

O P E R A T O R G U I D E

What Does a COO Do?

The COO runs day-to-day operations. They own the systems, the processes, and the delivery so the work gets done without the owner in every decision.

01 What they do

- ☐ Build the processes that the team follows.
- ☐ Put the tools in place and make sure they are used.
- ☐ Set the rhythm: what gets reported, how often, and to whom.
- ☐ Hire and train the people who do the work.
- ☐ Fix what breaks before it reaches the owner.

02 CEO, COO, and fractional COO

CEO: Owns direction. Full-time. Always.

COO: Owns day-to-day delivery. Full-time. When the business is large enough.

Fractional COO: Owns the systems that run it. Part-time. When the owner is the bottleneck.

03 When a fractional COO makes more sense

You need the work done, but you do not need a full-time hire yet. The business is past the point where you can do it all, and not large enough to justify a full-time COO. You want someone who has done it before, for a scoped engagement with a fixed price.

04 When a full-time COO makes more sense

The business has multiple teams. The work is complex enough that it needs someone in the seat every day. You have the revenue to support the role. The fractional engagement has already built the systems, and now they need a full-time owner.

If the owner is still the bottleneck, start fractional. Move to full-time only when the systems are built and the business can support the seat.

05 What to do next

Write down what is stuck. If it is one system or one process, a fractional COO can take it. If it is the whole operation and the business is large enough, look at a full-time hire.