The CPG Startup Readiness Checklist

25 Questions to Prevent the Performance Dip

1 FAT Readiness (Factory Acceptance Testing)

- ☐ Ensure FAT test plan is embedded into the RFP (not developed after the PO is signed)
- ☐ Quantify acceptance criteria (run duration, throughput, reject rates, changeover time)
- ☐ Run actual production materials (films, cartons, adhesives) at target rate
- ☐ Conduct a 2–5 minute pre-test (and for complex systems, 2–3 weeks before full FAT)
- ☐ Run dry-cycle test at least 24 hours for mechanical validation
- ☐ Do production run test for at least 15–30 minutes at rate (longer for complex lines)
- ☐ Test safety systems (interlocks, E-stops, LOTO) as first-class criteria
- ☐ Have startup team (operators, maintenance, setup techs) attend the FAT
- ☐ Establish a documented punch list resolution process before shipment authorization
- ☐ Receive full deliverables at FAT closeout (manuals, spare parts lists, as-builts, calibration certs)

2 vFAT Discipline (Virtual FAT)

- ☐ Account for vFATs taking roughly double the time of in-person FATs
- ☐ Ensure audio-visual quality is sufficient to inspect build quality and detail
- ☐ Record changeovers for future operator training
- ☐ Account for possible remote subject matter experts who wouldn't normally travel

3 SAT Readiness (Site Acceptance Testing)

- ☐ Draft SAT protocol alongside your FAT protocol (not after installation)
- ☐ Quantify SAT acceptance criteria (OEE targets, run duration, quality thresholds)
- ☐ Explicitly verify upstream/downstream integrations
- ☐ Test utilities under full production load (air, steam, electrical)
- ☐ Ensure spare and wear parts are onsite before SAT begins
- ☐ Measure the OEE delta when the OEM team departs

4 Training & Transition Ownership

- ☐ Begin operator training at FAT (not at startup week)
- ☐ Ensure operators demonstrate proficiency, not just attendance
- ☐ Assign an owner for the transition from OEM-supported to independent operation
- ☐ Have training plan extend 3–6 months beyond startup

5 OEM Relationship & Support

- ☐ Ensure contract defines post-startup support duration, response times, and escalation paths

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