

FEES

How much does a business broker charge to sell a business?

By Ayodele Olasiji, Optimax Commercial · Updated October 18, 2026 · 2 min read · Online at [optimaxdeals.com/guides/business-broker-fees](https://www.optimaxdeals.com/guides/business-broker-fees)

SHORT ANSWER

Most main street business brokers charge a success fee of about 10% of the sale price, commonly in an 8% to 12% range, with a minimum fee of \$10,000 or more. Larger deals often use the Lehman or Double Lehman scale, where the percentage falls as the price rises, and some brokers add upfront fees. Optimax Commercial charges sellers 3% at closing with a \$25,000 minimum and nothing upfront.

How to, at a glance

1. Expect about 10% at most main street brokers, often with a minimum
2. Ask in writing about any upfront or monthly fees
3. Compare fees in dollars at your likely price, not percentages
4. Judge the broker on buyers they bring, not the fee alone

Questions owners ask

Who pays the business broker fee, the buyer or the seller?

Usually the seller, out of the proceeds at closing. Some brokers also charge buyers. Optimax charges both sides and tells both in writing.

Are business broker fees negotiable?

Often, yes. The percentage, the minimum, any upfront fees and how long the agreement lasts are all worth asking about before you sign.

What is a Double Lehman fee?

A tiered success fee: 10% of the first \$1 million of price, 8% of the second million, 6% of the third, 4% of the fourth and 2% above that. Versions differ, so ask for the fee in dollars at your expected price.

Do I pay anything if my business does not sell?

Not under a success fee only agreement. Upfront fees and retainers are usually owed either way. Optimax charges nothing unless it sells.

Typical broker fees by deal size

Deal size	How the fee is usually set	Typical range
Main street business, under about \$1 million	Percentage of the sale price, paid at closing	About 10%, commonly 8% to 12%, often with a \$10,000 or higher minimum
Very small business, under about \$100,000	Flat fee, or a percentage with a minimum	A flat \$10,000 to \$15,000 is common
Larger business, about \$1 million and up	Lehman or Double Lehman scale	Double Lehman: 10% of the first \$1 million, then 8%, 6%, 4% and 2% on each next million

Ranges come from the published fee guides under Sources. They are not quotes. The agreement you sign is what you pay.

What the fee looks like in dollars

Percentages hide the real number. Here is the seller's fee at five sale prices.

Sale price	10% broker	Double Lehman	Optimax
\$300,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$25,000
\$500,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
\$1,000,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$30,000
\$2,000,000	\$200,000	\$180,000	\$60,000
\$5,000,000	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$150,000

Two honest notes. Below about \$833,000, the \$25,000 minimum is more than 3% of the price: at \$300,000 it works out to about 8.3%. And at \$5 million, a plain Lehman scale (5%, 4%, 3%, 2%, 1%) also comes to \$150,000, the same as 3%.

Upfront fees to ask about

Some brokers charge before anything sells. Ask about each one in writing, and ask whether it is credited against the success fee at closing.

- Engagement or onboarding fee
- Monthly retainer
- Valuation fee
- Marketing package or listing fees

The fee is not the whole cost

A lower fee only helps if the price holds. What matters is what you keep: the sale price, minus every fee, minus what the terms cost you, such as seller financing or a long training period. A broker earns the fee by putting more than one qualified buyer in front of you, because competition is what moves the price.

How Optimax charges sellers

- 3% of the sale price, paid at closing, with a \$25,000 minimum.
- Nothing upfront: no retainer, no listing fee, and nothing at all if it does not sell.
- Buyers also pay Optimax a fee under their own agreement, and both sides are told in writing.
- Your business goes only to buyers who signed our confidentiality agreement. No public listing.

Sources

- [ClearlyAcquired, How much do business broker fees actually cost in 2026](https://www.clearlyacquired.com/blog/how-much-do-business-broker-fees-actually-cost-in-2026) www.clearlyacquired.com/blog/how-much-do-business-broker-fees-actually-cost-in-2026
- [Investors Club, Business broker fees in 2026](https://investors.club/how-much-do-business-brokers-charge) investors.club/how-much-do-business-brokers-charge

Thinking about selling?

Buyers already signed up and under NDA, including cash buyers. Matched directly, no public listing. 3% at closing, \$25,000 minimum, nothing upfront.

Get a private call back

www.optimaxdeals.com/sell

Get the free seller kit

www.optimaxdeals.com/seller-kit/business

Optimax Commercial · [701 504 8429](tel:7015048429) · ayo@optimaxdeals.com