PNC Private Bank Research Reveals Business Owners Increasingly Want Integrated Financial Advice to Help Align Business, Personal Goals

PITTSBURGH, April 1, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- PNC Private Bank® today revealed research findings exploring the intersection of business ownership and personal wealth. The findings are outlined in the inaugural "Business Owner Wealth Insights" report, which draws on a national survey conducted with Ipsos. The survey explores how middle-market business owners balance growth, succession and legacy for their businesses and personal finances.

The research revealed strong interest in integrated financial planning among business owners. Nearly nine in 10 respondents (89%) value financial advice that considers both business and personal needs, and 88% see value in working with a dedicated financial advisor who understands both. However, only 55% currently work with a financial advisor on both their business and personal finances.

While nearly all business owners surveyed (98%) – and all family business owners (100%) – said they reassess their business decisions to ensure alignment with personal growth goals, about 40% do so only occasionally or rarely.

Additional findings include:

- About two-thirds of business owners manage their business and personal finances separately.
- Managing cash flow (33%) and keeping pace with evolving technology (32%) are cited as the top business challenges.
- While 26% say balancing business reinvestment with tax strategy is challenging, 40% are willing to sacrifice tax efficiency in favor of reinvesting in their business.

"Our research clearly shows that many business owners are seeking holistic advice that brings together their personal finances and business goals," said Don Heberle, head of PNC Private Bank. "This highlights the importance of working with advisors who understand the complexity of managing both – and who can help owners make informed decisions that support long-term growth, succession and legacy."

The PNC research also examined business owner perspectives on succession planning, family dynamics, philanthropy and tax planning.

Succession planning emerged as a critical priority, with 84% of family business owners saying a formal plan is essential to business continuity and nearly as many expressing that family dynamics affect exit and succession decisions. Among all business owners, nearly one-third (31%) do not have a plan in place. Common barriers include the lack of a clear successor, a focus on daily operations, family conflicts, the complexity of planning, financial uncertainty and unclear long-term business goals.

"Exiting or transitioning a business is often one of the largest, and most personal and emotional decisions an owner will make," said Heberle. "That's why it's critical for owners to have the right advisors and resources -- to help owners navigate complexity, balance business and personal priorities, and achieve their goals."

Philanthropy also plays a central role for many business owners. More than eight in 10 respondents (81%) said charitable giving is core to their business identity and legacy, and the same percentage structure their investment strategies to support philanthropic goals. While 80% believe it is important to involve the next generation in giving, only 43% currently do so.

"Engaging family early and establishing clear frameworks are key to ensuring an owner's philanthropic vision carries forward," said Heberle. "When charitable giving is thoughtfully integrated into business and wealth planning, it becomes a lasting expression of values and a powerful part of an owner's legacy."

The research also found that a significant majority (80%) said they are extremely or very confident in making tax-related decisions, and 77% are actively engaged in tax planning. Yet roughly eight in 10 (82%) said they would benefit from additional expert guidance.

"Taken together, these findings reinforce what we hear from business owners every day — that their business, personal and financial lives are deeply interconnected," said Heberle. "They want advice that brings it all together, and that integrated perspective is essential to helping them build, transition and sustain their legacy over the long term."

To view the full Business Owner Wealth Insights report and other findings, visit PNC's website.

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Methodology

The Business Owner Wealth Insights 2026 study was conducted online from Nov. 19 to Dec.10, 2025, and surveyed 300 private business owners and co-owners aged 25 and older who hold primary responsibility for their companies' operations. The research incorporated national panel samples of 150 Commercial business owners with annual revenues between $10 million and $50 million, and 150 Lower Middle Market business owners with annual revenues between $50 million and $125 million. Each sample carries a ± 8% margin of error at the 95% confidence level. To ensure national representativeness, results were weighted using Dun & Bradstreet data. The study was conducted by Ipsos.

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