Quick Start Guide

Essential Concepts from the 10 Plays

Partner for Equity Playbook
Comprehensive Business Acquisition Strategies

Welcome to the Partner for Equity Quick Start Guide. This condensed guide provides the essential concepts, key frameworks, and action steps from all 10 plays. Use this as a reference to quickly understand the core methodology and begin implementing these strategies immediately.

Play 1: Dealmaker Identity

Establish clarity about who you are as a dealmaker before pursuing deals. Define your goals, preferred role, available resources, and industry focus. Key concept: Know what you want before chasing opportunities.

Action Steps: • Define your primary outcome (time freedom, cash flow, wealth building) • Identify your ideal role (owner-operator, owner-investor, strategic partner) • Assess your resources (capital, skills, network, experience) • Choose industries aligned with your strengths

Play 2: Buy Box & Win Scenario

Create a personal deal filter that helps you quickly identify which opportunities deserve attention. Focus on consulting for equity partnerships, not traditional leveraged buyouts.

Key Criteria: • Industry focus (stay in your lane principle) • Business size ($500K-$5M revenue typically) • Ownership vs. cash flow balance • Time commitment (3-5 hours/week vs full-time)

Remember: Solve for your win first. Win-win is essential, but your success metrics must be satisfied before proceeding.

Play 3: 8 Ways to Land Deals

Eight proven strategies for securing equity partnerships:

1. Solve a bleeding problem in their business 2. Flip your current deal flow (pivot from acquisition to partnership) 3. Help business owners exit and get paid when they sell 4. Help businesses grow through acquisition 5. Consulting for equity roll-ups 6. Take over a business for a retiring owner 7. Get paid for your network and connections 8. Structure mergers and take a stake

Choose the strategy that best aligns with your skills and the business owner's needs.

Play 4: What You Trade for Equity

Conduct a taking inventory process to identify your valuable capabilities across 10 categories:

1. Skills (business capabilities) 2. Experience and expertise 3. Track record (proven results) 4. Connections and networks 5. Resources (assets and access) 6. Knowledge and wisdom 7. Ability to create change 8. Leadership and vision 9. Problem-solving abilities 10. Predicting success (business intuition)

Critical shift: Talk about problems you solve, not what you do for a living.

Play 5: Discovery Session

Uncover pain, misalignment, and fear of loss through strategic question clusters:

Cluster 1: What keeps you up at night? Cluster 2: What are your superpowers? Cluster 3: What are you spending time on that you shouldn't be? Cluster 4: What happens if you don't make a change? Cluster 5: What have you been ignoring that needs attention?

Remember: Main Street deals are driven by emotion, not just numbers. Identify bleeding problems that create urgency for partnership.

Play 6: Transfer of Value Issues

Identify the 9 issues that prevent traditional acquisitions:

1. Customer concentration risk (>15-20% from one client) 2. Owner dependency 3. Inconsistent financials 4. Declining profits 5. Owner-dependent sales process 6. Weak or unpredictable customer acquisition 7. Lack of documented systems and processes 8. Financial constraints (thin margins) 9. Absence of succession planning

These "deal killers" create perfect opportunities for equity partnerships.

Play 7: The Catch-22 Talk Track

Transform unbiable businesses into equity partnerships using the Catch-22 framework:

Five-Step Process: 1. Reaffirm their goal 2. Set the expectation (how acquisitions work) 3. Blame the bank, not the owner 4. State the hard truth 5. Pivot to partnering for equity

Magic phrase: "I only work with businesses I own or am a partner in."

This positions partnership as the logical solution to transfer of value issues.

Play 8: Framing the Future

Help the seller envision a better exit through partnership:

Talk Track Elements: 1. Acknowledge their situation 2. Highlight the problem with optimism 3. Introduce the smarter path 4. Paint the vision (12 months from now...) 5. Lean out and keep leverage 6. Pivot to the offer 7. Reinforce mutual fit requirement

Mindset: You're not selling, you're allowing. Create pull, not push.

Play 9: Deal Structure & Paperwork

Choose the right structure and protect your stake legally:

Five Effective Structures: 1. Hybrid retainer plus equity model 2. Revenue share plus exit bonus 3. Milestone-based equity vesting 4. Sweat equity with founder shares 5. Performance-based buyout option

Critical: Work with a qualified M&A attorney. Verbal agreements lead to disputes. Solve for your win first - balance immediate cash flow with long-term equity.

Play 10: Closing the Deal

Three-part closing process:

1. Get the agreement signed and official • Hire an attorney ($1,000-$7,500) • Present in person when possible • Use digital signing tools • Create urgency through deadlines

2. Set expectations for first 90 days • Define success metrics • Create implementation plan • Establish reporting cadence

3. Avoid last-minute deal killers • Address specific concerns, not vague hesitation • Remind them why they wanted partnership • Be willing to walk away

Remember: Equity isn't always the answer. Revenue share can be simpler and equally effective.

Your Next Steps

1. Complete your dealmaker identity statement 2. Define your buy box criteria 3. Take inventory of your skills and capabilities 4. Prepare your question clusters for discovery sessions 5. Start having conversations with business owners 6. Practice the Catch-22 talk track 7. Close your first partnership 8. Build a portfolio of 3-5 partnerships within 24 months Remember: Execution trumps knowledge. The difference between success and failure is taking consistent, focused action. Start having conversations today.