If someone has sent you this: they've sold, or may sell, a business they ran, and they're staying on to work for the buyer. This is about what changes when an owner becomes an employee. Tick what you've done, and talk about the rest.

Staying on after the sale: a checklist

Tick it on your own, or each of you separately and then compare.

What's agreed

- [ ] **You know what the employment contract says about the role and who it reports to.**
  The sale agreement covers the business; the employment contract covers the person.
- [ ] **You know what the role will be measured on.**
  Targets, a budget, or the results an earn-out depends on.
- [ ] **You know how long the commitment is, and what happens after an early exit.**
  Leaving early can affect part of the price or shares in the buyer. A lawyer can tell you what applies.
- [ ] **You know what can still be decided without approval.**
  Spending, hiring and changes to the product often need sign-off after a sale.

What changes day to day

- [ ] **You know who the people hired before the sale will report to.**
  They may report to someone in the buyer's organisation.
- [ ] **You've talked about the hours and travel the new role involves.**
  A buyer's meetings, time zones and reporting can add to the week.
- [ ] **You've agreed what would happen if the role turns out differently from what was agreed.**
  For example, who it would be raised with, and at what point leaving would be considered.

At home

- [ ] **Everyone affected knows the dates.**
  How long the commitment runs, and which payments depend on staying.
- [ ] **You've talked about what you'd want from the time after the commitment ends.**
  An end date set in a contract arrives whether or not anything is planned for after it.

Why these points are important

After I sold my company in 2022, I put part of the proceeds into shares in the parent company and stayed on with the US-based buyer as Product Manager until 2024. It was mostly a good experience, but a few things changed in ways I hadn't expected, and at the time I'd have valued someone on my side who had been through it.

From owner to employee

- Decisions made alone before may now need approval.
- People hired before the sale may report to someone new.
- The role is measured on targets someone else set.

What the contract decides

The role, the reporting line, the targets and the notice terms are usually set out in the employment contract. Anything left out of it tends to be settled later, by the buyer. A lawyer is the person to ask what it means.

When the role and the agreement differ

A difference is easier to raise early, with what was agreed in writing in front of you, than after months of working around it.

The end date

The commitment ends on a set date, and payments tied to staying may end with it. Deciding what comes next is easier while that income is still there.



WHERE COACHING FITS

I stayed on with a buyer for two years myself. People at this point often use coaching to work out what they want from the years they've committed, and to raise problems with the new owner early. I won't tell you whether to stay. I'll ask the questions that show what you'd need for the time to be worth it.

What to look for in any coach
simonbowen.com/guides/choosing-a-coach

A free first conversation
simonbowen.com/enquire/?moment=ends