

Timing is Everything?10 questions to ask before you sell

If you own a business, you've probably thought about trying to sell it at some point. But before you start dreaming of your profits?and even before you find out how much your business is worth?you need to consider if now is the right time. To figure that out you need ask yourself the following 10 questions.

- Can I currently make a living? If your business isn't making enough profit to support you and your family, it's time to sell and pursue other endeavors.
- Do I like what I do? If you no longer enjoy your work and have come to dread your responsibilities, selling is definitely an option to consider.
- Do I want to start another business? If you dream about closing your doors to open new ones, it might be time to sell.
- Will it be worth my while? Established businesses typically sell for more than newer businesses. If you've only owned your company for a few short years, you may maximize your profits by waiting a while.
- How will this affect my retirement? If you're retiring in the near future, the impact of selling your business will be enormous in your plans. Are you relying on a high sale price to be able to retire? Or are you moving to a new opportunity that will allow more flexibility?
- Would someone in the family like to take over? Before you put your business on the market, consider your own family. If you don't want to pass it on, a relative might want to buy your business and keep you on as a consultant.
- Is my business competitive? While immediate profits are certainly a selling point, interested buyers will also be interested in the long term potential of your business. Take a look at the marketplace in your neighborhood. Are you keeping pace with your competition? Outperforming them? If the answer is yes, selling is a reasonable option.
- Is the industry healthy? If your industry seems to be on a downswing or if your product has become obsolete, it's time to get out.
- Is my business healthy? There's nothing more attractive to a buyer than a healthy business that's on an upswing.
- Can my business stay competitive? While you may be successful right now do you think you will continue to be? For instance, if a big chain recently moved in, could you compete? If the answer is no then selling your business probably isn't a bad idea.

Honestly answering each of these 10 questions about yourself and your business will help clarify whether it's the right time for you to sell it.