

Helping Business Owners Plan Beyond the Business

You may have a gap you have not fully measured yet.



Many business owners have spent years building a company that provides income, identity, purpose, and family opportunity. But the business is often also the owner's largest asset, biggest source of income, and greatest financial concentration risk.

That creates an important question: Are you financially independent from your business, or is your personal plan still dependent on what the business may provide in the future?

At Covered Bridge Wealth Planning, we help business owners understand the personal financial side of business ownership. Our role is to help you clarify what you need outside the business, identify potential gaps, and coordinate planning with the right professionals so your business can better support your long-term goals.

We focus on helping you plan beyond the business, for your family, your future, and the options you want to preserve over time.

The Wealth Gap

A number every business owner should understand. Many business owners assume the business will eventually provide the wealth needed for retirement, family goals, or future independence. That may be true, but it should not be left to assumption. A useful starting point is identifying your Wealth Gap:

Wealth Gap = Personal Wealth Needed – Current Wealth Outside the Business

If the business did not provide another dollar of future value, would your personal financial plan still work?

For many owners, the answer is unclear. Their personal net worth may be heavily tied to the business, and their retirement plan may depend on future business income, distributions, a family transition, or a future liquidity event.

Once the Wealth Gap is clear, planning becomes more focused: How can the business help close the gap while also creating more options for the owner and the family?

That may involve business cash flow, owner distributions, retirement plan design, risk management, tax planning coordination, business-owner liquidity planning, value growth strategies, or future transition planning.

We do not perform all of this work ourselves. Instead, we help coordinate the personal financial planning side and work with appropriate professionals who can help address specialized business, legal, tax, valuation, insurance, and transition-related issues.

Questions We Help Business Owners Answer

Business owner planning often starts with better questions. We help owners think through questions such as:

- Is your retirement plan dependent on a future transition event?
- How much personal wealth do you need outside the business?
- Are your estate, tax, insurance, and investment strategies coordinated?
- Do you have a plan for extracting value from the business over time?
- What happens if business income slows, stops, or becomes less predictable?
- Who is helping you coordinate the moving parts?

These questions are especially important for owners of family-owned companies, construction businesses, service contractors, specialty trade companies, and other closely held businesses where personal wealth and business value are often deeply connected.

Three Connected Areas of Planning

Business owner planning is not just about the business. It is about aligning the business with the owner's personal goals and financial needs.

1. Personal Planning

What do you want your life, family, work, legacy, and future options to look like? Do you want to keep working indefinitely, reduce your role, transition ownership to family, bring in key employees, explore an outside transition, or create more flexibility? Personal planning clarifies objectives before strategies are recommended.

2. Personal Financial Planning

We help determine what you need personally: income, liquidity, investment strategy, risk management, retirement readiness, estate planning coordination, tax planning coordination, and financial independence outside the business. This includes identifying your Wealth Gap.

3. Business Planning

Can the business support your desired lifestyle? Is it creating transferable value? Are risks being reduced over time? Is there a plan to extract value in a tax-aware and coordinated way? We help coordinate with professionals who can address these questions while keeping the personal financial plan at the center.

Coordinating the Advisory Team

Business owners rarely need only one advisor. They often need a coordinated team. At Covered Bridge Wealth Planning, we help coordinate with your existing advisors and, when appropriate, introduce additional professionals.

Core Advisors

Financial Advisor | CPA | Attorney | Banker

Specialty Advisors, As Needed

Value Growth Advisor | Insurance Specialist | Family Advisor | M&A Partner | Tax Strategist | Estate Attorney

The goal is not to create complexity. The goal is to make sure the right professionals are addressing the right issues and that the owner's personal financial objectives remain central to the planning process.

How We Help

Wealth Gap Analysis

We help you determine whether your current personal wealth is sufficient to support your long-term goals, or whether your plan still depends heavily on future business income, distributions, or transition value.

Personal Financial Planning

We help coordinate your investment strategy, retirement income planning, liquidity needs, family goals, estate planning considerations, and long-term financial independence.

Risk Management Review

We help identify areas where business risk and personal financial risk overlap, including income dependency, concentration risk, key-person risk, liquidity risk, and family protection needs.

Tax Planning Coordination

We do not provide tax advice, but we help coordinate with tax professionals so tax considerations are part of the broader planning conversation.

Business-Owner Liquidity Planning

We help evaluate how value may be extracted from the business over time through income, distributions, retirement plan strategies, liquidity planning, and coordinated transition planning.

Advisor Coordination

We help organize the conversation among your professional advisors so that planning is not happening in disconnected silos.



Why Planning Ahead Matters

Many business owners assume the business will eventually provide the liquidity needed to fund retirement, family goals, or the next stage of life. But closely held businesses do not always transition as expected.

Business value can be affected by owner dependency, customer concentration, key employees, profitability, market conditions, tax considerations, deal structure, family dynamics, and timing.

The earlier these issues are addressed, the more options an owner may have.

Planning ahead can help you:

Understand how dependent your personal plan is on the business

Identify the personal wealth you need outside the business

Coordinate estate, tax, insurance, investment, and business planning

Reduce avoidable blind spots

Create more long-term flexibility for yourself and your family

Prepare for future opportunities before a decision is forced

The Outcome: More Clarity, More Coordination, More Options

For many owners, the business is the engine that has created wealth. But the business should also support a broader personal plan.

Our goal is to help you understand where you stand, what you need, and what steps may help create more independence and optionality over time.

That starts with one central question:

How dependent is your personal financial plan on your business?

Talk With Us

If you own a business and are unsure how dependent your personal financial future is on the business, we can help you begin with a conversation.



Aaron Louisell, CEPA[®], CFP[®], CIMA[®]
616.974.3372
www.bridgethegap-process.com

100 Crahen Ave. NE, Suite 200,
Grand Rapids, MI 49525-4530

Covered Bridge Wealth Planning of Raymond James
Securities offered through Raymond James & Associates, Inc., member New York Stock Exchange/SIPC.

Raymond James and its advisors do not offer tax or legal advice. You should discuss any tax or legal matters with the appropriate professional. Investing involves risk, and you may incur a profit or loss regardless of strategy selected, including diversification and asset allocation. Third-party professionals are independent from Raymond James unless otherwise specified. Raymond James financial advisors may only conduct business with residents of the states and/or jurisdictions for which they are properly registered. Not all investments and services mentioned are available in every state.