

Product readiness check: the last 20%

CHECKLIST · VERSION: JULY 2026

One prompt, one run — demo-ready, screenshot-ready, LinkedIn-ready. But "works in the demo" and "carries a business" are two different universes. **The 80% just became free. The last 20% decide whether you have a product.**

Specify, don't prompt

- ☐ The agent gets a precise brief — a specification, not a vague description
- ☐ You reach the goal without ten corrective prompts: one precise brief beats them all
- ☐ Specifying is a core skill you've trained, not an accident

Review as a primary discipline

- ☐ You've read the generated code — you read more code than you write
- ☐ You actually understand the code instead of waving it through
- ☐ You can own the code, not just produce it

Tests as a contract

- ☐ Automated tests tell you whether the fast agent was also right
- ☐ The edge case nobody prompted for is covered
- ☐ The whole thing is testable, maintainable, extensible — not a house of cards

Architecture in your head

- ☐ You see the system — not just the file the agent sees
- ☐ Someone understands the architecture when something is on fire
- ☐ You know how the code behaves under load — with real data, in six months

What this means in practice

- ☐ As a developer: your value moves from *producing* code to *owning* code — get excellent at review, learn to specify
- ☐ As a team lead: allow the AI speed — but don't skip the last 20%
- ☐ Rule of thumb: a feature that stands up in an hour and explodes in a quarter was never cheap — just prepaid

The full post: <https://halvic.ch/en/blog/the-last-20-percent>
