
EXIT-READY · COURSE + WORKBOOK

The Exit-Ready System

The twelve-month system to raise what your business is worth, get it off yourself, and walk into a sale prepared, from first thought to life after the close.

1.65[×] → 3.5[×]

TWELVE MONTHS, ONE SYSTEM

The Main Street **Operator**

\$799

D3

HOW TO USE THIS

The Exit-Ready System is a twelve-month course with a working workbook: nine lessons, nine workbook pages, one business a buyer wants at the end.

- **Start this weekend.** Run the readiness read in Lessons 01 through 04 and end the weekend with your eight drivers scored and a dated twelve-month plan.
- **Work the lessons with the workbook.** One lesson, one workbook page, quarter by quarter across the year, never all nine read at once.
- **The sale-price number is free.** This course teaches the drivers and hands you the workbook; it does not compute what your business is worth. The free Keystone diagnostic does that in four minutes at app.trykeystone.io.

THE SHORT VERSION

From a broker's first call to money in the bank is closer to 18 to 24 months, not the weekend most owners give it. This is the twelve-month build that turns a 1.65-times business into a 3.5-times one before a buyer ever opens your books.

The broker called on a Tuesday, said he had a buyer active in your trade, and asked what your last three years looked like. You gave a number off the top of your head, he asked for the add-backs and the customer concentration, and the pause on your end told both of you the truth.

You are not a year of preparation behind. On the drivers that set the price, most owners are two.

That gap is what this system closes. It is a twelve-month build, not a weekend read, and it takes a business from owner-run and unprepared to owner-light, documented, and ready for a buyer's accountant to open the books without flinching.

What this system is

The Exit-Ready System is a self-paced course with a working workbook, built for one outcome: you walk into a sale prepared instead of ambushed. Nine lessons teach nine moves, in order, and every lesson hands you one workbook page you fill in on your own business.

You finish with an eight-driver scorecard, a twelve-month value-build plan, an owner-dependence baseline, a clean-books add-back schedule, a complete data room, a deal-team plan, and an offer-reading worksheet.

This is education and a static workbook, on purpose. It does not compute what your business is worth, and it is not a valuation.

The living, scored version that reads your business, tracks your three scores, and gives you an estimated sale price is the free Keystone diagnostic, linked at the end of every lesson.

The one thing that both frees you and pays you

Owner dependence is a single problem that pays off twice when you fix it.

The first payoff is your week: a business that runs without a call to you on a Saturday. The second payoff lands the day you sell.

A business that depends on its owner commonly trades near 1.65 times its yearly owner earnings; one that runs without the owner commonly trades near 3.5 times. That is a published market range from a decade of BizBuySell Insight Reports and IBBA Market Pulse, calibrated against roughly 1.6 million SBA 7(a) loan records, shown here for illustration, not a valuation of your business.

Put a dollar figure on that spread, on an illustrative business at about \$480,000 of yearly owner earnings (SDE):

Profile	Published market multiple	SDE	Illustrative figure
Owner-dependent (as it runs today)	near 1.65x	\$480,000	about \$792,000
Owner-light (after the 12-month build)	near 3.5x	\$480,000	about \$1,680,000

The gap between those two figures is about \$888,000, on the same business in the same year, changed by nothing but how much it leans on the owner. Every figure here is an illustration of a public market range, not a valuation, and never what your business is worth.

Your actual number is one of the free scores at the Keystone diagnostic, and the whole point of the twelve months is to move your business from the low end of that range toward the high end before a buyer ever sees it.

Exit-ready is not a document you write the month you sell. It is a business you build for a year before you list it.

The twelve-month arc

The system runs on a twelve-month clock, then a sale process on top of it. The twelve months are the preparation: raise the drivers, get the business off you, clean the books, build the data room.

The sale itself, from signed letter of intent to close, is a further 6 to 9 months, and any earnout runs 1 to 3 years after that.

Be honest with yourself about the calendar from the start. From first serious thought to money in the bank is closer to 18 to 24 months, and that is the case for beginning now rather than the week a broker calls.

Months	Phase	Lessons	What you end with
1	Baseline	01, 02	Your buyer, your eight-driver score, your gaps named
1 to 3	Plan and clean	03, 05, 06	The 12-month plan, the add-back schedule started, the data room opened
2 to 9	Get it off you	04	Owner-hours falling, the two-week test passed
9 to 12	Assemble and prepare	07	The deal team lined up, the books add-back-ready, the data room complete
At offer	Read the deal	08	An offer broken into its real parts, not a headline
Close and after	Run it and land	09	A closed sale and a plan for the day after

Lessons 05 and 06 run in the background across the whole year: you build the add-back schedule and fill the data room a folder at a time while the owner-light work in Lesson 04 does the heavy lifting from months 2 to 9.

How the lessons and the workbook fit

Every lesson pairs with one workbook page, and the workbook is where the year actually gets done. The lesson teaches the move and shows one filled example on an illustrative business; the workbook page is the blank version for yours.

Do not read all nine lessons first and then start. Read one lesson, fill its page, then move to the next.

Nine lessons, nine workbook pages, one system that ends with a business a buyer wants and a seller who is ready.

Lesson	The one move	Workbook page
01 The Exit Landscape	Name your likely buyer and how the market prices	Page 1
02 The Eight Value Drivers	Score the eight drivers a buyer pays for	Page 2
03 The 12-Month Value-Build Plan	Sequence the driver moves across four quarters	Page 3
04 Getting the Business Off You	Run the owner-light method on the biggest workflows	Page 4
05 Clean Books and Add-Backs	Build the SDE add-back schedule with your CPA	Page 5
06 The Document and Data Room	Build the buyer's data room, folder by folder	Page 6
07 Assembling the Deal Team	Hire the broker, CPA, and attorney, in order	Page 7
08 Understanding an Offer	Read an offer part by part, never self-appraise	Page 8
09 The Process and Life After	Run the sale to close, then plan the day after	Page 9

The eight drivers you are moving

Nine lessons all serve one scoreboard: the eight drivers a buyer actually pays for. Owner dependence is the biggest of the eight, which is why Lesson 04 gets months 2 to 9.

The other seven each carry weight, and Lesson 02 scores all eight so you know which two or three are costing you the most.

8

value drivers a buyer prices

12

months to raise them before you list

1

of the eight that matters most: owner dependence

Your first weekend

You do not have to finish the year to get something you can use this month.

Give the first weekend to Lessons 01 through 04 and you walk out with three things: your eight drivers scored so you know the two or three costing you the most, a written twelve-month value-build plan that sequences the fixes in order, and your owner-dependence baseline with the first workflow to hand off already named.

Even if the next lesson waits a month, that is a real plan and a clear direction, not a shelf of unread material.

The number that makes it concrete is your value gap. The free Keystone diagnostic estimates what the business is worth leaning on you today, and the twelve-month build is the distance from that number to what it is worth running without you.

Lessons 01 to 04 turn that gap from a worry into a dated plan with the biggest lever, owner dependence, already moving.

Put a date on it, then re-score every quarter

A twelve-month plan with no dates is a wish, and month three is where wishes quietly die.

Run the free Keystone diagnostic today, write down your three scores and the estimated price, and put four quarterly re-scores on the calendar right now, one every 90 days across the build.

Each quarter you re-run it and read the gap from the quarter before: that moving gap is the scoreboard that proves the work is landing and keeps the year honest when the business gets loud.

What you need, and what this is not

You need four things: a business already doing \$300,000 or more a year, a licensed CPA you can call this week, 2 to 4 hours a month for a year, and an honest count of where you are. This system assumes you run a real service business, so it does not explain a P&L, an add-back, or a work order from scratch.

It is not a shortcut and it is not licensed advice. It will not value your business, promise a price, or replace the broker, CPA, and attorney you will hire in Lesson 07.

It teaches you to build the business a buyer pays a premium for, and to read the offer they put in front of you with your eyes open.

DO THIS TONIGHT

Open Lesson 01 and Workbook Page 1, and write down three things: the real reason you would sell, a rough year you would want to be out, and the number that would count as enough. Most owners have never written these down, and the year ahead is far clearer once they are on paper. You are not committing to a sale, you are giving the next twelve months a target.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Score where you stand before you change anything, so you can prove the gain later. The free Keystone diagnostic is 18 questions, three scores (business independence, systems maturity, acquisition attractiveness) and an estimated sale price, in four minutes, at <https://app.trykeystone.io>.

This course and its workbook are the static system you run yourself; the living, scored version that tracks your baseline over 100 days is Keystone.

Own the whole operator library at once, every product in one place: the Operator's Complete Library (Q1).

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