

Member Communication Experience

How to Get Clarity on My Business Numbers

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Wondering how to gain clarity on your business numbers – even if they’ve felt confusing, incomplete, or inconsistent in the past? If you’re leading a \$3 million – \$20 million company, your business has likely outgrown gut instincts and spreadsheet guessing. You need a clear, real-time view of your financial performance to make faster, smarter, and more confident decisions.

But here’s the challenge: most founders didn’t start their companies to read financial statements. You might be seeing profit, but struggling with cash. Or you’re unsure whether your pricing model is actually making you money. Clarity is possible – and it starts by organizing the right information in the right way.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Clarity starts with knowing which numbers matter most
- » Your profit and loss (P&L) doesn’t tell the full story – cash flow, margins, and trends matter too
- » Systems and rhythms – not spreadsheets – create consistent insight

THE REAL COST OF NOT KNOWING YOUR NUMBERS

When you don’t have financial clarity, decisions get delayed, opportunities get missed, and stress multiplies. You might find yourself constantly reacting to shortfalls, overspending on low-return activities, or struggling to explain performance to your team or investors. Even worse, you might feel like things are



working – when they’re actually unraveling under the surface.

Financial fog creates risk. And in growth-stage businesses, that risk gets expensive fast.

START WITH THE THREE NUMBERS THAT MATTER MOST

You don’t need to track dozens of metrics to gain clarity. You just need to start with the few that give you the clearest picture of your business health. We recommend beginning with three foundational numbers:

- » **Gross Margin:** This tells you how much of every dollar you keep after covering direct costs. If this number isn’t healthy, profit will always be a struggle.

- » **Free Cash Flow:** This is the real money left after expenses and reinvestment. It reveals how much you can use to grow, reinvest, or protect.
- » **Return on Labor:** How much net profit you're generating for every dollar spent on your team – across both direct and indirect roles.

These three numbers give you insight into profitability, cash control, and team efficiency. From there, you can add Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on your unique business model and growth priorities.

BUILD A SIMPLE REPORTING RHYTHM

Clarity doesn't come from a better spreadsheet – it comes from a better system. Start by committing to a regular financial review process. This means updating and reviewing your numbers weekly, monthly, and quarterly – not just at year-end or when things go wrong.

Here's a structure we recommend:

- » **Weekly:** Review cash balances, payables, and receivables
- » **Monthly:** Close the books, review your income statement, and compare actuals to forecast
- » **Quarterly:** Assess trends in margin, cash flow, and key KPIs – and reset goals if needed

Assign ownership. Whether it's your controller, bookkeeper, or CFO, someone must be responsible for ensuring the numbers are updated, accurate, and accessible.

BUILD A DASHBOARD THAT TRANSLATES NUMBERS INTO DECISIONS


Financial clarity isn't about more data – it's about better visibility. That's why we recommend building a dashboard that puts your key numbers in one place. Think of it as your strategic control panel. It should show what's working, what's sliding, and what actions to take.

Don't overcomplicate it. Start with the basics:

- » Revenue vs. forecast
- » Gross margin by product or service
- » Monthly net income
- » Operating cash flow
- » Cash-on-hand runway

Visuals matter. Use charts, color coding, and trend lines to make it easy to spot issues or improvements. And keep it updated so your leadership team can use it to drive weekly and monthly decisions.

FINAL WORD: CLARITY IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Knowing your numbers gives you more than just peace of mind – it gives you power. You can price more confidently, forecast more accurately, hire more responsibly, and invest with more precision. You stop reacting – and start leading. 



About the Author

Steve Coughran is the founder of [Coltivar](#) and a trusted partner to construction and service-based businesses that want to grow without the chaos. With deep experience in finance, strategy, and operations, Steve helps owners get clear on their numbers, fix what's holding them back, and build companies that are worth owning.

About the Article

Republished from [Coltivar](#). Coltivar gives construction business owners a proven system to grow profitably, increase cash flow, and build a more valuable, sellable company. Whether you're stuck, scaling, or preparing to sell, [Coltivar](#) combines financial strategy, technology, and ongoing support to help turn confusion into clarity. At the core of their approach is a system built to help owners scale their business like they plan to sell it, even if selling isn't the goal today.

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