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The Pre-Diligence Reputation Checklist

What a buyer's team finds when it researches the principal.

Buyers diligence the principal, not only the company. Background screening, adverse media searches, litigation checks, and increasingly AI-assisted research all run on the founder's name from the first week of a process. What that research returns is rarely reviewed in advance.

Work through this before the process opens, while there is still time to correct, contextualize, and sequence.

01 Name Resolution

- [ ] A bare-name search returns the principal on page one, without the company name supplied.
- [ ] Same-name individuals carry nothing that would attach to the principal in a screen.
- [ ] AI assistants return an accurate answer to "who is [name]" across at least three models.
- [ ] The principal's record resolves independently of the company's brand, which may be new.

02 Adverse Surface

- [ ] Civil litigation, judgments, and liens searched in every jurisdiction of operation.
- [ ] Regulatory, licensing, and professional disciplinary records identified.
- [ ] Prior ventures, dissolutions, and insolvencies accounted for and explainable.
- [ ] Former employee and contractor content located across review and forum platforms.
- [ ] Adverse media checked in every market and language where the company operates.

03 Third-Party Record

- [ ] Reddit and forum threads naming the principal or the company reviewed.
- [ ] Review platforms assessed for volume, recency, and unanswered complaints.
- [ ] Wikipedia, Crunchbase, and data aggregators verified as accurate and current.
- [ ] People-search and court-record aggregators checked for stale or wrong entries.

04 Controlled Record

- [ ] The company site names the principal with role, tenure, and verifiable credentials.
- [ ] LinkedIn is current and consistent with every other public account of the same facts.
- [ ] Bios across all surfaces agree on dates, titles, figures, and claims.
- [ ] Retired positioning is removed: old titles, prior company names, superseded frameworks.

05 Timing and Disclosure

- [ ] Every item above is documented before the process opens, not after a buyer raises it.
- [ ] Material items are disclosed on the principal's timeline and in the principal's framing.
- [ ] Nothing material is concealed. Suppression is reconstructed in diligence and costs more than the item.
- [ ] Monitoring is in place for the duration of the process, not only at the start.

Before you are introduced, your name is researched.

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