

A PRACTITIONER'S DIAGNOSTIC

The Franchisor-Readiness Diagnostic

5 axes · 25 points · honest in 10 minutes

Bộ Chuẩn Đoán Sẵn Sàng Nhượng Quyền — song ngữ EN / VI

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Why this diagnostic exists / Vì sao có công cụ này

EN — Most brand owners ask "Should I franchise?" The honest answer depends on five readiness axes that almost no one teaches together. This diagnostic gives you a 25-point score in 10 minutes — and tells you what to fix before you sell your first license. It applies equally to Vietnamese brand owners and to first-time franchisors anywhere in the world.

VI — Hầu hết chủ thương hiệu đều hỏi "Tôi có nên nhượng quyền không?" Câu trả lời thật phụ thuộc vào năm trục sẵn sàng (readiness) mà gần như không ai dạy đầy đủ cùng nhau. Bộ chẩn đoán này cho bạn điểm số 25 trong 10 phút — và chỉ rõ điều bạn cần sửa trước khi bán giấy phép đầu tiên. Áp dụng được cho cả chủ thương hiệu Việt và franchisor lần đầu ở bất cứ thị trường nào.

How to use / Cách sử dụng

1. Score yourself honestly on all 5 axes — 1 (not started) to 5 (institutional-grade). Be conservative; the cost of over-scoring is paid by your first franchisee.
 2. Add the scores. Maximum 25.
 3. Read the interpretation band at the end.
 4. Fix the lowest-scoring axis first. A franchise system is rate-limited by its weakest axis, not its strongest.
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Axis 1 — Unit Economics Validation

Trục 1 — Xác thực đơn vị kinh tế

EN — The question: Has the model been proven enough to ask someone else to invest their savings in replicating it?

VI — Câu hỏi: Mô hình đã được kiểm chứng đủ chín để bạn dám yêu cầu người khác bỏ vốn tích lũy

ra nhân bản hay chưa?

Why this is Axis #1

The most common — and most expensive — Vietnamese and global mistake is to franchise out a model that worked once. One profitable unit is a lucky restaurant. Three profitable units across two cities, sustained over 24 months, is a replicable system. The difference is paid by your first franchisee if you get it wrong.

Scoring rubric

Score	What this looks like
1	Less than 12 months operating · single unit · not yet positive at contribution-margin level
2	12–24 months single unit · just reached positive contribution margin · founder still has unpaid labour in the model
3	2–3 owned units · all profitable for 18+ months · payback period understood but >36 months
4	5+ owned units · all reached payback in <24 months · documented AUV (average unit volume) · same-store-sales growth tracked
5	Multi-unit, multi-region, multi-format · 3+ years of profitable performance · documented unit P&L per format · sample franchisee pro forma defensible to investors

Proof points you must be able to show

- Average Unit Volume (AUV) by format and by region
- Four-wall EBITDA (the unit-level profit, not the parent-company profit)
- Payback period with assumptions
- Same-store-sales growth over at least 24 months
- A sample franchisee P&L pro forma that you would sign your name to

The Vietnamese version of this trap

"Tôi mới mở quán được 8 tháng, đã có người hỏi mua nhượng quyền — có nên bán không?" The answer is almost always no. The 8-month founder hasn't lived through a slow season, a competitor opening, a key-staff resignation, or a supply-chain shock. The franchisee will live through all four within their first 18 months. If the model hasn't been stress-tested, the franchisee is paying for that test.

The most common failure mode

Over-extrapolating from the founder unit. The founder's unit is profitable partly because the founder is in it. A franchisee unit doesn't have the founder. Score honestly: would the unit be profitable if the founder weren't physically there?

Axis 2 — System Packaging Maturity

Trục 2 — Mức độ đóng gói hệ thống

EN — The question: Can your system be transferred to someone who has never met you?

VI — Câu hỏi: Hệ thống của bạn có thể chuyển giao được cho người chưa bao giờ gặp bạn không?

Why this matters

A franchise license is a promise that the buyer can replicate your success without you. If the model lives in the founder's head, the founder is the asset — and the asset cannot be franchised. Packaging is the work of moving the system out of the founder's head and into documents, processes, and training.

Scoring rubric

Score	What this looks like
1	System lives in the founder's head plus a kitchen recipe binder · training is "shadow me"
2	Some SOPs written for the kitchen / front-of-house · no Brand Manual · training is 1–2 weeks of in-store observation
3	Brand Manual draft exists · SOPs documented for all core functions (ops, HR, marketing, supply) · training is a 2–3 week structured program · field support is ad hoc
4	Full Operations Manual (200+ pages) · 4–6 week certified training program · ongoing field support cadence documented (X visits/quarter, response SLAs)
5	All of the above PLUS annual ops audit cadence · training certification with measurable competency outcomes · dedicated franchise support team with named roles

Proof points you must be able to show

- SOP completeness checklist by department (Ops, FOH, Kitchen, Supply, Finance, HR, Marketing,

Maintenance)

- Training program syllabus with hours, modules, assessments
- Support cadence document — visits per quarter, calls per month, response SLAs
- An anonymized sample of your most-recent franchisee operations audit

The Vietnamese version of this trap

"SOP có viết đó nhưng nhân viên có làm theo đâu." If your own staff don't follow your SOPs, your franchisee's staff won't either. Score on what's actually executed, not what's documented.

The most common failure mode

Treating packaging as a documentation exercise. The real work is identifying every founder-tacit decision that needs to become a written rule — the way you handle a 30%-off ingredient supplier offer, the way you decide to extend opening hours on a holiday, the way you handle a guest complaint that mentions food allergy. Each of these lives in the founder's instinct. Each needs a rule.

Axis 3 — Franchisor Financial Runway

Trục 3 — Nền tài chính của bên nhượng quyền

EN — The question: Can the franchisor business operate cash-positive on royalties alone, before any new franchise sales?

VI — Câu hỏi: Doanh nghiệp bên nhượng quyền có thể vận hành dương dòng tiền chỉ bằng royalty (phí định kỳ), không cần phí ban đầu của hợp đồng mới hay không?

Why this matters

This is the single most dangerous question in franchising, and almost nobody asks it publicly in Vietnam. A franchisor business funded by initial-franchise fees is a Ponzi-shaped structure. When growth slows, the franchisor cannot support existing franchisees, because supporting them costs money that was supposed to come from selling more franchises.

The healthy franchisor model: initial fees are a one-time recovery of onboarding cost. Royalties fund ongoing operations. If royalty income at your unit count doesn't cover your franchisor opex, you are not yet a sustainable franchisor.

Scoring rubric

Score	What this looks like
1	Pre-revenue franchisor entity · cash from initial fees IS the operating budget · no separate franchisor P&L

Score	What this looks like
2	Franchisor entity barely covers costs from initial fees · royalty income covers less than 30% of opex
3	Royalty income covers franchisor opex at 30+ unit scale · below that scale, dependent on new-sale fees
4	Royalty income covers franchisor opex at 20–30 unit scale · small profit at 30+
5	Royalty income covers franchisor opex including marketing fund / innovation / support at 15–25 unit threshold · franchisor profitable independent of new sales

Proof points you must be able to show

- A separate franchisor P&L — not consolidated with corporate-owned unit P&Ls
- The break-even unit count for the franchisor entity on royalties only
- A cash-runway analysis showing months of opex coverage at current royalty income
- A scenario model for "what happens if we don't sell another franchise for 24 months"

The Vietnamese version of this trap

The Mixue effect creates a temptation to model the franchisor business on rapid franchise-sale velocity. "Mixue mở 100 cửa hàng một năm — chúng ta cũng có thể." Mixue's scale is funded by a supply-chain markup that most Vietnamese brand owners cannot replicate. If your franchisor model only works at Mixue's pace, your model only works at Mixue's pace.

The most common failure mode

Confusing "the brand makes money" with "the franchisor business makes money." These are two different P&Ls. Score on the franchisor entity P&L specifically.

Axis 4 — Founder Franchisor Mindset Shift

Trục 4 — Chuyển dịch tư duy: từ Nhà sáng lập đến Chủ hệ thống

EN — The question: Have you built the org chart of a franchisor company, or are you still running a multi-unit operator company?

VI — Câu hỏi: Bạn đã xây dựng cơ cấu tổ chức của một công ty nhượng quyền, hay vẫn đang điều hành một công ty đa chi nhánh sở hữu?

Why this matters

The founder of a great restaurant chain is rarely a great franchisor. The skills are not the same. A franchisor needs to do four things the multi-unit operator does not:

1. Sell franchises (sales discipline, not founder charisma)
2. Onboard new owners (training the buyer, not training staff)
3. Govern franchise relationships (managing peers, not managing employees)
4. Continuously improve the system (R&D for the model, not for the menu)

If your team is not staffed for those four functions, you are not yet running a franchisor business.

Scoring rubric

Score	What this looks like
1	Founder still operates day-to-day in one or two units · no dedicated franchise team · franchise sales is "whoever asks"
2	Founder is part-time on franchise development · still runs ops the rest of the time · no dedicated franchise team
3	One full-time franchise development hire · founder owns franchisee relationship management · founder still in operational meetings daily
4	Dedicated franchise team (sales, training, support — at least 3 named roles) · founder leads strategy + governance · operations led by a COO who is not the founder
5	Full org chart of a franchisor (sales lead, training lead, field support lead, marketing lead, ops audit lead, finance/legal) · founder is CEO of the franchise system, not Operator of a unit

Proof points you must be able to show

- Current org chart with all roles named
- Headcount by function
- Role descriptions for the franchisor team (not the operations team)
- The founder's calendar — what percentage of time is in franchisor work (strategy, governance, sales, relationship management) vs. unit operations (kitchen, FOH, staff scheduling)?

The Vietnamese version of this trap

"Tôi vẫn phải vào bếp mỗi sáng vì không ai làm được như tôi." If that's true, you are not yet a franchisor — you are an irreplaceable operator. The franchise model collapses on the day you stop being in the kitchen. The work of becoming a franchisor is the work of making yourself replaceable in the unit.

The most common failure mode

Founder time-allocation. The founder says they have transitioned, but the calendar shows 60% of their time in unit operations. The franchisee can sense this — and reads the founder as not-yet-trustworthy as a franchisor.

Axis 5 — Legal + IP Readiness

Trục 5 — Sẵn sàng về pháp lý và sở hữu trí tuệ

EN — The question: Is your brand legally protected, your franchise contract enforceable, and your disclosure document defensible — in every jurisdiction you intend to operate?

VI — Câu hỏi: Thương hiệu của bạn đã được bảo hộ pháp lý đầy đủ, hợp đồng nhượng quyền có thể thực thi, và tài liệu công bố thông tin (FDD-equivalent) đủ sức bảo vệ trước tòa — ở mọi quốc gia bạn dự định mở rộng?

Why this matters

Vietnamese brand owners under-invest in this axis more than in any other. The cost of under-investment is asymmetric: small expense now, catastrophic expense later. Three cases in the last decade — Phở 5 Sao copying Phở 24's décor, Phở Thìn's trademark dispute, the Trung Nguyên family lawsuit — were all preventable with stronger early legal work.

Scoring rubric

Score	What this looks like
1	Brand registered in home country only (and not in all classes) · no franchise contract template · no disclosure document · IP held in the founder's personal name
2	Trademark filed in 1–2 countries · standard MOU template · no FDD-equivalent · IP held in the operating company, not a dedicated IP entity
3	Trademark filed in your priority expansion countries · franchise contract template reviewed by counsel · partial disclosure document

Score	What this looks like
4	Trademark perfected (granted, not just filed) in all priority countries · full franchise contract with jurisdiction-specific clauses · complete FDD-equivalent · IP held in a dedicated IP entity with a license-out structure
5	All of the above PLUS annual legal review cadence · dispute-resolution framework with chosen forum and law · cross-border tax structure with treaty optimization · IP enforcement protocol (cease-and-desist, takedown, litigation)

Proof points you must be able to show

- Trademark register entries with grant dates (not just filing dates) in all priority jurisdictions, all relevant Nice classes
- Master franchise contract template (the one you give to your lawyer, not the one your lawyer drafts for the first time when a deal appears)
- Your disclosure document — for Vietnamese context, this is the Decree 35 tài liệu giới thiệu; internationally, the FDD or local equivalent
- A signed Trademark License Agreement between the IP entity and the operating entity (proof of separation)

The Vietnamese version of this trap

"Lấy hợp đồng mẫu trên mạng rồi sửa lại cho mình." This is the single most expensive shortcut in Vietnamese franchising. Boilerplate contracts miss the 15 clauses that matter when things go wrong (territory exclusivity, post-termination non-compete, supply chain control, audit rights, dispute jurisdiction, IP reversion, brand-standard enforcement, fee escalation, transfer rights, force majeure, key-person, confidentiality, indemnification, governing law, severability).

The most common failure mode

Filing trademarks but not perfecting them. Filing is a queue; granting is the protection. Many Vietnamese brand owners discover the gap when a copycat opens — at which point the only remedy is litigation that will outlast the copycat's profitability.

Tally + Interpretation

Tổng điểm và phân tích

Add your five scores. The maximum is 25.

Score band	What it means	What to do next
22–25	Franchise-ready. All five axes are at institutional grade. The system can support franchisees without putting them at undue risk.	Begin franchise sales. Continue improving the lowest-scoring axis.
17–21	Packaging gaps to close. The model is real but the system is not yet complete. Selling franchises at this stage means the franchisor is finishing the system on the franchisee's dime.	Identify the two lowest-scoring axes. Spend 6–12 months closing them before any franchise sale.
12–16	Foundational work first. The core operating model may be sound but the franchisor business is not yet built. Selling franchises at this stage will create disputes within 18–24 months.	Do not sell franchises yet. Focus on Axes 1 (validation), 3 (franchisor financials), and 4 (mindset / team). 12–24 month workplan.
<12	Not ready. You are still building the operating business. Franchising at this stage will damage the brand and create avoidable losses for everyone involved.	Continue building the operating business. Re-take this diagnostic in 12 months.

A note on honesty / Một lưu ý về tính trung thực

This diagnostic is most valuable when scored honestly. The cost of over-scoring is paid by your first franchisee — and by the next ten franchisees, whose decision to buy is influenced by the first one's experience. The brand owner who scores honestly and waits 18 months is the brand owner who franchises successfully for 30 years.

Bộ chẩn đoán này có giá trị nhất khi bạn chấm điểm trung thực. Cái giá của việc chấm cao hơn thực tế sẽ do franchisee đầu tiên của bạn trả — và do mười franchisee tiếp theo, vì quyết định mua của họ phụ thuộc vào trải nghiệm của người đầu tiên. Chủ thương hiệu chấm điểm trung thực và chờ 18 tháng chính là chủ thương hiệu nhượng quyền thành công suốt 30 năm.

What happens next / Bước tiếp theo

If you scored yourself with this diagnostic and want a second opinion, the diagnostic can be run as a structured engagement with Phi's consultancy team. The deliverable is a written readiness report with each axis scored against documented evidence, the lowest-scoring axis given a 90-day remediation plan, and a recommended next-12-month franchisor roadmap.

Nếu bạn đã tự chấm và muốn có ý kiến thứ hai, công cụ chẩn đoán này có thể được vận hành như một engagement với đội tư vấn của Phi. Sản phẩm bàn giao là báo cáo sẵn sàng dạng văn bản với từng trục được chấm điểm dựa trên bằng chứng cụ thể, trục thấp nhất kèm kế hoạch khắc phục 90 ngày, và lộ trình franchisor 12 tháng tiếp theo.

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Use case: signature asset — free VN lead magnet + paid global diagnostic step-one

— Phi · 2026-05-21

What happens next

You now have a number out of 25. It is not a verdict — it is a map. The next step is to turn your weakest axis into a 90-day plan.

The full practitioner's guide — with the scoring rubric for every axis, the templates (AUV calculator, SOP checklist, franchisor P&L model, org chart, IP perfection list), a 90-day remediation plan per axis, and anonymized case studies — is published as a free e-book.

Read the weekly series and join the waitlist at nguyenphivan.com.

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