

The Spending Clarity Checklist

Practical Tool for Business Owners Who Want to Know Where Their Money Goes

This is a simple, structured way to bring visibility to your business spending — without overwhelm. It's designed for owners who want to feel grounded in their numbers, one step at a time. Think of it as a conversation starter between you and your finances — not an audit, not a test, just a clear path forward.

Why This Matters

Spending clarity isn't about restriction — it's about confidence. When you can see where your money goes, you make better decisions, sleep a little easier, and lead your business from a place of strength rather than uncertainty. This checklist is here to help you build that picture at your own pace, in a way that feels manageable and grounded. You deserve to feel informed and in control — and that starts with visibility.

1. Know Your Fixed Commitments

These are the costs that show up every month whether you're ready or not.

- List all monthly rent, lease, or mortgage payments tied to your business.
- Confirm your insurance policies (general liability, property, workers' comp) and their current premiums.
- Document all active loan or financing payments, including balances and terms.
- Review recurring payroll commitments, including any employer tax obligations.
- Verify that each fixed cost is reflected accurately in your bookkeeping records.

2. Track Your Variable Spending

These shift month to month — and that's where surprises tend to live.

- Review your materials, inventory, or supplies costs for the past three months.
 - Identify any contractor or freelancer payments and confirm they're categorized correctly.
 - Look at fuel, mileage, and travel expenses — note any months that spiked.
 - Review your marketing and advertising spend and what you received in return.
 - Flag the two or three variable costs that fluctuate the most — these are worth watching closely.
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3. Review Your Recurring Subscriptions and Tools

Small monthly charges add up quietly. This is where clarity pays for itself.

- Create a complete list of every software, app, or SaaS subscription your business pays for.
- Identify any tools that are unused, underused, or duplicated by another service.
- Confirm who on your team actively uses each tool — and whether access levels are appropriate.
- Check whether switching from monthly to annual billing could create savings on any subscriptions.

4. Understand Your Owner's Draw and Compensation

Your pay should be intentional, not whatever's left over.

- Document how you currently pay yourself — owner's draw, salary, distributions, or a combination.
 - Confirm that you have a consistent schedule for your compensation (weekly, biweekly, monthly).
 - Review your records to ensure personal and business expenses are clearly separated.
 - Consider whether your current draw aligns with your business's cash flow and capacity.
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5. Check Your Vendor and Contractor Relationships

Good vendor relationships start with clear records.

- Confirm that current W-9 forms are on file for every contractor you've paid this year.
- Review payment terms with your key vendors — are you taking advantage of any early-pay discounts?
- Identify any vendors you no longer use but may still be paying or have open accounts with.
- Verify that your records support 1099 reporting at year-end — no scrambling in January.

6. Look at the Bigger Picture

Spending clarity isn't just about the line items — it's about the patterns.

- Compare your total spending month-over-month for the past quarter — notice any trends.
 - Identify your top five expense categories and confirm they reflect your current priorities.
 - Note where your spending feels aligned with your goals — and where it feels like it's drifting.
 - Schedule a quarterly spending review on your calendar — even 30 minutes makes a difference.
 - Write down one area where you'd like more clarity or support before your next review.
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How to Use This Tool

This checklist works best when you revisit it regularly — monthly or quarterly, whatever rhythm fits your business. You don't need to do everything at once. Start with the section that feels most relevant to where you are right now and build from there. And if you'd like a partner to walk through it with you, that's exactly what we're here for.
