

Here is a "Funding-Ready Checklist" designed to help your readers determine if their project is prepared for external capital.

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## The "Is My Project OPM-Ready?" Checklist

Before you approach a lender or investor, walk through these five critical categories to ensure your business can handle the responsibility—and the risk—of other people's money.

### 1. The Financial Health Check

- **Clean Records:** Do you have at least 2–3 years of organized tax returns, profit & loss (P&L) statements, and balance sheets?
- **Credit Score:** Is your personal credit score at least 740? High scores often secure the best interest rates.
- **Debt-to-Income:** Can your current revenue comfortably cover your existing debts plus the new anticipated payments?
- **Cash Flow Stability:** Can you demonstrate at least 6–12 months of steady, predictable income?

### 2. The Project Plan

- **Specific "Use of Funds":** Can you list exactly where every dollar will go (e.g., \$50k for inventory, \$20k for marketing)?
- **ROI Projection:** Have you calculated the expected Return on Investment? The return should significantly exceed the cost of the capital.
- **The "Why Now?":** Is this funding for a high-growth opportunity (like an expansion) rather than just "keeping the lights on"?

### 3. Repayment & Strategy

- **Repayment Timeline:** Have you mapped out a 12-month payment schedule that aligns with your revenue cycles?
- **Plan B (Safety Net):** Do you have secondary revenue streams or a cash reserve to cover payments if the project hits a snag?
- **Exit Strategy:** If using equity, do you have a clear plan for how investors will eventually get their money back (e.g., a buyout or sale)?

### 4. Legal & Structural Readiness

- **Current Documentation:** Are your business licenses, permits, and Articles of Incorporation up to date?
- **Control Boundaries:** Have you decided how much decision-making power you are willing to give up in exchange for the funds?

#### 5. Professional Presentation

- **Business Plan:** Do you have a data-driven plan that highlights your competitive advantage and market position?
  - **Digital Loan File:** Are all these documents saved in a single, organized digital folder for instant sharing with a lender?
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