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Time to PRUNE—The PURSUIT of LESS



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

My wife is a Master Gardner. That means that over the past 25 years she's taken multiple courses, attended numerous workshops and seminars, put in several thousand hours of volunteer work and continually researches and experiments on ways to better grow and maintain her vegetable and flower gardens.

No one is a true Gardner until they thoroughly understand and master the art of pruning. By definition, pruning is described as "removing dead, diseased, and injured parts of a tree, shrub or plant to maximize their vigor and aesthetic qualities. Removing vulnerable parts of the plant will also minimize the potential for pest damage. Plus, pruning encourages good growth patterns and improves air circulation".

In everyday life we need to get rid of the things that are preventing us from being happy, healthy and productive. By doing so we can have more energy to do what we need to do to find significance and importance in things and actions that help us determine how we live and perform best.

Much like pruning the plant so it can be more beautiful or bare more fruit, we need to take a deeper look at our business lives to see what we can get rid of that will provide a more successful and profitable business while providing a better, well-balanced personal life. I describe this as "Doing Less Better".

Pruning in business is simply getting rid of the clutter, distractions, dead weight and meaningless time and efforts that produces NO fruit. Let me give you some questions to consider.

1. What is one product or service you should prune right now?
2. Is there a product or service that takes more time and effort than it is worth?
3. What is one marketing expenditure that you do not need right now?
4. What cumbersome, underutilized software should you prune?
5. Is there a supplier or vendor who consistently causes more problems than they solve?
6. Who is the client or employee draining your love for your business that needs pruning?
7. What is the one event that you frequently attend that you need to prune?

8. What is a personal activity or routine that you need to eliminate right now?
9. If you could start over today how different would your organization look?
10. If you spent less time chasing new customers and focused more on maintaining your current customers, would your business grow? The answer is YES.

So, if you actually spent the time addressing the above 10 questions and you successfully got rid of all the dead wood and wistful efforts in your business, what would you do with the newfound time?

1. Would you use that time to recharge and innovate?
2. Would you use that time to start a creative project you always wanted to explore?
3. Would you invest time into your spiritual growth?
4. Would you spend more time with family and friends?
5. How would you use extra time for recreation and self-care?
6. What's one educational pursuit you'd take on if you had the time?
7. What friends from high school or college would you call?
8. What possible new markets would you like to explore?
9. Would you spend more time training and supporting your staff?
10. Would you put together an advisory board to do a S.W.O.T. analysis?

Getting rid of things we have been doing, for things that we should be doing, is much easier said than done. I would suggest that you meet with a trusted advisor before you start pruning to make sure you are making decisions based on what is in the best interest of your business, employees and customers. DO NOT allow your emotions to be part of your decision-making process. Remember, you are getting rid of the things that are not allowing you or your business to prosper and grow so you can substitute them with things that will help you improve and expand.

Pruning is getting rid of things that you do not need so you have the time and resources to invest in things that you do need to help you grow and prosper. Prune for less and strive for best.



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GROW, OPTIMIZE, EXIT: BUILD A BUSINESS BUYERS CAN'T RESIST



By Nick Piscani, Piscani Consulting Services

Every small business owner will exit their business one day, whether through retirement, a sale, passing it to family, closing down, or an unexpected twist. The catch? You don't always get to choose when.

Half of all exits are involuntary, triggered by illness, divorce, distress, or disagreements (CNBC). That's why it's crucial to always run your business like you're preparing it for sale. Yet 48% of those looking to sell have no exit strategy, and 75% think they can sell in a year when it really takes 3-5 years to prepare your business to sell at maximum value.

Without solid processes, systems, and structures, your business's value can take a hit. So, how do you stay sale-ready?

Start by developing an exit strategy; think about your preferred exit path (selling to a third-party, passing the business on to family, merging with another company, etc.). Consider your post-exit plans, such as retirement or starting a new venture, and calculate the financial needs to cover liabilities, taxes, and desired leftover cash.

Clear financials are essential for clarity and buyer confidence. Buyers, banks, and lenders typically require three years of financial records to assess the business's health. Disorganized or incomplete records signal risk and can derail a sale.

A business overly reliant on its owner is a red flag for buyers, who seek operations that run smoothly without constant oversight. Develop documented systems to ensure consistency and scalability. Invest in a strong management team by training employees or hiring skilled leaders to handle daily operations. This reduces owner dependency, making

the business more attractive and freeing you up for strategic tasks.

High customer concentration, where one client accounts for a significant portion of revenue, scares buyers due to the risk of losing that client post-sale. Diversify your customer base by targeting new markets or expanding product offerings. Additionally, explore recurring revenue models to stabilize income and increase customer lifetime value.

Preparing a business for sale can take 3-5 years, especially if significant changes are needed, yet 75% of owners underestimate this timeline. Create a detailed preparation plan and share this plan with your management team to align efforts and maintain accountability. Track progress with measurable goals. Hold regular meetings to review progress, address challenges, and make needed changes. This disciplined approach ensures steady improvement, maximizing value and readiness for any exit scenario.

In 2025, with small business sale values up 15% (Forbes), there's no better time to prepare your business for an exit. By always running it as if it's for sale, you'll boost its value and make it more profitable and resilient today. Don't let poor preparation lead to a discounted sale or no sale at all. Start these steps now, and you'll be ready to exit on your terms at maximum value, whether by choice or life's unexpected turns.

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Events: Register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

- Tune Up Tuesday - July 15th on Zoom
- SBRA Mingle – July 30th at Café Folino

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