The Monthly Report Health-Check Checklist

Pick the one report your business depends on most. Tick every statement that is fully true today. Leave it blank if it is only partly true. It takes about ten minutes.

A Accuracy and controls

[ ]	1. Every total in the report reconciles to its source (finance system, bank, or sales ledger).
[ ]	2. There is a simple check cell or sheet that flags when numbers do not add up.
[ ]	3. Formulas are consistent down each column, with no hard-typed numbers hidden inside them.
[ ]	4. Inputs are validated (drop-downs, date and number rules) so bad data cannot be typed in.
[ ]	5. Someone other than the preparer reviews the report before it is sent.
[ ]	6. Errors such as #N/A or #REF! are explained or removed, not hidden.

B Structure and handover

[ ]	7. Data, calculations and presentation are kept on separate sheets.
[ ]	8. Sheets, tables and key cells have clear, meaningful names.
[ ]	9. There is a short instruction sheet: what it does, where data comes from, how to refresh it.
[ ]	10. At least two people can update the report without the original author.
[ ]	11. The file is saved in one agreed location with sensible version control.
[ ]	12. Assumptions (rates, targets, cut-off dates) sit in one place, not buried in formulas.

C Time and automation

[ ]	13. Monthly data is imported or refreshed, not copied and pasted from other files.
[ ]	14. Cleaning steps (removing blanks, fixing formats, merging lists) are repeatable, not manual.
[ ]	15. Producing the report takes hours, not days, and the time is predictable.
[ ]	16. Lookups use a reliable method (such as XLOOKUP) instead of manual matching.
[ ]	17. Recurring tasks that repeat every month have a template or a one-click process.
[ ]	18. The file opens, calculates and saves quickly.

D Presentation and decisions

[ ]	19. The report opens with the headline: what changed, why, and what to do about it.
[ ]	20. Key measures are defined clearly and used the same way every month.
[ ]	21. Charts show a comparison or a trend, and each has a clear message.
[ ]	22. Exceptions (the 10% that needs attention) stand out without searching.
[ ]	23. A manager can find an answer to a follow-up question within a minute.
[ ]	24. You could present this report confidently to the owner or a senior manager and explain any number in it.

Your score	Count your ticks (out of 24): _____
20–24	Strong. Small tweaks and regular reviews will keep it that way.
13–19	Workable but exposed. A few fixes would save time and reduce risk.
0–12	High risk. This report probably costs more time, and carries more risk, than you realise.

What next? The most common red flags are manual copy-and-paste (section C), no check totals (section A) and a file only one person understands (section B). Each can be fixed, usually faster than people expect. If your score worries you, a Report Health-Check turns it into a clear, prioritised plan, and a Rapid Problem-Solving Clinic can fix the most urgent issue in a single session.

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