



THE BOTTLENECK INDEX

7 Signs Your Business Is Running Through You

You built this business. You've grown it. You've survived things that would have stopped most people. And somewhere along the way, without meaning to, you became the thing everything runs through.

This index won't tell you something you don't already feel. It will give you a name for it.

HOW TO USE THIS INDEX

Read each sign. Score yourself honestly: **This is me (2)**, **Sometimes (1)**, or **Not really (0)**. Total your score at the end to find your result.

SIGN #1

The Decision Inbox

You built a team. But somehow, every meaningful decision and a lot of the unmeaningful ones still ends up in front of you. Not because people are incompetent, but because somewhere along the way, the unwritten rule became: *when in doubt, ask you.*

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #2

The Delegation That Disappeared

You handed something off six weeks ago, checked in once or twice, and now you're sitting in a meeting realizing it's in the exact same place it was when you gave it away. Maybe the ball was dropped. Maybe they are overloaded. Either way, it just stopped moving.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #3

The Meeting You Shouldn't Be In

You looked at your calendar this week and counted. At least three meetings where your presence was the only reason anything was going to get decided. You're not leading those meetings. You're resolving them.

Every hour you spend there is an hour your team isn't learning to lead without you.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #4

The Explanation You've Given Three Times

You've said it clearly. You've said it more than once. And yet here you are, saying it again. Same concept, different audience, same look on their faces that makes you wonder if this time it actually landed.

It isn't a people problem. It's that clarity at your level doesn't automatically become clarity at every level beneath it.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #5

The Friday That Followed You Home

You told yourself you weren't going to open the laptop this weekend. And then you did. Not because of an emergency, but because the business doesn't fully function when you step away from it.

That's not dedication. That's a structural problem wearing dedication as a costume.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #6

The Promotion You're Second Guessing

You moved someone up because they earned it but six months in, most of their decisions still come back to you for a final read. They're not failing. They're operating inside a system that was never rebuilt around their new role.

The gap isn't their capability. It's that no one redesigned the structure when the org chart changed.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

SIGN #7

The Growth That Created More Weight

You expected more revenue and more team members to mean more freedom. Instead it meant more complexity and more of *you* required to hold it together.

That's not a sign something's wrong with you. That's the exact inflection point where structure has to catch up with scale or scale starts working against you.

- This is me
2 pts
- Sometimes
1 pt
- Not really
0 pts

Your Score.

What It Means.

This is me = 2 | Sometimes = 1 | Not really = 0 | Maximum score: 14

0 – 4

Early Signs

No significant bottleneck at this moment, but the patterns could be forming. The owners who address structure before it becomes the constraint are the ones who scale without sacrificing everything to get there.

5 – 9

Active Bottleneck

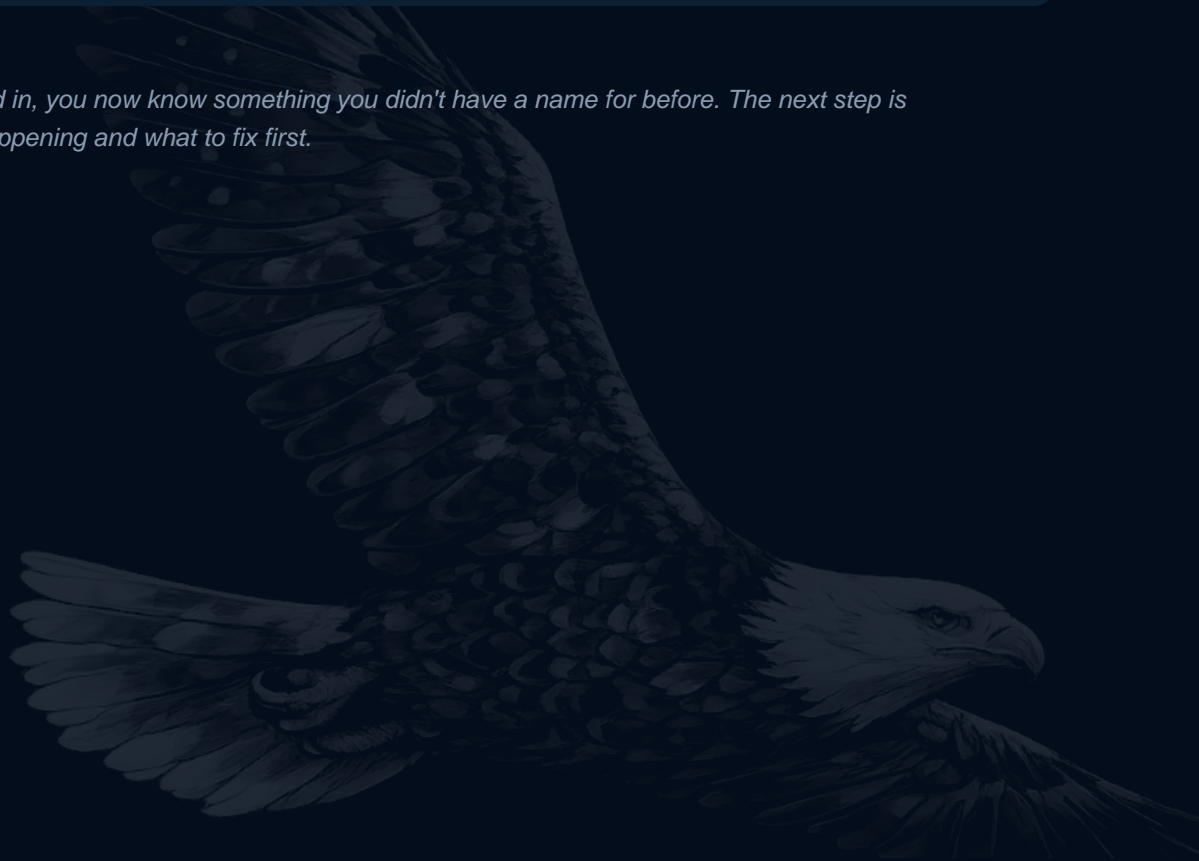
You're carrying more of the business than you should be. It's costing you time, and it's costing your team the chance to grow and develop. This is solvable, but it won't fix itself.

10 – 14

The Business Runs Through You

Everything works because you make it work. That's a testament to who you are and it's also the thing that has to change. If this is your score, the Executive Diagnostic was built for exactly this conversation.

Whichever tier you landed in, you now know something you didn't have a name for before. The next step is understanding why it's happening and what to fix first.



Now you have a name for it.

The next step is understanding why it's happening and what to fix first. That's exactly what the Executive Diagnostic is designed to do.

Executive Diagnostic

A focused diagnostic session to identify the real problem and build your 90-day path forward.

myaquilapartners.com/executive-diagnostic

When speed matters, we fold the Executive Diagnostic into the engagement and the work begins immediately.

The Inner Work

A Private Engagement. For leaders who are ready to move quickly.

myaquilapartners.com/the-inner-work

"Complexity compounds faster than operational discipline."

Clarity. Simplify. Align. Execute. Adjust.