

Pre-Hire Readiness Scorecard

For founder-led consulting, fractional, and learning-agency firms (5 to 30 people) who have decided a senior hire is the next move, or are about to decide.

You've worked through the diagnostic. You've sat with the cost. The honest read is that one of the embeddings routing through you is genuinely a capacity problem, and the next move is a hire. This scorecard is the second gate. It checks whether your firm is ready to receive the hire, and whether the role-spec contains what it needs to contain for the hire to stick. Skip this gate and the most common outcome is a capable senior person making decisions you'd have made differently, or kicking decisions back to you, within two quarters.

Answer each question honestly: yes, no, or partial. There is no right score. There is only what your answers signal about whether to hire now, write the spec further, or do one more workflow pass first.

- 1 Can you name the decision the hire will own, in one sentence, without using the word "support"?**
 "Owns pricing decisions up to \$50k without my sign-off" is a decision. "Supports the founder on pricing" is a wish.
- 2 Have you written down the rule the hire will apply, in a doc someone else could read?**
 Pricing band, quality bar, scope-change protocol. If the rule lives only in your head, the hire becomes a question-asker or a guesser.
- 3 Could a peer in your network read the role-spec and tell you the title within five seconds?**
 Compound specs (delivery + sales + ops) are three roles into one salary, and capable people read that as confusion.
- 4 Have you priced what the hire would cost in their first 12 months, including ramp and your time?**
 Base, all-in comp, search cost, ramp at full pay against partial output, your hours during onboarding. Just the salary undercounts by half.
- 5 Is there a 30-day stretch in the next quarter where you could clear 10 hours a week to onboard?**
 Specific block, on the calendar, today. Not "I'll find time." First-90-days founder time is non-negotiable.
- 6 Can you name the metric that will tell you, in 90 days, whether the hire is working?**
 Observable, founder-independent. "How it feels" is not a metric. Without the metric, you can't tell if the hire is sticking.
- 7 Have you decided what authority the hire actually gets on day one, in writing?**
 Spending limit. Decisions they can make. Decisions that come to you. "We'll figure it out" defaults to "ask the founder."
- 8 If the hire stayed two years and did exactly what you wrote down, would the firm be visibly different?**
 If the answer is "not really, but my workload would be lower," the role isn't strategic. Price and scope it accordingly.

What Your Answers Signal

0 to 2 yeses

The role isn't ready to post. The hire would land into a firm that hasn't yet articulated what it wants from them, and the failure mode is the senior person inheriting a workflow only you can run. The next move is two to four weeks of role-spec and decision-rule writing, before any search begins.

3 to 5 yeses

This is where founder-led firms in this size band commonly land when they get serious about a hire. The role has shape. Some rules exist. The gaps usually concentrate in two or three of the eight, often metric, authority, and ramp time. A two-week sharpen-the-spec pass before posting is the highest-leverage move this quarter.

6 to 8 yeses

The role is hireable. The spec is concrete enough that a recruiter or peer-network referral can run, the hire walks into a documented surface, and the 90-day metric is in place. Run the search. If you scored 8, you're in the small fraction of founder-led firms that approach hiring with the discipline the hire deserves.

• If this exposed two or more gaps in your readiness, the Blueprint is the next step.

- A Blueprint is a fixed-scope diagnostic engagement that maps the embeddings, separates the workflow fixes from the genuine hire fixes, writes the role-spec for the genuine ones, and produces a prioritized roadmap a firm can execute with or without us.

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