

The End Game:

Planning Your Business Exit with Confidence



Toolkit Event Workbook

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INTRODUCTION

Selling a business is a major decision. Whether you're preparing to exit or simply exploring future options, the best outcomes come from clear goals, thorough preparation and a structured plan.

"The End Game" is a 2026 Dorset Chamber Toolkit presented by P.Griffin Consulting. This accompanying workbook is designed to help you clarify what you want from a sale, assess how ready and attractive your business is, explore the main exit routes, and identify the practical steps needed to move forward with confidence. Inside, you'll find four practical tools:



1. BUSINESS SALE GOALS WORKSHEET – Define what a successful sale looks like for you, financially and personally.

2. BUSINESS SALE READINESS & VALUE SCORECARD – Assess your business's attractiveness, highlight value gaps and identify areas to strengthen.

3. KEY BUSINESS SALE OPTIONS – A concise overview of the main exit routes and their key considerations.

4. BUSINESS SALE PLANNING CHECKLIST – A step-by-step guide to help you prepare thoroughly and maximise value and certainty.

Whether you plan to sell soon or simply want to future-proof your business, these tools offer a clear, practical starting point. They'll help you clarify priorities, guide internal discussions and shape a sale that delivers the return, legacy and lifestyle you want.

If you'd like support interpreting the results or shaping a tailored exit plan, I'm here to help.

UNLOCKING LASTING SUCCESS

Maximising business value through focused growth, powerful strategy, strong leadership and highly motivated teams.



Accelerate Profitable Growth



Build High-Performing Teams



Design & Deliver Winning Strategies

1. BUSINESS SALE GOALS WORKSHEET

Clarifying what you want your sale to achieve

STEP 1 – DEFINE YOUR DESIRED OUTCOMES Rate how important each goal is to you on a scale of 1–5 (1 = Not important, 5 = Essential to a successful sale).

1.	Financial Return	Achieving the value you want, strong upfront payment, and a structure that supports your long-term financial security.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Your Future Lifestyle & Plans	Funding retirement, freeing up time, moving on to a new venture, or simply reducing stress.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Business Legacy	Ensuring the business continues to thrive, preserving values, and maintaining reputation.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Team Continuity & Wellbeing	Protecting jobs, looking after loyal staff, and choosing a buyer who will invest in your people.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Right Type of Buyer	A buyer that will achieve alignment with your preferred outcome.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Minimising Your Ongoing Involvement	How quickly you want to step back – immediately, phased, or remaining in an advisory role.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Timing of the Sale	When you ideally want to complete: immediately, this year, or within a longer timeframe.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Smooth Process & Low Disruption	A sale process that is well-managed, confidential, and doesn't impact performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Tax Efficiency & Net Proceeds	Maximising how much you keep after tax, including use of Business Asset Disposal Relief where applicable.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Emotional Readiness & Confidence	Feeling personally ready, supported, and clear about what happens after the sale.	1	2	3	4	5

STEP 2 – YOUR TOP PRIORITY GOALS

From step 1, identify the 3–5 goals that matter most to you:

1.	<hr/>	<hr/>
2.	<hr/>	<hr/>
3.	<hr/>	<hr/>
4.	<hr/>	<hr/>
5.	<hr/>	<hr/>

STEP 3 – CHALLENGE IDENTIFICATION

For each priority, consider what challenges need to be overcome:

STEP 4 – YOUR PERSONAL DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL SALE

Complete the sentence:

"A successful sale, for me, means..."

2. BUSINESS SALE READINESS & VALUE SCORECARD

Rate your business honestly on each value lever from 1–5, where:

1 = Weak / high risk

3 = Average / needs improvement

5 = Strong / attractive to buyers

Add up your total at the end section.

1. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE & PREDICTABILITY (1–5)



Does the business have stable revenue, strong margins, and clean financials over multiple years?

- 1–2: Volatile, unclear accounts
- 3: Generally stable
- 4–5: Very predictable, strong profit & cash flow

Score

2. GROWTH POTENTIAL (1–5)



Is there a clear, credible growth story a buyer can leverage?

- 1–2: Limited growth or unclear strategy
- 3: Some potential
- 4–5: Strong markets, clear opportunities

Score

3. CUSTOMER QUALITY & CONCENTRATION (1–5)



How diversified and loyal is your customer base?

- 1–2: Heavy reliance on one or two key customers
- 3: Moderate concentration
- 4–5: Diverse, sticky, recurring customers

Score

4. MANAGEMENT TEAM STRENGTH (1–5)



Can the business operate without you?

- 1–2: Highly dependent on owner
- 3: Some delegation
- 4–5: Strong team; business runs independently

Score

5. OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY & SCALABILITY (1–5)



Are processes efficient, documented, and scalable?

- 1–2: Informal, inconsistent
- 3: Acceptable but improvable
- 4–5: Efficient, documented, scalable systems

Score

6. MARKET POSITION & COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE (1-5)



Is the business clearly differentiated in its market?

- 1-2: Minimal differentiation
- 3: Competitive but not unique
- 4-5: Strong brand, niche strength, USP

Score

7. BUSINESS MODEL QUALITY (1-5)



Is the revenue model attractive (recurring, contracted, etc.)?

- 1-2: One-off or transactional
- 3: Mix of repeat and one-off
- 4-5: High recurring, contracted, long-term

Score

8. LEGAL, COMPLIANCE & RISK PROFILE (1-5)



How “clean” is the business legally and operationally?

- 1-2: Gaps in contracts, compliance, IP, or disputes
- 3: Mostly in place
- 4-5: Fully compliant, well documented, low risk

Score

9. WORKING CAPITAL & CASH FLOW (1-5)



Is the business cash-generative with manageable working-capital needs?

- 1-2: Cash-flow stress or high stock/debtors
- 3: Generally stable
- 4-5: Strong, reliable cash generation

Score

10. SYNERGY POTENTIAL FOR A BUYER (1-5)



Would a buyer benefit from cost savings, market expansion, or cross-selling?

- 1-2: Limited buyer synergy
- 3: Some potential
- 4-5: Clear synergy opportunities

Score

What your score means



40-50: High Value & Sale-Ready - Your business is highly attractive. You could enter a sale process soon with confidence.

30-39: Solid, but Improvements Will Boost Value - The business is saleable, but 3-5 targeted improvements will significantly increase value and reduce buyer risk.

20-29: Needs Preparation Before Sale - A buyer would see risk and discount value. A 12-24 month improvement plan is recommended.

UNDER 20: High Risk / Low Value - A sale is possible but unlikely to achieve a strong price. Substantial preparation needed.

Total Score
Out of 50

3. KEY BUSINESS SALE OPTIONS

When planning your exit, it's important to understand the different routes available and how each one affects value, control, people and timing. Every option comes with its own advantages and challenges, so the right choice depends on your goals, your business structure and how you want your transition to look.

The summaries below provide a clear, quick overview to help you compare the main exit paths and decide which is best for you. Rate each option so you know which are contenders for further consideration.



1. TRADE SALE - SALE TO ANOTHER BUSINESS

Selling your business to a strategic buyer – often a competitor, supplier, customer, or company looking to expand.

Appeal Rating

Low	Mid	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pros:

- Potentially highest valuation if there are strategic synergies
- Faster exit once the deal is complete
- Buyer may bring resources to grow the business further
- Allows the owner to walk away more quickly after handover

Cons:

- Cultural clash risk for staff
- May require a longer earn-out period tied to performance
- Customer relationships may be disrupted
- Buyer due diligence can be demanding and time-consuming



2. MANAGEMENT BUYOUT (MBO)

The existing management team buys the business, often financed through loans, investors, or staged payments.

Appeal Rating

Low	Mid	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pros:

- Continuity for customers, staff and operations
- Buyers already understand the business
- Smoother transition with less disruption
- Allows staged exit, giving owner phased income

Cons:

- Management team must have the capability and appetite
- Financing can be complex, and valuations may be lower
- Owner may need to provide some vendor financing
- Transition period may be longer than a trade sale



3. EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP TRUST (EOT)

A structure where a trust is created to buy the business on behalf of the employees. Supported by favourable UK tax legislation.

Appeal Rating

Low	Mid	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pros:

- Significant tax benefits
- Protects jobs and culture
- Creates strong employee engagement and loyalty
- Owner can stage the exit gradually

Cons:

- Usually requires a strong, stable cashflow to fund purchase
- Valuation is fair market value, not strategic premium
- Requires robust governance structures
- Not suitable if employees lack interest in ownership



4. FAMILY SUCCESSION

Passing the business to children or family members through sale or gifting.

Appeal Rating

Low	Mid	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pros:

- Maintains family legacy and continuity
- Familiar leadership for customers and staff
- Can be structured tax-efficiently
- Flexibility in timing and transition

Cons:

- Family dynamics can complicate decision-making
- Successor may lack capability or motivation
- Hard conversations about fairness between family members
- Valuation and financial return may be lower



5. PARTIAL SALE / INVESTOR (PRIVATE EQUITY OR MINORITY STAKE)

Selling a portion of your business to an investor, often to fund growth or de-risk personally.

Appeal Rating

Low	Mid	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pros:

- Allows owner to take some money out while staying involved
- Investor brings expertise, networks and growth capital
- Potential for a larger future exit if the business scales
- Can maintain leadership continuity

Cons:

- Owner gives up some control and decision-making autonomy
- Investor expectations can increase pressure
- Governance & reporting requirements become more formal
- Next exit depends on investor timelines

4. BUSINESS SALE PLANNING CHECKLIST

Selling your business is a major step, and good preparation makes all the difference. This checklist highlights the essential actions to strengthen your business, boost its value and ensure a smooth, well-planned exit. Use it to quickly assess where you stand and what to focus on next.

1. CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

- ☐ Define personal and financial goals
- ☐ Set your ideal exit timeframe
- ☐ Decide full or partial exit
- ☐ Define what a “successful exit” looks like

2. CHOOSE YOUR EXIT ROUTE

- ☐ Trade sale
- ☐ Management Buyout (MBO)
- ☐ Employee Ownership Trust (EOT)
- ☐ Family succession
- ☐ Partial sale / investor

3. STRENGTHEN YOUR FINANCIALS

- ☐ Clean, accurate accounts (3+ years)
- ☐ Improve margins & cashflow stability
- ☐ Prepare forecasts and KPIs
- ☐ Fix financial red flags

4. REDUCE OWNER DEPENDENCY

- ☐ Delegate operations & decision-making
- ☐ Strengthen management team
- ☐ Document key processes
- ☐ Build a business that runs without you

5. BUILD A TRANSFERABLE BUSINESS

- ☐ Solid team structure
- ☐ Standardised processes & systems
- ☐ Clear value proposition
- ☐ Diversified customer base

6. ENSURE COMPLIANCE & HOUSEKEEPING

- ☐ Review contracts and legal documents
- ☐ Protect IP and trademarks
- ☐ Resolve disputes or liabilities
- ☐ Ensure GDPR and regulatory compliance

7. MAXIMISE VALUE DRIVERS

- ☐ Strong leadership and culture
- ☐ Reliable recurring revenue
- ☐ Long-term contracts / retention
- ☐ Low risk profile and stable performance

8. PREPARE YOUR SALE STORY

- ☐ Clear narrative of growth opportunity
- ☐ Transparent view of strengths and risks
- ☐ Simple information pack for buyers

9. BUILD YOUR EXIT TEAM

- ☐ Corporate Solicitor
- ☐ Accountant
- ☐ Tax adviser
- ☐ M&A finance adviser / broker

10. PLAN THE TRANSITION

- ☐ Define handover role and timeline
- ☐ Prepare staff communication plan
- ☐ Protect culture and customer confidence
- ☐ Plan your post-exit next chapter

Top Tip: **DON'T WAIT - PLAN EARLY**

An exit strategy isn't just for later...
...it's how you maximise value today!



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Slides, tools and
other resources:

