



ATOMIC CONSULTANCY



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SELL • BUY • MERGE • STAY INDEPENDENT

THE FUTURE OF AGENCY OWNERSHIP

BUY, SELL, MERGE OR STAY INDEPENDENT?

The agency acquisition market is changing. New buyers are entering the sector, well-run businesses remain in demand and more owners are reviewing what they want from the next stage of their career.

You may be planning an exit, looking for your next acquisition, considering a merger or firmly committed to remaining independent. Whatever your direction, the strongest decisions begin with a clear understanding of your business, your goals and the options available.

This practical guide will help you start that conversation.

Atomic Consultancy has completed 180 agency deals worth £180 million, supported by a network of more than 10,000 registered buyers.

WHICH DIRECTION IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

There is no single right answer for every agency owner. Your decision should reflect what you want personally, what the business can realistically support and how prepared you are for the next step.

01 SELL

Selling may be the right option when you are ready to step back, change direction or realise the value you have created. A successful sale depends on preparation, realistic expectations and finding a buyer whose plans align with the business you have built.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Can the business operate successfully without you?
- Are your financial and compliance records ready for buyer scrutiny?
- Do you understand the current value and likely deal structure?
- What matters most to you beyond the final price?

02 BUY

Acquisition can provide immediate income, market share, people and geographic reach. It can also carry significant risk if the strategic fit, funding or integration plan is weak.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why is acquisition better than organic growth in this instance?
- Do you have the funding and management capacity to complete and integrate the deal?
- Does the target strengthen your existing business?
- How will you protect staff, customers and income after completion?

03 MERGE

A merger can bring together complementary strengths, create scale and solve succession or leadership challenges. It requires shared objectives, clear roles and honest agreement about control, culture and future direction.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What would the combined business achieve that each agency cannot achieve alone?
- Are the cultures and leadership teams compatible?
- How will ownership, responsibilities and future value be divided?
- Will the combined operation genuinely be stronger?

04 STAY INDEPENDENT

Remaining independent can be an active strategic choice. It works best when the agency remains profitable, resilient and aligned with the owner's goals.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is the business giving you the income and lifestyle you want?
- Can it adapt to regulatory and market change?
- Is there a clear plan for leadership and succession?
- What should you strengthen now to keep future options open?

WHAT BUYERS LOOK FOR

Buyers want confidence. They need to understand the income they are acquiring, the risks they are taking on and whether the business can continue performing after a change of ownership. You don't need all of this in place to sell. The more you can show, the stronger your position.

THE MAIN AREAS BUYERS ASSESS

- 1 Accurate financial information and regular management accounts
- 2 Recurring income and the balance between fully managed and let-only properties
- 3 Landlord and customer retention
- 4 Clear contracts and reliable supporting records
- 5 Compliance processes and documentation
- 6 Strength, capability and retention of the team
- 7 Systems, reporting and operational efficiency
- 8 Dependence on the owner
- 9 Reputation, location and future growth potential
- 10 Geographical spread of the portfolio

A QUICK VALUE CHECK

Most agencies we sell don't tick every box, and they still sell successfully. How many of these are true for yours?

- ☐ We produce accurate monthly management accounts
- ☐ We can clearly separate recurring and one-off income
- ☐ Our compliance records are complete and accessible
- ☐ Our customer and landlord agreements are clear
- ☐ Our key team members could run the business without the owner
- ☐ Our systems and processes are documented
- ☐ We understand which services are genuinely profitable
- ☐ We have addressed unnecessary costs and outdated contracts
- ☐ We know what could reduce buyer confidence
- ☐ We have a realistic view of value and timescale

Not ticked many? Don't worry, it won't stop you selling. Every 'yes' adds buyer confidence and can strengthen your offers, and we can help you decide what's worth working on first.

BUILD VALUE BEFORE YOU GO TO MARKET

The best time to prepare for a sale is before you need one.

Owners who begin early have more opportunity to improve recurring income, strengthen profitability, reduce dependency and resolve issues before due diligence. These changes can help create a smoother process, better buyer confidence and stronger offers.

EIGHT PRACTICAL ACTIONS

01 Increase the quality and visibility of recurring income

02 Improve management accounts and financial reporting

03 Review fees, contracts and unnecessary costs

04 Reduce reliance on the owner

05 Strengthen compliance records

06 Develop and retain the management team

07 Resolve weaknesses before a buyer identifies them

08 Seek an informed valuation and plan early

ATOMIC EXIT ADVANTAGE

Build value before you go to market.

If you are planning to exit your estate or lettings agency in the next one to three years, Atomic Exit Advantage is a tailored 6 to 12 month programme designed to strengthen your business before going to market, helping you maximise value and achieve stronger offers.



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CONSIDERING YOUR NEXT MOVE?

Speak confidentially with Atomic about your business, your priorities and the options available. Whether you are planning an exit, exploring an acquisition or simply want to understand your current position, the first conversation carries no obligation.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION WITH ATOMIC

Visit atomicconsultancy.com

VISIT THE WEBSITE

Looking to grow? Register for acquisition opportunities through Atomic's buyer network

REGISTER AS A BUYER

You do not need to decide today whether you will buy, sell, merge or remain independent. You do need to build a business that gives you the freedom to choose.

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