EXIT WITHOUT SELLING

FOREWORD

The primary reason most businesses don't scale is the same reason most owners get stuck.

I've spent years working with entrepreneurs, and the pattern is remarkably consistent. They work harder than almost anyone around them. They care more. They're usually the most talented person in the room. And that's exactly the problem.

Without realizing it, most entrepreneurs build a company that revolves entirely around them. They become the master problem-solver, the chief decision-maker, the sun around which all other planets orbit.

Jim Collins calls this the genius with a thousand helpers, and it's why most businesses never outgrow the owner's personal capacity. The owner never stops to consider that they are the ceiling. So they stay stuck for years or decades, and eventually are left with two bad options: keep grinding, or sell and walk away.

But as Richard and Luke will show you in the pages ahead, there's a third option: build an A-Player team that runs the day-to-day without you. If more business owners understood this option existed and had a proven system for getting there, they'd be far better off — psychologically, relationally, and financially.

INTRODUCTION

THE THIRD OPTION

I stared at the check in shock, a pit forming in my stomach. I never thought so much money could make me feel so sick.

After half a decade of pouring my life into this company, my partner was pushing to buy me out. I kept reading and rereading his email, calculating the value of our company and reviewing the proof of funds he'd attached. But I couldn't imagine walking away. Not now. Not like this.

There were plenty of reasons to sell:

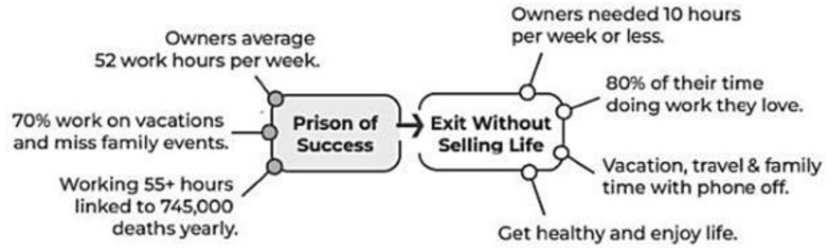
- I was burned out and bored with our current business and two other business opportunities on the table.
- My partner had the loyalty of our leadership team. If I didn't sell, I might stand alone.
- My ongoing battles with chronic Lyme disease, mold toxicity, and heavy metal poisoning had locked me in a flu-like haze every day.
- Our third daughter hadn't slept more than three hours straight for over a year. My wife and I were sleep deprived like never before.

I heard recently that owners who keep their businesses but step back from operations generate three to five times more long-term wealth than those who sell.

That's what we call Exit Without Selling.

To Exit Without Selling, you rebuild your business to run profitably without you so you can finally live the life you started your business to create.

When you Exit Without Selling, your business becomes a wealth-generating asset you own but don't operate. Your team, led by a particular type of Second-in-Command, runs everything. You're free to do only the work you love.



Best of all, when you structure your business this way, your business becomes infinitely more valuable. This gives you options to sell, but no obligation to. And if you do decide to sell, your Second-in-Command and team become a built-in buyer when done right.

It reminds me of a couple in our neighborhood who renovated their house to sell it. Six weeks and 40 grand later, the house was magazine-worthy. Months passed, and I still didn't see a For Sale sign. One day, I asked the husband when they planned to sell it.

His answer surprised me. "We're not," he said, "We realized, '*Why the hell would we sell this now? It's finally how we always wanted it!*'"

That's precisely what Exit Without Selling does to your business. You build something too good to abandon.

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Richard Shaull

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