



# How Do I Know When it's Time to Sell My Print or Sign Business?

WHITE PAPER



Alliance Franchise Brands LLC is the parent company of KK Printing Canada ULC.

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While the choice of whether or not to sell your print or sign business is often a deeply personal decision, experience has shown us that the most successful sellers are those who are able to take a step back to view their operation objectively.



When considering the big decision, you'll need to address the following three questions.

### Can I sell it at a price that meets my needs?

Whether you are seeking to retire or contemplating a change career-wise, much will depend on the amount you can obtain for your printing or signage operation.

Start with a quick reality check. Understandably, many owners who are seeking to sell want to be compensated for all the hard work they have put into their business, its potential for growth, and the operation's current measurable attributes.

Potential buyers, however, are only interested in the latter factor.

They don't want to pay you for the blood, sweat and tears you put into growing your business. They don't want to pay you for what the business *could* achieve in the future. Instead, they wish to pay only for what the business is achieving today—with an eye, of course, on maximizing its potential going forward.

A business valuation should be your first step in determining a realistic price that a prospect might pay.

Alliance Franchise Brands (AFB)—the parent company to Allegra Marketing Print Mail franchise businesses and Image360 centers for graphics, signage and displays—offers a way for you to find out right away, and at no charge.

Printers can visit [valuemyprintbusiness.com](https://valuemyprintbusiness.com) while sign makers should go to [valuemysignbusiness.com](https://valuemysignbusiness.com).



By entering (on a confidential basis) your annual gross sales, owner's discretionary earnings and other information, you'll instantly receive a low-medium-high estimate of the valuation of your business.

If the valuation is one that you find favorable to your circumstance, now may indeed be the right time to sell your print or sign business. However, if it's less than you need to fund your retirement or another next step, it's time to ask what changes you can make now to increase the value of the business.

The ability to show strong sales and growing revenues will be chief among them, and AFB offers several options for consideration.

### Are today's market conditions favorable?

If all signs are pointing to selling now, you'll likely be concerned with the nation's economic outlook. The onset of the COVID-19 Crisis might lead you to believe that buyers are scarce, and print and sign business valuations will be on the low side.

However, that is not true for many **print businesses in 2021**. Benefiting from their status as essential businesses, many printers and sign makers emerged from the crisis with stronger revenues based on the sale of banners, floor graphics, signs, single-use menus and other pandemic-related products. Several of our Allegra Marketing Print Mail Franchise Owners, made the 2021 Top 100 Small Commercial Printers List. Of course, others are experiencing slower recoveries. Where you stand will affect your prospects.

Will it pay for you to wait? Financial advisors generally caution against trying to "time the market." Uncertainty regarding effective vaccines for COVID-19, the strength of a recovery and the potential for change in interest rates and tax laws may make future conditions more favorable for a sale—or less so.



With all that said, one looming demographic argues that you should indeed time the market and sell sooner rather than later.

As "baby boomer" owners (i.e., those born in 1946-64) begin to retire in ever-larger numbers, there will likely be an unprecedented number of small businesses put up for sale over the next 10-15 years.

Many expect this trend to tilt the supply-and-demand equation in favor of buyers—creating ever-stronger downward pressures on business valuations.

## Are you personally prepared to move on?

Beyond price and market conditions, there's a third consideration when deciding when to sell your print or sign business, and that's your enthusiasm for maintaining ownership.



It may be time to consider selling your operation if:

- On some level you know it's time, but you still find yourself convincing yourself otherwise.
- You find yourself going through the motions rather than aggressively growing your business.
- You are holding off making necessary investments in people, equipment and technology.
- Work feels like work; the fun is gone.
- You worry more and plan less.
- You feel disempowered as if the business is changing against your will rather than taking charge and driving the change.
- Your business is being fed primarily with existing customers. Other than an occasional referral, you aren't generating much new business.
- Customers, employees, and vendors seem to be getting on your nerves more than ever before.
- You go to bed tired and you wake up tired. The business no longer feeds you energy.
- You feel trapped as if somehow the business now owns you, rather than you owning it.
- You want to spend more time visiting family, pursuing hobbies or traveling.
- You have discovered a new passion and want to devote your energies to this new venture or cause.

The bottom-line question: Can you imagine running your print or sign business for another one, three or five years—or even longer?

## A final thought for consideration

While it may or may not be time to sell, it's always a good practice to step back and take stock of your business and its prospects, the market as a whole and your enthusiasm level in specific.

As in any endeavor, those printers or sign makers with a clear idea of whether to grow—or to go—are more likely to achieve success in their chosen path.





For more information on opportunities with Alliance Franchise Brands,  
please contact Mike Cline, Chief Development Officer, by phone at **800-765-7446**  
or via email at **[acquisitions@alliancefranchisebrands.com](mailto:acquisitions@alliancefranchisebrands.com)**

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