



FREE RESOURCE • CLAIM-VERIFICATION CHECKLIST

Check Every Claim. Before They Do.

The claims a careful reader checks first — and how to make each one hold up before the meeting. For any deck that has to survive scrutiny: an investment round, a board pack, a lender review or an enterprise buyer's procurement team. Five claim categories, twenty-three checks and a 60-second pre-meeting test.

23 CHECKS

5 CLAIM CATEGORIES

8 TRIGGER PHRASES

60-SECOND TEST

Three questions decide whether a claim survives

Run every load-bearing claim through all three. A claim that fails any one is a liability wearing a statistic.

01

Sourced

Can you name where the number comes from — a licensed database, a regulator, your own instrumented data? A blog citing a blog is not a source.

02

Dated

Does every external figure carry an “as of”? An old number presented as current reads as carelessness — or as hope.

03

Defended

If someone pressure-tests it, can you produce the cohort, the method, the file? Going quiet in the room is not a strategy.

FAILS ANY ONE?

Flag it, fix it or cut it — before the meeting does. When one number fails a check, every other number inherits the doubt.

01 Market Size — 5 Checks

A market size only counts if the maths agrees.

- ☐ **Market size names its source and year** — analyst, regulator or your own build. “Industry reports suggest” is not a source.
- ☐ **Top-down and bottom-up reconcile** — customers × price × frequency lands within the quoted figure’s order of magnitude.
- ☐ **Serviceable and obtainable shares carry stated logic** — geography, segment, channel. “We will take 1%” is a guess wearing a percentage.
- ☐ **Growth rate shares the market figure’s source** — same source, same window. A growth rate spliced in from a second report gets caught.
- ☐ **Every figure is dated** — an old number needs an explicit “as of”, or an update.

WHAT THEY WILL ASK

“Walk me through the bottom-up.”
“What exactly is in the denominator?”
“Whose number is this — and when is it from?”

RED FLAG • AS HEARD IN THE ROOM

“It is a £40bn market.” Say instead: the segment you can serve — and the build behind it.

02 Traction & Revenue — 5 Checks

Traction is a definition before it is a number.

- ☐ **Every metric is defined where it is quoted** — annual recurring, run-rate, booked or collected. Mixed labels read as concealment.
- ☐ **Multiples state base and window** — “3x growth” from what baseline, over how many months, on which metric?
- ☐ **A cohort table backs every retention claim** — it exists, it matches the headline and it is ready to share.
- ☐ **Charts start where the data starts** — not at the most flattering month. Truncated axes are found, then remembered.
- ☐ **Pipeline is classified by commitment** — signed, contracted, letter of intent, conversation. A letter of intent is not revenue.

WHAT THEY WILL ASK

“Is this monthly revenue × 12, or contracted?”
“Show me the cohort behind that retention figure.”
“What happened before this chart begins?”

RED FLAG • AS HEARD IN THE ROOM

“We are growing 40% a month.” State base, window and metric — then let the number speak.

03 Unit Economics — 5 Checks

Ratios survive on their inputs.

- ☐ **Customer acquisition cost declares its denominator** — fully loaded (paid, people, tooling) or paid-only, labelled as such.
- ☐ **Lifetime value uses observed churn, not ambition** — state the churn input, the sample size and the window.
- ☐ **Ratios come with their method** — quote LTV:CAC only if the inputs survive a reader substituting their own.
- ☐ **Payback is stated in months, formula shown** — and it agrees with how cash actually collects.
- ☐ **Gross margin is the one your accountant signs** — cost to serve includes hosting, support and account management.

WHAT THEY WILL ASK

“What is inside the acquisition-cost denominator?”
“Where does the churn input come from?”
“What does payback look like at double the spend?”

RED FLAG • AS HEARD IN THE ROOM

“Our LTV:CAC is 8:1.” Inputs and method first — an outlier ratio invites substitution maths.

04 Competition — 4 Checks

“No competition” is a finding about your search.

- ☐ **The comparison includes the status quo** — spreadsheets, agencies, in-house teams, doing nothing. Inertia is the real incumbent.
- ☐ **Real alternatives are named** — what customers actually compare you against, not just look-alikes.
- ☐ **Claims about rivals are dated** — a competitor’s “missing” feature can ship in one release.
- ☐ **Any “category of one” claim survives an expert** — adjacent players named; the difference structural, not adjectival.

WHAT THEY WILL ASK

“Who loses budget when you win?”
“What does the customer do today instead?”
“Why does the incumbent not just build this?”

RED FLAG • AS HEARD IN THE ROOM

“We have no real competition.” Either the market does not exist, or the search was not done. Name the alternatives.

05 Team, Capability & Why Now — 4 Checks

Why you — and why now.

- ☐ **Relevant experience is evidenced** — years in the problem, delivered projects, specific expertise. Shown, not asserted.

- ☐ **Key-person risk is acknowledged** — and the mitigation fits in one sentence.

- ☐ **“Why now” names a dated shift** — regulation, cost change, distribution change — with a source attached.

- ☐ **Named advisers, partners and accreditations are current** — they will be checked. Make sure they answer.

WHAT THEY WILL ASK

“What do you know that the last team to try this did not?”

“What changed in the world — and when, exactly?”

“Who on the team has done this before?”

RED FLAG • AS HEARD IN THE ROOM

“AI makes this possible now.” Name the specific capability and cost shift — and date it.

06 Eight Phrases That Start a Dig

Each phrase turns a listening room into an auditing one — and each has a stronger replacement.

THE PHRASE	WHAT THE READER HEARS	SAY INSTEAD
“Conservative estimate”	The model says whatever I needed it to.	Show the assumptions; let the reader judge.
“Industry reports suggest...”	I cannot name the source.	Publisher, report title and year — on the slide.
“We just need 1% of the market”	No bottom-up build exists.	Customers × price × frequency, reconciled to the total.
“We have no real competition”	The search was not done.	Status quo plus named alternatives.
“Growing 3x year on year”	The base must be tiny.	Base, window and metric, stated alongside.
“Our LTV:CAC is 8:1”	The churn input is aspirational.	Inputs and method first, ratio second.
“The product sells itself”	There is no go-to-market plan.	Channel mix and channel economics, dated.
“£2m of signed letters of intent”	None of this is revenue.	Pipeline classified by commitment stage.

07 The 60-Second Pre-Meeting Test

Three claims, nine scores. Decks are forwarded faster than they are corrected — test before it travels.

Pick the three load-bearing claims — the ones the decision leans on. Score each 0–2 on Sourced, Dated and Defended: **0** = cannot show it · **1** = could find it · **2** = on file, ready.

CLAIM	SOURCED	DATED	DEFENDED
01 · Market			
02 · Traction			
03 · Economics			
Total	/ 18		

16–18

Ready

Send it — and keep the claim log on file.

11–15

Fix First

Repair before sending. A forwarded deck cannot be corrected.

10 OR LESS

Do Not Send

The deck will do your positioning for you — in your absence.

08 Claim Log Worksheet

One line per load-bearing claim. If a line cannot be completed, the claim is not ready.

CLAIM AS WRITTEN	SLIDE / PAGE	SOURCE + "AS OF"	STATUS	LIKELY CHALLENGE · ANSWER
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	
			Verified · Soft · Cut	

VERIFIED: SOURCE ON FILE, ANSWER READY · SOFT: DIRECTIONALLY TRUE, NOT YET PRESSURE-PROOF · CUT: OUT
UNTIL IT CAN BE

WHEN YOU WANT A SECOND PAIR OF EYES

Check It. Sign It. Send It.

Start free: a **First Signal** reads your deck or page and flags the claims a careful reader would doubt.

Release Assurance checks every claim in your deck, site or proposal against named sources, and a named verifier signs the result before it goes out.

Both at thrivefinity.uk/release-assurance

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