

THE AUTO REPAIR SHOP OWNER'S GUIDE TO SELLING

**How to Prepare, Maximize Value,
& Transition Smoothly**



GREATWATER
360 AUTO CARE

INTRODUCTION

Selling your auto repair shop is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make as a business owner. It's more than just a financial transaction—it's the culmination of years of hard work, customer relationships, and a reputation you've built from the ground up.

We created this guide to help you navigate the process with confidence. Whether you're just starting to think about selling or actively exploring offers, this resource will help you:

- Understand what buyers are really looking for.
- Prepare your shop to attract stronger offers.
- Avoid common mistakes that can cost you time and money.
- Protect your team, customers, and legacy.

Selling doesn't have to be stressful or filled with uncertainty. With the right preparation and knowledge, you can transition on your own terms while maximizing the value of your business.

QUICK CHECKLIST: ARE YOU READY TO SELL?

Before you start reaching out to potential buyers, ask yourself:

- **Personal readiness:**
 - Am I burned out or looking for more work-life balance?
 - Do I have plans for retirement or my next venture?
 - Am I emotionally prepared to let go of day-to-day operations?
- **Business readiness:**
 - Are my financial records accurate and organized?
 - Do I have strong customer loyalty and recurring business?
 - Is my team stable, skilled, and able to run the shop without me?
- **Market readiness:**
 - Are there active buyers in my area?
 - Is now a favorable time to sell based on industry trends?

If you answered “yes” to most of these, you're likely ready to explore selling.



UNDERSTANDING THE SELLING PROCESS

Selling an auto repair shop typically follows these steps:

1. **Initial Exploration:** Confidential discussions with advisors and buyers to gauge interest. No commitments, just information gathering.
2. **Preparation:** Organizing financials, cleaning up operations, and fixing red flags that could scare off buyers.
3. **Valuation & Offers:** Buyers analyze your shop's earnings, growth potential, and market position to make an offer.
4. **Due Diligence:** A deeper dive into your financials, vendor contracts, staff agreements, and operations to verify details.
5. **Closing:** Signing final documents, transferring ownership, and handing over the keys.

Typical timeline: 60–120 days, but it can vary based on shop size, complexity, and how prepared you are.

MAXIMIZING YOUR SHOP'S VALUE BEFORE SELLING

The better your shop looks on paper and in person, the stronger your offers will be.

Focus on:

- **Financial health:** Clean up your books, reduce debts, and make sure your tax filings are accurate.
- **Curb appeal:** A clean, well-maintained shop signals pride of ownership. Fix deferred maintenance and organize work areas.
- **Strong team:** Retaining skilled employees reduces buyer risk and adds value.
- **Recurring revenue:** Maintenance programs or fleet contracts create predictable income streams.
- **Online reputation:** Positive reviews and strong visibility make your shop more appealing to buyers and customers alike.

Value-Boosting Checklist

- ✓ Financial statements are accurate and up-to-date.
- ✓ Equipment is functional and maintained.
- ✓ Key employees are retained and cross-trained.
- ✓ Customer reviews and marketing presence are strong.
- ✓ Growth opportunities are documented for buyer consideration.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING DUE DILIGENCE

Due diligence is when buyers confirm the details you've provided. It's not meant to be intimidating—it's a standard part of the process.

Buyers typically review:

- **Financial records:** Profit and loss statements, tax returns, debts, and liabilities.
- **Operations:** Vendor agreements, inventory, software systems, and customer records.
- **Employees:** Roles, compensation, and whether they plan to stay on post-sale.
- **Legal items:** Licenses, zoning, or environmental concerns.

Avoid surprises:

- Fix outstanding tax or legal issues early.
- Be transparent about any challenges your shop faces.
- Stay organized and responsive to requests.

Due Diligence Prep Checklist

- ✓ Three years of tax returns ready
- ✓ Profit and loss statements up-to-date
- ✓ Vendor contracts organized
- ✓ Employee agreements documented
- ✓ Lease or property documents accessible

MYTHS ABOUT SELLING A SHOP

Many shop owners hesitate to sell due to common misconceptions. Let's set the record straight:

Myth: Selling means losing the shop's name and brand recognition.

Fact: Many buyers keep your branding or phase changes slowly.

Myth: My employees will lose their jobs.

Fact: Most buyers want skilled staff to stay on.

Myth: The process takes years.

Fact: A well-prepared sale often closes in 60–120 days.

Myth: I'll lose control immediately.

Fact: Transition arrangements can be negotiated.

Myth: Selling is complicated and risky.

Fact: With advisors and preparation, it can be straightforward and rewarding.



RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

You've built a successful business—now it's time to plan your next chapter with knowledge and confidence.

Here's what you can do next:

- Read our **blog series, “What to Expect When You’re Thinking of Selling Your Auto Repair Shop,”** for deeper insights on each step of the process.
- Use this guide's checklists to assess your readiness and prepare your shop for sale.
- Contact us for a confidential conversation about your options—whether you're ready to sell now or just starting to explore.

ABOUT GREATWATER 360 AUTO CARE

GreatWater 360 Auto Care is a growing network of full-service auto repair shops in key markets, connected by shared values and approach to customer service. Each shop in the network has earned the trust of the communities they serve through transparency, integrity, and quality work. The company partners with established local shops to help them grow while maintaining their reputations and community connections.

Are you a shop owner thinking about what's next? Contact us to learn how GreatWater can help you build a future that honors your past at:

greatwater360autocare.com/sell-your-shop

This guide is designed to give you clarity and confidence in your selling journey. With preparation, honesty, and the right buyer, you can ensure a smooth, profitable sale that protects your legacy and sets you up for success in your next chapter.