

EXIT

Tired of running your business? Five ways out, and what each one pays

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

SHORT ANSWER

If you are done running your business, you have five realistic exits: sell it to an outside buyer through a broker, sell it fast to a direct buyer, sell it to an employee or family member, step back and hire a manager, or lease it to an operator and collect rent. Selling to competing buyers usually pays the most; a direct sale is fastest; leasing or a manager keeps the asset but not the work.

How to, at a glance

1. Work out what the business earns for an owner
2. Get a price range from comparable sales
3. Pick an exit: broker sale, direct sale, insider sale, manager or lease
4. Keep the business running well while you decide
5. Let more than one buyer see it before you accept

Questions owners ask

What is the fastest way to get out of my business?

A direct sale to a buyer who closes with their own cash is usually fastest. Expect a lower price in exchange for the speed, and check proof of funds before you sign.

Can I sell my business and keep the property?

Yes. You can sell the business and lease the building or land to the buyer, which gives you a sale price now and rent after.

What does Optimax charge to sell?

3% of the sale price at closing, \$25,000 minimum, nothing upfront and nothing if it does not sell. Buyers also pay Optimax a fee under their own agreement, and both sides are told in writing.

The five exits side by side

Exit	Speed	What you usually get	Your work after
Sell through a broker to outside buyers	Months	The market price, set by competing buyers, minus the fee	None after handover and training
Sell direct to a "we buy" firm	Can be weeks	One offer, usually below market, no commission	None
Sell to an employee or family member	Varies	Often a fair price paid over time	Often you carry the financing
Hire a manager and step back	Weeks to hire	Profit minus the manager's pay	Oversight, books, problems
Lease it to an operator	Weeks to months	Rent, and you keep the property	Collecting rent, checking reports

Which one fits you

- **You want the most money and can wait a few months:** sell to competing buyers.
- **You need out fast:** a direct buyer, but test the offer first. See [selling to a "we buy" company or a broker](#).
- **You own the property and want income:** lease it out. See [leasing out a car wash](#); the same terms apply to most owner operated businesses.
- **You have someone inside ready to take over:** sell to them, ideally with a lender involved so you are not the only bank.

Before you choose, get three numbers

1. What the business earns for an owner: profit plus your own salary and any personal expenses run through the business. Brokers call this seller's discretionary earnings.
2. What buyers would likely pay. A broker can give you a range from comparable sales.
3. What you would net after fees, taxes and any loan payoff. Your accountant can run the tax side.

Burnout makes owners sell too cheap

The most common mistake is taking the first offer because you are exhausted. A tired owner lets the numbers slide, and buyers pay for the last twelve months. Keep the books clean and the place running while you sell, and let more than one buyer see it.

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

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