business
for sale

Not Every Offer Is a Real Offer

Not every enquiry from a potential buyer will lead to a genuine offer. Learn how sellers can identify serious buyers, protect confidential information and focus their time on buyers who are ready and able to proceed.

Published on: **23rd September 2026**
Author: **Inika Pieters**

When you put a business up for sale, enquiries feel encouraging. Every message looks like a possible buyer. The hard truth is that many people who make contact will never buy anything. Some are curious. Some are competitors having a look. A few are dreamers with no way to pay. Telling them apart early saves you time, stress, and sometimes the sale itself.

The Cost Of The Wrong Buyer

Time spent on a buyer who was never serious is not free. While you are answering their questions and sharing information, the buyer who is serious may lose patience and move on. Worse, handing sensitive details to the wrong person can put your business at risk, especially if they are a competitor in disguise. Every hour has a cost, and so does every document you share too soon.

How To Tell A Real Buyer Apart

Serious buyers behave differently. They can explain why they want the business and how they would fund it. They are willing to sign a confidentiality agreement before you reveal anything sensitive. They ask thoughtful questions rather than fishing for numbers. Before you open your books, it is fair and wise to ask what they are looking for, whether they have bought a business before, and how they intend to pay. A genuine buyer will respect the questions. A time waster will melt away.

Protect Your Information In Stages

You do not have to reveal everything at once. Share the general picture first, and keep the sensitive detail for buyers who have shown they are serious and have signed the right agreement. This staged approach keeps your business safe while still giving real buyers what they need to make a decision.

Being selective is not rude. It is how you respect your own time and protect the value of what you have built, so that your energy goes to the people who can actually close.

Knowing which buyers to take seriously is part of selling well. If you want help qualifying buyers and protecting your information, talk to us.