

Pat Keating Releases The Business Exit Playbook as Founders & Family Businesses Confront Once-in-a-Generation Transition

After 50 Years in the Trenches, Keating Reveals the Real Decisions Behind Founder Exits and Generational Transfers

MANHATTAN, KS, UNITED STATES, March 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As millions of privately held businesses approach a crossroads — whether to sell, transfer ownership, or pass the company to the next generation — veteran advisor Pat Keating is releasing a new book designed for the people carrying that weight: founders and family business owners.

Keating's new book, *The Business Exit Playbook: What You Need to Know About How, When, and Why to Sell*, arrives at a pivotal moment. Across the U.S., aging founders, consolidating industries, and unprepared successors are colliding, forcing owners to make high-stakes decisions that will shape not only their financial futures but their families, employees, and legacies.

After more than 50 years advising entrepreneurs through exits, succession plans, family transfers, ESOPs, and internal buyouts, Keating says most owners are unprepared for the realities of transition.

"Selling or handing over a business is rarely just a financial event," Keating said. "It's a personal, emotional, and generational decision. If you don't prepare for all three, the long-term effects can be devastating."

Unlike traditional business books that focus narrowly on valuation or deal mechanics, *The Business Exit Playbook* tackles what Keating calls "the meeting behind the meeting" — the unspoken fears, identity loss, family tension, and second-guessing that surface when ownership changes hands.

The book addresses both sides of the transition equation:

- Founder exits, including sales to strategic buyers, private equity, or insiders
- Generational and internal transfers, where businesses move to children, relatives, or long-time employees

Drawing on real stories from decades in the field, Keating explores why so many family

businesses struggle to survive the handoff, how unclear expectations fracture relationships, and why being “fair” is often more important than being “equal” when ownership moves within a family.

Throughout the book, Keating introduces practical frameworks founders can use to pressure-check decisions before they are irreversible — encouraging owners to think beyond valuation and consider leadership readiness, family alignment, employee impact, and life after ownership.

“Most regret doesn’t come from the price,” Keating said. “It comes from what the owner didn’t think through — things like who would lead next, how the family would react, or who they’d be once the business was no longer theirs.”

Industry observers note the timing of the book is especially relevant. A massive wave of closely held businesses — many built by first-generation founders or held within families for decades — is expected to change hands over the next ten years. Yet few owners have formal succession plans, and even fewer have prepared for the emotional consequences of transition.

Keating’s message is consistent throughout the book: The best exits and handoffs are planned years in advance, while owners still have leverage, clarity, and energy.

The Business Exit Playbook is written for founders, second-generation owners, and family business leaders who want to make intentional decisions about when to sell, when to stay, and how to transfer what they’ve built without destroying the relationships around it.

The book, being published by [Lunch Break Books](#), will be released in March 2026.

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About the Author

Pat Keating is a financial advisor, serial entrepreneur, and business exit strategist with more than 50 years of experience advising privately held companies. He founded [Keating & Associates](#) in 1975 and has guided hundreds of business owners through exits, generational transfers, ESOPs, and succession plans. Known for his steady hand and practical wisdom, Keating draws on his own experience as both an owner and seller to help founders navigate not just transactions but the life transitions that follow. He lives in Kansas with his wife and family.

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