

Thinking of selling your business? Nine considerations for a winning exit

As a founder of a specialist software business, you may be considering what's next. But taking action is a different story.

Before deciding, it's crucial to be clear on what's important for you and your business so you can choose

an investment partner that aligns with your goals. The difference could be the exit you desire versus one that sidelines you with less money in your pocket and an unsatisfactory outcome for your customers and employees.

9 Exit Questions

1

How do I know when the time is right to exit?

There are many reasons you might sell. Perhaps the business has plateaued, or lacks the expertise and resources to scale. Or, it's simply time to rebalance your personal and professional lives and reap some rewards after years of hard work. Whatever the reason, selling requires careful planning ahead.

2

Is selling my business the right strategy?

If there's no clear succession plan, a management buyout isn't feasible, and winding down doesn't appeal, then selling could be a great option. Some exit strategies offer a financial exit while also protecting the business's long-term success, employees and customers.

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What options are available if I want to sell my business?

The "go-to" options are private equity, venture capital, or trade sale. But these might not be ideal. They can lead to undervaluation, low returns, and considerable uncertainty for the business's future. Instead, consider Permanent Equity, which prioritises a strong return and maximum growth without an investment horizon.

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Why is permanent equity a good investment option for me?

The right permanent equity partner will recognise the vision you've created, the value of your loyal customers, dedicated employees, trusted partners, and the industries you serve. So, they will offer fair valuations, pay fair prices, and maximise long-term growth – over decades, not just years – without compromising the integrity of what you've worked so hard to build.

Permanent equity also offers ways for founders to remain involved in the business, and retain a stake, after the transaction has completed. No other investment options offer this flexibility.

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How do I choose the right investment partner?

Every investor is different. To ensure their approach aligns with your goals, ask about their credentials, source of capital, investment horizon, involvement, and share percentage. If long-term success continues to be important, consider whether they have expertise in your sector and country and share your values and ambitions.

6

How do I create the right exit plan for me and my business?

Having created a successful business, you may want to stay involved after you have had external investment. If so, avoid investors demanding 100% of the shareholding upfront. Seek investors who value your involvement and will offer flexible deal structures and a share in future returns.

If you want to sell all your shareholding, choose an investor that is committed to growing and protecting your business, brand, team, and culture after you've gone.

7

What's the best process for selling my business?

The investment process you engage in should not be extended and opaque, draining time, energy, resources, and focus. Look for an investment partner with a transparent, uncomplicated approach that supports you at every step. Agree on a timeline early on. At Uplift, we work at your pace.

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What will my business look like after investment?

It depends on the investment route. Some investors will rebrand and restructure your business or fold your team into a corporate megastructure. Others, like Uplift, will retain what made your business successful – like people and culture – helping it achieve maximum potential in the long term.

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What support will I get after investment?

If you want your business to thrive, look for investors with experience acquiring and managing businesses like yours – not just money. Do they have the right network of advisors who will work with you? Can they add value by, for example, helping you optimise operational processes or streamline finance, adjust product strategy, launch in an entirely new market, or help with acquisitions to accelerate growth.

Are you curious about your next steps? Uplift is here to help. Contact us for a no-obligation discussion to explore the best path for your business. Read our [eBook for further information](#).

About Uplift

Uplift is Europe's leading quality-orientated permanent equity investor with a focus on niche European software businesses with €1m - €25m in revenue. Our team of software industry experts across Europe work alongside founders to create better deals for better companies. We collaborate to preserve companies' brand and culture while making long-term investments that unlock their growth potential and enable founders to fully or partially exit. For more information, visit www.uplift.com.