



Is Your Business an Impact Business?

A 10-Question Self-Assessment

Before You Start

Most people hear “impact business” and picture a nonprofit, a solar company, or something backed by a billionaire foundation.

That’s not what this is about.

An impact business is any business that solves a real problem, creates measurable positive change for a specific group of people, and makes money doing it. That’s it. No special certification required. No green logo. No mission statement written by committee.

If you run a business — any business — there’s a good chance you’re already creating more impact than you realize. This assessment will show you where you stand.

It takes five minutes. Be honest with your answers. The results might surprise you.

How Scoring Works

For each question, choose the answer that best describes your business **right now** — not where you hope to be someday.

POINT VALUES

- A. (3 pts) Strong signal
- B. (2 pts) Emerging signal
- C. (1 pts) Foundation exists
- D. (0 pts) Not yet

Add your points at the end.

The Questions

1. Does your business solve a specific problem for a specific group of people?

Why this matters: Every impact investment starts with a problem. The more specific your answer, the more investable your work becomes.

Not “we help everyone” — a specific problem for identifiable people.

- A. (3 pts) Yes — I can name the problem and the people in one sentence.
- B. (2 pts) I think so, but I haven't articulated it clearly.
- C. (1 pts) My business serves a need, but I wouldn't call it a "problem."

- D.** (0 pts) I'm not sure what problem I solve.
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2. Would your community notice if your business disappeared tomorrow?

Why this matters: This is the simplest test of real impact. If your absence creates a hole, your presence is creating value that goes beyond the transaction.

Think about your customers, your neighborhood, the people who depend on what you do.

- A.** (3 pts) Absolutely — people would scramble to replace what I provide.
- B.** (2 pts) Some people would feel the gap. Not everyone, but a meaningful group.
- C.** (1 pts) My regular customers would miss me, but they'd find alternatives.
- D.** (0 pts) Probably not.
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3. Can you describe a specific person whose life is different because of your business?

Why this matters: Impact investors don't fund abstractions. They fund stories that represent patterns. One specific story is worth more than a hundred vague claims.

Not a category of people. One person. A story you could tell.

- A.** (3 pts) Yes — I can tell you their name and what changed.
- B.** (2 pts) I can describe a type of person, but I don't have a specific story.
- C.** (1 pts) I know my customers are satisfied, but I haven't tracked deeper change.
- D.** (0 pts) I've never thought about it this way.
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4. Does your business create jobs or economic opportunity beyond just you?

Why this matters: Job creation is one of the most measurable forms of community impact. Even one job in the right community changes families.

This includes employees, contractors, suppliers you buy from, or other businesses your work enables.

- A.** (3 pts) Yes — I employ people, pay contractors, or directly support other businesses.
- B.** (2 pts) I'm getting there — I'm starting to hire or regularly use contractors.
- C.** (1 pts) It's mostly me right now, but I can see how growth would create jobs.
- D.** (0 pts) It's a solo operation and likely to stay that way.
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5. Do you make money?

Why this matters: Impact without a business model is charity. Nothing wrong with charity — but it's not investable. The fact that you make money while solving a problem is what makes this powerful.

Simple question, but it matters more than you think.

- A. (3 pts) Yes — my business generates consistent revenue and I can pay myself.
 - B. (2 pts) Revenue is growing, but it's not consistent yet.
 - C. (1 pts) I make some money, but it's more of a side income.
 - D. (0 pts) Not yet — I'm still figuring out the business model.
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6. Could someone else do what you do in a different city or neighborhood?

Why this matters: Scalability is the difference between a good local business and something investors pay attention to. You don't have to scale. But knowing that you COULD changes how people value what you've built.

Not whether they'd do it as well as you — whether the model itself could work elsewhere.

- A. (3 pts) Yes — the model would work in other places with the right person running it.
 - B. (2 pts) Probably, with some adaptation.
 - C. (1 pts) Maybe, but it's very specific to my area.
 - D. (0 pts) No — this only works because of my unique circumstances.
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7. Do you measure any kind of results or outcomes?

Why this matters: "Measurable" is the word that separates impact investing from feel-good stories. You don't need IRIS+ or a consultant. You need to count something that matters.

This doesn't mean fancy dashboards. It means: do you track anything that shows your work is making a difference?

- A. (3 pts) Yes — I track specific numbers (customers served, outcomes achieved, repeat rates, etc.).
 - B. (2 pts) I track some things informally — I know my numbers roughly.
 - C. (1 pts) I track revenue but not impact-related metrics.
 - D. (0 pts) I don't really measure anything beyond whether I'm making money.
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8. Do your customers come back — or refer other people to you?

Why this matters: Referral behavior is evidence that you're solving a real problem well enough that people tell other people about it. Investors call this "product-market fit." You might just call it "doing good work."

Repeat business and referrals are the purest signals of real value.

- A. (3 pts) Yes — most of my business comes from repeat customers or referrals.
- B. (2 pts) I have some repeat customers, but I'm still mostly finding new ones.
- C. (1 pts) A few people have referred others, but it's not consistent.

- D.** (0 pts) I'm still trying to get my first customers.
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9. Is your business sustainable without you working every waking hour?

Why this matters: A business that depends entirely on one person's daily labor is a job, not a company. That doesn't make it less valuable — but understanding the difference matters for what comes next.

Be honest. If you stopped for two weeks, what would happen?

- A.** (3 pts) It would keep running — I've built systems and/or have people who can cover.
- B.** (2 pts) It would slow down, but it wouldn't die.
- C.** (1 pts) It would stop, but I could restart without losing everything.
- D.** (0 pts) If I stop, it stops.
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10. If someone handed you \$50,000 tomorrow to grow your business, would you know what to do with it?

Why this matters: This is the readiness question. Knowing how capital would accelerate your work is the difference between "interesting business" and "investable business." And it's something you can learn.

Not what you'd hope to do. What you'd actually do, specifically.

- A.** (3 pts) Yes — I have a clear plan for how growth capital would be deployed.
- B.** (2 pts) I have ideas, but I'd need to think it through more carefully.
- C.** (1 pts) I'd probably use it, but I'm not sure it would change the trajectory.
- D.** (0 pts) I wouldn't know where to start.

Add Up Your Score

Add the points from all 10 questions and write your total below.

My total score (out of 30):

Your Results

22-30 POINTS

You're Already an Impact Business

You might not have known it. Now you do.

Your business solves a real problem, creates measurable value, and generates revenue. That combination – problem + outcome + money – is exactly what a \$1.571 trillion global asset class is looking for. You're not starting from zero. You're starting from proof.

What to do next: Your biggest gap is probably visibility. The investors and institutions looking for businesses like yours don't know you exist yet. Your next step is learning how to communicate what you've built in the language capital understands – without losing what makes it real.

Recommended: Visit devendavis.com/resources to explore tools for translating what you're already doing into a format that investors, partners, and supporters can immediately understand.

14-21 POINTS

You're Closer Than You Think

Most of the hard part is already done. You just need to name it and sharpen it.

You have the foundation of an impact business. You're solving something real for real people. The pieces that are missing – measurement, scalability, clarity of model – aren't weaknesses. They're the next steps. And they're learnable.

The gap between where you are and where you need to be is smaller than you imagine. Most people in your position assume they need an MBA, a business plan, or someone's permission. You don't. You need a framework.

What to do next: Get specific about what you're building and who it's for. The clearer your problem-outcome-leverage-model, the faster everything else falls into place.

Recommended: Visit devendavis.com/resources to find the P-O-L-M framework and the free mini-course – three short modules you can complete in a weekend.

7-13 POINTS

You Have the Foundation

Don't underestimate what you've started.

You may be early. Your business might be young, or you might not have thought about it through an impact lens before today. That's fine. The fact that you're here, asking these questions, puts you ahead of most people who never even consider it.

The foundation exists. What comes next is building on it with intention – understanding the problem you're solving, the people you're solving it for, and how to build a business model around it.

What to do next: Start with the white paper. It'll show you the full picture – the forces creating opportunity, the sectors starving for founders, and the framework for building something that matters and makes money.

Recommended: Visit devendavis.com/resources to download The Great Convergence – the free report that explains why the next 10-20 years are the biggest window in history for impact entrepreneurs.

0-6 POINTS

The Starting Line

You're at the beginning. That's exactly where every founder who ever built something meaningful started.

You might not have a business yet, or you might have something that hasn't found its footing. Either way, you're asking the right questions. That matters more than most people realize.

The Great Convergence isn't just for people who are already running companies. It's for anyone who sees a problem worth solving and wants to know how to build something around it.

What to do next: Read the white paper. Let it change how you think about what's possible. Then decide if you want to take the next step.

Recommended: Visit devendavis.com/resources to download The Great Convergence – your introduction to the biggest opportunity in history for people who want to build something that matters.

One More Thing

Whatever your score, remember this:

Impact investing is a \$1.571 trillion market – and it's growing at 21% a year. The investors deploying that capital are actively looking for more businesses to fund. Not fewer. More.

The pipeline of investable impact businesses is the bottleneck. Not the capital. Not the interest. Not the infrastructure. The bottleneck is founders who don't know what they've built.

You just took the first step toward knowing.

YOUR NEXT STEP

This Is Just the Beginning.

Your score is a starting point, not a verdict. Every resource below is designed to help you go deeper — whether you're just getting started or already building something real.

devendavis.com/resources

- The Great Convergence White Paper
 - The 9,500x Gap Primer
 - Impact Founder Gameplan Worksheet
 - Free 3-Module Mini-Course
 - Accredited Investor Starter Checklist
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The frameworks, strategies, and approaches described in this document represent one perspective on building impact-driven businesses. Results will vary based on individual circumstances, effort, market conditions, and many other factors. No guarantees of specific outcomes are made or implied.

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