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Finding The Right Financial Adviser

A Practical Guide For Business Owners

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Table of Contents

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Choosing a financial adviser is harder than it should be.

Not because there is a shortage of financial advisers. Quite the opposite. There are thousands of firms, directories, awards, search results, review sites, professional badges, and smart-looking websites.

The problem is working out who is actually good.

That matters even more if you own a business.

As a business owner, your finances are rarely straightforward.

Your income may vary from year to year. Much of your wealth may be tied up in the company. You may be holding more cash in the business than you need.

At the same time, you may be trying to reduce tax, build wealth outside the business, protect your family, and keep enough money in the company to support future growth.

You're also likely to be time-poor.

You do not want to spend months interviewing advisers. You want a clear way to find someone credible, relevant, and commercially sensible.

This guide gives you an insider's process for finding the right financial adviser.

It is useful for anyone searching for financial advice. But it is written especially for ambitious business owners who want to turn business success into personal financial security.

What A Good Financial Adviser Should Actually Do

Before choosing an adviser, you need to know what you are looking for.

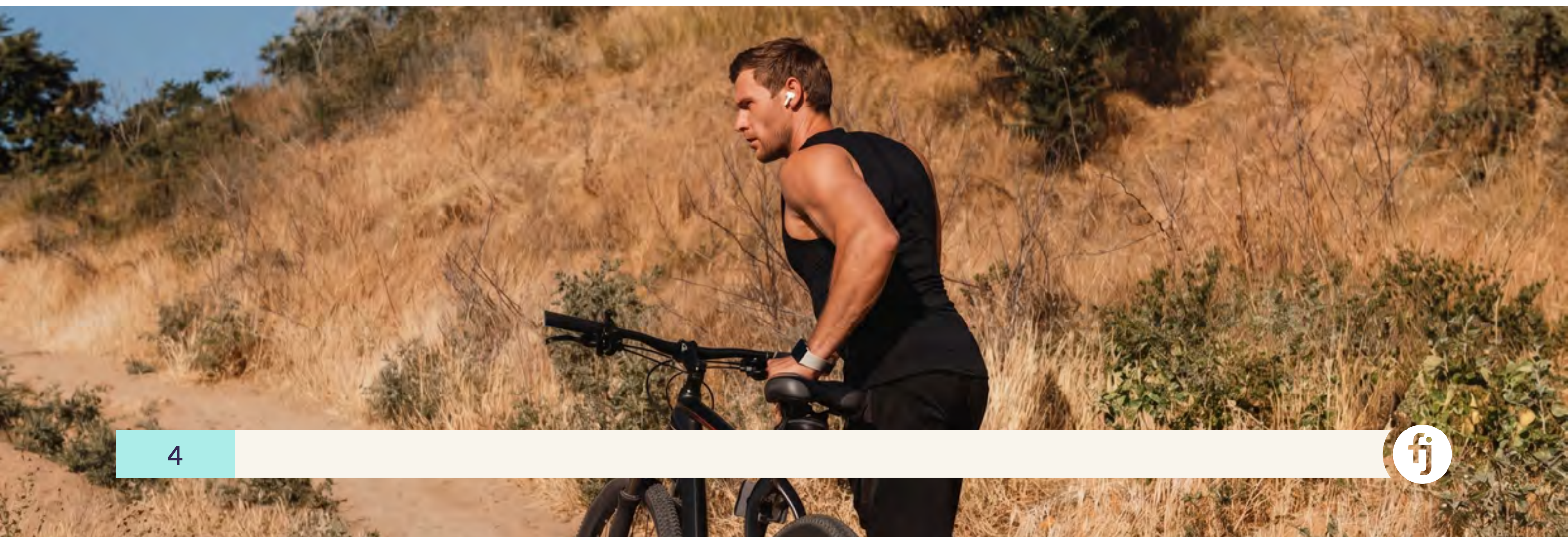
A good financial adviser helps you make smart decisions with all aspects of your finances. For a business owner, those decisions might include:

- How much is enough?
- What happens if I cannot work?
- How much should I take from the company?
- How much cash should I keep in the business?
- Am I building enough wealth outside the company?
- Could I afford to slow down, sell, hire, or take more risk?
- Am I using the business to create freedom, or just a more demanding job?
- Should I pay myself through salary, dividends, pension contributions, or a mix?

Beyond these decisions, **a stronger adviser should help you see trade-offs clearly.**

They should help you understand what is possible, what is sensible, and what needs attention.

They should also be able to explain complex issues in simple terms, giving you clarity and confidence around your finances.



Why Business Owners Need A Different Kind Of Financial Adviser

Many financial advisers can help someone invest a pension or ISA.

Fewer are genuinely comfortable advising business owners.

That is because business owners do not just have personal finances. They have two connected financial lives:

- **The finances of the household**
- **The finances of the business**

Those two lives cannot be separated.

The right personal financial decision depends on what is happening in the business. The right business financial decision depends on what you want your money to do outside the business.

Take too much from the company, and you may reduce flexibility, cash flow, or growth. Leave too much in the company, and you may delay building personal wealth, protecting your family, or creating financial independence.

That is the challenge.

Business owners are constantly making decisions where the business answer and the personal answer need to be considered together.

Employer pension contributions may be tax-efficient, but they also move money out of the company. Retained profits may feel safe, but they can leave too much of your wealth exposed to one business. Investing personally may build independence, but only if the company has enough cash to remain resilient.

None of these decisions sits neatly in one box.

That is why business owners need advice that connects tax, pensions, investments, protection, cash flow, and long-term financial planning. Not as separate topics, but as parts of one joined-up plan.

A good adviser does not need to replace your accountant. But they should understand enough about your business to work intelligently alongside them.

They will ask how the business supports your life, where it creates risk, and what personal financial freedom would actually require.

Because for a business owner, good financial advice is not just about managing money. It is about turning business success into personal wealth, security, and choice.

Step 1: Define What You Need Help With

Most people start by searching for "best financial adviser near me".

That is understandable. But it is not the best first step.

Before searching, you need some idea of what you want help with.

There is a useful idea from Alice in Wonderland. When Alice asks which way she should go, the answer depends on where she wants to go. If she does not know that, then it does not matter which road she takes.

Choosing a financial adviser works in a similar way.

If you are not clear on what you need, almost any adviser can seem suitable. If you are clear, even briefly, you can filter the market much more effectively.

For a business owner, the right adviser may need to help with:

- Reducing tax;
- Making better decisions around risk;
- Investing surplus income;
- Building personal wealth outside the business;
- Deciding how much to contribute to pensions;
- Protecting your family;
- Preparing for a future sale;
- Simplifying pensions and investments;
- Understanding when work becomes optional;

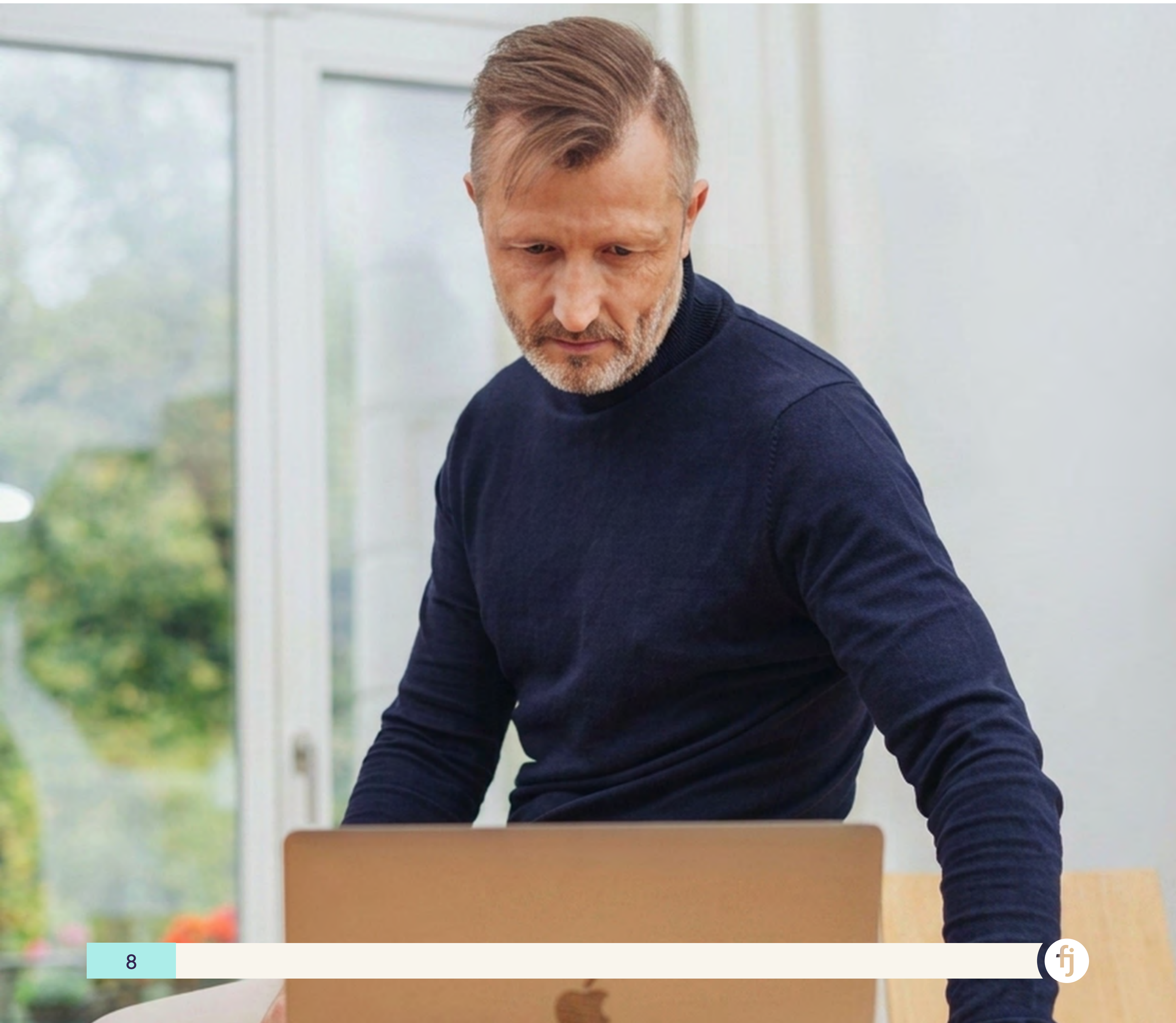
You do not need a perfect brief.

You just need enough clarity to avoid choosing someone generic.

> *I am a business owner in my thirties or forties. I am earning well, saving regularly, and want to build wealth outside the business while making sensible tax decisions."*

That sentence alone will help you filter the market.

It tells you what to look for, what to ask, and which advisers are unlikely to be the right fit.



Step 2: Build A Shortlist

Not A Final Answer

Your first goal is not to choose an adviser.

Your first goal is to build a shortlist.

That distinction matters.

If you try to pick the "best" adviser from the whole market, the process quickly becomes overwhelming. There are too many firms, too many directories, too many awards, and too many polished websites.

A shortlist gives you a better starting point.

Aim for three to five firms that look credible, relevant, and worth investigating properly. At this stage, you are not making a final decision. You are simply deciding who deserves a closer look.

Use Google to find specialists

Google can be a useful search tool. But how useful it is depends heavily on what you search for.

A broad search like "financial adviser near me" may give you results, but they will often be mixed. You may see large national firms, directories, local advisers, paid adverts, and firms with strong SEO rather than strong relevance.

For a business owner, relevance matters. Use specific search terms that reflect your situation. Here are some useful search terms:

- financial adviser for business owners;
- financial planner for business owners;
- financial adviser for company directors;
- financial planning for entrepreneurs;
- financial adviser for contractors;
- business owner pension planning;
- tax planning for business owners;
- financial planning for business owners UK.

These searches are more likely to surface firms that understand your world.

You are not just looking for someone who can manage investments. You are looking for someone who understands profit extraction, pension contributions, tax planning, business cash, family security, and building wealth outside the company.

Ask a friend

Other business owners can be a useful source of recommendations, especially if they run a similar type of business to yours.

They may already have gone through the process you are about to start. That means they can give you something Google cannot: a first-hand view of what the adviser is actually like to work with.

But make sure to be specific in what you're asking for.

Ask your accountant

Your accountant can be a great source of recommendations.

They already understand your business and will work with many other similar business owners.

They will likely already have connections within the financial advisory community and can guide you on who's worth speaking to and who to avoid.

One thing to be mindful is that accountants sometimes have commercial arrangements to recommend financial advisers or may be connected with their businesses. Make sure to ask your accountant if there are any potential conflicts of interest in their recommendation.

Look for professional credentials

Professional credentials can be a useful way to narrow the field.

They do not guarantee that an adviser is right for you, but they do give you some evidence that the adviser, or the firm, takes professional standards seriously.

Useful signs include:

- Chartered Financial Planner;
- Certified Financial Planner;
- Chartered Financial Planning firm;
- Accredited Financial Planning firm;
- strong technical qualifications across the wider team.

A firm does not need every badge to be good. Some excellent advisers will not hold all of them.

But if you are trusting someone with important decisions about your pensions, investments, tax planning, business wealth, and family security, you should expect a high professional standard.

Search financial adviser directories

Directories and review sites can be useful. Two of the best-known sites are **www.unbiased.co.uk** and **www.vouchedfor.co.uk.**

- **Unbiased** is a large UK adviser directory and can be useful for research. It may help you find firms you would not otherwise come across. But treat it as a shortlisting tool, not a final recommendation. The site is not mainly review-led, and adviser visibility can be influenced by commercial participation. So use it to gather names, then do your own checks.

- **VouchedFor** is more review-led. It can give you useful insight into what clients say about an adviser, including communication, trust, and overall experience. That is valuable. But remember that advisers often invite clients to leave reviews, so there can be some selection bias. Strong reviews are helpful evidence, not proof of fit.

  Use these sites as extra data points.

Step 3: Review Their Website Like An Insider

Once you have a shortlist, review each firm's website.

You are not looking for the best-looking site. You are looking for evidence.

A good website should help you answer one question: "Is this firm likely to understand someone in my position?"

A firm does not need to work only with business owners to be good. But if you own a business, you should see signs that they understand your world.

Look for content that speaks to the questions you are already asking:

- How do I build wealth outside the business?
- Am I taking too much, or too little, from the company?
- Should I use pension contributions to extract profits tax-efficiently?
- How much cash should I keep in the business?
- Should I invest personally or through the company?
- How do I protect my family if I cannot work?
- How much money would make work optional?

You are looking for relevance. Do their service pages, articles, videos, guides, and case studies make you think, "they get people like me"?

If they claim to advise business owners but have no meaningful content on business-owner planning, be cautious.

Do they talk about planning, not just products?

Some firms still lead with products:

- Pensions;
- Investments;
- ISAs;
- Protection;
- Retirement accounts.

But the stronger firms usually lead with planning questions:

- What do you want life to look like?
- How much is enough?
- What risks are you carrying?
- What options do you want in the future?
- What trade-offs are you willing to make?

For a business owner, this is important.

You are not just buying investment management. You are buying a trusted adviser for all things money.

Is their content genuinely useful?

Read a few articles or watch a few videos and Then ask:

- Did I learn something useful?
- Did they explain things clearly?
- Did they avoid jargon?
- Did they understand my world?
- Did they make me think differently?
- Would I trust them in a complex decision?

Content is a window into how a firm thinks.

Look at the people, not just the brand.

Read a few articles or watch a few videos, and Check:

- Qualifications;
- Experience;
- Specialisms;
- Depth;
- Tenure

As a business owner, you do not want to rely entirely on one individual with little support around them. If that person leaves, retires, becomes ill, or gets too busy, the relationship can become fragile.

Equally, you probably do not want to be passed around a large organisation where no one really knows you.

The best fit is often a small, specialist team with enough depth to provide continuity, but enough focus to make you feel personally looked after.

You want a relationship with real people, backed by a team that can support you properly as your circumstances change.

Step 4: Look For Joined-Up Planning

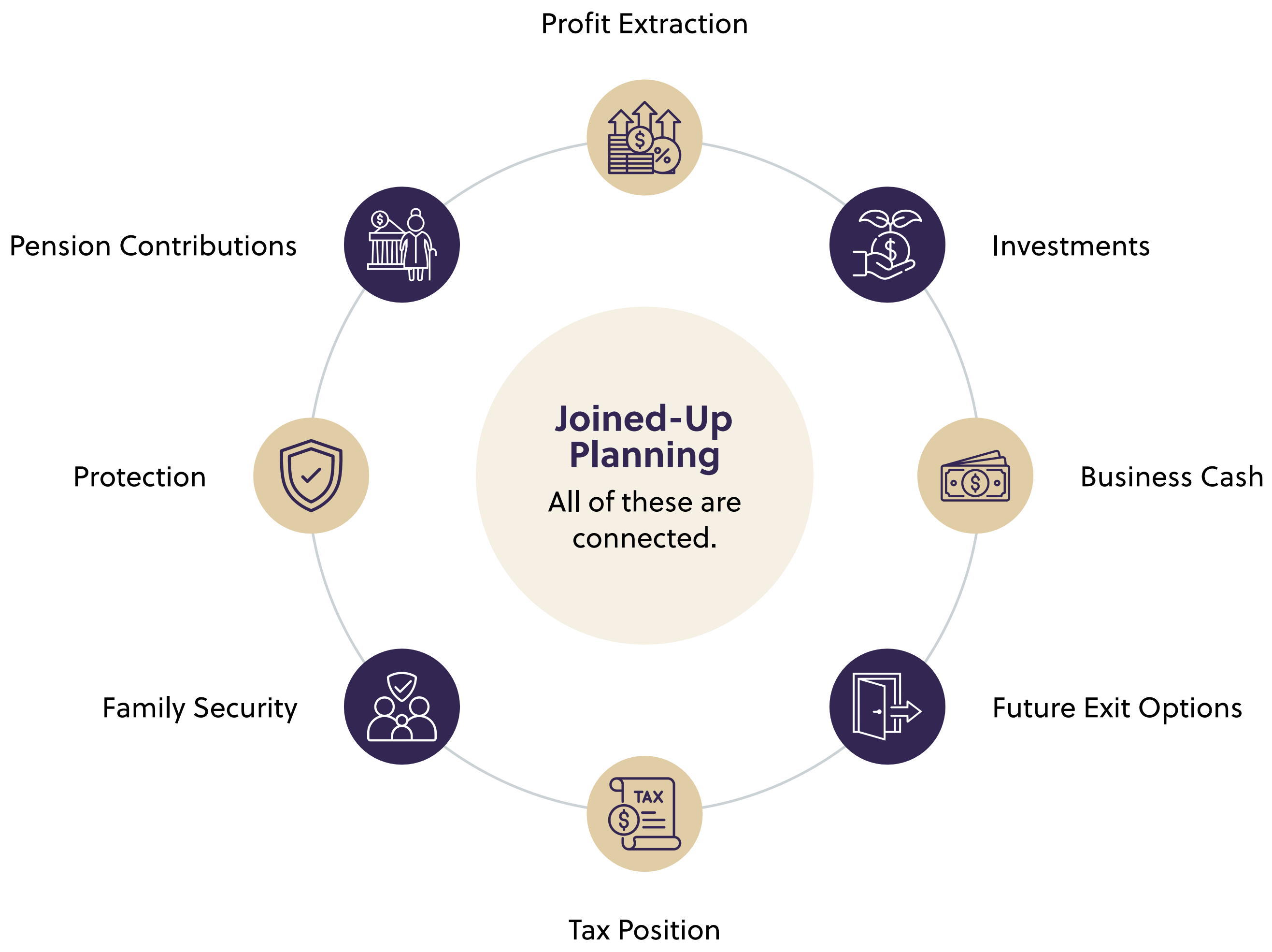
This is where many business owners go wrong.

They look for an adviser who can help with pensions or investments, but they do not check whether the adviser can connect those decisions to the wider picture.

For a business owner, financial advice should not sit in a separate box.

Your pension contributions, profit extraction, business cash, protection, investments, tax position, family security, and future exit options are all connected.

The right adviser knows where their expertise starts, where it ends, and how to coordinate with the other professionals around you.



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Step 5: Make Contact And Assess The Response

Once you have narrowed the list to two or three firms, contact them. The first contact tells you a lot. Pay attention to:

- how quickly they respond;
- whether the response feels professional;
- whether the process is clear;
- whether they ask sensible initial questions;
- whether they explain the next step;
- whether they seem organised.

For a time-poor business owner, responsiveness matters. Not instant replies to everything. That is unrealistic. But good firms should have a clear process and communicate well. You know the saying **you don't get a second first impression**.

Step 6: Use The Initial Call Properly

Most firms will offer an initial call, without cost or commitment.

This may be a short discovery call, introductory conversation, or first-stage consultation.

Use it well.

You are trying to answer three questions:

1. Do they understand people like me?
2. Can they help with the problems I actually have?
3. Do I trust them?

Good questions to ask include:

- What types of clients do you work best with?
- How do you help business owners specifically?
- How do you work alongside accountants?
- What would you usually look at first for someone in my position?
- How do you approach pension contributions from a company?
- How do you help clients decide how much wealth they need outside the business?
- How do you charge?
- What happens after the first meeting?
- What would make someone a poor fit for your firm?

That final question is useful. Good firms know who they are right for and who they are not right for. If they try to sound suitable for everyone, be cautious.

Step 7: Watch For Red Flags

Some warning signs are obvious. Others are more subtle.

Be cautious if an adviser or firm:

- cannot explain who they work best with;
- cannot explain fees clearly;
- talks about investments before understanding your goals;
- gives answers before asking proper questions;
- focuses too heavily on market performance;
- applies a standard solution without understanding your situation;
- uses jargon to sound clever;
- promises or implies unrealistic returns;
- seems more interested in your assets than your plan;
- dismisses your accountant or existing professionals;
- makes you feel rushed, confused, or pressured.
- does not ask about your business, cash flow, profit extraction, pensions, family, or future plans;

If you spot one red flag, ask a follow-up question and see how they respond. If you spot several, move on. The right adviser should make you feel clearer, not more cautious.

Step 8: Understand What The First Proper Meeting Is For

Most firms will offer an initial call, without cost or commitment. This may be a short discovery call, introductory conversation, or first-stage consultation. Use it well.

The adviser should want to know:

- who you are;
- what matters to you;
- how your business works;
- what worries you;
- what opportunities you are considering;
- what you want life to look like.

For business owners, the meeting should explore both personal and business context. That does not mean giving detailed advice on the spot. In fact, be wary of advisers who recommend major actions too quickly.

Good advice needs context. The first meeting should leave you both feeling more informed about how you could work together.

You should understand:

- whether the firm can help;
- what the process looks like;
- what the fees are;
- what you would need to provide;
- what happens next.

Step 9: Top 10 Questions To Ask Your Financial Advisor

Use the initial meeting to understand how the adviser thinks, how they work, and whether they are right for you and Ask:

- What would you need to understand before advising me?
- What types of clients do you work best with?
- How do you help business owners specifically?
- How would you work alongside my accountant?
- What would you usually look at first for someone in my position?
- How do you measure whether the advice has worked?
- What are your fees, and what will I receive in return?
- What would make someone a poor fit for your firm?
- How do you help clients make trade-offs between tax, growth, risk, and personal wealth?
- How do you decide whether money should stay in the business, be extracted, invested, or contributed to pensions?

These questions test the areas that matter most:
relevance, judgement, process, transparency, and fit.

The best answers should feel specific to your situation. Be cautious if the adviser gives generic answers, moves too quickly to investments, avoids discussing fees, or cannot explain who they are not right for.

Step 10: Understand The Cost Of Working Together

Fees matter.

Before engaging an adviser, you should understand exactly how much it will cost to work together.

Ask for the fees in both pounds and percentage terms. Percentages can sound small, but the pounds-and-pence figure is what you actually pay.

A good adviser should clearly explain:

- what the initial advice will cost;
- when that fee becomes payable;
- what the ongoing advice fee is;
- what investment, platform, and fund charges also apply;
- whether the fee is fixed, percentage-based, or both;
- what is optional;
- what services are included each year;
- whether there are implementation fees;
- what conditions apply if you stop working together.

As a rough guide, ongoing financial advice commonly costs around 1% per year of the money being advised on or invested, though the exact fee will vary by firm, service level, and portfolio size.

The fees should be clear enough that you could explain them to someone else. If you cannot understand the fee structure, ask again. If it still is not clear, treat that as a warning sign.

Step 11: Compare Advisers While The Meetings Are Fresh

If you meet more than one adviser, do the meetings close together.

Ideally, within the same week.

After each meeting, score the adviser while the conversation is fresh.

Use simple categories:

Area	Adviser 1	Adviser 2	Adviser 3
Understood my situation	/10	/10	/10
Business owner expertise	/10	/10	/10
Clarity of explanation	/10	/10	/10
Technical credibility	/10	/10	/10
Commercial judgement	/10	/10	/10
Process and organisation	/10	/10	/10
Fee transparency	/10	/10	/10
Personal fit	/10	/10	/10
Trust	/10	/10	/10
Overall score	**/10**	**/10**	**/10**

Then write one sentence: "**The main reason I would choose this firm is…**"

Do not overcomplicate the decision. But do not drift into it either.

Be clear and intentional.

Step 12: Make The Decision

At some point, you need to choose. That choice will include logic and feel. Both matter. You are looking for a firm that is:

- qualified;
- experienced;
- clear;
- commercially sensible;
- relevant to your situation;
- transparent on fees;
- strong on process;
- easy to communicate with;
- willing to challenge you;
- focused on long-term planning.

For business owners, the best adviser is rarely just the person who knows most about investments.

It is the person who can help you make better financial decisions across your business, personal life, family, and future.

That is the relationship worth looking for.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do business owners need a financial adviser?

Not always.

But if you are earning well, saving regularly, paying significant tax, holding cash in the business, or relying on the company to fund your future, financial advice can be valuable.

The more moving parts you have, the more useful good advice becomes.

Is my accountant enough?

Usually, no.

Your accountant is essential. But their role is different.

An accountant usually focuses on tax, accounts, compliance, and business finances. A financial adviser focuses on your personal financial plan, investments, pensions, protection, and long-term goals.

The best results often come when your accountant and adviser work together.

Should I use a local financial adviser?

Local can be helpful, but it is not essential.

Fit, expertise, and quality matter more than geography.

Many high-quality financial planning firms work effectively by video call, especially with busy business owners.

What qualifications should I look for?

Chartered Financial Planner and Certified Financial Planner are strong signs.

You can also look for Chartered firms or Accredited Financial Planning firms.

Qualifications are not a guarantee, but they are useful evidence.

How many advisers should I speak to?

Usually two or three is enough.

Speaking to too many advisers can create confusion and waste time.

Build a strong shortlist, speak to the most relevant firms, then make a clear decision.

What is the biggest mistake people make when choosing an adviser?

Choosing based on familiarity rather than fit.

That might mean choosing the adviser closest to home, the first name recommended by a friend, or the firm with the biggest brand.

Those things may be useful signals. But they are not enough.

The better question is:

> *Does this adviser understand my situation and have the ability to help me make better decisions?"*

Final Word

Finding the right financial adviser is not about choosing the loudest firm, the nearest office, or the biggest brand.

It is about finding the right fit.

For business owners, that means finding an adviser who understands how your company, tax position, family, investments, pensions, and future choices all connect.

At Frazer James, we help business owners turn business success into personal financial freedom.

If you are earning well, saving meaningfully, and asking bigger questions about tax, pensions, investments, protection, and financial independence, we can help you get clear.

Book an initial consultation with Frazer James. *We will help you understand where you are, what needs attention, and whether we are the right firm to help.*