Rob Bickel Agency · Managed Software Services

The Production-Readiness Checklist

For products built fast with AI. 36 checks across monitoring, deployment, testing, security, data, and scale, so you can keep selling without the foundation giving way.

For founders and small product teams

WHY THIS MATTERS

AI got you to launch. It usually skips what keeps you there.

AI coding tools are excellent at producing working features. They rarely produce the operational layer around them, and that gap shows up right when customers arrive.

Outages you hear about last

No monitoring, so customers find problems before you do.

Risky releases

No tests or rollback, so every deploy might break sign-up or billing.

Security questions

Bigger prospects ask about auth, data, and access, and you need real answers.

Costs that scale badly

Inefficient queries and services get expensive as usage grows.

How to use this: check each item that's true today. Count the unchecked items in each section, then use the scoring guide at the end.

01 · Monitoring

Will you know before your customers do?

- [ ] Uptime checks on the app and key endpoints
  Login, sign-up, checkout, and API, not just the home page
- [ ] Errors are captured and grouped in one place
- [ ] Alerts reach a named person, not a shared inbox
- [ ] Logs are searchable for at least 14 days
- [ ] Scheduled jobs report when they fail or don't run
- [ ] SSL and domain expiry dates are monitored

02 · Deployment

Can you ship without holding your breath?

- [ ] All code lives in a company-owned repository
- [ ] Deploys run from a pipeline, not someone's laptop
- [ ] A staging environment mirrors production
- [ ] You can roll back a bad release in minutes
- [ ] Environment settings and secrets are kept out of the code
- [ ] More than one person can deploy

03 · Testing

Do you know what a change will break?

- [ ] Automated tests cover sign-up and login
- [ ] Automated tests cover payments or your core transaction
- [ ] Tests run automatically on every change
- [ ] A failing test blocks the deploy
- [ ] Someone reviews AI-generated changes before they merge
- [ ] You have a short manual checklist for releases

04 · Security

Could you answer a customer's security questionnaire?

- [ ] No secrets or API keys in the codebase or its history
- [ ] Admin and cloud accounts use multi-factor authentication
- [ ] Users can only reach their own data
  Authorization checked on the server, not just hidden in the UI
- [ ] Dependencies are scanned for known vulnerabilities
- [ ] Data is encrypted in transit and at rest
- [ ] You know which third parties receive customer data

05 · Data & recovery

If the database disappeared tonight, then what?

- [ ] Automated backups run at least daily
- [ ] Backups are stored separately from production
- [ ] You've restored a backup in the last 6 months
- [ ] Database changes are versioned and repeatable
- [ ] You know how much data you can afford to lose
- [ ] A written recovery runbook exists

06 · Scale & cost

What breaks at 10x your current usage?

- [ ] You know your slowest pages and queries
- [ ] Heavy work runs in background jobs, not web requests
- [ ] Third-party API rate limits are known and handled
- [ ] Cloud spend is tracked and has budget alerts
- [ ] You've load-tested your critical path at least once
- [ ] Someone owns performance and cost, by name

SCORING

Count your unchecked items.

0–6 Solid foundation. Keep it maintained as you grow, and revisit quarterly.

7–15 Workable, but fragile. Fix monitoring and deployment first. They catch everything else.

16+ You're scaling on luck. Prioritize monitoring, backups, and security before your next big customer.

Rule of thumb: a section with 3 or more unchecked items is where your next incident comes from.

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Want this handled while you keep selling?

We add monitoring, pipelines, tests, security, and scaling to AI-built products alongside your roadmap, then keep it running. I lead every engagement personally and our onshore and nearshore engineers support you, under one service agreement with flexible scopes of work and monthly invoicing.

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