

The Five Stages of a Business Exit

Every owner-led business exit moves through the same five stages. Main Street Exit Partners leads Stages 3 and 4.



THE MSEP METHOD

Stages 3 and 4: Where Main Street Exit Partners (MSEP) Leads

STAGE 1

Owner Alignment

The owner clarifies goals, financial needs, timeline, and what a successful outcome looks like. Family and partner alignment. Post-exit vision.

Led by: Owner, Wealth Advisor, Financial Planner, Exit Planner

MSEP surfaces key questions and coordinates advisors.

STAGE 2

Transition Design

The owner confirms which exit path fits their situation before a market process begins. Third-party sale, family succession, management buyout, ESOP, or recapitalization.

Led by: Owner, Attorney, CPA, Advisor Team

MSEP confirms the path and stays connected as the future transaction lead.

STAGE 3

Business Readiness

THE EXIT READINESS FRAMEWORK

The business is evaluated through the buyer and lender lens before going to market. Financial story, transferability, and documentation are prepared before buyer exposure begins.

- Value Clarity
- Buyer Confidence
- Diligence Readiness

STAGE 4

Transaction Execution

THE DISCIPLINED EXIT PROCESS

The confidential market process. Qualified buyers are identified, screened, and engaged through a disciplined process designed to protect confidentiality and close on the right terms.

- Position
- ↓
- Pursue
- ↓
- Negotiate
- ↓
- Close

STAGE 5

Post-Closing

Transition obligations, proceeds deployment, tax planning, and personal adjustment. The closing is a milestone, not the finish line.

Led by: Attorney, CPA or Tax Advisor, Wealth Advisor, Financial Planner, Transition Coach

MSEP's active role ends at closing.

START WITH READINESS

Understand where your business stands.

A Confidential Exit Readiness Assessment is a private first conversation about where your business sits in the process, what buyers are likely to care about, and what a prepared path forward may look like. Preparation does not obligate you to go to market.

[REQUEST A CONFIDENTIAL EXIT READINESS ASSESSMENT](#)

mainstreetexitpartners.com/exit-readiness · info@mainstreetexitpartners.com · 513.273.5055



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Main Street Exit Partners, LLC · Preparation-First Business Brokerage

Main Street Exit Partners, LLC provides business brokerage services. Grady Collins is a licensed real estate salesperson in the State of Ohio. Business and real estate transactions are brokered by eXp Commercial, LLC.

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Thinking About Selling in the Next Few Years?

You do not need to have everything figured out. Start with a private conversation about where things stand, what buyers are likely to care about, and what a prepared path forward may look like.



WHY START EARLY

Diligence tends to surface what preparation would have found first.

More time to address what buyers question.

Owners who begin early often have more time to work on transferability, documentation, owner dependence, and customer concentration.

A financial story a lender can verify.

Many Main Street buyers rely on outside financing, often SBA-backed. The lender runs its own review of the seller's numbers, so books that reconcile cleanly matter.

Decisions on your timeline.

Starting early does not obligate you to go to market. It creates options: the ability to move when the time is right, rather than when circumstances force the decision.

THE FIRST STEP

The Confidential Exit Readiness Assessment

A private first conversation about where your business stands today, what buyers are likely to care about, and what a prepared path to market may look like.

THE EXIT READINESS FRAMEWORK

- **Value Clarity**
How buyers are likely to view earnings, add-backs, trends, margins, and customer concentration.
- **Buyer Confidence**
Whether the business can operate without the owner at the center, and whether a buyer could finance it at a realistic price.
- **Diligence Readiness**
Whether records, contracts, leases, licenses, and operational materials are organized and support the story being told.

It is not a certified valuation or appraisal, and it does not place your business on the market. MSEP will not contact buyers, employees, customers, competitors, lenders, vendors, or landlords without your authorization.

WHY MAIN STREET EXIT PARTNERS

Most owners only sell once. We help them prepare before buyers are involved.

Main Street Exit Partners is a preparation-first business brokerage for owner-led companies in Greater Cincinnati and the tri-state region. MSEP leads Stages 3 and 4 of the five-stage business exit process: Business Readiness and Transaction Execution. Throughout, MSEP works alongside your attorney, CPA, and other advisors without replacing their role.

ABOUT GRADY COLLINS

Grady Collins founded Main Street Exit Partners. His background includes Deloitte audit experience, financial leadership roles across public, private, and private equity-backed businesses, and due diligence and integration work on acquisitions. He has an Ohio State business education with a specialization in accounting, and is a member of the International Business Brokers Association and the Ohio Business Brokers Association.

Full professional background:
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BEGIN WITH A PRIVATE CONVERSATION

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