01

THE FOUR ANSWERS TEST

Find out in a single meeting whether your leadership team agrees on what's capping the business.

ALONE. Don't confer with other directors.

PLAINLY. Full sentences, no bullet points.

QUICKLY. Fifteen minutes. First instinct counts.

UNNAMED. Answers are read out without your name.

NAME _____ ROLE _____ RETURN TO FACILITATOR BY _____

Q1 What is the one thing capping the growth of this business right now?

One sentence. Name one thing.

Q2 If that constraint were removed tomorrow, what would annual revenue be in 12 months' time?

Give a number, not a range.

£ _____ per year

Q3 Who, by name, is responsible for removing it today?

One person. "All of us" is an answer, and it will be scored as one.

Q4 What have we already tried to fix it, and why hasn't it worked?

Name the initiatives. Be specific about why they stalled.

Q5 How confident are you that every other director has written the same answer to Q1?

Circle one. 1 = not at all, 10 = certain.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

RUNNING THE FOUR ANSWERS TEST

Most leadership teams believe they agree on what's holding the business back. Asked separately, four directors often give four different answers. The test works because every answer is written before anyone has heard anyone else's. This guide covers how to issue the questionnaire, run the read-out, score the answers, interpret the result and leave the room with decisions made.

01 ISSUING THE QUESTIONS BLIND

SEND 48 HOURS AHEAD

One copy to each director, individually. No group email, no shared document.

COLLECT PRIVATELY

Answers come back to the facilitator only. Chase late returns; don't run the session with gaps.

TRANSCRIBE AND STRIP NAMES

Type every answer onto one sheet per question, in shuffled order, so handwriting and position can't identify the author.

PICK A NEUTRAL FACILITATOR

Not the MD or CEO. A non-executive, an adviser or someone from outside the business.

02 THE 45-MINUTE READ-OUT

MINUTES	STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
00–05	Set the rules	The facilitator reads the ground rules below aloud and asks everyone to agree to them.
05–15	Read out Q1	Every answer, unattributed, with no comment. Then the room groups them on a whiteboard by theme.
15–25	Q2 and Q3	Write the revenue figures and the owners' names side by side. Note the range between highest and lowest.
25–35	Q4	List what's been tried. Look for the same initiative described as a success by one director and a failure by another.
35–40	Score	Complete the alignment scorecard together, then reveal the average Q5 confidence score.
40–45	Decide	Take the three decisions in section 05 and write them down before anyone leaves.

GROUND RULES: KEEPING IT FROM TURNING INTO A ROW

1. **Nobody claims or defends an answer.** Authorship stays hidden for the whole session. A director can reveal their own at the end if they choose.
2. **Describe before you debate.** The first pass on every question is "what do we see?", not "who's right?"
3. **The most senior person speaks last.** Otherwise the room converges on their view and the test is wasted.
4. **The spread is the finding.** You are measuring disagreement today, not resolving it in 45 minutes.
5. **People go in the car park.** If an answer names a colleague as the constraint, the facilitator restates it as a role or capability gap and moves on.
6. **The facilitator holds the pen and the clock.** When a step runs out of time, move to the next one.

03 THE ALIGNMENT SCORECARD

Score Q1 to Q4 as a group, using the same scale for each. Agree each score before moving on; if the room can't agree, take the lower one.

3	2	1	0
Every director gives the same answer.	Same theme, different words or emphasis.	Two distinct camps.	No two answers match.

Q	WHAT COUNTS AS THE SAME ANSWER	SCORE
Q1	The constraint. Answers describe the same underlying problem, even if one names the symptom and another the cause.	
Q2	The prize. Figures sit within 25% of each other.	
Q3	The owner. The same individual is named. "All of us" or "the board" scores 0.	
Q4	The history. Directors list the same initiatives and give the same reasons they stalled.	
	ALIGNMENT TOTAL (OUT OF 12)	

[illegible]

[illegible]agrees on the problem. The question is whether it's being worked on fast enough.

6–9

PARTLY ALIGNED

Shared instinct, but gaps in ownership or ambition. Look at which question scored lowest.

0–5

SPLIT

Directors are working on different problems. Read section 04 before taking decisions.

THE CONFIDENCE GAP (Q5)

Average the Q5 scores. If the average is 7 or above and the alignment total is 5 or below, the board believes it agrees and doesn't. Record both numbers side by side; the distance between them is the most useful single figure the test produces.

04 WHAT A WIDE SPREAD ACTUALLY MEANS

A low score is a diagnosis, not a failure. It usually explains why effort and spend haven't turned into growth. Where the spread falls tells you what kind of misalignment you have.

SPREAD ON Q1

NO SHARED CONSTRAINT

Each director is fixing a different problem, so budget and attention are split between them and none gets enough.

SPREAD ON Q2

NO SHARED VIEW OF THE PRIZE

Directors disagree on how big the opportunity is, so they will disagree on how much to invest in it.

SPREAD ON Q3

NO OWNER

Several names, or "all of us", means nobody is accountable. The constraint stays because no one is paid to remove it.

SPREAD ON Q4

DIFFERENT HISTORIES

The team remembers past initiatives differently, so the same fixes keep being proposed and the same lessons go unlearned.

HIGH Q5, LOW TOTAL

THE BOARD THINKS IT AGREES

This is the most common pattern and the hardest to see from inside. Nobody raises the disagreement because nobody knows it exists. If this is your result, the session has already done its main job.

A tight spread is not automatically good news. If every director names the same constraint but Q3 scores 0, agreement hasn't turned into action.

05 THREE DECISIONS BEFORE ANYONE LEAVES THE ROOM

1

NAME THE CONSTRAINT

One sentence, written where everyone can see it, agreed as the priority for the next 90 days. If the room can't agree, decide who will gather the evidence to settle it, and by when.

2

NAME ONE OWNER

One person, by name, with the authority and budget to act. Others support. One person answers for progress at every board meeting.

3

SET THE NEXT CHECK

A date within 90 days to re-run the test, and the single measure that will show whether the constraint is moving.

THE CONSTRAINT

OWNER

RE-TEST DATE

THE MEASURE

WANT AN INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR IN THE ROOM?

New Way Growth runs the read-out with your leadership team and helps you act on the result.

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