



What's Driving Your Decision to Sell?

This document helps you focus on what's motivating your sale decision and how your motivation affects the timing and approach for exiting your business.

Step 01: Define your motivation and sale urgency.

Some motivations force quick action. Others allow for a more flexible timeline.

The following chart lists the motivations behind most exit plans. Use the left column to check the factors (all that apply) that are influencing your desire to sell your business. Then use the right column to check the urgency of your situation.

Exit Plan Motivation (check all that apply)	Timing to indicate your urgency	
You're bored by your business.	Immediate	Flexible
You feel burned out.	Immediate	Flexible
You want or need to move to a different geographic area and your business is reliant on its current location.	Immediate	Flexible
You're facing health challenges.	Immediate	Flexible

Exit Plan Motivation (check all that apply)	Timing to indicate your urgency	
A pending or recent divorce or family or personal change prompts your need to sell.	Immediate	Flexible
You need to make more money than your business can provide.	Immediate	Flexible
Your business would benefit from increased investment and energy you don't feel able to provide.	Immediate	Flexible
You're fed up with your partners.	Immediate	Flexible
All your net worth is tied up in your business and you want to sell in order to diversify.	Immediate	Flexible
You're overwhelmed by financial problems.	Immediate	Flexible
You want to retire.	Immediate	Flexible
Other.	Immediate	Flexible
Motivations/Factors specific to you.	Immediate	Flexible

Step 02: Define what you want to do after a sale.

Many business owners want to leave their businesses once and for all. Others want to stay involved, either as a part owner, a contract employee, or a consultant to the new owner. Often, even those who want to walk away agree to remain involved for a short period of time, usually 3-12 months, to facilitate the transition to the new owner.

Defining your after-sale interests helps you design a sale approach that fits your motivations. Consider the questions on the following page:

Yes/No answers will help you determine how to offer your business for sale. **Maybe** answers indicate areas you need to consider more carefully in order to develop a sale offering that matches your desired outcome.

Yes No Maybe Your personal after-sale priorities

Do you want to sell your business and walk away?

Are you willing to remain involved during a 3-12 month post-sale transition period?

Do you want to remain at the managerial helm of your business after its sale?

Do you want to remain involved full-time with your business, either as a partner or an employee, after its sale?

Do you want to remain as a part-time consultant or employee with your business after its sale?

Is it important (or necessary) to you to receive a full or significant payment at the time of sale closing?

Step 03: Decide what you want for your business after a sale.

Yes/No answers limit the buyer pool for your business, while **No** answers leave you open to the greatest range of prospective buyers. **Maybe** answers require additional consideration to enable you to proceed confidently with your marketing effort, which is the focus of Chapter 3.

Yes No Maybe Your personal after-sale priorities

After a sale, is it important to you that your business remains in its current location in order to minimize disruption to your clients and to your staff?

Is there a key employee or family member or members to whom you prefer to sell your business?

Is there a key competitor, supplier, or other business you'd prefer (or prefer not) to sell your business?