BUSINESS LONGEVITY | ROCKY ROMERO

Owner-Independence Checklist

Companion worksheet to **“Building a Business That Sells: How to Remove Yourself From Operations”**

Start here: If you took a three-month, totally unplugged vacation starting tomorrow, what would happen to your business?

○ It runs smoothly ○ It slows down ○ It grinds to a halt

How to use it: Check a box only if it is true today. Every unchecked box is work a buyer would have to replace — and a risk they will price into the deal. Work one step at a time, in order.

STEP 1 Document the work only you do

Score: ____ / 4

- ☐ I logged every task I performed for one full week — big and small, nothing left out.
- ☐ I grouped that list under Sales, Marketing, Operations, Finance, and People.
- ☐ I marked every task that only I can do today.
- ☐ I can name the function where the business depends on me most.

STEP 2 Build the team and systems that run it

Score: ____ / 4

- ☐ My most critical tasks have a simple standard operating procedure (SOP) — a checklist, flowchart, or short screen recording.
- ☐ I delegate any task a team member can do 80% as well as I can.
- ☐ Each delegation includes the SOP, clear instructions, and a deadline.
- ☐ I check the result, then hand over more responsibility as the team succeeds.

STEP 3 Move customer relationships to the business

Score: ____ / 4

- ☐ Each key account has a named point person on my team — not just me.
- ☐ I introduced that person in a warm handoff, framed as better service for the client.
- ☐ When clients contact me directly, I loop in their point person and let them lead.
- ☐ Calls, emails, and notes for key accounts are logged in our customer relationship management (CRM) system — not only in my inbox.

STEP 4 Clean up the books so a buyer can trust the numbers

Score: ____ / 4

- ☐ A professional bookkeeper and a certified public accountant (CPA) prepare clean profit-and-loss, balance sheet, and cash flow statements.
- ☐ Tax returns, bank records, and payroll are organized and ready for due diligence.
- ☐ Personal spending is fully separated from business spending.
- ☐ Owner adjustments used to recast the financials are documented and justifiable — for example, a market-rate salary for a replacement chief executive, or one-time expenses.

STEP 5 Prove it runs without you — the Vacation Test

Score: ____ / 4

- ☐ I have planned a real, mostly unplugged break of two weeks or more.
- ☐ Before I leave, my team knows who is in charge, what authority they hold, and what is expected.
- ☐ While I am away, I am reachable only for a true, business-ending emergency.
- ☐ After the break, I reviewed what held up: sales continued, projects moved forward, and customer issues were resolved without me.

Your total: ____ / 20 Start with the step where you checked the fewest boxes. You do not need to fix everything at once — you need a first fix, finished.

My first fix: _____ **Owner:** _____ **By:** _____

Business Longevity helps owners build a business that lasts — and is worth more when they sell. Making your business less dependent on you is not only an exit strategy; it is a better life right now — more freedom, less stress, and a company that can grow beyond your personal limits.