How to Know When It’s Time to Sell Your Business — Before It’s Too Late

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Every business owner knows the day will come when they either sell their company or pass it on. What’s harder to accept is when that day is today.

Waiting too long can mean declining profits, dwindling energy or a missed opportunity to maximize your exit. But leaving too soon can stir doubt — what if the next owner hits record growth?

While there’s no perfect formula for timing your exit, there *are* signs. If you’re starting to wonder whether it’s time to move on, these three signals may offer the clarity you need.

Related: When Should You Get Your Business Ready to Sell? The Best Time to Start Is Now — Here’s Why.

1. You feel drained instead of driven

Remember when you used to wake up energized by possibility? When you loved solving customer problems or brainstorming with your team? If that drive has turned into dread, take notice.

Many founders dismiss this phase as temporary burnout. But if you’re going through the motions day after day — uninspired and emotionally checked out — it’s not just a rough patch. It’s a sign that your time in the business may be up.

Hanging on to a company you no longer love doesn't just affect your mood — it chips away at the business's value. Culture suffers. Growth stalls. And by the time you decide to sell, it may be worth far less than if you had exited earlier.

2. You've stopped getting excited about growth

New partnership? Big client? Expansion opportunity? If those words once lit a fire in you but now just sound like more work, you're not alone.

When you no longer feel pulled toward opportunity — and instead feel trapped by it — it's a strong indicator that your motivation has run dry. And motivation is fuel. Without it, growth halts and momentum fades.

Declining revenue is the death knell of a strong sale. Buyers pay for potential, not stagnation. So if you feel like you have nothing more to give, don't wait for the numbers to reflect that. Move before they do.

3. Your business is booming

Ironically, one of the *best* times to sell is when everything's going right. Profits are strong, clients are happy, and you're at the top of your game.

So why would you even consider leaving?

Because that's *exactly* when your business is most attractive to buyers — when there's still room to grow. Smart owners don't wait to "ride it out a few more years." They sell while the company is on the upswing, not after it peaks.

We worked with a client who planned to sell in 24 months. But when the time came, he delayed. Again and again. By the time he was ready, his energy was gone, performance had slipped and

the business sold for far less than it could have.

Waiting for the “perfect” moment is how many owners miss the best one.

Related: Sell Your Company When You Least Expect It — How to Properly Scale and Sell Your Business

What to do if you see the signs

These signals are emotional and internal — but your next step should be grounded in data. If any of these signs resonate, get a business valuation or exit assessment. Know what your company is worth *today* and what’s at stake if you wait.

Most importantly, don’t wait until you’re exhausted to begin the process. Selling a business takes time and energy — two things in short supply once burnout sets in.

You don’t need a crystal ball to time your exit well. You just need to trust your instincts — the same ones that helped you build this business in the first place.

Every business owner knows the day will come when they either sell their company or pass it on. What’s harder to accept is when that day is today.

Waiting too long can mean declining profits, dwindling energy or a missed opportunity to maximize your exit. But leaving too soon can stir doubt — what if the next owner hits record growth?

While there’s no perfect formula for timing your exit, there *are* signs. If you’re starting to wonder whether it’s time to move on, these three signals may offer the clarity you need.

The rest of this article is locked.

Join Entrepreneur+ today for access.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/leadership/3-signs-you-are-ready-to-sell-your-business/491769