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An ExitSmarts Whitepaper
**The Role of the Quarterback
in Business Exit Planning**

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ExitSmarts[®]

Role of the Quarterback in Business Exit Planning

No one wants to buy my business! Who will I leave my business too?!! It has become conventional wisdom in the Exit Planning sector that the large number of aging Boomer Business Owners, combined with their ownership of the majority of private businesses, will require a structured approach if they are going to experience successful business transitions. To meet this burgeoning demand, there has been a lot of activity on the Advisor side in getting prepared to assist these Business Owners. However, for many Advisors, all of this activity is not resulting in actionable plans for how to realistically work with the Business Owners relative to their transition assistance needs.

This paper addresses several of the most common challenges Advisors face when wanting to participate in the business transition planning space:

- What is my seat at the table, my role in the process?
- What is the process for conducting this role?
- How can I become Most Trusted Advisor to Business Owners
- How do I put together an Advisor network
- How do I get clients?

As you read on it will become clear how Quarterbacking has everything to do with these challenges. **Only when the Quarterback role is defined, an Advisor Community is established, and a common transition planning model is used, can individual Advisors resolve these challenges.**

This paper examines the Advisor's challenges, then offers solutions featuring:

- a delivery model that defines the critical roles and processes for the Quarterback, the transition plan development Advisors, and the transition plan implementation Advisors
- a system that is Quarterback-driven
- a Community approach where Advisors subscribe to, and participate in, a common transition model

Who's on First?

It is not the tax specialist, not the legal expert, not the broker, not the financial planner, but it is the Quarterback who is *the* most important Advisor to the Business Owner in the business transition process. Any one of the above-named Advisor types could take on the role of a Quarterback, so long as the Advisor has intentionally chosen this role and has a process. To be sure, all Advisors are important, and can provide value to the Business Owner, but it is the

Quarterback who works closest with the Business Owner and is in the natural position of being viewed by the Business Owner as his/her most important Advisor.

'Quarterback' is a common name used in the industry for an advisor who directs Exit Planning for a business owner. A better name would be 'Coach', because 'Coach' better identifies what the Advisor does in working with a Business Owner in the Exit Planning process. When referring to this role going forward the term 'Coach' will be used in place of 'Quarterback'.

Another term it would helpful to address is 'Exit Planning', which refers to a Business Owner's 'Exit' from his/her business. When the term changes from 'Exit Planning' to 'Transition Planning', the concept expands to include helping Business Owners with whatever business transition they desire, such as building a more valuable business, achieving less time at work, creating greater efficiencies, successful changes in leadership – and not just a total exit from the business.

Since we are exchanging 'Quarterback' with 'Coach', and 'Exit Planning' with 'Transition Planning' an adjusted title for this paper is:

The Role of the Coach in Business Transition Planning.

Business Transition Planning & the Need for the Coach

It is common understanding and acceptance that business transition planning is a multi-advisory process. Depending upon the complexity of the transition, advisors needed could include business lawyer, accountant, insurance advisor, financial planner, valuation advisor, estate planner/wealth manager, investment advisor, business brokers/M&A intermediary, value enhancement advisor, plan development advisor, and others. THIS is where the challenge, and the opportunity, begins.

A Business Owner often does not know which of these Advisors need to be included, when to be included, how to find them, and then how to coordinate them. **Hence the need for a Business Transition Coach.** It is important to note that many different specialist Advisors struggle with the same issues as the Business Owners – not knowing what all is needed, who all is needed, where to find credible specialists, and how to coordinate them effectively. Some Specialty Advisors have intentionally sought to learn about the business transition process by studying and becoming accredited by an organization like the Exit Planning Institute. Through its Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) training and credentialing, the Exit Planning Institute provides professional Advisors with the training needed to work with Business Owners during their business transitions.

Most Trusted Advisor

Business Owners need help with their business transition planning, though many Business Owners do not know they need this help. Most Advisors who get into business transition planning want to provide this needed assistance to their Business Owner Clients. **And because real transition planning involves sharing of the Business Owner's personal thoughts, plans, and finances, the Advisor (Coach) who leads in this process is likely to be, or to become, the Business Owner's Most Trusted Advisor.** While desiring to become the Most Trusted Advisor may be altruistic, it also strengthens the relationship of the Business Owner and the Advisor (Coach) which leads to the purchase of more services of the Advisor (Coach) over time. Also, having the closest relationship with the business owner is a defensive business position that keeps the business owner considering the Advisor (coach) first for services.

It should not be overlooked that there are Advisors who already have Most Trusted Advisor status, with their Business Owner Clients. Studies over the years, have indicated that the Advisor most likely to have this relationship is the Business Owner's accountant. More recent studies are showing that financial planners are beginning to challenge accountants for this status. There are also some wealth managers who would have this status as well. The point is that any Advisor who has existing Most Trusted Advisor status is well positioned to become the Coach for their Business Owner's transition needs.

Super Coach or Coach

Much has been written about Advisors being Coaches, but the connotation is most often that the Coach be the Super Advisor – the Super Coach - who understands, not just the basics, but also more complex issues like advising on buyer type, deal structure, and business value improvement. However, **the vast majority of Advisors who want to be Coaches do not have the desire, experience/skills, or the time, to provide these extra services – they do not want to be a Super Coach.**

So the prevailing market definition of a Coach as a 'Super Coach' does NOT actually fit most Advisors wanting to participate in transition planning.

The 'Super Coach' definition more appropriately fits those Advisors in the M&A space where their multi-specialty capabilities are a requirement. The presence of these available Super Coaches does not begin to meet the market need for Coaches because Super Coaches focus on the largest 4-5% of all privately-owned businesses, leaving the remaining 95-96% of business owners still needing Coaches.

An example of an Advisor-type that does not want a time-intense Super Coach role with their Business Owner Clients is the Wealth Manager. However, they do covet the Most Trusted Advisor role. The question becomes: how do they accomplish one without the other? The

Business Transition industry seems to be lacking a script (process) for being anything other than the Super Coach to achieve this status with the business owner.

Wealth Managers represent well over half of all Advisors seeking the 'Most Trusted Advisor' role with their Business Owner Clients who are in need of transition planning. However, many Wealth Managers are restricted by compliance issues that govern their licensure. Many other Wealth Managers simply do not have the time to be a Super Coach because of the service demands to their clients.

But this does not change the fact that a large amount of Wealth Managers are trying to find a seat at the transition planning table that will yield Most Trusted Advisor status with their Business Owner Clients.

Many Advisor types besides Wealth Managers desire the 'Most Trusted Advisor' status and for a myriad of reasons prefer not to be a Super Coach.

So if you are not a Super Coach, is there a different Coaching role that will allow you to become a Most Trusted Advisor to the other 95-96% of Business Owners with business transition needs. **The answer is YES. It simply requires the development of a process for the Coach that does not require being a Super Coach, but at the same time, yields Most Trusted Advisor status with the business owner.**

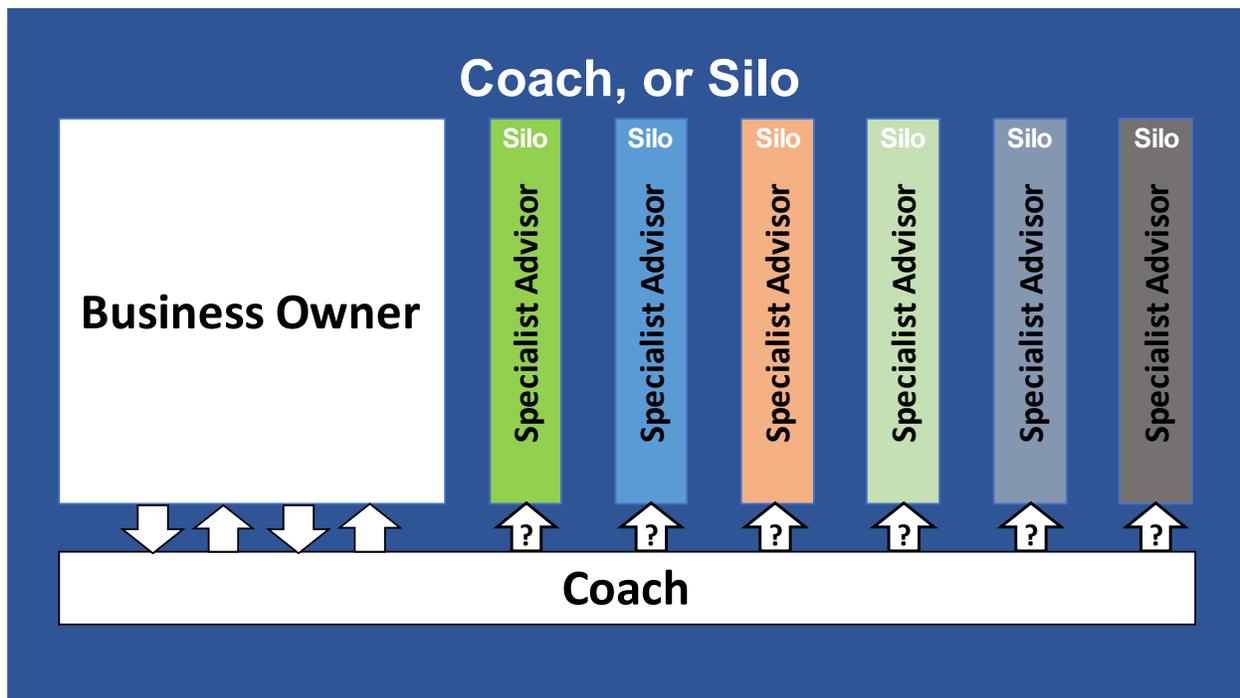
Coach, or Silo?

One of the basic requirements of being the Coach is to lead the Business Owner through the business transition process; and that includes referring to specialist Advisors as appropriate. The Advisor has a choice to make: do I want to be a Coach, and coordinate Advisor referrals, or be a specialist Advisor who performs a specific part of the transition process. Once again, both Coach and Specialist are needed, they just have different roles and different positioning with Business Owners. In other words, for purposes of business transition planning, the non-Coach Specialist will not directly be attracting Business Owner Clients, but rather get their transition clients through referrals from the Business Transition Coach.

The Silo is a good metaphor for illustrating being a Coach or a Specialist in transition planning. The term silo evokes pictures of grain, or other silos, spread across vast fields – each silo alone and not connected to the other silos.

Advisor silos exist when groups of Advisors are independent and separated by specialization. Being a Specialist is not a bad thing in any way. A Specialist Advisor, who is not a Coach, could be considered a (Specialist) Silo. In fact, Specialist Silos is a predominant practice style for many Advisors.

In the metaphor, one can think of all the Specialist Advisors who are not Coaches, as Silos with each Silo performing its own specialty. It is worth repeating that in the business transition space, Silos only get transition clients, when they are referred by the Advisor who is in the Coaching role. **In the end, as it relates to Business Owners and transition planning, the Advisor is either a Coach or a Specialist Silo.**



This Silo example is offered simply as a way for Advisors to understand their own role, so that their expectations are in line relative to their positioning and relationship with Business Owners in the Business Transition Process.

Going forward we will refer to two types of Advisors. One is the 'Coach', who is the advisor with a specialty, but also has the role as the 'Business Transition Coach'; and the 'Specialist' who is an advisor who offers a Specialty Service in his/her area of expertise.

This Coach/Specialist dynamic is why many Advisors wanting to be in transition planning are struggling trying to understand why they are not getting clients. Most likely they have not thought through the implications of being a Coach vs. being a Specialist Advisor. They know they want to be in the transition planning space, and they envision having their *own* Business Owner Clients. They get certified, hang out a shingle, expect to start getting clients, and then don't understand why there are no clients beating down their doors since so many Business Owners need transition planning services.

Business Owners will most likely need Specialist services at an appropriate time, but first and foremost, the Business Owner needs a Business Transition Coach.

It is important to note that being a Coach does not at all limit the Advisor to being just a Coach, as the Coach is positioned to additionally provide whatever other related specialty services he/she is qualified to provide.

Advisors wanting to be involved in Business Transition Planning and gain the position of Most Trusted Advisor with Business Owners, MUST, AT A MINIMUM, BE A COACH. Think about it – if you are not a Coach, then what would your marketing message be: “I am a specialist in the XWZ part of transition planning, come to me when you need this part of your overall transition plan. This approach to advertising might work to gain access to the Coach’s Advisor network, but it does not work very well when aimed at Business Owners who are looking for help in Business Transition Planning. This is the same ‘silo’ message that has left them without the coordinated comprehensive assistance needed for successful transitions. They need a Coach before they need the Specialists.

Two Questions about your marketing message can clarify whether you are a Coach or a Specialist: Are you promoting a service like a specialist in tax, legal, or investment advice; or are you promoting a comprehensive transition plan offering in which you will Coach (guide) them?

If you are a Specialists and wanting to participate more in the Business Transition Space, meet your new best concept and friend – the Business Transition Coach.

Market Infancy

If Business Owners do not know what it takes for a successful business transition, and that Transition Coaches exist, how will Business Owners ever utilize their services?

The Transition Planning sector, especially as it relates to medium and small-sized businesses, is still in its infancy. On the one hand, the Advisors wanting to play in this space are still trying to figure out how it all works, and how it can work together. On the other hand, are the Business Owners who do not know that there are Transition Planning Coaches ready to serve their needs. When Business Owners do think about their future transitions, they most likely contact a business lawyer, or perhaps their accountant. If none of these first-line Advisors are plugged into the Transition Planning world, then the advice the Business Owner gets is not likely to be comprehensively useful. And then a most tragic situation ensues. The business Owner not aware of options goes it alone. They think of steps to take, what questions to ask, and who to contact? They begin to try to find answers on their own about their business’s worth, how to improve business value, determine a selling process as well as tax and legal ramifications.

Business Owners need help: first, to acquire awareness of Business Transition Planning and the value it can bring to them; then, to learn about the availability and function of Business Transition Coaches.

Case Study

An example of the above is illustrated by a Business Owner I know who had built a successful small business over about a ten-year period. As often happens, this business started in the owner's basement, moved to its first location, then moved to its dream location in the center of town. The business was a high-end gift, personalization, and clothing store. The store gained a great reputation for selection and customer service and became the go-to store for many female shoppers in the area.

Then the owner decided he wanted to transition. He figured that it would probably take up to a year to sell his business. His accountants and lawyer suggested minor steps to prepare for a sale. Their advice was meager and there was no knowledge of Transition Planning or a Transition Coach. This left the Business Owner spinning with the realization that he had to figure things out by himself. In discussion with a Real Estate Broker friend, the Business Owner was told that one of the Broker's Agents could handle a business sale. The Agent asked him how much he wanted to sell the business for and then immediately put-up a For Sale sign. While this did not feel right to the Business Owner, he had no other known options. After an unsuccessful first three months, the Business Owner released the Real Estate Agent and decided to have a planned closure of the business over a nine-month period. This planned closure at least netted the Business Owner some return, but a large amount of money was left unrealized, employees lost their jobs, and the town lost an admired store. The investment made in the business ended up in a loss to many stakeholders.

This story plays out hundreds of thousands of times as awareness and lack of knowledge about Business Transition Planning and is the norm.

Author's Note: I know this Business Owner very well - it was me!

Whose Job is Business Owner Awareness?

With the Business Transition Planning Industry in its young stage, someone needs to educate the Business Owners that the Industry and the Coaches exist and can bring extreme value to them.

In recent years there have been any number of local Business Owner roundtables, webinars, and emails aimed at Business Owners with the intent of educating Business Owners about transition planning. Stop for a minute and think about what a lot of this promotion has been about. Often the message content is related to the specialist delivering the message – so the messages tend to be Specialist oriented. Thus, we have had messages like, “How to have a successful exit through an ESOP”, “How tax code XYZ can save money in your exit”, “We can manage your assets after you exit”, etc. Business Owners receiving these messages gain

specialty information, but not information about how transition planning all comes together, or who can help them put it all together.

This may all seem a bit dramatic as some Advisors are delivering messages about the overall transition process, and their messages are helpful for Business Owners; but they are in the minority and there is a lot of work to do. The need for Business Owner awareness is clear when you listen to most transition Advisors as they ask, “How do we find Business Owner Clients?”

Coaches wanting Business Owner Clients to participate in their transition planning services are going to have to engage in serious Business Owner awareness work. It will be the message(s) from the Business Transition Coach that will wake up the sleeping giant. Messages will be needed about the Business Transition Process, its value to the Business Owner, and the Coach’s role in that process. These messages will resonate with Business Owners.

Summarily, those Advisors wanting to be Business Transition Coaches, will need to take responsibility for Business Owner awareness. That awareness needs to be about the overall Business Transition Process and its value to Business Owners; and not just Specialist information.

Prerequisites to Offering Comprehensive Transition Services

Two Basic things a Business Transition Coach will need to have in place before he/she can hang out a shingle to offer comprehensive transition planning services, are the following:

- A specific comprehensive transition planning process through which to take the Business Owner
- A network of competent Specialist Advisors to whom he/she can make referrals as necessary.

A comprehensive transition planning process

One of the most visible comprehensive transition planning systems is the Value Acceleration Methodology (VAM) from the Exit Planning Institute. It contains all of the parts of transition planning. The Coach needs to first understand a process like VAM, and then be able to competently explain it to a Business Owner. The Coach will also need a comprehensive delivery system – a real challenge for most Coaches.

A network of specialist Advisors to whom he/she makes referrals as necessary

Recalling that transition planning is a multi-Advisor process and that the Coach does not profess to be a specialist in all areas of transition planning; the Coach needs the Specialists in order to

have a complete offering that will meet the Business Owners needs - so there is opportunity for everyone. Having the Specialists aligned and speaking the same message as the Coach requires front-end groundwork between the Coach and all of the Specialists. The Coach necessarily needs to be the initiator in finding appropriate Specialists and getting everyone on the same page. Sharing a common transition process and transition jargon is extremely important for clarity, coordination, and consistency, as the Business Owner moves through the process.

On some more common legal and tax issues it would be fairly easy to find Specialists who can give competent advice. Advice from different Advisors may have small variance, yet all answers will be similar.

On the other hand, because transition planning industry is still in its formative stage, there are some parts of transition planning that are not yet known and understood widely in the public forum. Answers from Advisors could be very different depending on their understanding or experience. This is where it is critical that all Advisors are advising out of the same playbook – like all subscribing to a model like the Exit Planning Institute’s Value Acceleration Methodology.

Two areas, where it will prove challenging to find knowledgeable and experienced Advisors are transition plan development and business value enhancement.

Transition plan development will be defined differently from one Specialist Advisor to the next – assuming that the Specialists has an understanding of how to develop a transition plan in the first place. Though there are many variances in creating transition plans, it is vital that the Transition Coach and the Specialist Advisor are coordinated and explaining the same concepts to the business owner. To ensure this continuity the Coach and the Specialist Advisor(s) need to have a prior agreement on the Transition Plan Process and desired results. This way the same terms, process, and outcomes, are communicated to the Business Owner. The owner will then experience clarity, consistency, and understand benefit over cost.

The business value enhancement, or value acceleration, part of a ‘Business Transition System’ presents another challenge between the Transition Coach and the Specialist Advisor. The Coach and the Specialist will need to be on the same page about what value enhancement means, how it fits into the overall process, and how the Coach and Specialist are going to work together with the Business Owner. Additionally, the value enhancement Specialist needs to understand the transition plan that was created and its implications on value enhancement. While there are several consultant groups doing value enhancement, they mostly operate in a single dimension – they pay attention to the business only, and do not address the personal and financial wants/needs of the Business Owner. Integration of all ‘three legs of the stool’ will be necessary for a successful Business Owner Transition. Working with Specialists will require the Coach to meet with them in advance and reach agreements on how to customize his/her approach to accomplish the transition needs of the Business Owner. This is a big challenge because many Specialists do not really understand how to effect business value enhancement, so they struggle when leading their part of a discussion along with a value enhancement

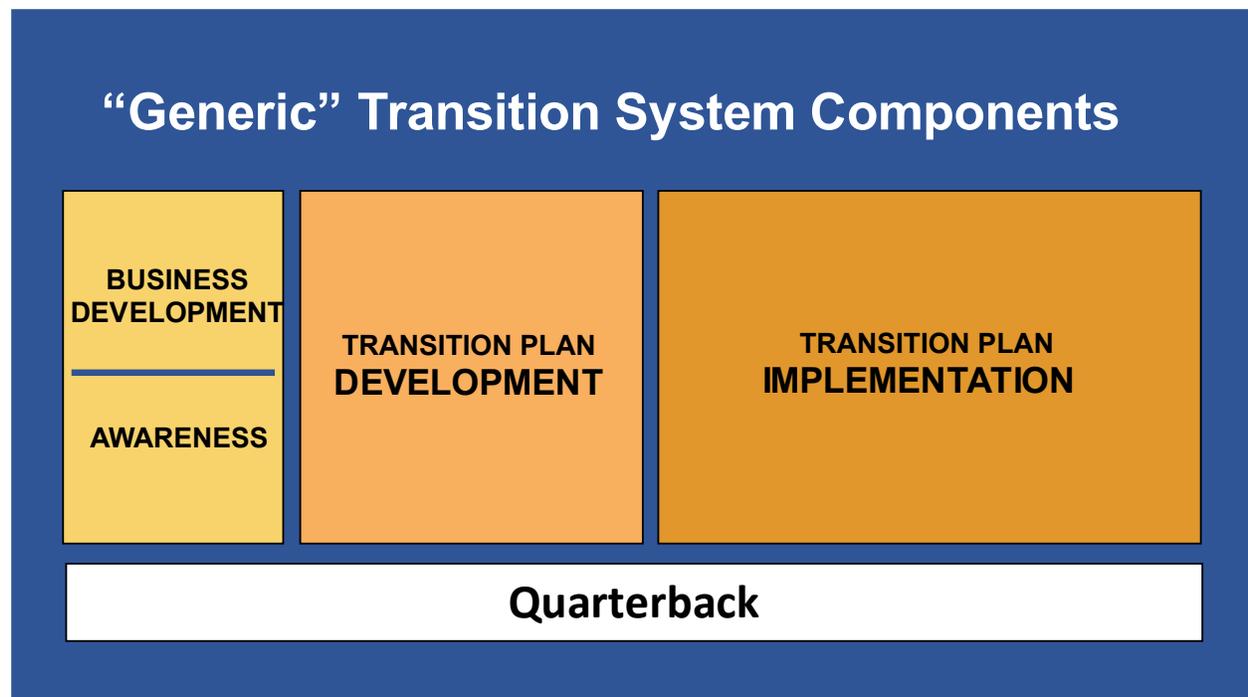
advisor. This is an example of how siloed disciplines struggle to deliver the outcomes needed by the Business owner. Mutual understanding, with an agreed upon process and outcomes with all involved, will empower and enable the Business Owner to experience a successful transition.

Coaching Process (In a Generic Transition Plan Model)

How could a Coach possibly serve Business Owner Clients effectively when spending *only* 12-30 hours per year? How could the Coach ever gain Most Trusted Advisor status with this low level of time commitment? The answer lies, in what the Coach is accomplishing with the Business Owner in their time together.

So that we can describe what the Business Transition Coach (*BTC*) does with the Business Owner throughout the transition planning process we need a basic transition planning model. A generic model has four components:

1. Create Business Owner Awareness of transition planning and of the Coach’s role
2. Develop a Transition Plan for the Business Owner
3. Implement the Transition Plan that has been developed
4. Implement the Coach’s role throughout the process



The role of the *BTC* is not just about doing and coordinating the above actions. It is about being coach-like in the conduct of these steps. Effective Coaching is about being a good listener and helping the business owner discover and execute his/her answers. It is different from a consultant who is expected to tell a client what they should do based on their experience and expertise. Much is written about the benefits of having a coach-like approach with clients. We will only mention the top benefit of taking this approach at this time.

The more coach-like the Business Transition Coach (*BTC*) is with the business owner, the closer and deeper their relationship will become. The ultimate positioning is to become the Business Owner's Most Trusted Advisor. Being a Business Transition Coach (*BTC*) with the Business Owner in a coach-like manner, will either create or strengthen that very relationship.

1. Create Business Owner Awareness of transition planning and of the Coach

First the Business Owner needs to become aware of Transition Planning and its benefits to them. Nothing happens until the Business Owner becomes aware that a business transition process, and transition Coaches are available to them. The goals of the Coach in the awareness phase is (1) Bring Awareness and Education to the Business Owner, (2) move the Business Owner to have a Transition Plan developed and (3) to generate advisory revenue.

The initial challenge for the Business Transition Coach is that Business Owners are mostly unaware that the services and Coaches exist. They know that they can contact their accountant or lawyer to get tax or legal assistance, but they don't know about the existence of a comprehensive transition planning services. The legal or tax guidance they have been receiving has been what was needed up to this the time, so nothing seemed to be missing. When the need for a business transition came to them they generally have a feeling of, "This is new territory, and I am on my own here to figure this thing out." This is a simple case of they don't know what they don't know.

The point here is that Coaches cannot expect Business Owners to be knocking on their doors. Coaches need to invest in an awareness campaign to help Business Owners know (1) that the transition planning industry exists, (2) that the Coach is a valuable part of this industry, and (3) how the process can help the Business Owner with his/her transition.

Awareness Building with the Business Owner's Transition Objectives

Once a Coach has a 1-1 opportunity with a Business Owner one good way to initiate an awareness conversation is simply to ask: "So, what are your plans for your future?" Sometimes this question opens the floodgates and the Business Owner unleashes a tidal wave of thoughts, concerns, fears, dreams that all relate to a hopefully profitable transition that has been on the

Business Owner's mind. The openness of the Business Owner will depend on the closeness of the relationship, and thus the value of being a Most Trusted Advisor.

Other times the Coach may need to respectfully probe to help the business owner share plans. There is a set of questions - often referred to as the *foundational* objectives, or transition objectives, that underpin every successful transition – and these questions are designed to bring awareness to the business owner. As the Business Owner starts to visualize a desired transition it can open up a conversation about, "How do I make this transition happen?" The Coach can then mention: "I have a process for helping the Business Owner successfully achieve that transition. Thus begins the conversation about the business transition process.

One way to characterize the foundational or transition objectives is with the 5Ws which stand for **What, Why, When, Wampum, and Who?** These questions bring together the personal, financial, and business dimensions of the Business Owner's business owner's ultimate plan. *The word Wampum is an Indian term for something of value, currency.*

What is the transition that you envision? What is it that you are going to do after that transition?

Why do you want to make that transition? *(The coach will ask this until a core value or reason is identified)*

When do you envision this transition occurring?

Wampum How much (money) will it take to support your intended transition plans?

Who will be the recipient(s) of the transfer?

The discussion of these 5W's in a thoughtful manner will naturally increase the awareness and seriousness of the Business Owner. Sometimes the Business Owner will want to begin the process immediately, and other times the process will come later. Either way, the Coach has planted a transition seed that can be nurtured over time with related follow up conversations. Awareness has been brought, and another business owner is added to those considering their Business Transition needs.

The 5W's are not static and are subject to change. A business climate changes, a key employee leaves, partners begin fighting, family begins fighting, or a major decision maker is disabled, can all have dramatic effects on the 5W's and how they affect the Business Owner's future transition plans. In business, the 5D's - death, disability, divorce, disagreement, and disaster - can drastically change the direction of a business. **In fact, 50% of transitions are forced due to one of the 5Ds.**

It is important to point out that not only are the 5W's a way to jump start Business Owner transition awareness, but they are also a relationship-long responsibility of the Coach. The 5W's are so important because they are the foundation of all transition planning from the

development of the plan and throughout the implementation of the plan. Everything that the Coach and all of the included Specialists do throughout the entire process is done to help the Business Owner accomplish his/her 5W's. The potential volatility of the 5W's means that the Coach needs to keep them current and updated with the Business Owner. The Coach, along with the Business Owner, is responsible to keep other Owners, Major Decision Makers, and all Specialists, aware of major changes, should they occur, so they can make appropriate changes.

Identifying the 5W's, and exploring them until they align with the Business Owner's values, goals, and purpose, can cause a cathartic reaction in the Business Owner. Seeing the personal, financial and business goals aligned, maybe the first time, delivers a reality check and causes the Business Owner to think, "Hmmm, that IS what I want for the rest of my life, and I see how it can all come together now." This moment of is called a Triggering Event. It is a moment of visualization that the Business Owner can get what he/she wants; and a realization that it is time to get started on the transition journey. This is what causes the Business Owner to want to begin Transition Plan Development.

2. Develop a Transition Plan for the Business Owner

One of the primary objectives of the awareness phase it to get the Business Owner to agree to move to the Transition Plan Development (*TPD*). To develop the transition plan, the Coach refers the Business Owner to a *TPD* Specialist; or, if the Transition Coach is trained in Transition Plan Development (*TPD*), the Coach will develop the plan with the Business Owner.

During this phase the Transition Plan Development Specialist (who is a referred Specialist or a trained Coach in *TPD*) works with the Business Owner to develop a written transition plan containing all of the action items the Business Owner will need to undertake in order to get from where he/she is today to the desired transition.

When the Business Owner is working with an outside Specialist in the development of the plan, the Transition Coach receives updates from the Specialist, conducts scheduled monthly check-ins with the Business Owner, connects with the Specialist, meets with the Specialist to review the Transition Plan prior to its final presentation with the Business Owner, and attends the final report meeting with the Specialist and the Business Owner.

At the conclusion of Transition Plan Development, the Business Owner needs to decide to try to execute the Transition Plan alone, or to engage the continued assistance of the Transition Coach and other Specialists to assist and accelerate the process of implementing the plan. The Coach is back into awareness mode with the Business Owner to help them understand the options and valuable benefits. Now it is time to move on to Transition Plan Implementation.

3. Implementation of the Transition Plan

While Transition Plan Development (*TPD*) is usually a single-Specialist process, Transition Plan Implementation is a multi-Specialist process. This means that the role of the Transition Coach is bigger and busier in this phase – monitoring and coordinating progress and making Specialist referrals as needed. A main Specialist during this phase will be the Transition Plan Implementation (*TPI*) Specialist whose expertise is in business value acceleration. Other Specialists brought in during this phase would minimally include an accountant, financial planner, broker/investment banker/M&A, lawyer, wealth manager, and insurance broker. The complexity of the transition will dictate the type of Specialists needed.

During Transition Plan Implementation the Coach will need to receive input from all engaged Specialists. The coach will conduct monthly calls, or meetings, with the Business Owner to give updates, have the 5W's check-in, and discuss progress or lack of progress. There will also be a need for quarterly meetings with the business owner, the *TPI* Specialist and other Specialists to review progress and set quarterly goals.

Throughout the process the Coach is the listener, confidant, comforter, encourager, facilitator, and in some cases teacher. This will have the effect of deepening the relationship of Most Trusted Advisor and will expedite the success of the business transition.

4. Create Coach Role and Process

The addition of the Business Transition Coach (*BTC*) and its defined role, pulls together the entire process and model. The absence of this position causes confusion about how Business Transition Planning all comes together to serve the objectives of the Business Owner Client.

Billable or Not

A Super Coach can charge for advisory services, but how about the (regular) Transition Coach? The Transition Coach should absolutely charge for his/her services. Each Coach should decide on his/her own approach to advisory service charges. When considering the work of the Transition Coach, there is certainly time spent, and value created, that should be billable. The key is having an advisory service process, a Transition Planning Coach Process, that can be presented to the Business Owner for consideration. The process will demonstrate the involvement and value the Transition Coach brings to ensure the Business Owner's successful transition.

The Coach can provide additional related services in the awareness phase, which are also billable.

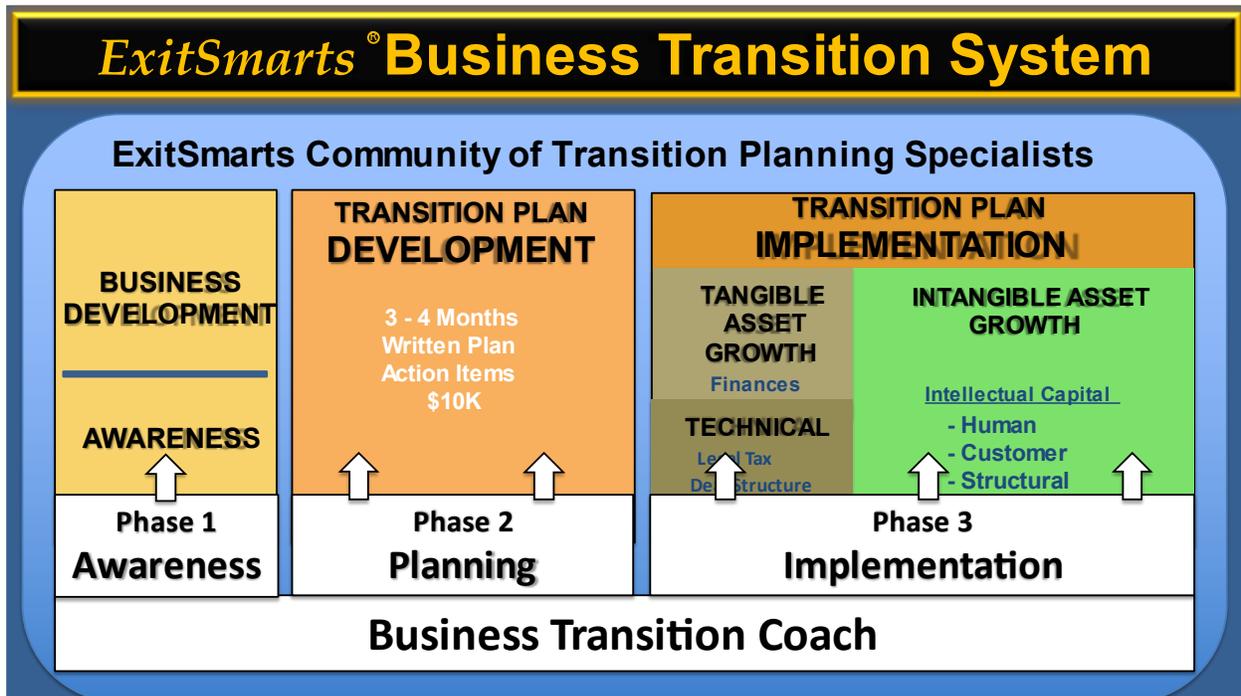
The ExitSmarts Business Transition System Solution – *Practice in a Box*

The ExitSmarts team created the Business Transition System based on hundreds of Advisor discussions. The challenges expressed in these discussions were consistent and became predictable. After summarizing the Advisor comments, they all pointed to one issue which ultimately identified the solution. The aggregated issues all pointed to the fact that Advisors were, and are, having difficulty getting Business Owner Clients into their transition planning services or practices.

Attracting Business Owner Clients for transition planning services is only going to work if the Advisor is offering a comprehensive solution to Business Owners rather than offering just one area of specialty within the total solution. Regardless of the Advisor’s original specialty, he/she must be a Transition Coach. Advisors can Coach and also offer other specialty services along the way, but first and foremost the Advisor must be a Coach that can address the Business Owner’s comprehensive Transition needs. The Business Owner needs a Transition Coach first and Specialists later.

Since the Super Coach was the only coach type referred to in Transition Planning literature, the ExitSmarts team needed to define the (non-Super) Coach role, including the process for this role. It became evident that the Coach’s role needed to exist in concert with an Advisor Community consisting of Specialists, all of whom subscribe to the same transition planning model. The ExitSmarts team then crafted two more pieces of the overall solution:

1. A comprehensive transition planning model
2. A network of referral Advisors who all practice the new ExitSmarts transition planning model – the Business Transition System (BTS)



The model was created in alignment with the Exit Planning Institute Value Acceleration Model with the addition of specific process and tools for the roles of Business Transition Coach (*BTC*), Transition Plan Development (*TPD*) Advisor, and Transition Plan Implementation (*TPI*) Value Enhancement Advisor. Additionally, training workshops for all three of these roles were established to provide maximum flexibility and opportunity to individual Advisors. Advisors can become Business Transition Coaches (*BTC*) only, or they can also attend workshops to also become a Transition Plan Development (*TPD*) Advisor or Transition Plan Implementation (*TPI*) Advisor.

The ExitSmarts Community has been built, and continues to expand, to include trained Coaches, Transition Plan Development Advisors, Transition Plan Implementation Advisors, and other Specialists to cover the gamut of Advisor Specialists that may be needed by any one Business Transition Coach.

With the model and Advisor Community in place, an independent Advisor can become a Business Transition Coach and *immediately* begin promoting a comprehensive solution to Business Owners. The new Coach performs the Coaching role and has instant access to the ExitSmarts support and community for referrals as necessary. **Hence, the name *Practice in a Box*.**

Market Differentiation Note: While **ExitSmarts is a services company**, and not a technology company, the Business Transition System (*BTS*), tools, and processes, are in all a workflow system that guides the process, houses the tools, and automates communication among the Coach, the business owner, and the Specialists.

About the Author: Dan Paxton is a partner of ExitSmarts. He was previously an Implementor of the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS)/Traction, and holds accreditation from both the Business Enterprise Institute (BEI) and the Exit Planning Institute (EPI).