

ENTREPRENEURSHIP LIBRARY · BOOK 1

Business Candidate Test Pack

Score the evidence, design the next test, read the economics, and decide.

Companion to Is This a Business?

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This pack is for repeated use. Print only the pages required for the next decision. Record conditions, counter-evidence, and limits rather than compressing the result into a flattering score. The weakest structural claim controls the next commitment.

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Business-Candidate Scorecard

Use this scorecard after an end-to-end test and at every material change of buyer, promise, price, channel, or delivery shape. It is an evidence snapshot, not a personality assessment.

1.1 How to Score

For each claim, use the lowest level whose full description is supported.

- **0: unsupported.** No relevant evidence or contrary evidence dominates.
- **1: plausible.** Opinion, analogy, general research, or limited past behavior.
- **2: supported.** Repeated relevant behavior or commitment in the defined buyer group.
- **3: demonstrated.** Payment and successful delivery under conditions close to the proposed next exchange, with repeat evidence where required.

Do not total the 6 scores. The weakest structural claim controls the next commitment.

1.2 Buyer

- **0:** “Everyone” or a broad population; roles and authority unknown.
- **1:** A plausible group with some relevant conversations.
- **2:** Repeated matched events reveal user, buyer, approver, operator, and trigger.
- **3:** Defined buyers repeatedly enter the tested exchange through the expected decision path.

Evidence: _____

Strongest contrary evidence: _____

Score and date: _____

1.3 Progress

- **0:** The problem is generic, inactive, or defined by the proposed mechanism.
- **1:** Buyers describe the situation and desired result but little consequence.
- **2:** Recent behavior shows meaningful cost, workaround, priority, or trigger.
- **3:** Buyers recognize and use the promised result after paid delivery.

Evidence: _____

Current alternative and why it survives: _____

Score and date: _____

1.4 Access

- **0:** No ethical, permitted, or practical route to matched buyers.
- **1:** Buyers can be found through exceptional personal access or weakly matched attention.
- **2:** A defined route repeatedly produces relevant conversations or offers.
- **3:** The route produces paid, successfully delivered exchanges at a cost and burden compatible with the next stage.

Evidence: _____

Trust, permission, or partner dependency: _____

Score and date: _____

1.5 Payment

- **0:** Praise, survey intention, or free use only.
- **1:** Relevant prior spend or meaningful commitment, but no tested payment.
- **2:** Matched buyers pay or place real deposits under clear pilot terms.
- **3:** Payment repeats at terms close to the proposed exchange after value is delivered.

Evidence: _____

Price, terms, discount, and approval path: _____

Score and date: _____

1.6 Delivery

- **0:** Result not delivered or requires unsafe, unlawful, or misleading work.
- **1:** Prototype, sample, or founder rescue suggests feasibility.
- **2:** Paid delivery succeeds with documented inputs, quality, timing, and failure handling, but exceptions or founder subsidy remain.
- **3:** The controlled process repeats with acceptable quality, cost, buyer work, risk, and recovery.

Evidence: _____

Founder rescue or unresolved exception: _____

Score and date: _____

1.7 Founder Fit

- **0:** Essential work violates a time, cash, skill, ethical, household, or risk boundary.
- **1:** The work is plausible but tested mainly as a short burst.
- **2:** The founder completes a realistic cycle and understands the ordinary and bad week.
- **3:** Essential work and coverage repeat inside stated boundaries, or a proven role design removes the conflict.

Evidence: _____

Non-negotiable boundary: _____

Score and date: _____

1.8 The 2 Gates

Permission gate

List the legal, tax, license, privacy, safety, insurance, professional-scope, claim, and platform questions required for the next action. Mark each resolved, controlled, escalated, or blocking.

Economics gate

Record the honest unit, price, variable cash cost, founder minutes, contribution, current capacity, and bad-week result.

1.9 Decision

Weakest structural claim: _____

Decision: **STOP / CHANGE / CONTINUE**

Next bounded commitment: _____

What the evidence does not support yet: _____

Decision date or threshold: _____

Assumption Ledger Template

Use one row per claim. Write claims so they can be wrong. Preserve disproved claims and date every material update.

2.1 Ledger Fields

- **ID:** a stable reference such as B-01 for buyer or D-03 for delivery.
- **Family:** buyer/progress, access, payment, delivery, economics, or risk/fit.
- **Claim:** actor, behavior or condition, context, and decision threshold.
- **Evidence:** observations only, with sample and conditions.
- **Interpretation:** what the evidence may imply.
- **Alternative explanation:** strongest plausible rival interpretation.
- **Confidence:** low, medium, or high.
- **Consequence:** local, material, or structural if wrong.
- **Immediacy:** later, soon, or now.
- **Next test or escalation:** smallest relevant action.
- **Decision affected:** what commitment changes.
- **Status:** open, supported, weakened, disproved, escalated, or deferred.
- **Date and owner:** who updates the row and when.

2.2 Blank Ledger

ID	Claim	Evidence and conditions	If wrong	Next action
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2.3 Assumption Sweep Prompts

Buyer and progress

- Who notices the trigger, uses the result, buys, approves, benefits, operates, and blocks?
- What recent event shows consequence?
- What alternative is used and why does it survive?
- What result counts as good enough?
- What tradeoff is unacceptable?

Access

- Where does the buyer notice, name, search, trust, approve, and act?
- Which route is welcome and permitted?
- What trust or partner dependency exists?
- What cash and founder work does the route require?
- What changes between the first 10 and the next 100 buyers?

Payment

- What is the price basis?
- Who controls the budget and payment method?
- What existing spend anchors the decision?
- Which terms, discounts, refund rights, or approval steps apply?
- What evidence would support repeat value?

Delivery

- What buyer input and behavior is required?

- What are the quality, timing, safety, and completion standards?
- Where does human judgment enter?
- What fails, how is it detected, and what remedy follows?
- What must be returned, retained, deleted, or documented at closure?

Economics

- What is one honest unit and any connected route or cohort unit?
- What revenue, usable cash, variable cost, founder time, and contribution occur?
- What fixed and step costs appear?
- What creates the capacity bottleneck?
- What happens in a bad week?

Risk and fit

- What permission, license, tax, privacy, safety, insurance, claim, or professional-scope question must be resolved first?
- Which tasks require qualified support?
- What time, cash, household, employment, health, and ethical boundaries apply?
- Which repeated work does the founder want or reject?
- Who covers the promise during interruption?

2.4 Evidence Update

After each test, attach a short update:

1. Observation, sample, and conditions.
2. Invalidating events or missing data.
3. Interpretation and alternative explanation.
4. Confidence before and after.
5. Stop, change, or continue threshold.
6. Decision executed.

Customer Conversation Guide

This guide supports a 25- to 35-minute event-based conversation. Use only questions relevant to the priority assumption. Do not collect sensitive information you cannot responsibly handle.

3.1 Recruitment Note

I am researching how [defined buyer] handles [specific situation]. I am not selling on this call. I would like to ask about one recent event and the tools or people involved. The conversation will take about [time]. Please do not share names, records, or confidential details. [Explain recording, compensation, data use, retention, and contact choice where applicable.]

3.2 Opening

1. Confirm the person's role and why they fit the buyer or operator definition.
2. Restate the purpose, time, privacy boundary, recording choice, and right to stop.
3. Say that you will ask about a recent event rather than seek approval of an idea.

3.3 Event Reconstruction

- Take me to the last time this situation occurred.
- What happened immediately before you noticed it?
- What did you do first?
- What did you open, read, make, ask, or buy?
- Who else became involved?
- What happened next?
- Where did the process slow, fail, or change?
- How did it end?

3.4 Consequence and Alternative

- What did the event cost in money, time, risk, attention, relationship, or opportunity?
- What happened when it was left alone?
- What workaround did you use?
- What does that workaround do well enough?
- What have you tried before, and why did you continue or stop?
- What outcome would have counted as good enough?
- What tradeoff would make a solution unacceptable?

3.5 Roles and Authority

- Who experienced the problem?
- Who decided what to do?
- Who approved money, access, or change?
- Who had to operate the solution?
- Who could block it, and why?
- How did the last comparable purchase move from interest to payment?

3.6 Money and Commitment

- What have you paid for to handle this situation?
- Where did that budget come from?
- What else competed for the same money?
- What made the amount feel acceptable or unacceptable?
- When did you stop paying or renew?
- What non-cash commitment did the current approach require?

3.7 Inputs and Delivery

- What information, material, access, or behavior would a new approach require from you?
- Which of those can you provide, and which require someone else?
- What must not be collected, shared, or changed?
- What timing or quality standard matters?
- What failure would create the most harm?
- What support or recovery would you expect?

3.8 Neutral Follow-ups

- What do you mean by that?
- Can you give me a recent example?
- Was that this event or what normally happens?
- What happened immediately before and after?
- How did you decide?
- Who saw it differently?
- What made you stop?

3.9 Closing Commitment

Choose one action appropriate to the stage. Make refusal easy.

- Introduce the buyer, approver, or operator.
- Review the exchange sentence.
- Describe or share a safely redacted input structure.
- Schedule a second event review.
- Consider a real written offer.
- Join a bounded paid pilot.
- Decline and state the main reason.

3.10 Post-Conversation Notes

Participant match

Recent event

Trigger

Sequence and artifacts

Consequence

Current alternative

Roles and authority

Past spend

Unacceptable tradeoff

Observation

Interpretation

Alternative explanation

Next question or commitment

Experiment Menu and Inference Limits

Choose from this menu only after the assumption and decision are written. The final column is the most important one.

Experiment	Useful for	Observed behavior	Cannot prove alone
Event interview	Trigger, alternative, roles, consequence	Reconstructed past behavior	Payment, adoption, delivery
Message review	Comprehension and expectation	Explanation, objection, next-step choice	Market demand
Matched outreach	Access route and trigger response	Delivered contact and relevant reply	Scaled acquisition
Partner interview	Intermediary fit and burden	Referral criteria and operating conditions	Repeatable partnership
Search or directory scan	Buyer language, alternatives, visible intent	Query and result patterns	Demand for your offer
Landing page	Message and source-specific action	Click, sign-up, call, or checkout action	Payment unless accepted
Sample deliverable	Expectation, quality, and usefulness	Buyer interpretation and task response	Repeated delivery
Paper prototype	Sequence and language	Task completion and confusion	Technical feasibility
Clickable prototype	Interaction and information design	Task behavior in simulated flow	Reliability, demand, security
Concierge test	Progress, inputs, judgment, buyer work	Real result through manual delivery	Automation or scale
Wizard-of-Oz test	Interaction before full automation	Behavior through partly manual system	Undisclosed capability
Paid pilot	Payment, delivery, participation, economics	End-to-end exchange	Broad market or long retention
Deposit	Financial commitment and priority	Money accepted under terms	Delivery or full-price repeat
Preorder	Commitment before final delivery	Paid order under stated conditions	Ability to fulfill
Limited physical run	Production, quality, price, and handoff	Paid units and delivery failures	Stable supply at volume

Second purchase	Repeat value	Buyer pays after first delivery	Long-term retention
Referral request	Recognized value and trust	Buyer introduces a matched person	Repeatable channel economics
Price-scope choice	Tradeoff between 2 real offers	Purchase or decline by version	Precise population sensitivity
Cancellation or offboarding test	Exit clarity and operational duty	Buyer leaves, exports, re-funds, closes	Acquisition or demand

4.1 Test Card

Assumption: _____

Decision affected: _____

Qualified participants and exclusions: _____

Behavior observed: _____

Price, channel, timing, mechanism, and support conditions: _____

Stop threshold: _____

Change threshold: _____

Continue threshold: _____

Invalidating conditions: _____

Risk controls and required escalation: _____

Time, cash, founder-hour, and scope ceiling: _____

What the test cannot prove: _____

Test owner and decision date: _____

Small-Economics Calculator

Use actual values from a paid pilot as soon as possible. Label every estimate. Keep the unit, route or cohort, and monthly views separate.

5.1 One-Unit View

Line	Amount or time
Unit definition	
List price	
Discount	
Tax collected	
Cash received	
Payment fee	
Materials, ingredients, or inventory	
Packaging, shipping, or route allocation	
Per-unit contractor or license cost	
Expected refund, return, waste, or failure cost	
Other variable cash cost	
Variable cash cost total	
Contribution per unit	
Contribution margin	
Acquisition and sales minutes	
Onboarding minutes	
Delivery minutes	
Support and correction minutes	
Administration and closure minutes	
Founder minutes total	
Sustainable labor value per hour	
Contribution after sustainable labor view	

Contribution per unit = unit revenue – variable cost.

Contribution margin = contribution per unit ÷ unit revenue.

5.2 Route, Cohort, or Project View

Use this when a fixed delivery cost is shared across units.

Line	Amount or time
Shared unit definition	
Number of individual units	
Total revenue	
Total individual variable cost	
Shared preparation cost	
Shared delivery, venue, travel, or platform cost	
Shared founder minutes	
Failure and buffer allowance	
Shared-unit contribution	
Minimum individual units to cover shared cost	

5.3 One-Month View

Line	Amount or time
Expected paid units under current evidence	
Total revenue	
Total variable cost	
Total contribution	
Fixed tools and services	
Rent, insurance, professional, or license cost	
Baseline contractors or staff	
Other fixed cost	
Step cost triggered in this range	
Founder hours required	
Reliable founder hours available	
Operating remainder before tax and owner draw	
Cash received this month	
Cash paid this month	
Refund or failure reserve	
Usable cash at month end	

5.4 Break-even View

For a stable single-product model:

$$\text{Break-even units} = \text{fixed costs} \div (\text{price per unit} - \text{variable cost per unit}).$$

Fixed costs per period: _____

Price per unit: _____

Variable cost per unit: _____

Contribution per unit: _____

Break-even units: _____

Can the current channel and capacity produce those units? _____

Does break-even compensate founder work? _____

5.5 Three Scenarios

Line	Base	Bad week	Capacity edge
Paid units			
Average price			
Variable cost			
Refunds or failures			
Contribution			
Fixed and step costs			
Founder hours			
Late cash			
Usable cash			
Quality or timing result			

5.6 Economics Decision

Honest unit: _____

Current bottleneck: _____

Hidden founder subsidy: _____

Cost most likely to rise: _____

Step cost and trigger: _____

Price, scope, cost, mechanism, buyer, or candidate change required: _____

Next economic assumption and test: _____

30-Day Validation Sprint

This sprint is a decision cycle, not a launch countdown. Extend the calendar when rules, organizational approval, or responsible delivery require more time. Do not change the order.

6.1 Days 1 to 3: Define

Put It to Work

- ☐ Write the buyer card and exclusions.
- ☐ Write the before-and-after progress statement.
- ☐ Choose a provisional business shape.
- ☐ Write the exchange sentence.
- ☐ Complete the first assumption sweep.
- ☐ Rank consequence, uncertainty, and immediacy.
- ☐ Choose one fatal assumption.
- ☐ Set time, cash, founder-hour, and risk ceilings.

Deliverable: one-page candidate definition and priority ledger.

6.2 Days 4 to 8: Recover Behavior

Put It to Work

- ☐ Recruit 5 matched participants.
- ☐ Run event-based conversations.
- ☐ Map trigger, sequence, artifact, alternative, consequence, roles, and authority.
- ☐ Record past spend and unacceptable tradeoffs.
- ☐ Separate observations, interpretations, and alternative explanations.
- ☐ Revise the buyer, progress, and exchange sentence.

Deliverable: conversation evidence table and revised candidate version.

6.3 Days 9 to 11: Resolve the Boundary

Put It to Work

- ☐ List legal, tax, license, privacy, safety, insurance, claim, and platform questions.
- ☐ Use current official sources for the exact test.
- ☐ Obtain qualified advice where the decision requires it.
- ☐ Reduce data, risk, scope, or participants where possible.
- ☐ Mark every question resolved, controlled, escalated, or blocking.
- ☐ Stop if the permission gate cannot open inside the resource ceiling.

Deliverable: signed-off test boundary and escalation record.

6.4 Days 12 to 15: Build the Offer

Put It to Work

- ☐ Write buyer, trigger, result, mechanism, scope, buyer work, price, proof, and next action.
- ☐ Create a sample deliverable with safe fictional or authorized inputs.
- ☐ Write terms, exclusions, refund, cancellation, and failure paths.
- ☐ Define quality standards and input checks.
- ☐ Choose the price basis, amount, and payment route.
- ☐ Complete the test card and prewrite stop, change, and continue rules.
- ☐ Build only what the buyer needs to experience the result.

Deliverable: versioned offer, sample, terms, and test card.

6.5 Days 16 to 20: Recruit and Sell

Put It to Work

- ☐ Choose one primary and one learning channel.
- ☐ Present the fixed offer to a matched sample.
- ☐ Track identified, reachable, delivered, relevant response, offer, and payment counts.
- ☐ Record buyer questions, authority, comparisons, and decline reasons.
- ☐ Keep the offer version stable or mark a new version.
- ☐ Accept payment only when the test can be responsibly fulfilled.

Deliverable: access and payment evidence with exact conditions.

6.6 Days 21 to 27: Deliver

Put It to Work

- ☐ Confirm payment, scope, identity, authority, and valid inputs.
- ☐ Run the full delivery chain.
- ☐ Time acquisition, onboarding, production, support, correction, and closure.
- ☐ Apply quality and safety controls.
- ☐ Record buyer participation and recognized progress.
- ☐ Handle failure, refund, or correction under the stated terms.

- ☐ Close records, data, payment, support, and marketing permissions separately.

Deliverable: end-to-end delivery record and one-unit economics.

6.7 Days 28 to 30: Decide

Put It to Work

- ☐ Update every priority ledger row.
- ☐ Score buyer, progress, access, payment, delivery, and founder fit.
- ☐ Check the permission and economics gates.
- ☐ Compare result with prewritten thresholds.
- ☐ Execute stop, named change, or bounded continue.
- ☐ Complete obligations to buyers and partners.
- ☐ Write the next-commitment sentence and review date.

Deliverable: signed decision memo.

6.8 Daily Log

Use one line per material action.

Day	Action	Observation	Decision effect
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
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6.9 Decision Memo

Candidate and version: _____

Fatal assumption: _____

Test, sample, price, and conditions: _____

Primary observations: _____

Invalid or missing evidence: _____

Threshold result: _____

Decision: **STOP / CHANGE / CONTINUE**

Next bounded commitment: _____

Evidence that would reverse this decision: _____

Decision owner and date: _____

Questions to Escalate Before You Act

This checklist helps you identify where current official guidance or qualified professional advice is required. It does not answer the questions. Rules vary by location, category, customer, claim, data, employment structure, and delivery method.

7.1 Business and Tax

Put It to Work

- ☐ What business registration or legal structure applies before trading?
- ☐ Which tax registrations, collection, invoices, records, and filings apply?
- ☐ Does selling across states, provinces, or countries create additional obligations?
- ☐ What must be separated between business and personal finances?
- ☐ What accounting treatment applies to deposits, preorders, refunds, and marketplace payments?
- ☐ Which records must be retained, for how long, and where?

7.2 License and Professional Scope

Put It to Work

- ☐ Does the product, advice, service, location, equipment, or occupation require a license or permit?
- ☐ Does the promise imply legal, financial, health, educational, employment, engineering, or another regulated professional judgment?
- ☐ What can the founder provide, and what requires a qualified professional?
- ☐ Do local premises, zoning, home-business, transport, or event rules apply?
- ☐ Does a partner's license cover the work, and under what supervision or agreement?

7.3 Consumer Rights and Contracts

Put It to Work

- ☐ What information must be provided before purchase?
- ☐ What cancellation, cooling-off, return, refund, replacement, warranty, or shipment rights apply?
- ☐ Are terms clear, fair, accessible, and consistent with the main promise?

- ☐ What happens when delivery is delayed, changed, unsafe, unavailable, or defective?
- ☐ How are subscriptions renewed, canceled, and confirmed?
- ☐ Can the business execute every stated remedy?

7.4 Advertising and Claims

Put It to Work

- ☐ What express and implied claims does the whole offer create?
- ☐ What evidence supports performance, health, safety, financial, earnings, environmental, or comparative claims?
- ☐ Are qualifications and limitations close enough to the claim to be understood?
- ☐ Do testimonials reflect honest experience and carry necessary disclosures?
- ☐ Are material relationships, incentives, affiliate interests, or paid endorsements clear?
- ☐ Does urgency, scarcity, a comparison, or a reference price reflect a real condition?

7.5 Privacy and Security

Put It to Work

- ☐ What personal or sensitive data will be collected, observed, inferred, stored, shared, or deleted?
- ☐ What specific purpose and legal basis apply to each use?
- ☐ What notice, consent, contract, rights, retention, and transfer obligations apply?
- ☐ Can data be minimized, redacted, aggregated, or kept in the buyer's system?
- ☐ Who is controller, processor, service provider, or authorized user?
- ☐ What security controls, access limits, backups, deletion, and incident response exist?
- ☐ How will access, correction, export, deletion, objection, or complaint requests be handled where applicable?
- ☐ Are delivery contact, research, and marketing treated as distinct purposes where needed?

7.6 Safety and Product Responsibility

Put It to Work

- ☐ What health, food, product, workplace, transport, child, event, or premises standards apply?
- ☐ What hazards, allergens, contraindications, age limits, warnings, or instructions must be communicated?
- ☐ How are suppliers, materials, equipment, storage, temperature, testing, and quality controlled?
- ☐ How will an unsafe, defective, contaminated, or mislabeled item be contained and recalled?
- ☐ What complaint, incident, reporting, and emergency process is required?
- ☐ What training, supervision, and records must exist before the first pilot?

7.7 Insurance and Liability

Put It to Work

- ☐ What general, professional, product, cyber, vehicle, premises, employer, or event cover is appropriate?
- ☐ Which activities, locations, claims, people, or territories are excluded?
- ☐ Do contracts create obligations not covered by insurance?
- ☐ Can the business fund deductibles, refunds, replacements, and uninsured loss?
- ☐ Do partners, venues, landlords, marketplaces, or customers require proof of coverage?

7.8 People and Work

Put It to Work

- ☐ Is a worker an employee, contractor, volunteer, partner, trainee, or participant under the applicable rule?
- ☐ What pay, tax, working-time, safety, leave, nondiscrimination, accessibility, and record duties apply?
- ☐ Who owns work product and intellectual property?
- ☐ What confidentiality and data access are appropriate?
- ☐ Can the business supervise, cover, and pay the role responsibly?

7.9 Intellectual Property and Permission

Put It to Work

- ☐ Do you own or have permission to use every name, image, text, dataset, code component, design, recording, and testimonial?
- ☐ Does a license permit commercial use, modification, distribution, and the intended format?
- ☐ Do employment, client, university, partner, or platform agreements affect ownership?
- ☐ Is confidential or proprietary information being reused?
- ☐ Are releases or separate marketing permissions required?

7.10 Platforms, Payments, and International Sales

Put It to Work

- ☐ Do marketplace, payment, hosting, advertising, app-store, email, community, or social terms permit the activity?
- ☐ What holds, reserves, disputes, chargebacks, prohibited categories, and identity checks apply?
- ☐ What happens to buyers and data if the provider suspends the account?
- ☐ Do consumer, tax, privacy, export, sanctions, accessibility, or language duties change across buyer locations?
- ☐ Can the test be narrowed to one responsible location or route first?

7.11 Escalation Record

Question	Authority or adviser	Status and date	Effect on test
----------	----------------------	-----------------	----------------

Permission gate owner: _____

Status: **OPEN / CONTROLLED / BLOCKED**

Action allowed: _____

Action not allowed: _____

Evidence before escalation.

Keep the next commitment proportionate to what you know.