

# InvestmentNews

## Sticker shock for small business owners looking to sell

Prices for many smaller outfits still not where they were before recession struck

By **Lavonne Kuykendall**

June 20, 2012 12:51 pm ET



Many small-business owners delayed retirement when business prices fell during the recession to wait for prices to bounce back. But that may not happen for all of them, said an accountant who specializes in succession planning.



"A lot of merger and acquisition deals over the last few years fell apart because owners expected higher prices," said Gary Curtis, a CPA and partner with Haskell & White, LLP. "We try to keep them focused on a succession plan, and to maintain the value of their company."

Mr. Curtis predicts that a lot of owners who put off retiring will jump back into the market as soon as they detect that prices are again favorable. Those who worked on improving their business's value over the past few years can expect reasonable bids. Those who didn't may be disappointed with what they're offered

"Over the last three years, some companies had a tendency to just survive," he said. "Now they need to get their operations running more smoothly." He advises his clients to cut costs and increase revenue to improve their company's value.

"Sometimes companies can grow the top line, but not the bottom line as well," he said. "They have to find where the waste in their business comes from."

### Related to this story »

- RIAs on markets, management
- Why small RIAs are panicking over SRO bill despite fee cap
- **RIA Data Center:** Which state has the most AUM?

Advertisement

**Federated Institutional  
High Yield Bond Fund**

[learn more >](#)