

Private Equity Operator: The First 90-Day Finance Checklist for Your Portfolio Company

Get investor-grade financial visibility in place **without hiring a full-time CFO**

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this checklist immediately after acquisition or when evaluating a new portfolio company. Go line by line and mark each item as:

1. Complete
2. In Progress
3. Missing

Any “Missing” items represent potential blind spots that can impact investor confidence, cash flow decisions, and exit readiness.

1. Financial Visibility (Week 1–2)

1. Monthly financials are delivered within 10–15 days of month-end
2. Revenue, expenses, and margins are clearly broken out
3. Financials are consistent month-to-month (no format changes)
4. There is a clear understanding of current cash position
5. No reliance on manual spreadsheets for core reporting

2. Cash Flow & Runway Clarity (Week 1–3)

1. 13-week cash flow forecast exists
2. Cash inflows and outflows are mapped weekly
3. Leadership knows current runway (in months)
4. Known cash risks are documented
5. No surprises in upcoming large expenses

3. Budgeting & Forecasting (Week 2–4)

1. A forward-looking financial model exists
2. Forecast includes hiring, revenue, and expenses
3. Leadership uses forecast for decision-making
4. Budget vs. actual tracking is happening monthly
5. Assumptions are documented and revisited

4. Investor / Lender Reporting (Week 2–5)

1. Monthly reporting package is standardized
2. Reports are easy to understand (no “translation” needed)
3. KPIs are clearly defined and tracked
4. Reporting is delivered on time, every time
5. Leadership can confidently walk through the numbers

5. Financial Infrastructure (Week 3–6)

1. Chart of accounts is clean and structured
2. Systems are integrated (no duplicate data entry)
3. Revenue recognition is consistent and documented
4. No dependency on one person for financial knowledge
5. Processes are documented and repeatable

6. Post-Acquisition Cleanup (Week 4–8)

1. Historical financials have been reviewed for accuracy
2. One-time adjustments are identified and isolated
3. Legacy processes from prior ownership are removed
4. Financial inconsistencies are documented and corrected
5. Clean baseline established for future reporting

7. Decision-Making Support (Week 6–10)

1. Leadership has clear visibility into margins
2. Key financial drivers are identified
3. Scenario planning is possible (best / worst case)
4. Financial data supports hiring and growth decisions
5. Leadership is not “guessing” on financial outcomes

8. Exit & Transaction Readiness (Week 8–12)

1. Financials can withstand basic diligence review
2. Supporting documentation is organized
3. Key metrics are consistent and defensible
4. No major reporting gaps exist
5. Business can present itself as a “clean asset”

Why This Is Important

Most portfolio companies don't fail because of strategy. They fail because leadership is making decisions **without clear financial visibility**. In the first 90 days post-acquisition:

1. Weak reporting reduces investor confidence
2. Poor forecasting leads to bad capital decisions
3. Disorganized financials slow down growth and exits

This checklist ensures the company operates with **the financial discipline private equity expects**, not founder-level guesswork.

Book a 15-Minute Strategy Conversation

Let's walk through your current setup and identify where your financial visibility, reporting, and forecasting may be breaking down.

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