

PRESENCE AUDIT · FOR FOUNDERS AND PERSONAL BRANDS

The Sniff Test

Before anyone hires you, buys from you, or partners with you, they look you up. This is what they find, and whether it earns the yes.

You are looked up before they say yes.

Trust gets decided before the conversation, in every field. Think about your own behavior. The last time someone recommended a person who actually mattered, a contractor, a designer, a coach, a doctor, did you book them before you looked them up? You looked. Everyone does. That search is the real interview.

A referral gets you considered. It does not close anyone. You were recommended for a reason, some version of what you are known for. The person takes that reason and quietly checks it against everywhere you show up. If what they find confirms it, and the proof is right there, the yes gets easy. If what they find is generic, scattered, or strangely empty of evidence, the referral quietly cools and you never know it happened.

The bigger the decision, the harder they look. A fractional exec, an agency on retainer, a wedding photographer, the more it costs to be wrong, the more diligence they do, and the more they need to see proof before they commit.

This document is a way to see yourself the way they see you. Not the bio you wrote two years ago. How it lands today, across every surface, as one impression of whether you are worth the yes.

Four surfaces. One verdict.

The sniff test does not happen on a single page. It happens across four surfaces, in about four minutes, and the viewer blends them into one feeling. Most people have never looked at all four together as one system. The person deciding always does.

01 · GOOGLE

The first move

They search your name. Whatever owns page one owns the story, whether you chose it or not.

02 · LINKEDIN

The credibility read

Your headline and About either say the one thing you want to be known for, or read like a generic resume.

03 · INSTAGRAM OR SOCIAL

The proof read

Where people see your work, your results, and your clients in public. For a personal brand, often where the yes is won or lost.

04 · WEBSITE

The deep read

The surface you fully control, and where your proof should live. A generic or evidence-free site is the most expensive miss of the four.

Five things have to be true.

Run every surface through these five. The audit prompt later in this document scores each one for you, but read them first. They are the standard the whole tool is built on.

01 Coherence

The same person shows up on every surface, all pointing at the one thing you want to be known for. The fastest way to fail is to be three different people across three different platforms.

02 Differentiation

Swap your name for a competitor's. Does the copy still read as true? If it does, you are invisible, you wrote the words anyone in your field could have written. What you want to be known for has to be unmistakable.

03 Narrative Control

When someone searches you, do you own the story, or does the algorithm? Page one should be the narrative you would choose, built from what you made and the proof you earned.

04 Proof

Visible evidence that you do what you claim. Here is the good news a regulated advisor never gets: you can show all of it. Testimonials, results, case studies, named clients, numbers. See the note below.

PROOF · YOUR ADVANTAGE

Lead with proof. You are allowed to.

This is the one place a financial advisor would envy you. No marketing rule, no restriction on testimonials. You can name clients, show results, post the case study, quote the praise, put the number on the homepage. So the failure flips: it is rarely saying too much, it is hiding the proof you already have out of modesty. Gather your receipts and put them where they get looked up.

The score that decides it.

05 The Sniff Test

The net effect. If someone was sent your way for a reason, and spent four minutes verifying, would they come away more convinced or less? This is the score that decides whether the yes happens. The other four are the reasons behind it.

Run this on yourself.

Gather your surfaces with the checklist near the end, then paste everything into Claude (preferred) or your large language model of choice and run the prompt below. It gets clear on what you want to be known for, scores you on all five dimensions, names the single highest-leverage fix, and builds a branded report you can download.

PROMPT 01 · THE AUDIT · PASTE INTO CLAUDE

You are a brand and presence auditor. Whatever I do, before someone hires me, buys from me, partners with me, or follows me, they look me up. They check Google, LinkedIn, Instagram, and my website, and they blend it into one fast judgment about whether I am the real thing. Be direct. I would rather hear it now than lose the client, the deal, or the follow later.

Here is everything someone would find when they look me up:

- MY NAME:
- WHAT I WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR (and to whom):
- WHAT I DO OR SELL:
- GOOGLE (titles/snippets for my name):
- LINKEDIN (my headline + About):
- INSTAGRAM OR MAIN SOCIAL (my bio + a description of my last 6 posts):
- WEBSITE (my homepage headline + opening copy, or "none"):

STEP 1. First, get clear on what I want to be known for. If I have not made it obvious above, ask me one question, "In one sentence, what do you want to be known for, and to whom?", and wait for my answer before scoring. Everything is measured against that one thing. Then audit me in writing, here in the chat, and score each dimension 1 to 10 with a one-line reason:

1. COHERENCE - same person on every surface, all pointing at the one thing?
2. DIFFERENTIATION - swap my name for a competitor's. Still true? Then I am invisible.
3. NARRATIVE CONTROL - do I own page one, or does the algorithm?
4. PROOF - testimonials, results, case studies, numbers, named clients. I CAN show all of it, so the failure is hiding it. Tell me where my proof is weak, missing, or buried.
5. THE SNIFF TEST - after 4 minutes, would the right person be more convinced or less?

Then give me THE VERDICT (one paragraph, do I pass today?) and THE ONE FIX (the single highest-leverage change, not a list).

STEP 2. Then build a branded report as a single downloadable HTML file titled "The Sniff Test," using only what is in the audit above. Include my name and the date, a composite score out of 50, the verdict, the five dimensions each with its score, a thin score bar, the one-line reason and a Next Step, and a dark One Fix block. Style it: parchment background #FAF8F0, near-black ink #211D18, cognac accent #8C6840, display font Cormorant Garamond, body font Inter, square corners, hairline rules, small-caps labels, no em dashes. Add an @page Letter rule, print-color-adjust exact, break-inside avoid on each block, and a fixed "Save as PDF" button that prints cleanly and hides on print.

STEP 3. If you can run code, also render that HTML to a true PDF with the fonts embedded and give it to me as a download.

STEP 4. Also give me a plain, text-only version of the whole audit that is easy to share or print.

If you cannot create files, do the audit as text, then paste the report HTML in a code block so I can save it myself, with the text-only version below it.

Tip: screenshot your Google results page and paste it in too. The model can read it.

Fix the weakest surface.

The audit tells you where you are leaking. This pass closes it. Run it right after the audit, in the same conversation, so the model still has the full context of what it just scored.

PROMPT 02 · THE REWRITE · RUN RIGHT AFTER THE AUDIT

Using the audit you just ran, rewrite my weakest surface so it passes the sniff test.

What I want to be known for: [paste it, or the one line you confirmed above].

Rewrite [my LinkedIn About / my Instagram bio / my website headline] so it:

- says the same thing as my other surfaces (coherence),
- could only be me, with no line a competitor could claim (differentiation),
- makes what I want to be known for unmistakable in the first two lines,
- puts my strongest proof right up front, a result, a name, a number, a testimonial,
- sounds like a person, not a brochure.

Give me two versions, one tighter, one warmer. Then tell me which you'd pick and why.

Gather your surfaces.

Five minutes of collection makes the audit ten times sharper. Open a blank note and grab each of these before you start the prompt.

Your name, exactly as it appears publicly

Including any title or business name you actually go by.

Your Google results

Search your name. Copy the top result titles, or screenshot page one.

Your LinkedIn headline and About

The full headline and the entire About section, pasted as written.

Your Instagram or main social

The bio verbatim, plus a one-line description of your last six posts.

Your website homepage

The main headline and the first paragraph of copy, or "none."

What you want to be known for

In one sentence, and to whom. The benchmark everything is measured against. If you can't say it, that is the first finding.

If the surfaces don't match, the leak is upstream.

When the audit says your presence is incoherent or undifferentiated, the instinct is to go fix the copy. Sometimes that is enough. Often it is not, because there was never a single thing you decided to be known for. You cannot make four surfaces say the same thing until you have decided what that thing is.

That decision is what The Positioning Blueprint is for. Pick the one thing. Pressure-test it until it holds. Then this audit becomes simple maintenance: you are just confirming that every surface still says it, and that your proof is right there. The two tools are a sequence: decide, then prove.

THE HONEST CLAIM

This won't build your reputation for you.

It tells you the truth about the one you already have, before a client does. The work of becoming someone worth recommending is still yours. This just makes sure that when the referral comes, your presence confirms it, and your proof is right there, instead of quietly talking the person out of reaching out.

Frameworks and credit: presence and trust thinking draws on classic brand coherence principles.