

The 9 Symptoms of a Failing SME

Early warning signs every
leader should recognise.

Most SMEs don't collapse overnight.

They break slowly - through patterns leaders overlook.

These are the **9 symptoms** we see repeatedly in struggling or stagnant SMEs.

1. Revenue volatility



Sales swing unpredictably month to month with no pipeline discipline.

2. Margins shrinking while volumes increase



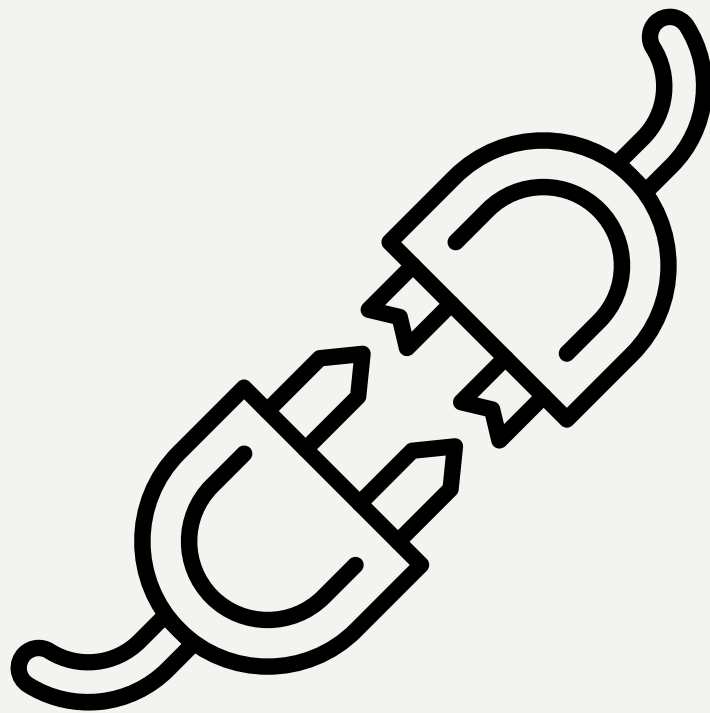
Topline grows, but profitability erodes due to operational leakage.

3. A founder doing 10 jobs



Decision-making is centralised.
Delegation is weak.
Execution bottlenecks everywhere.

4. Teams running on intent, not systems

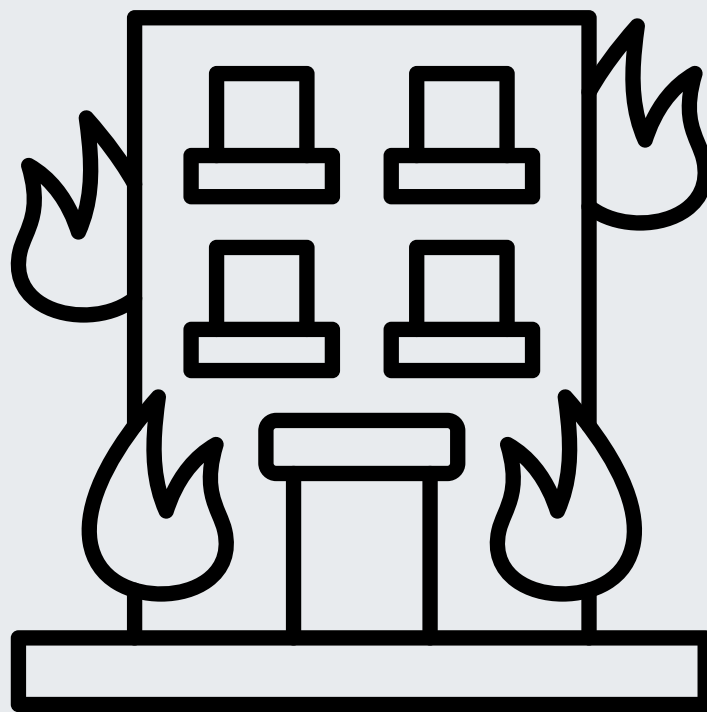


No SOPs.

No standards.

No accountability loops.

5. Constant firefighting



Reactive decisions.
Every day feels urgent.
No time to think strategically.

6. No clarity on financial health

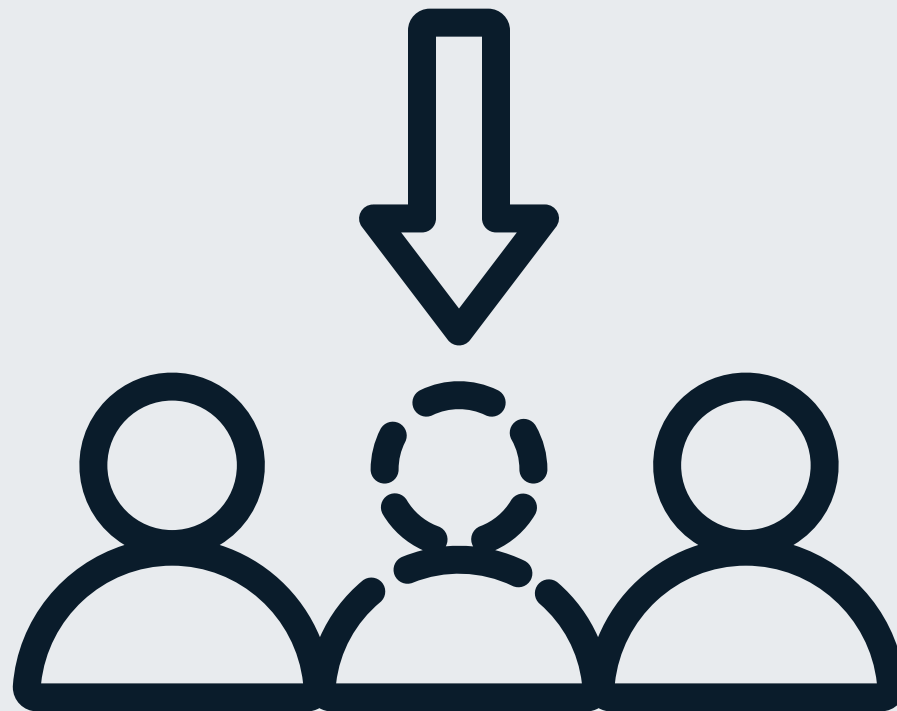


No dashboards.

No cash flow discipline.

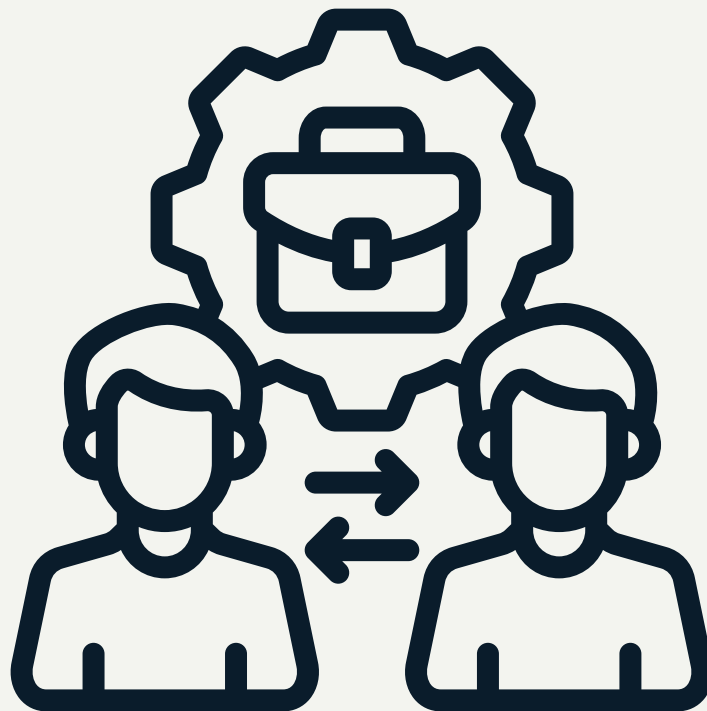
No unit economics visibility.

7. Customer churn masked as market issues



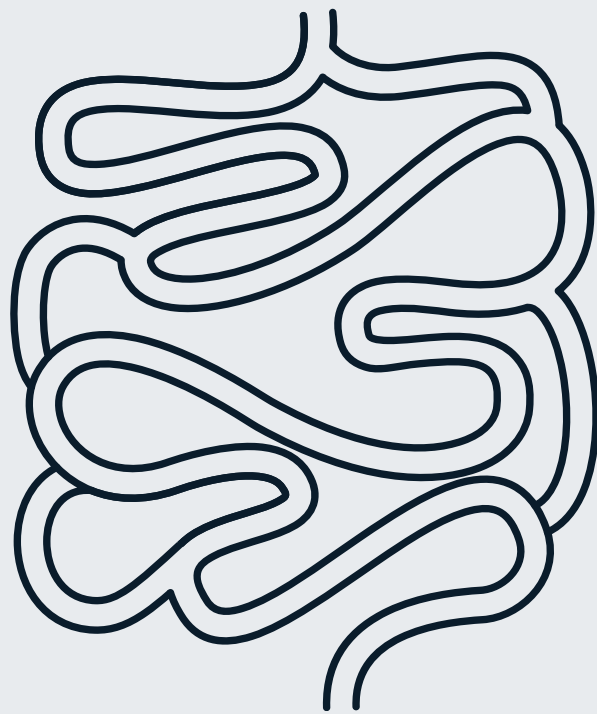
Repeat business is inconsistent because delivery isn't reliable.

8. High staff turnover



People join, try, burn out, and leave - repeatedly.

9. Excessive complexity built on an unstable core



Too many products, markets, or initiatives added before the basics were fixed.

Symptoms tell the story before the P&L does.

Early detection enables turnaround.

Structural fixes create sustainable growth.

STRATISIAN

Strategy.
Structure.
Scale.
