



MAXIMIZE BUSINESS VALUE PODCAST - EPISODE 243 Transcript

Tom Bronson (1s):

Welcome to the Maximize Business Value Podcast, brought to you by Mastery Partners, where our mission is to equip business owners like you to maximize your business value and achieve the exit of your dreams, whatever that means to you. With insights gained from over a hundred business transactions, we share real-world strategies, lessons, and expert advice to help you build long-term sustainable value in your business. Each episode is hosted by one of our Mastery-certified partners, their seasoned experts who've helped countless business owners navigate the complexities of growth, scaling, and building value.

Tom Bronson (45s):

They bring firsthand experience, actionable insights, and a passion for helping you build a business that thrives. So let's dive in. Hi, this is Tom Bronson, and welcome to Maximize Business Value, a podcast for business owners who are passionate about building long-term sustainable value in your business. If you spent any time around me, you've probably heard me say, exit strategy is just good business strategy. But for a lot of business owners, the word exit feels like a four-letter word. It just makes business owners squirm.

Tom Bronson (1m 29s):

They change the subject. They say things like, I'm not ready to retire. That's way down the road. Look, I get it. I've been there. Well, not really. I start most things of importance in my life with the end in mind. So, there is a truth: whether you plan it or not, you are going to eventually exit your business. The only question is, how prepared will you be when it happens? So let's talk about why many business owners avoid that conversation and why. I believe it's one of the most important conversations you'll ever have.

Tom Bronson (2m 12s):

Here are the top 10 reasons why business owners avoid talking about an exit strategy. Number one, they think it means quitting. For most entrepreneurs, this business is their baby. Letting go feels like you're giving up, but it's not. It's graduating to the next level. Your business is an asset. It is not your baby. Number two, they identify their identity is tied to the business. When your name is on the door, it's hard to separate who you are from what you do.

Tom Bronson (2m 56s):

That's why a well-planned exit includes a vision for what's next, what's next in your life. Number three, they're stuck in the day-to-day of the business. Now, most business owners are too busy putting out fires and keeping the lights on to even think about an exit strategy. But if you're always reacting, you're never preparing, and that day catches up to you. You look up and COVID was five years ago, not just last year, and you realize, oh my goodness, I've been stirring the sauce.

Tom Bronson (3m 36s):

That's a term that I use from when I had a pizza restaurant. If I caught myself stirring the sauce, that meant that I was working in the business and not on the business. Business owners just love to stir that sauce. Number four, they don't know where to start. Exit planning just sounds overwhelming, and honestly, without a guide, it sure can be, but just like building your business, you don't have to go at it alone. Number five, they're afraid of the valuation. Look, I've sat across from business owners who expected their business to be worth \$10 million and found out that it was worth 4 million.

Tom Bronson (4m 22s):

Now, that is a punch in the gut, but it's also an awake-up call. It's really important to understand where you are to understand and have a path to where you're going. Number five, and this is a hard one. It's emotional. I mean, it just is. It's, I don't wanna sugarcoat it. It's personal. Exit involves your legacy, your family, and your employees. It's okay to feel something. Just don't let those feelings stop the progress. Even our clients who are the most logical engineering minds, when it comes to the date of the exit, they get emotional.

Tom Bronson (5m 8s):

Expect it. It's coming. No matter how emotional you might think you are, number seven, they just think it's too soon. Newsflash, the best time to start exit planning is years before you need it. Being exit-ready makes your business stronger today, even if you don't sell it tomorrow or ever. And don't you want a better, stronger business? Number eight, they don't trust the process. Now, look, some owners have been burned. I'm the

first one to understand that they've seen friends sell to the wrong buyer or get bad advice, and that's why picking the right advisors truly matters when it comes to your exit planning.

Tom Bronson (5m 57s):

Number nine, they worry about their team. I hear this all the time. What will happen to my people? Look, a good transition plan protects them, and it gives you peace of mind and gives them peace of mind in the process. Finally, number 10, they don't know what comes next. Now, if you don't have a vision beyond your business, an exit feels like sort of falling off a cliff. But when you plan your next chapter, it feels like launching from a springboard. So why do we talk about exit so much?

Tom Bronson (6m 40s):

Well, because I've lived it, because I've helped hundreds of owners go through it, because I've been on the other end of the phone from an attorney representing a deceased business owner whose family needs to liquidate the business, but we can't do it because nobody planned. The business simply wasn't sellable. And that's heartbreaking because it isn't just about the end. It's about building a business that's valuable, sustainable, and transferable.

Tom Bronson (7m 21s):

Let me show you what I mean. The better side of exit. Real reasons. We keep bringing it up. Number one, exit isn't quitting. It's not quitting. It's leading. Well, a SaaS founder I worked with stepped away at the peak of the business, not to retire, but to reinvest in other founders and scale his own impact. Another owner started having so much fun leading her business and her team that she just put off the exit for three more years. Number two, you are not your business.

Tom Bronson (8m 3s):

One client thought she'd feel lost after selling. Instead, she launched a new chapter as a mentor, an investor, and a community leader. She's leaving her best life. Number three, time is a gift. It's not a guarantee. Look, a healthcare force one owner's hand. Luckily, he planned and was able to sell on his own terms instead of in crisis. And let me tell you, from firsthand experience, a health scare is really a wake-up call. Number four, there is a playbook. I've built one, I've used it, and I've seen it work over and over again.

Tom Bronson (8m 45s):

You don't need to invent the wheel; you just need to follow a proven path. Number five, the market will tell you the truth. One business owner thought he'd get \$10 million, and

after a reality check and 18 months of focused work, he actually sold for 11.2 million. Now, that's a nice outcome for 18 months' worth of work; six emotions are better managed with a plan. Look, I watched a second-generation owner honor her family's legacy and still create space for her own life goals because she started early.

Tom Bronson (9m 32s):

Number seven, exit-ready means opportunity-ready. A young agency owner wasn't planning to sell until the perfect buyer came along because he was ready. He cashed out and moved on to something bigger when that buyer showed up. Number eight, there are good buyers out there, I promise. I've seen transitions where employees are promoted, culture is protected, and the founder is the chairman. It is possible to find great buyers out there. Number nine, your team deserves a plan. The best exits I've seen involve open communication, leadership, succession, and zero surprises.

Tom Bronson (10m 17s):

That's how you protect your people. My teams always knew the plan was to sell. And guess what? Many of those employees are still with the companies that I sold, doing extremely well, maybe even better than they were when I was the CEO, and I'm helping impact the business owners. That's how I make future impact. Win, win, win, win, win. Everybody wins. Number 10, your next chapter might be better than you think. I've seen business owners start nonprofits, travel the world, right, and even enjoy a life that they didn't have time for before.

Tom Bronson (11m 1s):

The business is a chapter. It's not the whole book. Don't let it be the entire book. So here's the bottom line. You're going to exit your business one way or another. The only question is whether you'll do it on purpose or by default. That's why I won't stop talking about it, because exit isn't just a one-time event. It's the result of a thousand smart decisions made along the way. So wherever you are in your journey, don't treat exit as a dirty word. The sooner you start thinking about your exit strategy, the better the outcome will ultimately be.

Tom Bronson (11m 47s):

And if you wanna talk about building an exit-ready business that gives you freedom, options, and peace of mind, I'm here. You know how to find me, and you know how to find all my partners at [Masterypartners](#). Let's start a conversation. This, my friends, is the Maximize Business Value Podcast, where we give practical advice to business owners on how to build long-term sustainable value in your business. Be sure to tune in

each week and subscribe to our channel so you won't ever miss another episode. We'll see you next week.

Tom Bronson (12m 28s):

Thanks for joining us for another episode of the Maximize Business Value Podcast. I hope today's conversation sparked new ideas on how you can continue driving value in your business. But remember, it's not just about listening. It's about taking massive action. Visit our website [masterypartners dot com](http://masterypartners.com) for more resources. Grab a copy of any of the books in the Maximize Business Value series on Amazon or via the links below, and don't hesitate to reach out if you want to know how to apply these concepts to your business.

Tom Bronson (13m 8s):

So until next time, I'm Tom Bronson, reminding you to relentlessly execute while you Maximize Business Value.