The Business Owner Playbook

A Premier Guide to Attracting Talent, Reducing Taxes, Protecting Your Company, and Maximizing Enterprise Value.

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OVERVIEW

The Challenges Every Business Owner Faces

Most owners spend years building a successful company but very little time planning around the issues that determine whether that success lasts.

WHAT OFTEN GETS OVERLOOKED

- Talent retention
- Tax efficiency
- Retirement accumulation
- Business continuity
- Holistic financial planning
- Succession planning and exit readiness

> A business is often the **largest asset** an owner will ever possess, yet many owners have no formal strategy for **converting that asset into retirement income.**
>
> *Planning early is what turns a successful company into a successful outcome.*

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Building a Strong Employee Benefits Program

Benefits are no longer just an expense. They are a recruiting and retention strategy.

BENEFITS THAT MATTER

Executive Benefits

Health Insurance

Retirement Plans

Disability Insurance

Life Insurance

Dental & Vision Insurance

WHY GROUP BENEFITS MATTER

Companies with strong benefits programs often experience:

- Improved employee retention
- Stronger recruiting efforts
- Higher employee engagement & productivity
- Reduced turnover costs
- Lower administrative burdens

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Retirement Plans: More Than Just a 401(k)

Retirement plans can help business owners reduce taxes, reward employees, build wealth, and create long-term retention.

COMMON PLAN TYPES

Traditional 401(k)
Retirement plan with employee contributions and optional employer matching.

Safe Harbor 401(k)
Allows owners to maximize contributions by making required employer contributions.

Profit Sharing Plan
Lets employers make flexible retirement contributions for employees.

Cash Balance Plan
Allows for high tax-deductible contributions for business owners.

SIMPLE IRA
Low-cost option for small businesses with employer and employee contributions.

SEP IRA
Employer-funded plan with flexible, tax-deductible contributions.

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Executive Benefits and Retaining Key Employees

Businesses who employ individuals who are critical to the success of the business — the loss of just one key employee can create a significant disruption.

EXECUTIVE BENEFIT STRATEGIES

- Executive Bonus Plans
- Deferred Compensation Plans
- Key Person Insurance
- Split Dollar Arrangements
- Buy-Sell Funding

CHOOSING THE RIGHT STRATEGY

Not every business needs every tool. Before making a decision, ask:

- Who are the key employees you cannot afford to lose? Cost to replace them?
- Is your primary objective retention, succession planning, or business protection?
- How do cash flow, taxes, and long-term profitability impact your options?
- Are ownership transitions or leadership changes expected in the future?

The goal is to reward and retain the people who help drive the business before competitors or changing circumstances do.

Protecting Your Business

The right protection strategies help safeguard your business, your employees, and your ownership when life doesn't go according to plan.

THREE AREAS OF BUSINESS PROTECTION

PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

Key Person Insurance

Provides financial protection if the loss of a key employee or owner impacts business operations.

Business Overhead Expense Insurance

Helps cover eligible operating expenses if a business owner becomes disabled and cannot work.

Cyber Liability Insurance

Helps businesses respond to cyberattacks, data breaches, and technology-related risks.

PROTECTING BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Buy-Sell Agreements

Establishes how ownership will transfer following a triggering event, helping ensure a smooth transition and protecting all parties involved.

Funded with Life Insurance

Provides liquidity to fund a buyout when an owner passes away.

Funded with Disability Insurance

Provides funds to purchase an owner's interest following a qualifying disability.

PROTECTING AGAINST KNOWN AND UNKNOWN LIABILITY

Traditional Business Insurance

Helps protect against common operational risks through coverage such as general liability, business owner's policies, and workers' compensation.

Umbrella Liability Insurance

Provides an additional layer of liability protection beyond the limits of underlying insurance policies.

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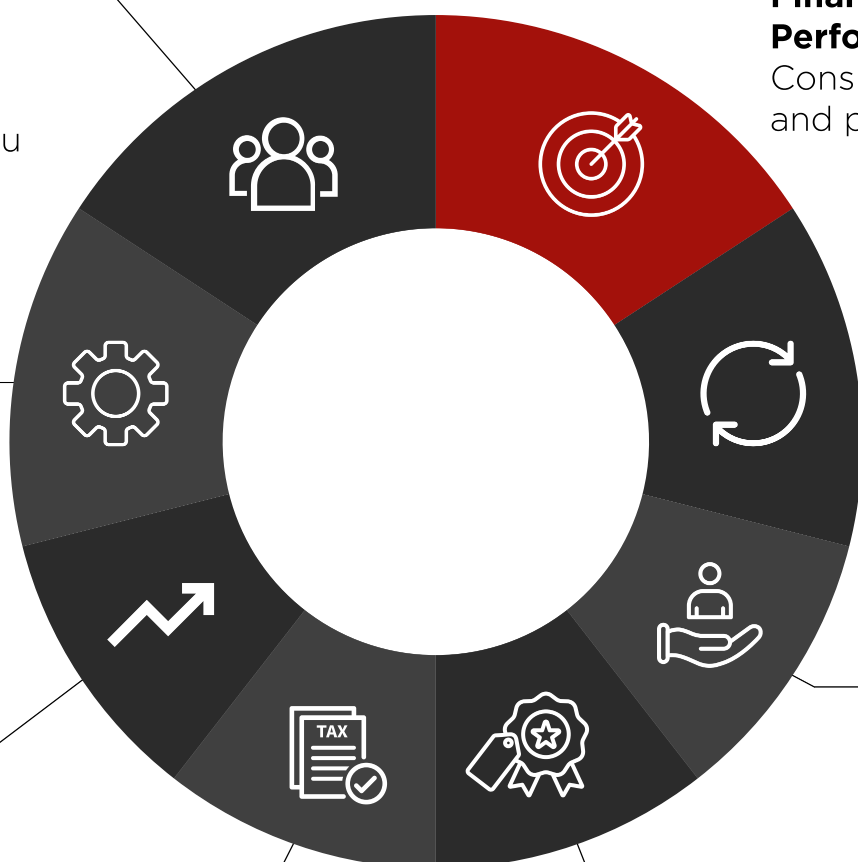
Increasing Business Value

Enterprise value is built long before you sell

THE 8 DRIVERS OF ENTERPRISE VALUE

Leadership Strength
A capable team that doesn't solely rely on you

Financial Performance
Consistent growth and profitability



Operational Excellence
Efficient processes and scalable systems

Recurring Revenue
Predictable, repeatable, and valuable

Corporate Benefits
Strong benefits strategy that supports growth and retention

Growth Strategy
A clear plan for future expansion

Tax Efficiency
Efficient tax planning that supports long-term growth

Brand Reputation
A strong market position and trusted name

Preparing Your Business for an Exit

Buyers pay for quality, stability, and reduced risk. Start preparing now to maximize your outcome

WHAT BUYERS LOOK FOR

- Consistent growth
- Strong profitability
- Leadership Security
- Clean financial records
- Scalable benefits

WHAT LOWERS VALUE

- Owner dependence
- Unprotected risk
- Inconsistent earnings
- Disorganized operations
- Legal or compliance items

COMMON RED FLAGS

- No formal financial reporting or forecast
- High reliance on a few customers or vendors
- Key employees not incentivized to stay
- Lack of documented processes
- Unfunded partnership agreements
- Unclear or uncommunicated growth strategy

The best time to prepare for an exit is 3 to 5 years before you plan to sell.

Exit Planning Engineered for Success

A successful exit doesn't happen by accident.

THE EXIT PLANNING ROADMAP

1. Strengthen financial performance
2. Build recurring revenue
3. Reduce owner dependence
4. Create a strong leadership team
5. Clean up legal & operational documents
6. Optimize tax strategy
7. **LIQUIDITY EVENT**

POSSIBLE EXIT PATHS

***70-90%**

of a business owner's net worth is often tied to their company.

Your exit strategy determines how much of it you actually keep.

Family Transfer
Transition to the next generation

Strategic Acquisition
Sale to a competitor or strategic buyer

Private Equity
Sale to a private equity firm

Management Buyout
Sell to your existing management team

Third-Party Sale
Sale to another external buyer

*Based on information from Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesfinancecouncil/2026/05/11/business-exit-planning-and-the-transition-behind-the-transaction/, and Kiplinger, https://www.kiplinger.com/business/small-business/entrepreneurship/603901/warning-your-business-is-not-a-retirement-fund

Succession Planning

A strong succession plan ensures the business can thrive for years to come.

SUCCESSION CONSIDERATIONS

- Identify and develop internal talent
- Create a leadership transition plan
- Communicate the plan to key stakeholders
- Review and update regularly

Whether you plan to transfer to a family member or someone that is a part of the team, timely planning can provide confidence, tax efficiency, and ease administrative burdens.

> “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.
>
> — Benjamin Franklin

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Your Business. Your Legacy. Our Partnership.

Turn the ideas in this guide into a coordinated strategy for your company, your employees, and the future you are building.

1 ASSESS

Clarify priorities, risks, and opportunities.

2 ALIGN

Connect benefits, protection, tax, and exit planning.

3 ACT

Build a practical roadmap with clear next steps.

READY TO MOVE FORWARD?

Schedule a Discovery Meeting

Start with a focused conversation about where your business stands today and what needs to happen next.

CALL 913.283.4423

SCAN TO GET STARTED

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