If someone has sent you this: they'd like more of the business's decisions to be made without them, and they'd like to agree with you which ones. Tick what you've done, and talk about the rest.

Who decides what, and up to where

Tick it on your own, or each of you separately and then compare.

Which decisions there are

- [ ] **You've listed the decisions that came to the person running the business in the last two weeks.**
  From email, messages and the calendar, not from memory.
- [ ] **You've sorted them by how often they come up.**
  The ones that come up every week are where a limit saves the most time.
- [ ] **You've marked the ones that really need that person.**
  For example, anything that changes where the business is going, or commits more money than anyone else should.

Where the limits sit

- [ ] **Each common decision has one named person who makes it.**
  One name, so nobody waits for two people to agree.
- [ ] **There's an amount up to which they decide alone.**
  For example, a refund, a discount or a purchase up to a set figure.
- [ ] **It's written down where people look for it.**
  A limit agreed only in conversation tends to be forgotten or stretched.
- [ ] **You've agreed what gets reported afterwards, and when.**
  A short weekly note is usually enough.

Agreeing it together

- [ ] **The people who'll decide have seen the list and said what's missing.**
  They usually know of decisions the person running the business never sees.
- [ ] **You've agreed what happens when a decision turns out wrong.**
  Agreeing in advance that it gets talked about, and isn't taken back, makes people readier to make the next one.
- [ ] **You've agreed which decisions still go to the person running the business, and why.**
  Knowing why makes the exceptions easier to accept.
- [ ] **There's a date to look at the limits again.**
  Limits set when the business was smaller stay where they were unless someone looks at them.

Why these points are important

When I ask someone running a growing business which decisions still come to them, they usually name the large ones. In my experience most of the time goes on small ones that come every day, because each takes a minute and nobody counts them.

Decisions that usually wait longest

- Refunds, credits and discounts for customers.
- Small purchases and subscriptions.
- Changes to an order with a supplier.
- Who covers what when someone's off.
- Replies to a complaint.

Each is small, and each one waits for the same person.

Why a figure works better than "use your judgement"

"Decide within reason" leaves people to guess where reason ends, and careful people guess low. A figure, or a named list, removes the guess.

What I'd do first

I'd start with the decision that comes up most often, set a limit for it and leave it for a month before adding another. One limit that holds does more than five that get taken back.

When a decision goes wrong

Some decisions made without you will be ones you'd have made differently. I'd talk about those afterwards and keep the limit where it is, unless the same mistake happens twice.

If you're the one who'd decide

It helps to say early which decisions you'd find hard to make alone, and what you'd need to make them. A short note afterwards on what you decided and why is usually what gets a limit raised.



WHERE COACHING FITS

People at this point often use coaching to separate the decisions they keep because they need to from the ones they keep out of habit, and to plan the conversation with the team. I won't tell you where your limits should be. I'll ask the questions that show what you'd lose by letting go of each one.

What to look for in any coach
simonbowen.com/guides/choosing-a-coach

A free first conversation
simonbowen.com/enquire/?moment=scaling