RAMP UP GROWTH ADVISORS · PRE-RAISE DIAGNOSTIC

The Capital Readiness Checklist

Are You a "Fundable Enterprise" or Still Just a Startup With a Deck?

By **Christian Liu, CPA, CMA, MBA** — Founder, RampUp Growth Advisors | Contract Instructor, Sprott School of Business, Carleton University

Capital flows to the prepared. Before your next raise, run through these four checklists. Each unchecked box is a question an investor will ask that you don't yet have a confident answer to — better to find that out here than in the room.

01 Financial Infrastructure

- ☐ Real-time (not "Day 10") financial reporting in place
- ☐ Data room organized and investor-ready today, not "by next month"
- ☐ Unit economics (CAC, LTV, margins) documented with real-time attribution
- ☐ Rolling cash forecast maintained weekly, not rebuilt per request

02 Governance & Risk

- ☐ Board reporting cadence documented and consistently followed
- ☐ Internal controls in place beyond "the founder checks everything"
- ☐ Risk mitigation plan covers at least 3 realistic downside scenarios
- ☐ ESG / impact metrics tracked, if relevant to your investor set

03 Growth Story & Metrics

- ☐ Budgets model 2026-specific scenarios (efficiency, disruption, liquidity freeze)
- ☐ EBITDA trajectory is sustainable, not a single strong quarter
- ☐ Path to next milestone (M&A, IPO, profitability) is quantified, not aspirational
- ☐ AI / automation-driven efficiency gains are baked into the operating model

04 Investor Fit

- ☐ You know whether this raise is a VC fit, a Family Office fit, or both
- ☐ Pitch materials are tailored to that investor's stated priorities
- ☐ You can explain your capital efficiency story in under 2 minutes
- ☐ References / prior investor relationships are lined up in advance

If You're Talking to VCs

They focus on exit velocity, hyper-scalability, and unit economics — and expect cash flow transparency that rivals public-company standards. Lead with growth data and a clear path to IPO or M&A.

If You're Talking to Family Offices

Their horizon is generational. They focus on longevity, governance, and sustainable EBITDA growth. Lead with risk mitigation, control, and a story built for the long game — not just velocity.

13–16
Capital Ready — polish the story, start the raise

8–12
Close — fix your gaps before you're in the room

Under 8
Build the infrastructure first — a raise now costs you leverage