maximum long-term gross profit.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Historical cohort tracking connecting initial channel source tags to multi-year invoice history.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

52 What is our Organic Search (SEO) traffic share for high-intent target commercial keywords?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures non-paid search visibility and brand authority for buying queries.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How effectively organic search captures buyer intent without relying on continuous ad spend.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Keyword rank tracking tools linked with Search Console keyword data.

53 What is our Email Marketing open, click-through, and downstream conversion rate by audience segment?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates email database health, message relevance, and segment targeting efficiency.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which message angles and content themes resonate with specific buyer segments.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Dynamic list segmentation built on demographic, firmographic, and behavioral parameters.

54 What is our content asset ROI measured by opportunities touched and influenced?

WHY IT MATTERS Justifies content creation budgets by linking content directly to pipeline impact.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which ebooks, case studies, guides, or videos actively support deal progression and closes.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Content costs, defined eligible interactions, opportunity history and attributed gross profit over an agreed period. Report influenced pipeline or revenue separately: a sum of touched deal values is not an ROI calculation or proof of causation.

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03 / QUESTIONS 55-57

Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

55 What is the ratio of Brand Ad Spend (awareness) vs. Direct Response Ad Spend (lead gen)?

WHY IT MATTERS Balances long-term demand creation with short-term lead generation focus.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether marketing over-indexes on immediate lead capturing while eroding long-term brand equity.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Clear campaign classification tags in ad accounts (Search, Social, Display).

56 What is our social media organic engagement-to-pipeline conversion rate?

WHY IT MATTERS Tests whether organic social media activity drives commercial outcomes or vanity metrics.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether social engagement translates into qualified web traffic and leads.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Custom link tracking on social posts connected to site conversion metrics.

57 What is our benchmark cost per impression (CPM) and click-through rate (CTR) across primary paid channels?

WHY IT MATTERS Monitors ad creative relevance, audience fatigue, and platform ad costs over time.

WHAT IT ANSWERS When ad creative needs refreshing or audience targets need adjustments.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Automated ad platform reporting dashboards updated daily/weekly.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

58 What is the return on investment (ROI) of industry events and trade shows attended/sponsored?

WHY IT MATTERS Verifies whether offline events generate sufficient qualified leads to justify travel and booth costs.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which event investments yield actual commercial contracts vs. low-value contacts.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Dedicated event lead tagging and post-event pipeline tracking over a 6-12 month timeframe.

59 What percentage of lost customer opportunities return to the marketing funnel for re-engagement?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures remarketing efficiency for timing-related lost opportunities.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How effectively marketing reactivates cold or previously lost pipeline prospects.

DATA & DEFINITIONS CRM status workflows that route closed-lost deals into automated nurture tracks.

60 What is the net click-to-lead conversion drop-off rate on mobile vs. desktop devices?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies user experience (UX) barriers specific to device types.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether mobile users face technical barriers or frustrating layouts when converting on site.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Analytics tracking segmented by device category, browser, and screen resolution.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

61 How does customer acquisition cost (CAC) change during seasonal industry shifts?

WHY IT MATTERS Optimises ad spend pacing to avoid over-investing during low-converting seasonal periods.

WHAT IT ANSWERS When advertising budget yields peak conversion efficiency vs. when spend should be throttled back.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Multi-year monthly spend and acquisition data analysed against seasonal benchmarks.

62 What is our referral and word-of-mouth customer origination percentage?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures customer advocacy and viral growth strength without ad spend support.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How effectively satisfied customers generate new prospective clients organically.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Mandatory "How did you hear about us?" survey metrics on intake forms.

63 What is the average cost to reactivate a churned or inactive customer through marketing efforts?

WHY IT MATTERS Compares customer reactivation costs directly against net new acquisition spending.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether win-back campaigns offer a more efficient growth path than acquiring cold leads.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Distinct campaign tagging applied specifically to historical customer win-back lists.

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Marketing leadership

Acquisition, attribution and the connection to customer value.

64 What is our overall brand sentiment score across online reviews, social media, and industry forums?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies emerging brand reputation risks that impact conversion rates.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How the market views brand trust, customer service quality, and product reliability.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Brand monitoring aggregators and review site feedback scoring integrations.

65 What is our share of eligible search-ad impressions relative to competitors?

WHY IT MATTERS Assesses visibility and competitive presence in the search auctions relevant to the business.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How often ads appeared out of the impressions they were eligible to receive. This is an impression-based measure, not a share of competitors' advertising spend.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Search impression share, agreed campaign scope and periods, and relevant auction comparison reports. Do not treat available search-auction data as total cross-channel market share.

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Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

66 What is our end-to-end operational cycle time (from order placement to customer fulfilment)?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures delivery performance and operational throughput capacity.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where fulfilment delays occur and how fast value reaches the paying customer.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Time-stamped workflow milestones from purchase confirmation to customer delivery receipt.

67 What is our Capacity Utilisation Rate across operations staff, equipment, or service infrastructure?

WHY IT MATTERS Balances operational efficiency with burnout risk and capital expenditure planning.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether current resources are underutilized or running at risk of service quality decline.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Defined billable or productive capacity thresholds calculated per resource category.

68 What is our First-Time Pass Rate (FTPR) or error-free fulfilment rate?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates operational quality control and minimizes costly process rework.

WHAT IT ANSWERS What percentage of orders or deliverables are completed correctly without requiring adjustments or repairs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Quality audit logs and clear operational defect classifications.

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Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

69 What is our average order/project backlog size measured in total labour days or units?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies delivery bottlenecks and informs staffing or production adjustments.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether current fulfilment infrastructure can keep pace with inbound sales volume.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Real-time project tracking or production queue monitoring systems.

70 What is our Inventory Turnover Ratio by product SKU or material type? (Applicable to physical operations)

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents capital from being tied up in slow-moving or obsolete inventory stock.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which stock items sell quickly and which tie up working capital in warehouse storage.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Integrated ERP/inventory software tracking cost of goods sold against average inventory values.

71 What is our average cost per unit/project delivered, including direct labour and operational overhead?

WHY IT MATTERS Validates product/service pricing and protects gross margin targets.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The true operational cost of delivering each unit of value to customers.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Activity-based cost allocation models reflecting direct labour, shipping, and shared infrastructure costs.

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Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

72 What is our On-Time In-Full (OTIF) delivery rate to clients?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures service delivery reliability, directly driving customer satisfaction and retention.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How consistently operations meets agreed delivery dates and order completeness requirements.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Promised delivery dates recorded against confirmed client delivery receipts.

73 What is our supplier failure or delay rate across top operational vendors?

WHY IT MATTERS Highlights external supply chain vulnerabilities that disrupt customer fulfilment.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which vendors consistently meet service level agreements (SLAs) and which create operational risk.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Vendor scorecards tracking promised delivery dates against actual receipt dates.

74 What is the average time spent on administrative rework or handling customer complaints per 100 orders?

WHY IT MATTERS Quantifies operational friction and hidden overhead costs resulting from execution errors.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much operational capacity is wasted fixing errors rather than executing core business tasks.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Customer support ticket logging categorized by complaint type and resolution effort hours.

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Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

75 What is our operational SLA breach rate on customer support or service tickets?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates post-sale support efficiency and client dissatisfaction risks.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether customer service teams meet promised response and resolution SLAs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Help desk software with defined baseline resolution thresholds by issue priority tier.

76 What is the ratio of billable/productive operational hours vs. non-billable administrative hours?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures team labour efficiency in service-based or project-driven businesses.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much time operational teams spend on value-creating work vs. internal overhead tasks.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Time tracking tools categorizing labour entries into billable, productive, and administrative codes.

77 What is our average equipment downtime or technology system outage duration per quarter?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates infrastructure stability and lost productive capacity risks.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much delivery output is lost due to technical failures, tool downtime, or maintenance interruptions.

DATA & DEFINITIONS System monitoring logs tracking planned vs. unplanned service outages.

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04 / QUESTIONS 78-80

Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

78 What is the percentage variance between estimated project labour hours and actual completed project hours?

WHY IT MATTERS Improves project scoping accuracy and protects project gross margins.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether delivery teams consistently go over project budgets or under-deliver relative to initial estimates.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Baseline project scope estimates locked prior to project initiation and tracked against timesheets.

79 What is our operational waste, scrap, or concession rate as a percentage of total material/labour volume?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies direct resource waste and opportunities for process refinement.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much material or labour expense is wasted during production or service delivery.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Scrap logging, material usage audits, or concession write-off reporting in finance software.

80 What is our maximum sustainable order or project throughput with our current facilities and staffing?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies physical or operational ceilings before scaling sales growth.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How many orders or projects the current operation can deliver in a defined period before a capacity constraint is reached.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Available productive hours, processing time, bottleneck capacity and a consistent order or project mix. Average order value measures money per order; it is not a throughput or capacity measure.

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04 / QUESTIONS 81-83

Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

81 What is the employee turnover rate within core operational execution teams?

WHY IT MATTERS High operational turnover hurts delivery quality, increases training costs, and slows down throughput.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether operational roles face burnout, poor onboarding, or retention challenges.

DATA & DEFINITIONS HR exit records categorized by department, team, and tenure length.

82 What is the cost of expediting materials, rush shipping, or overtime labour per quarter?

WHY IT MATTERS Highlights poor planning, demand miscalculations, or operational panic spending.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much margin is lost due to reactive operational adjustments and emergency procurement.

DATA & DEFINITIONS GL line-item tagging for rush shipping fees, vendor expedite charges, and overtime payroll.

83 What is our compliance audit success rate across health, safety, quality, and industry regulations?

WHY IT MATTERS Mitigates regulatory liability, fines, and operational disruption risks.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How strictly operations teams follow safety, quality, and legal compliance guidelines.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Internal quality assurance scorecards and scheduled regulatory audit reports.

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04 / QUESTIONS 84-85

Operations leadership

Delivery, capacity, quality and operational friction.

84 What is our single-vendor dependency risk score for critical operational components or software tools?

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents severe supply chain or software delivery stoppages if a key vendor fails.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which operational processes rely entirely on a single third-party provider without backup options.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Vendor mapping documentation detailing alternative suppliers and switching costs.

85 How long does it take to onboard and train a new operational staff member to standard efficiency?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates training process maturity and operational scalability speed.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How quickly operational capacity can be expanded during periods of rapid business growth.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Milestone competency tests tracked against hiring start dates.

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05 / QUESTIONS 86-88

Finance leadership

Cash, margins, working capital and financial resilience.

86 What is our Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) trend across client credit tiers?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates accounts receivable efficiency and working capital health.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How quickly invoiced revenue is collected as cash and which client categories delay payment.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Aged Accounts Receivable (AR) reports segmented by payment terms and customer category.

87 What is our Gross Margin variance by product line compared to standard cost estimates?

WHY IT MATTERS Exposes unexpected material cost increases, labour inefficiencies, or pricing erosion.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which product lines yield lower margins than originally planned in budget forecasts.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent product-level costing and comparable budget and actual periods. Express the difference between two margin percentages in percentage points; define any relative percentage variance separately.

88 What is our fixed vs. variable overhead absorption rate during revenue fluctuations?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures financial flexibility and breakeven point changes when market demand swings.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How revenue dips impact net profitability based on non-negotiable fixed overhead costs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Categorization of expenses into fixed G&A vs. variable operational execution expenses.

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05 / QUESTIONS 89-91

Finance leadership

Cash, margins, working capital and financial resilience.

89 What is our bad debt write-off percentage relative to total annual revenue billed?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates client credit assessment policies and financial risk management.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How much billed revenue ends up uncollectible due to client default or dispute.

DATA & DEFINITIONS GL tracking of write-offs, credit notes issued, and bad debt provisions over multi-year periods.

90 What is our effective tax rate and tax liability timing across active operating territories?

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents cash flow surprises and optimises corporate tax planning.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How tax obligations impact net cash flow and quarterly working capital reserves.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Integrated tax schedule planning with quarterly tax liability projections.

91 What is the ROI on capital expenditure (CapEx) investments made over the past 36 months?

WHY IT MATTERS Holds major equipment and infrastructure investments accountable to expected financial returns.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether machinery, real estate, or capital investments generated projected returns.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Post-investment financial audits comparing baseline assumptions against realised cash flow increases.

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05 / QUESTIONS 92-93

Finance leadership

Cash, margins, working capital and financial resilience.

92 What is our operating cash flow (OCF) to net income ratio over consecutive quarters?

WHY IT MATTERS Detects cash flow issues early where paper profits fail to translate into bank deposits.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether reported earnings reflect real cash generation or paper accounting gains.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Monthly cash flow statements reconciled directly against income statements.

93 What is our debt-service coverage ratio (DSCR) under downside stress scenarios?

WHY IT MATTERS Ensures credit compliance and solvency protection during market downturns.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The company's ability to cover debt service obligations if revenue declines significantly.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Loan covenant parameters modeled against conservative financial forecasts.

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06 / QUESTIONS 94-96

HR & people operations

Workforce productivity, retention and organisational capacity.

94 What is our Revenue Per Employee (FTE) trend over the past 8 quarters?

WHY IT MATTERS Measures overall organisational productivity and workforce efficiency as headcount grows.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether adding headcount increases organisational leverage or dilutes per-employee efficiency.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Total accrued revenue divided by precise Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) headcount tracking.

95 What is our annualized voluntary vs. involuntary employee turnover rate by department?

WHY IT MATTERS Identifies underlying management issues, burnout risks, or poor hiring practices.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which specific teams struggle with retention and high employee exit rates.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Consistent voluntary and involuntary exit categories, average headcount and reporting period. State the annualisation method if using less than a full year of data.

96 What is the average fully burdened cost of hiring and onboarding a replacement employee by role category?

WHY IT MATTERS Calculates the true financial impact of employee turnover to justify retention initiatives.

WHAT IT ANSWERS The complete replacement cost (recruitment fees, lost productivity, onboarding time) when a team member leaves.

DATA & DEFINITIONS HR cost modeling including recruiter fees, job board spend, management interview hours, and ramp-up time lost.

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06 / QUESTIONS 97-99

HR & people operations

Workforce productivity, retention and organisational capacity.

97 What is our internal promotion rate vs. external hiring rate for managerial and executive roles?

WHY IT MATTERS Evaluates internal leadership pipelines and talent development frameworks.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Whether the business develops leadership talent internally or relies heavily on external hires.

DATA & DEFINITIONS HR tracking of role movement, internal promotions, and external leadership appointments.

98 What is our average absenteeism and sick leave rate by department and team manager?

WHY IT MATTERS Early warning indicator for employee burnout, poor management dynamics, or low workplace morale.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Where unmanaged stress or operational pressure causes elevated employee absence.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Centralized leave management tools logging unscheduled absences across teams.

99 What is the variance between employee compensation band benchmarks and current market competitive rates?

WHY IT MATTERS Prevents unexpected departures of top performers to higher-paying market competitors.

WHAT IT ANSWERS Which roles face flight risk due to below-market salary structures.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Annual salary benchmarking against verified regional industry compensation reports.

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06 / QUESTIONS 100-101

HR & people operations

Workforce productivity, retention and organisational capacity.

100 What is our Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) or overall workplace satisfaction index by business division?

WHY IT MATTERS Predicts retention risks, cultural health, and employee advocacy across teams.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How likely employees are to recommend the organisation as a great place to work.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Anonymous eNPS pulse surveys conducted consistently on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.

101 What is the average time-to-fill for vacant critical operational and revenue-generating roles?

WHY IT MATTERS Long hiring delays strain existing teams and cause revenue or delivery shortfalls.

WHAT IT ANSWERS How quickly recruitment processes fill empty roles before team burn-out occurs.

DATA & DEFINITIONS Recruitment tracking measuring days from job requisition approval to candidate offer acceptance.

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YOUR NEXT QUESTION

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Stephen Flynn
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