

Noughts & Crosses Advisory

Startup Self-Assessment Guide

Introduction

This template is designed to help startup founders thoroughly assess their business model, assumptions, and readiness for investment/advisory discussions. Please fill out each section with as much detail as possible.

1. Core Business Overview

Basic Information

- Company Name:
- Founded Date:
- Current Stage (Pre-seed/Seed/Series A):
- Total Funding Raised to Date:
- Current Monthly Burn Rate:
- Runway Remaining:

Value Proposition

1. Describe your solution in one sentence:
2. What specific problem are you solving?
3. Who are your target customers?
4. What are your key differentiators?
5. What evidence do you have that customers want this solution?

Market Validation

1. What market research have you conducted?
2. List any pilot customers or beta users:
3. Provide key metrics from market testing:
4. What is your total addressable market (TAM)?
5. How did you calculate your TAM?

2. Financial Projections & Assumptions

Growth Targets

1. User/Customer Growth:
 - Current number of users/customers:
 - 6-month target:
 - 12-month target:
 - What assumptions are these based on?
2. Revenue Projections:
 - Current monthly revenue:
 - 6-month revenue target:
 - 12-month revenue target:
 - Key revenue streams and their projected split:
3. Unit Economics:
 - Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC):
 - Lifetime Value (LTV):
 - How did you calculate these?
 - What's your payback period?

Cost Structure

1. Fixed Costs:
 - List major fixed cost categories:
 - Monthly fixed cost total:
2. Variable Costs:
 - List major variable cost categories:
 - Current variable costs per user/customer:
3. Development Costs:
 - Platform/product development budget:
 - Timeline for development:
 - In-house vs. outsourced split:

3. Product & Technology

Current Status

1. What is the current state of your product?
2. List key features currently built:
3. List key features planned:
4. What is your technology stack?
5. Who owns your IP?

Development Roadmap

1. Next major milestone:
2. Timeline to reach it:
3. Resources needed:
4. Key technical risks:

4. Go-to-Market Strategy

Customer Acquisition

1. How will you acquire your first 100 customers?
2. What are your primary marketing channels?
3. What is your expected cost per acquisition?
4. How will you scale customer acquisition?

Market Entry

1. Which geographic market(s) are you targeting first?
2. Why these markets?
3. What are the entry barriers?
4. How will you overcome them?

5. Competition & Market Position

1. Who are your direct competitors?
2. Who are your indirect competitors?
3. What is your competitive advantage?
4. How defensible is your position?
5. What stops competitors from copying you?

6. Team & Resources

Current Team

1. List key team members and their roles:
2. What key roles need to be filled?
3. What is your hiring timeline?

Advisory Needs

1. What specific expertise are you seeking?
2. What are your most pressing challenges?
3. What help do you need most urgently?

7. Risk Assessment

1. What are your top 3 business risks?
2. What are your top 3 technical risks?
3. What are your top 3 market risks?
4. How do you plan to mitigate each?

8. Funding Strategy

1. How much funding are you seeking?
2. What will the funds be used for?
3. What milestones will this funding help you achieve?
4. What is your target valuation?
5. How did you determine this valuation?

9. Key Metrics & KPIs

1. What are your top 5 KPIs?
2. Current performance on each:
3. Targets for each:
4. How do you track these?

10. Future Vision

1. What is your 18-month goal?
2. What is your 3-year vision?
3. What are potential exit strategies?
4. What are the key milestones to get there?

11. AI & Technology Strategy

AI/ML Implementation

1. Are you using AI/ML in your product? If yes:
 - What specific AI/ML technologies are you using?
 - How are you sourcing/training data?
 - What's your AI development roadmap?
2. If no:
 - How are you future-proofing against AI disruption?
 - What potential AI applications have you identified?

AI Ethics & Governance

1. What's your AI ethics policy?
2. How do you ensure AI transparency?
3. How do you balance AI automation vs. human expertise?
4. What safeguards are in place for AI decisions?

12. Regulatory & Compliance

Current Compliance

1. What regulations affect your business?
2. List all relevant compliance requirements:
3. What certifications do you need?
4. Current compliance status:

Data Privacy & Security

1. How are you handling data privacy?
2. Which privacy regulations apply (GDPR, CCPA, etc.)?
3. What's your data retention policy?
4. How do you handle user consent?

13. ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)

Environmental Impact

1. What's your environmental policy?
2. How do you measure environmental impact?
3. What sustainability initiatives are planned?

Social Responsibility

1. What's your D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) strategy?
2. How do you measure social impact?
3. What community initiatives are you involved in?

Governance

1. What's your governance structure?
2. How do you handle ethical decisions?
3. What oversight mechanisms are in place?

14. Remote/Global Operations

Remote Work Strategy

1. What's your remote work policy?
2. How do you maintain company culture remotely?
3. What tools/processes support remote work?

International Operations

1. What's your global expansion strategy?
2. How do you handle different time zones?
3. How do you manage cross-cultural communication?
4. What's your localization strategy?

15. Partnership Strategy

Current & Planned Partnerships

1. List current strategic partnerships:
2. What partnerships are you seeking?
3. What's your partnership evaluation criteria?

Partnership Operations

1. What's your partnership model?
2. How do you structure partnership agreements?
3. What's your partner onboarding process?
4. How do you measure partnership success?

16. Crisis Management & Business Continuity

Crisis Preparedness

1. What's your business continuity plan?
2. How do you handle service outages?
3. What's your disaster recovery plan?
4. How often do you test these plans?

Crisis Response

1. What's your crisis communication strategy?
2. Who manages crisis response?
3. How do you handle reputation management?
4. What's your stakeholder communication plan?

17. Technology in your business

Current Solutions - What are they ?

1. Accounting Software
2. Budgeting & Financial Forecasting Tools
3. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
4. Payroll & Human Resources Management
5. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
6. Product-Specific Software

Planned/Desired Solutions

1. Software Upgrade Opportunities
 - What existing solutions are limiting your business growth?
 - Which software tools are becoming outdated or inefficient?
2. Emerging Technology Needs
 - What business processes currently lack dedicated software support?
 - Are there any manual workflows that could be automated?
3. Integration Challenges
 - Which current software solutions do not communicate with each other?
 - What data silos exist in your current technology ecosystem?
4. Future Technology Roadmap
 - What software capabilities do you anticipate needing in the next 12-24 months?
 - Are there industry-specific solutions you're considering?

18. Future Scenarios & Adaptability

Market Changes

1. How would you adapt to major market shifts?
2. What competitive moves could impact you?
3. How do you stay ahead of market trends?

Technology Evolution

1. How do you adapt to new technologies?
2. What emerging technologies could impact your business?
3. How do you evaluate new technology adoption?

Additional Information

- Any other relevant information not covered above?
- What unique challenges does your startup face?
- What other areas would you like advice on?

Document Checklist

Please attach the following documents if available:

- Financial model/projections
- Product roadmap
- Technical architecture
- Team structure
- Market analysis
- Competitor analysis
- Risk assessment
- Partnership agreements
- Compliance documentation
- Crisis management plans

Next Steps

1. What are your immediate priorities?
2. What specific help do you need?
3. What would make the biggest impact on your business right now?