

Could You Sell Your Business Tomorrow?

The 25-Point Exit Readiness Checklist for NZ business owners. Tick each item honestly - every 'No' is a value leak a buyer will find.

Financials

Item	Yes	No
1. Three years of clean, accountant-prepared financial statements		
2. Owner's personal expenses separated from the business		
3. Up-to-date GST and IRD filings with no arrears		
4. Monthly management reports you actually use		
5. Clear, documented profit (EBITDA) with normalisation adjustments		

Operations

Item	Yes	No
1. Written procedures for key processes		
2. Business runs for 4+ weeks without you		
3. Up-to-date asset and equipment register		
4. Reliable systems (accounting, CRM, stock) in place		
5. Health and safety obligations documented and met		

People

Item	Yes	No
1. Written employment agreements for all staff		
2. A capable second-in-command or manager		
3. Key staff likely to stay after a sale		
4. Holidays Act entitlements calculated correctly		
5. No outstanding employment disputes		

Customers and market

Item	Yes	No
1. No single customer is more than 15-20% of revenue		

Item	Yes	No
2. Recurring or contracted revenue		
3. Documented customer list and sales pipeline		
4. Clear market position and reasons customers buy		
5. Brand, website and online reviews in good shape		

Legal and structure

Item	Yes	No
1. Lease is assignable with adequate term remaining		
2. Key supplier and customer contracts are transferable		
3. Trademarks, domains and IP owned by the business		
4. Company records, shareholder agreement up to date		
5. Clear idea of your exit timeline and goals		

Your score

21-25 Yes: Sale-ready. Get a valuation.

15-20: Close - fix the gaps over 6-12 months.

Under 15: Start now. Exit readiness takes 2-3 years to do well.

Next steps

Prioritise the 'No' answers that affect profit and risk most. Talk to your accountant about normalising earnings and to a broker about likely buyer types.

General guidance only - not legal, tax or financial advice. Talk to your accountant, lawyer or a business broker about your situation.