

## Pre-work

Before your coaching session, complete the sections below and be prepared to discuss your answers with your business consultant.

### Section 1: Identify your current goals

What are your goals for the upcoming year? Do they include fixing issues or seizing opportunities? Review and check the goals below that relate to your business.

<b>Business operations</b>	Increase sales and revenue	Improve bookkeeping or accounting
	Improve budgeting/decrease costs	Improve technology systems or cybersecurity
	Become profitable and grow	Build talent/manage employees
<b>Marketing</b>	Improve marketing	Improve customer engagement
	Expand brand awareness	Market expansion/speed to market
	Attract new customers	
<b>Supply chain</b>	Improve supply chain management	New or improved product or service offerings
	Improve product reliability	

### Section 2: Identify your current vendors

Now that you've identified your goals, let's identify the vendors supporting you in achieving those goals. Vendors include any external people, companies or suppliers who provide a service or product.

<b>Business operations vendors</b>	Accounting	Payroll or HR
	Bank	Systems and technology
	Financial advisor(s)	Strategic business advisor(s)
	Legal	Customer engagement
<b>Marketing vendors</b>	Website	Strategy
	Graphic design	Packaging
	Brand	
<b>Supply chain vendors</b>	Manufacturer	Distributor
	Product supplier	Retailer
	Wholesaler	

### Section 3: Identify new vendors

After completing the previous sections, have you identified any goals for your business where you don't yet have a vendor supporting you?

List any business goals where you don't currently have vendor support:

### Section 4: Food for thought

Strong vendor relationships are at the core of a business's success. But what makes a great vendor relationship? Communication, performance and trust. Consider the following framework when thinking about your current vendors and suppliers.

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Do you have good **communication** with your vendor(s)?

- ❓ Do you communicate regularly and effectively?
- ❓ What are the communication norms and expectations?
- ❓ Are goals and expectations clear?
- ❓ Are roles and responsibilities clearly established?

*Contracts that detail mutual expectations help strengthen communication between parties.*

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Are your vendor(s) meeting your **performance expectations**?

- ❓ Do you regularly review deliverables and performance?
- ❓ Are key performance indicators (KPIs) clearly established?
- ❓ Have your vendor(s) been meeting KPIs or other success metrics?
- ❓ Is your vendor timely and reliable with their work?

*Leverage metrics and data to inform conversations about evaluating or changing vendors.*

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Do you **trust** your vendor(s)?

- ❓ Do you feel alignment with your vendor(s) (e.g., mission, goals, business philosophy, common values)?
- ❓ Do you feel your vendor(s) acts honestly and fairly?
- ❓ Do you seek strategic advice from your vendor(s)?
- ❓ Do you trust your vendor(s)?

*All of these elements (communication, strong performance and alignment) will ultimately help you **build trust** with your partners.*

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For a quantitative approach, read our case study on [Evaluating Vendor Impact](#) and use the [Vendor Analysis Worksheet](#) to compare current and prospective vendors, weighing each partnership based on the criteria that's most important to your business.

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