



Playbook

How to identify, prioritize & activate business owners already in your book

A practical system for uncovering new opportunities with existing clients and starting the right conversations with confidence.



“RISR helped us reframe our role with a long-time client and uncovered significant planning opportunities that were previously overlooked.”

Mike Creighton

Partner @ Evolution Financial Group

Playbook contents

1 The Hidden Opportunity

Understand why so many valuable opportunities already exist in your client base and how clarity unlocks deeper planning conversations.

2 Discovery Framework

Learn a simple, repeatable method for uncovering business owners hidden in your book through income patterns, entities, and behavioral clues.

3 Segmentation Model

Use business stage, urgency signals, and value bands to focus your time where planning momentum and client receptivity are highest.

4 Activation Scripts

Access easy, low-pressure scripts that help you start discussions with business-owning clients today.

5 The Quarterly Business Owner Sweep

Follow a structured, quarterly workflow to review your book, prioritize top owners, and consistently initiate meaningful planning conversations.

6 Turning Insights Into Planning

See how RISR insights naturally lead to value, risk, and exit conversations that deepen your advisory relationship.

SECTION 1

The Hidden Opportunity

Depending on who you target, it's highly likely that there are business owners within your book of business today.

Their personal wealth, retirement readiness, and financial security are tied directly to their business – yet most planning conversations focus solely on personal accounts. The result is an incomplete picture for both advisor and client.

This disconnect happens for predictable reasons. Owners rarely initiate business-related discussions because they're busy, overwhelmed, or assume their advisor "doesn't go there." Their business and financial life feel separate, even though they are deeply intertwined. Advisors, meanwhile, often hesitate to bring up the business without a clear entry point or structure.

The consequence is significant:

- Owners stay unclear on the value of their largest asset
- Advisors miss natural entry points into deeper planning
- RISR goes underutilized
- Key strategies around exit, tax, liquidity, and succession never surface

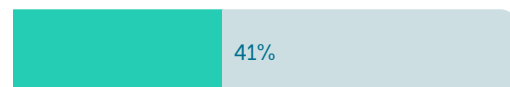
This playbook removes the guesswork and gives advisors the confidence to initiate conversations owners actually value – and often need more than they realize.

Percent of clients that own businesses by segment

Mass Market (< \$250k investable assets)



Mass Affluent (\$250k – \$1M investable assets)



High Net Worth (\$1M–\$5M investable assets)



Ultra High Net Worth (> \$5M investable assets)



75%

of owners lack a succession plan

\$18M

Avg. unprotected equity value

\$7.1T

private business wealth transfer

85%

of owners lack a clear estimate of business value

SECTION 2

Discovering business owners you already serve

Most advisors assume they only work with a handful of business owners. In reality, most have far more, but those owners remain hidden unless advisors know what to look for.

Business owners blend into the broader client base because income patterns, entity structures, and operational responsibilities aren't always obvious at first glance.

This section gives you a clear framework for identifying owners across different categories:

- Active operators
- Silent partners
- Real estate owners
- Consultants
- Side-business operators
- Family-business participants

When you know what signals to look for in tax returns, CRM notes, and day-to-day conversations, business owners quickly emerge from the noise.

Systematic discovery transforms your existing book into a pipeline of meaningful opportunities without any added prospecting. The checklist on the right will help guide your discovery process.

Business owner discovery checklist

Income Indicators

- ☐ K-1s or pass-through income
- ☐ Schedule C or Schedule E activity
- ☐ Irregular income patterns aligned with distributions
- ☐ Large cash inflows labeled bonuses, draws, or distributions
- ☐ Multiple streams of income reported across different entities or EINs

Entity Indicators

- ☐ LLCs, S-Corps, partnerships
- ☐ Real estate holding companies
- ☐ Multi-entity structures
- ☐ Family-owned or jointly operated businesses

Behavioral Clues

- ☐ Talking about employees, hiring, or firing
- ☐ Fluctuating revenue
- ☐ Fatigue or burnout
- ☐ "How much longer do I want to do this?" comments
- ☐ Frustration with tax complexity
- ☐ Frequent mentions of "my partner"

Professional Signals

- ☐ Close relationships with CPAs or attorneys
- ☐ Involvement in business groups (Vistage, EO, YPO, Chamber, trade groups)
- ☐ Attendance at industry conferences

Tax return signals

- ☐ Return includes a Schedule C
- ☐ Return includes a Schedule E (partnership/S-Corp)
- ☐ Return includes depreciation schedules
- ☐ Return includes a business deductions
- ☐ Evidence of multiple entities

CRM & Client file review

- ☐ Ownership percentage mentioned
- ☐ Business name or industry
- ☐ Notes referencing employees, revenue, or strain
- ☐ Past conversations hinting at exit or succession

SECTION 3

Segmenting & Prioritizing Business Owners

Advisors that can tailor their marketing, engagement, and services to a specific type of family or individual tend to resonate better and grow faster with them.

The same principles apply to the segment of your clientele that own businesses.

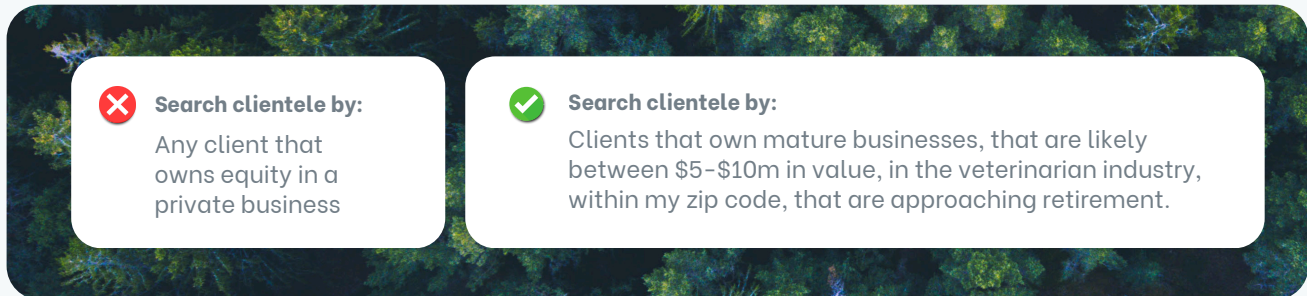
The segmentation framework below can help you better define what the right profile of business owner looks like for you.

- **Stage.** The stage of a business is typically an indicator of the life phase of the owners and proximity to a liquidity event.
- **Size.** The size of the business can be an indicator of investable assets and complexity of financial life for the individual.
- **Industry.** As you work with more owners, identifying 1 to 2 industries to become more familiar with gives you the opportunity to differentiate and build higher impact COIs.
- **Geography.** Geography can inform the size of your target market and makes it easier to generate an event marketing and COI strategy.



Create a list of the highest impact opportunities each month

Not every business owner has the same needs, urgency, or readiness for planning. Using the business owner segmentation framework is a great start, but keeping an eye out for signals that urgent help may be needed will surface where the highest-impact conversations are.



Urgency signals can be hidden within client interactions and the notes of your CRM.

Look for signs of the client is:

- Worried about their financial future
- Considering stepping away from operations
- In the midst of a dispute with business partners
- Approaching retirement
- Stressed about tax complexity
- Concerned about succession

Then rank owners that have urgency and fit into your ideal segment. **These clients should be your focus for outreach over the next 30 days.**

SECTION 4

Activation: Starting the Conversation

Even when advisors identify the right owners, many hesitate to reach out. The fear of being intrusive, not knowing what to say, or overcomplicating the conversation often leads to delayed action.

This section gives you simple, natural scripts you can use immediately without expertise, complexity, or pressure. These prompts open the door to meaningful conversations and help owners articulate goals they've rarely discussed.

Activation is all about starting the right conversation.

➔ Re-engaging Existing Clients

"We haven't spent much time connecting your business to your long-term goals. Since the business is often the biggest part of a client's net worth, even a short conversation can bring helpful clarity. Want to explore this together?"

➔ Setting Up a Discovery Conversation

"This isn't a heavy lift — we can walk through a few questions in about 10–15 minutes. It helps us understand the business today, how it ties to your goals, and any risks or opportunities worth planning around."

➔ For Transition-Minded Owners

"Many owners at your stage start thinking about timing, value, and next steps. We can get a clear picture quickly so your decisions come from clarity, not uncertainty."

➔ For Owners Showing Fatigue

"You've mentioned things feel more demanding lately. It might help to check how the business is positioned relative to your future plans. A quick conversation can give us clarity on your options."

Tailor your approach based on the stage of the business

Depending on the stage of the business, you can tailor your approach to consider what's typically important to owners in that stage.

Startup

Characteristics

- Early revenue or pre-revenue
- Owner is focused on survival, product-market fit, or early growth
- Limited historical financial data
- Planning needs center around cash flow, burn rate, and stabilizing the business

➔ How to approach

- Keep the conversation simple and foundational.
- Startups often aren't ready for a valuation, so focus instead on cash flow stability, protecting the owner personally, and setting expectations for when business insights will matter.
- Position RISR as a future tool rather than a today tool: "Once the business stabilizes and revenue becomes more predictable, we can use RISR to understand value and risk in a meaningful way."

Growth

Characteristics

- Revenue
- High owner involvement
- Not thinking about exit
- Needs clarity on value trajectory and risk

➔ How to approach

- Growth-stage owners respond well to clarity, not complexity.
- Help them connect their rapid decision-making to long-term impact by showing how risk, concentration, and early value drivers affect the trajectory of the business.
- Use RISR to establish a baseline value, highlight exposures, and demonstrate how operational choices today influence planning in the future.

Maturity

Characteristics

- Operational stability
- More strategic decision-making
- Ready for risk, value, and planning conversations

➔ How to approach

- These owners are ready for strategic conversations.
- Use RISR to support deeper discussions around risk reduction, value acceleration, key-employee stability, and longer-term planning.
- Show how business decisions integrate with personal goals: retirement timelines, liquidity planning, or estate strategy.
- The focus shifts from "what's happening" to "how do we shape what's next?"

Transition

Characteristics

- Start here, they are your highest likelihood for engagement
- Thinking about timing, lifestyle, or next chapter
- Highly receptive to valuation
- Urgent planning window

➔ How to approach

- This is where your highest-impact work happens. These owners are the most receptive and often the most urgent.
- Lead with clarity and timing. These owners want to understand value today, readiness gaps, and what needs to happen before a sale or succession event.
- Use RISR to frame the conversation around exit preparedness, financial independence, tax planning, and aligning personal goals with business transition.

SECTION 5

The Quarterly Business Owner Sweep

Consistency beats intensity. The Quarterly Sweep ensures identifying and activating business owners becomes a habit, not a sporadic project. Every quarter, you'll review your entire book, segment owners, choose your top three, and move them into meaningful conversations. This rhythm is simple, scalable, and proven across advisory teams.



1. Review Your Entire Book of Clients

A quick scan reveals owners you've overlooked and uncovers new planning opportunities hiding in plain sight.



2. Segment and Prioritize

Sorting by stage and urgency helps you focus your energy where real planning momentum already exists.



3. Choose Your Top Three Owners

Limiting outreach to three creates consistency, removes overwhelm, and ensures you follow through every quarter.



4. Send Warm Outreach

A simple, low-pressure message starts the conversation and makes re-engagement feel natural and welcomed.



5. Conduct a 10-15 Minute Intake

Doing this together removes friction, builds confidence, and gives you accurate inputs for meaningful insights.



6. Deliver Insights Using RISR

Clear visuals and simple explanations help owners see value, risk, and alignment without getting lost in details. [▶ Watch RISR video on how to use business insights to engage](#)



7. Transition Into Planning

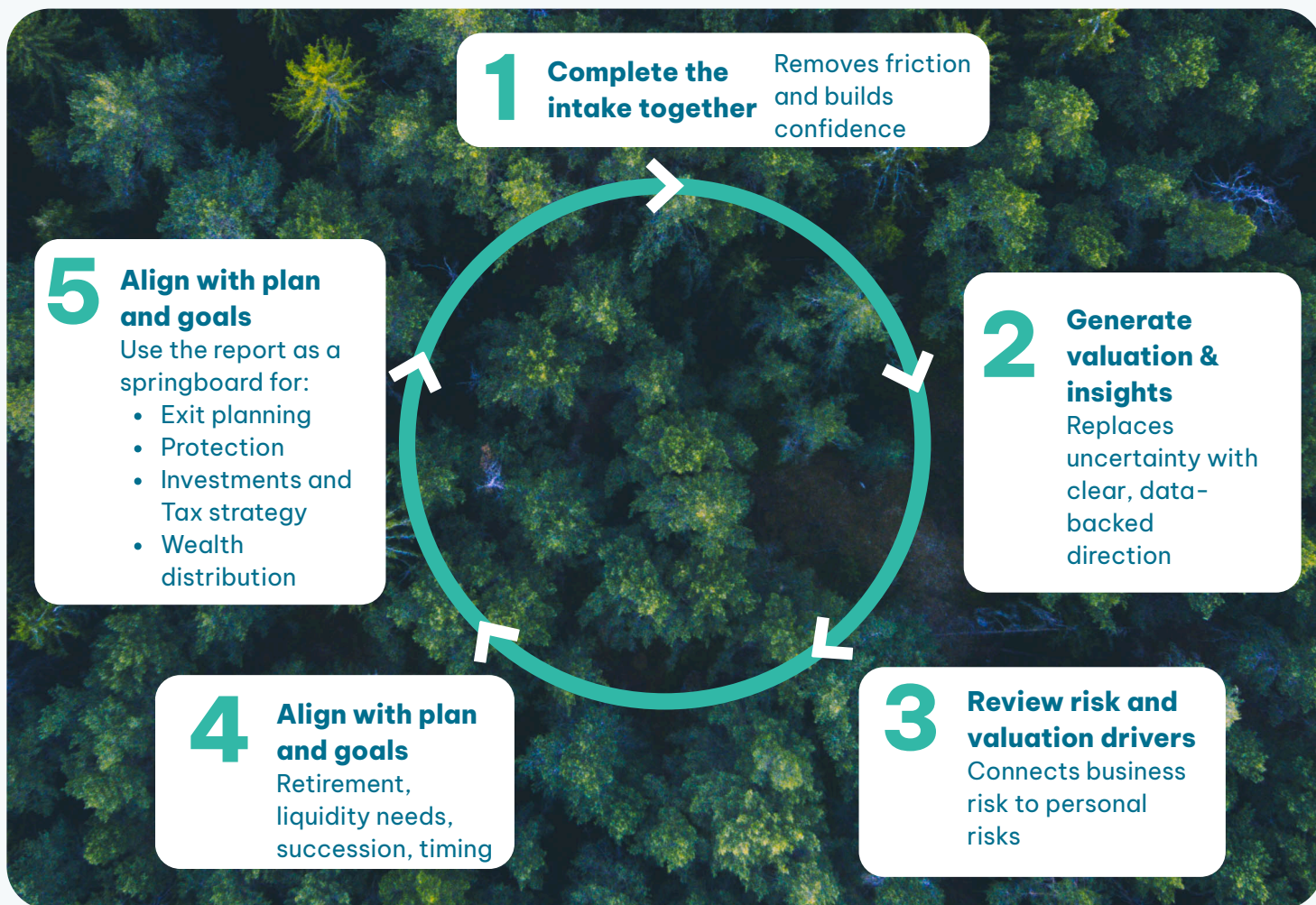
Transition naturally into wealth, risk, exit, and tax planning conversations to show owners it shows how business clarity drives personal financial strategy.

SECTION 6

Turning insights into planning

Once a business owner engages, you need a smooth way to move from conversation to insight to deeper planning. This section shows an activation flow you can repeat using RISR. The goal is to make next steps feel natural for the owner and easy for you to execute.

Once a client engages, RISR turns a simple conversation into a clear planning pathway.



The key: your willingness to start the conversation.

Many advisors hesitate with business owners not because they lack insight, but because they're unsure of timing or worry about sounding intrusive or unprepared. The truth is that business owners want clarity, they just rarely ask for it. They're not expecting you to be an expert in their field; they simply want someone who can help connect their business to their long-term goals. When you follow a clear workflow and keep the conversation simple, confidence builds quickly, and owners respond with openness and trust.

You don't need to reinvent your practice to work more deeply with business owners. Start the conversation, RISR insights and deliverables will help you take it from there.

Business owners want clarity, confidence, and direction – and advisors are uniquely positioned to give it to them. When you combine your planning expertise with RISR's business insights, you create conversations that owners rarely experience: conversations anchored in their goals, supported by data, and focused on what truly matters most to them.

The scripts, workflows, and positioning tools in this playbook are designed to help you start those conversations with ease. Whether you're meeting with an owner for the first time, re-engaging a past client, or building relationships with COIs, leading with insight creates momentum and opens the door to deeper planning opportunities.

RISR gives you the visibility to guide owners across wealth, risk, exit, and tax planning – and it empowers you to show how their business fits into their life plan with clarity and simplicity. When used consistently, it becomes the foundation for a stronger advisory relationship and a more confident path forward for your clients.

John Smith | Precision Auto Services LLC

Succession & Exit Re

Overall readiness

41

out of 100

Personal readiness

Next best actions

Identify net proceeds from exit needed to fund goal

Clearly define transition priorities

Identify ideal exit timeline

John Smith | Precision Auto Services LLC

Business Risk

A review of the risk factors that

Business risk score

Moderate

Component business

Owner dependency risk

High

Key employee dependency risk

High

Revenue stability risk

High

Supplier diversity risk

Moderate

Financial practice risks

Moderate

Customer concentration risk

Moderate

John Williams | Mainstreet Advisory Services

John, this guide will help us align your plans for your life, legacy, wealth, and business.

The wealth potential of your business

You've worked hard to build a valuable business. We're here to help you estimate what your business is worth today and what it needs to be worth at exit to reach your life goals.

Current valuation (est.)

Goal valuation by 2045

Goal net exit proceeds

\$8,556,63

\$12,000,00

\$6,720,00

Align business goals with your wealth goals

Feel confident in how your business fits into your

Goal EBITDA

\$1,477,90

RISR

11