Julius Bär | EY

FAMILY BAROMETER 2026



MARKETING MATERIAL

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Foreword

Every family business tells a story. This story is not only one of entrepreneurship and long-term commitment, but just as much about families growing alongside the businesses they create. Over time, questions of ownership and succession become inseparable from its commercial success. As this year's Family Barometer confirms, family businesses remain the principal source of wealth for ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) families worldwide, making their transition one of the most significant moments in a family's history.

This year's report examines that transition through the lens of one defining event: the sale or transfer of a family business. While every family's journey is unique, successful transitions share common foundations. They depend on thoughtful preparation and a willingness to balance commercial opportunity with the long-term interests of both the family and the enterprise. The chapters that follow explore this journey before, during and after a business exit, recognising that the most important decisions often begin long before a transaction and continue well beyond it.

This edition marks an important milestone for the Family Barometer. For the first time, Julius Baer and EY have combined their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing entrepreneurial families. Family businesses are inherently multidisciplinary. They require expertise across transactions, legal and tax considerations, governance, wealth structuring, and investment. Above all, they require an appreciation of the human dynamics that shape family decision-making. By bringing together these complementary disciplines, we hope to offer a broader perspective on one of the defining decisions for an entrepreneurial family.

The survey findings reinforce this integrated view. They show that successful transitions depend as much on governance and family alignment as they do on favourable market conditions. Families that invest time in these foundations manoeuvre themselves into the strongest position possible to preserve not only their wealth, but also what matters most: the values, relationships, and sense of purpose that bind generations together.

We hope the insights shared by the wealth management professionals who participated in this year's survey, together with the perspectives contributed by our specialists, provide some practical guidance as you consider your own family's future.

From our families to yours,



Roger Stutz
Head of Wealth Planning,
Bank Julius Baer & Co. Ltd.



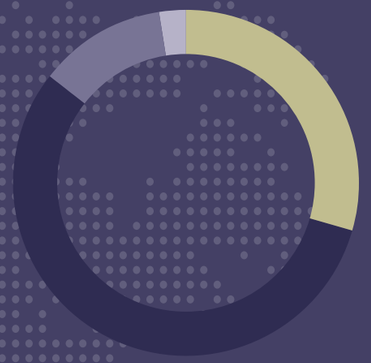
Thomas Fisler
Head Private Client Tax Services,
Ernst & Young Ltd – Switzerland

The great transition of family businesses

High intent – low readiness: families face transition gap

Many family businesses are not well prepared for a sale or transition to the next generation.

Are UHNW* business owning families ready for a transfer (sale or transition to their next generation) at any given time?



- 29.5% Most are not ready to transfer
- 56.3% Most are somewhat prepared
- 12.0% Most are largely ready with minor gaps
- 2.3% Most are fully ready

The next generation – called upon but not quite prepared yet

Families struggle to prepare their next generation to take over the family business.

Provided that the families you advise are not ready for an exit, is the next generation ready to take over the family business?

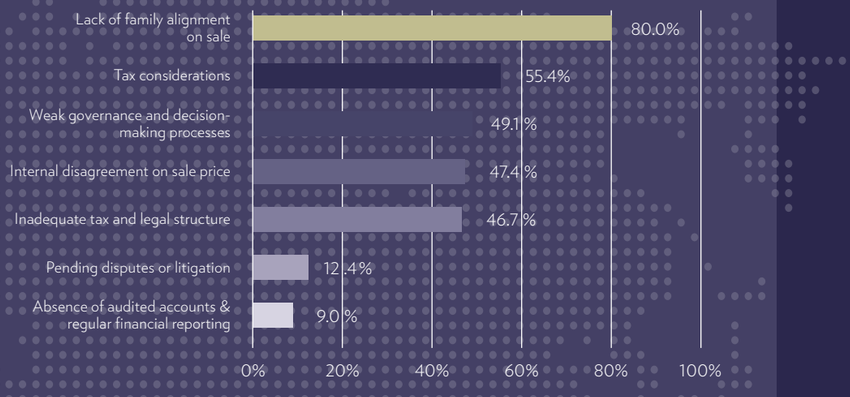


- 65.9% No, the next generation is not ready to take over the family business yet, but will certainly be in a later stage
- 11.6% No, the next generation is not interested in taking over the family business
- 22.6% Yes, the next generation is ready and fully equipped to take over the family business

The hidden barriers to selling the family business

Internal family misalignment, not external factors, are the leading inhibitor of a successful business sale.

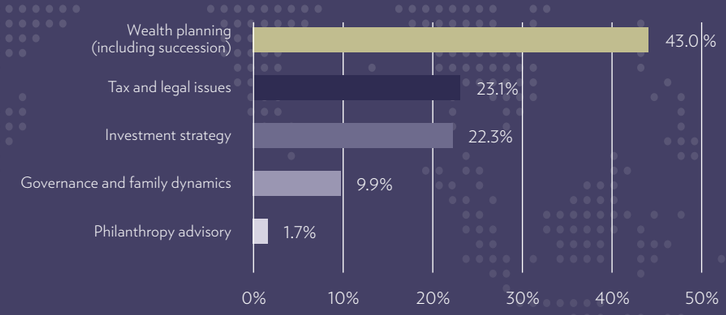
Which of the following most commonly limit sale readiness of a family business?**



Life after exit – guidance matters more than ever

Wealth Planning is the #1 advisory need for families after the business exit.

After a business exit, which would be the areas that your clients most often need additional expertise in?



*CHF 50m+ total wealth

** Chart is based on multiple choice; percentages may exceed 100%.

Global top 3 **family** topics:

1st Succession planning
2nd Building family legacy
3rd Individual and family growth opportunities

Global top 3 **investment** topics:

1st Geopolitical diversification
2nd Inflation protection
3rd Real estate investing

Global top 3 **societal** topics:

1st Taxation
2nd Intergenerational wealth transfer
3rd Political stability

Regional insights

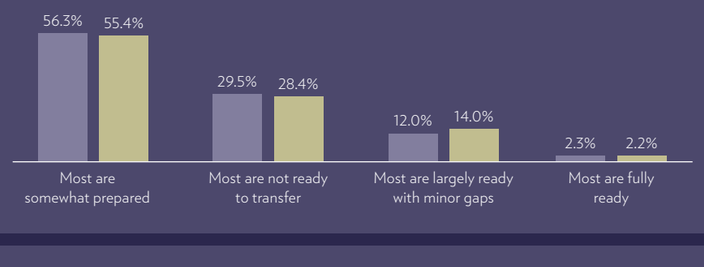
Europe

- Building family legacy has become a top priority for European UHNW families over the past 12 months.
- Majority of European families spend less time managing their investments as they do managing their business.

Top 3 **family-related** topics:

1st Succession planning
2nd Building family legacy
3rd Individual and family growth opportunities

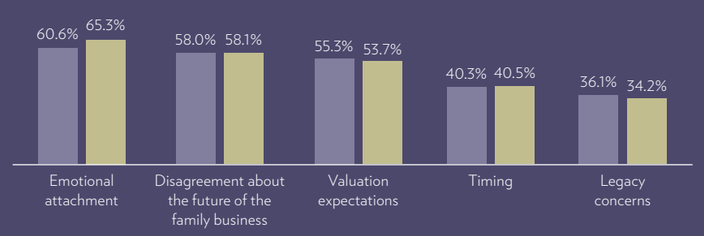
Are UHNW* business owning families ready for a transfer (sale or transition to their next generation) at any given time?



Top 3 **investment-related** topics:

1st Geopolitical diversification
2nd Inflation protection
3rd Real estate investing

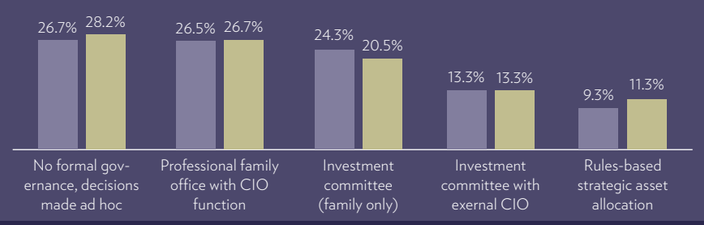
Which alignment gaps are most common when a family takes an exit decision?** (Top 5)



Top 3 **societal-related** topics:

1st Taxation
2nd Intergenerational wealth transfer
3rd Political stability

After an exit, what investment governance structures do UHNW families most commonly implement?



Global Europe

*CHF 50m+ total wealth

Last year's results – 2025 global top 3

Family topics
- Succession planning
- Individual and family growth opportunities
- Building family legacy/family governance

Investment topics
- Geopolitical diversification
- Real estate investing
- Inflation protection

Societal topics
- Taxation
- Political stability
- Intergenerational wealth transfer

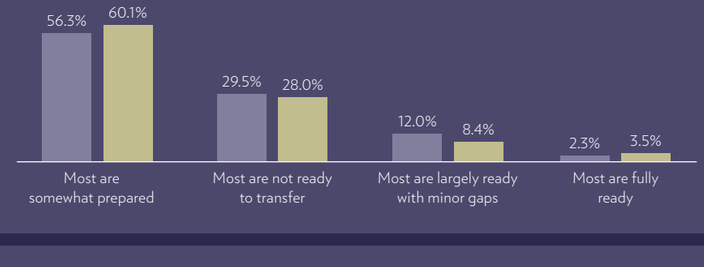
Asia

- Exiting the family business is not a top priority in the region.
- Sales proceeds are primarily managed through single-family offices, a preference that aligns with findings from last year's edition.

Top 3 **family-related** topics:

1st Succession planning
2nd Building family legacy
3rd Individual and family growth opportunities

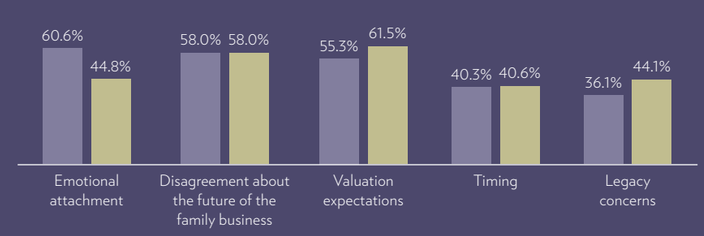
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2nd Inflation protection
3rd Real estate investing

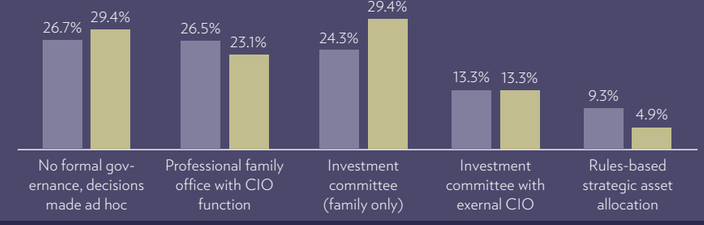
Which alignment gaps are most common when a family takes an exit decision?** (Top 5)



Top 3 **societal-related** topics:

1st Taxation
2nd Intergenerational wealth transfer
3rd Political stability

After an exit, what investment governance structures do UHNW families most commonly implement?



Global Asia

** Chart is based on multiple choice; percentages may exceed 100%.

Regional insights

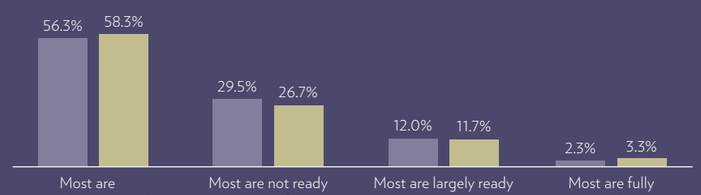
Middle East

- For the first time, personal safety has become a primary concern across the region, highlighting the influence of escalating geopolitical uncertainty.
- After exit, Middle East families prefer investment committees to keep the governance within the family.

Top 3 **family-related** topics:

1st Succession planning
2nd Individual and family growth opportunities/ building family legacy
3rd **Family governance***

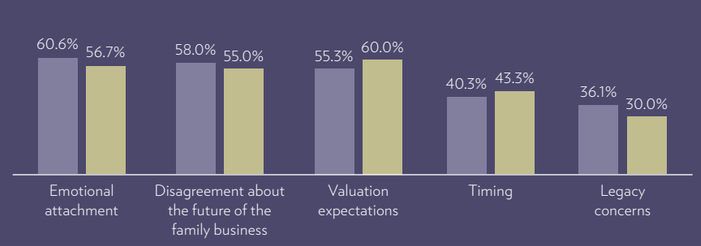
Are UHNW business owning families ready for a transfer (sale or transition to their next generation) at any given time?



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2nd **Real estate investing***
3rd Inflation protection

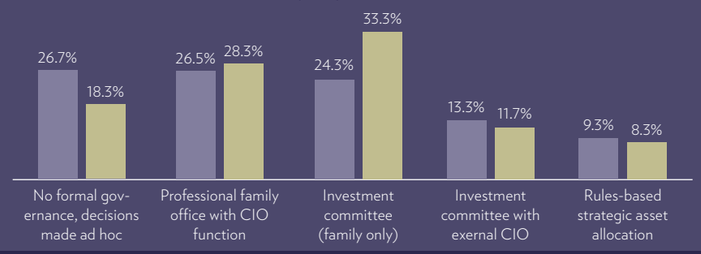
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Top 3 **societal-related** topics:

1st **Political stability***
2nd Intergenerational wealth transfer
3rd **Personal safety***

After an exit, what investment governance structures do UHNW families most commonly implement?



Global Middle East

* Most significant differences compared to global results

Last year's results – 2025 global top 3

Family topics
- Succession planning
- Individual and family growth opportunities
- Building family legacy/family governance

Investment topics
- Geopolitical diversification
- Real estate investing
- Inflation protection

Societal topics
- Taxation
- Political stability
- Intergenerational wealth transfer

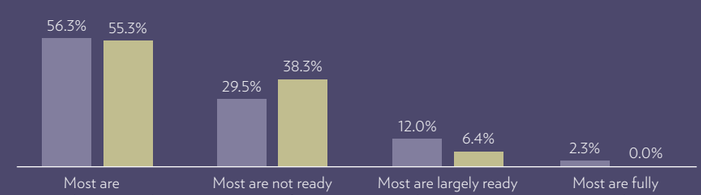
Latin America

- Political stability emerged as a top priority reflecting rising levels of political uncertainty in the region over the past year.
- Close to half of business-owning families are contemplating an exit over the next five years (the highest proportion across all regions) yet they are the least prepared with nearly 40% not ready to transfer their business.

Top 3 **family-related** topics:

1st Succession planning
2nd Building family legacy
3rd Individual and family growth opportunities/ **Family governance***

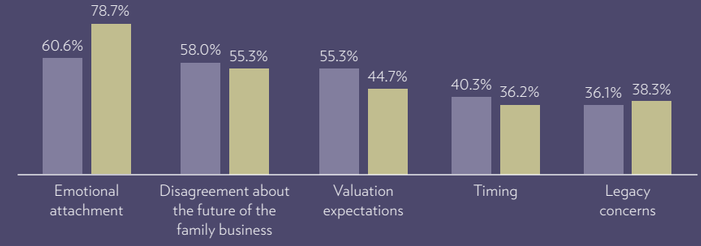
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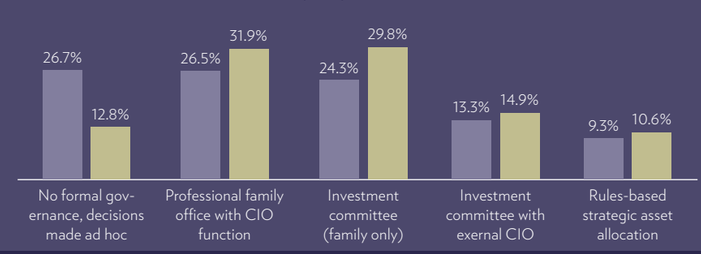
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Top 3 **societal-related** topics:

1st Taxation
2nd **Personal safety***
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After an exit, what investment governance structures do UHNW families most commonly implement?



Global Latin America

** Chart is based on multiple choice; percentages may exceed 100%.

Key findings: family alignment is the asset that matters most

Ownership of a family business is seldom purely a financial matter. By the time a family considers selling, the enterprise has absorbed decades of decisions and shared meaning that no transaction document can fully account for. The Family Barometer 2026 finds that these deeper dimensions of ownership are what separate the families who transition well from those who find the process far harder than they expected.

- Just 2.3 per cent of families planning an exit are fully ready, with emotional attachment the most common barrier.
- Intergenerational wealth transfer has strengthened its hold as a leading global concern.
- Preserving joint family wealth, not maximising returns, emerges as the top priority once a business sale completes.

Wealth endures when families do. That sentence sounds simple. Living it, as this year's Family Barometer makes clear, is anything but. The geopolitical pressures of 2026 – fractured alliances, resurgent inflation, the redrawing of trade relationships a generation assumed were settled – have tested every aspect of how ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) families manage their assets. However, the findings that stand out are human in character and concern the family itself: its governance, its alignment, its readiness to make decisions that will outlast any single transaction.

The Family Barometer is our authoritative annual survey of the financial professionals advising the world's wealthiest families. For 2026, we canvassed more than 1,700 internal and external experts across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Across all four regions, the family business ranks as the single most important asset for UHNW families. More than four in five hold a majority stake of 50 per cent or more in their operating company – wealth that is concentrated, illiquid and deeply personal. Everything that follows turns on what happens when families decide the moment has come to change that.

This year's focal theme reflects a reality advisers across four regions encounter with increasing frequency: a significant share of the UHNW families they serve are considering a business exit within the next five years.

The convergence of generational transition, concentrated ownership and a more demanding geopolitical environment has made that conversation more pressing than it has been for a generation – and understanding what separates the families who navigate it well from those who struggle is the animating question of the Family Barometer 2026.

"The families who exit well are those who prepared the family with the same care they gave the business."

Carlos Recoder, Member of the Global Wealth Management Committee and Co-Head Region Western Markets & Switzerland, Julius Baer



2026's top five discussion topics

In 2026, five themes stood out, spanning the societal anxieties, family priorities, and investment instincts shaping how UHNW families think about ownership, transition, and what comes next.

1. The readiness gap

Perhaps this year's most sobering finding concerns timing. Among families considering an exit, only 2.3 per cent describe themselves as fully ready. A further 12 per cent call themselves largely ready, leaving the overwhelming majority somewhere between cautious optimism and genuine unpreparedness.

The survey indicates that this readiness gap runs in two directions. On one side, many businesses have not completed the governance, ownership, and structural preparation needed for a successful sale or transition. On the other, the next generation is often still developing the experience, confidence, and perspective required to assume the responsibilities of ownership or leadership. Preparing a family business therefore means preparing both the enterprise and the people who will shape its future.

Emotional attachment to the business ranks as the most commonly cited source of misalignment globally, ahead of governance or valuation disagreements. Operational success says little about a



"Planning a transfer across multiple jurisdictions and generations demands the kind of expertise and trust that takes years to build."

Rahul Malhotra, Member of the Global Wealth Management Committee and Region Head Emerging Markets, Julius Baer



"Serving families through a liquidity event demands institutional precision alongside personal understanding – and the two have to work in concert."

Thomas Frauenlob, Member of the Executive Board and Co-Head Region Western Markets & Switzerland, Julius Baer

family's readiness to make a collective decision to sell. The businesses that look most prepared on paper often conceal families who have never openly discussed what life looks like once the company is gone.

The readiness paradox at the heart of the survey is that building a successful business and developing a family's human capital are two very different challenges. One creates wealth; the other ensures that wealth can endure across generations.

2. Intergenerational wealth transfer comes back to the fore

Taxation holds its position as the leading societal concern globally, as it has done for several years.

What is notable in 2026 is the strengthening grip of intergenerational wealth transfer alongside it. The topic has risen in importance across Europe and the Middle East in particular – a signal that, even as geopolitical pressures intensify, families have not lost sight of the longer horizon.

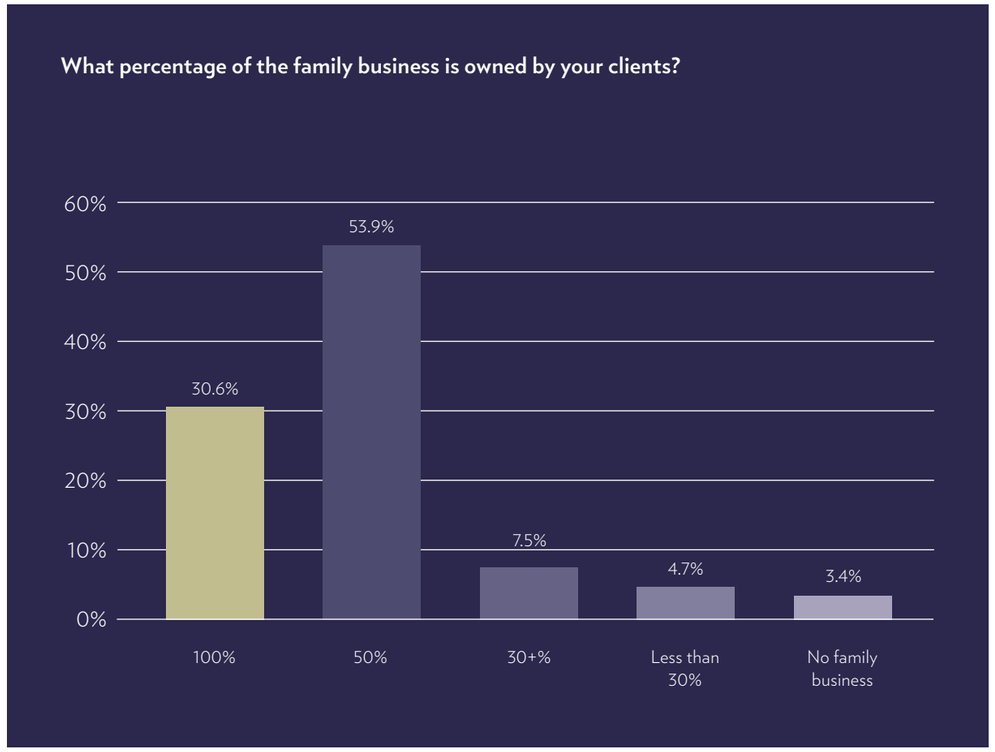
The reasons are structural. Today's UHNW families are internationally entangled by nature: assets, business interests, and family members spread across multiple jurisdictions, each with its own tax treatment, regulatory framework, and succession law.

Wealth management professionals across all four regions – from tax advisers and lawyers to family office employees and investment specialists – consistently rank intergenerational wealth transfer at or near the top of their clients agendas. Families know that orchestrating a successful transfer across that landscape demands sustained, expert attention.

"Across Asia, the most prepared families have made succession a shared strategic priority, well before a transaction becomes relevant."

Jimmy Lee, Member of the Global Wealth Management Committee and Region Head Asia, Julius Baer





3. Succession planning: the one topic that unites every region

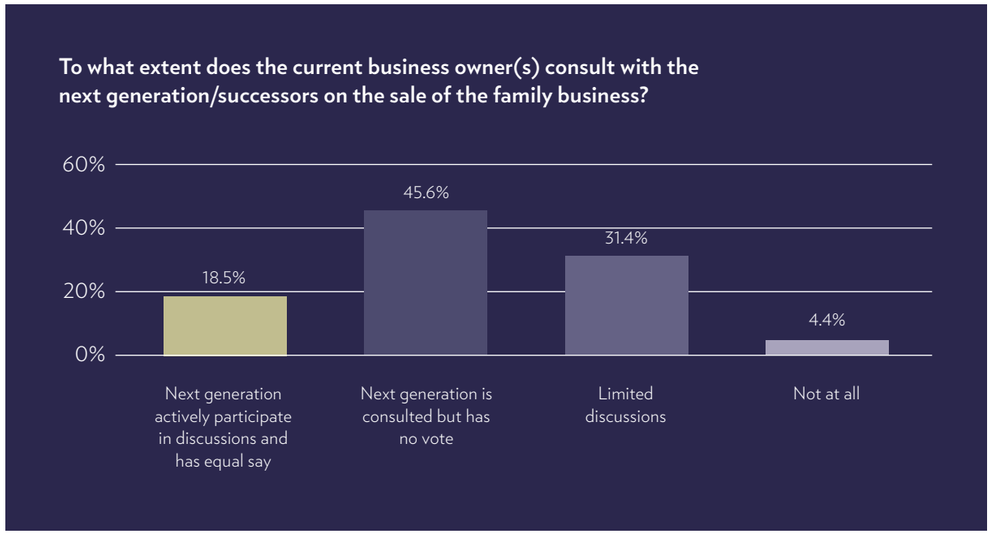
Succession planning ranks as the most important family topic globally, and it does so unanimously – first place in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, as well as first place across every professional role surveyed. No other topic in this year's survey commands that breadth of consensus.

For families whose wealth is anchored in a family business, succession is the question that underlies every other one. Who leads next? How is ownership shared across branches? When does the founding generation step back, and on whose terms? In the context of a potential exit, these questions become commercially consequential, shaping valuation, negotiating leverage, and the family's capacity to act when an opportunity arises.

Yet the data suggests those conversations are not happening openly enough. In most families, the next generation is consulted but holds no formal vote, and less than one in five actively participates with an equal say. The gap between a family that has genuinely worked through its succession thinking and one that has merely deferred the conversation is, as this year's survey suggests, one of the clearest predictors of exit readiness.

4. Geopolitical diversification: resilience as a portfolio strategy

Investment priorities have taken a decisive turn this year. Geopolitical diversification has risen to the top of the global investment agenda, a reflection of a world in which political risk has become inseparable from capital allocation decisions. Across all four regions surveyed, families cite the desire to build portfolios resilient to shocks they





"The move from building a business to stewarding capital is one of the most significant transitions a family will navigate."

Luigi Vignola, Member of the Global Wealth Management Committee and Co-Head Global Products & Solutions, Julius Baer



cannot predict, with inflation protection holding firm in second place globally.

The impetus is clear. Shifting alliances, sanctions regimes, and the reconfiguration of trade relationships have made geography matter to investment in ways it has not for a generation. Families are asking where their assets are held and under which regulatory environment. In the Middle East, real estate remains a strong complement to that diversification impulse, prized for its tangibility and long-term stability. For family offices, this broadened investment remit is translating into a more sophisticated allocation framework.

5. Life after liquidity: unity over yield

The family's concern with cohesion runs through the entire exit journey – and the survey captures it at both ends. Before a sale, the vast majority of UHNW families say they would consider an exit to preserve family unity, treating it as a governance decision as much as a financial one – a way of removing potential conflict before it takes root.

After a sale, that same instinct reasserts itself in a different form. When asked what requires the most attention once the business has gone, close to four in five respondents cite the preservation of joint family wealth — the practical challenge of keeping



"Geopolitical risk has moved from background noise to a central variable in every allocation decision families make today."

Rajesh Manwani, Member of the Executive Board and Co-Head Global Products & Solutions, Julius Baer

“Operating companies are the largest single asset of wealthy families. Preserving the value of this asset through a business exit is critical to sustaining family wealth.”

Remo Wey, Partner, Wealth & Asset Management Consulting, Ernst & Young Ltd – Switzerland



assets intact and collectively managed once the unifying structure of the operating company has disappeared.

These are related but distinct preoccupations: one about protecting relationships, the other about protecting capital. The structures families establish after a sale – investment vehicles, governance frameworks, family offices – are valued as much for the shared identity and decision-making clarity they provide as for the returns they generate. Liquidity raises questions a balance sheet was never designed to answer.

Concluding remarks

Taken together, this year’s findings describe families navigating a paradox. The instincts that built a successful business – discipline, conviction, a tolerance for concentrated risk – translate imperfectly into the very different task of governing a family through transition.

The Family Barometer 2026 suggests that families who address this gap early, well before a transaction is on the table, arrive at decisions with far greater confidence and speed. Those who delay the conversation often find that misalignment resurfaces precisely when unity matters most: during due diligence, at the negotiating table, or in the years that follow a sale. When the structures that once held the family together have disappeared and nothing has yet taken their place.

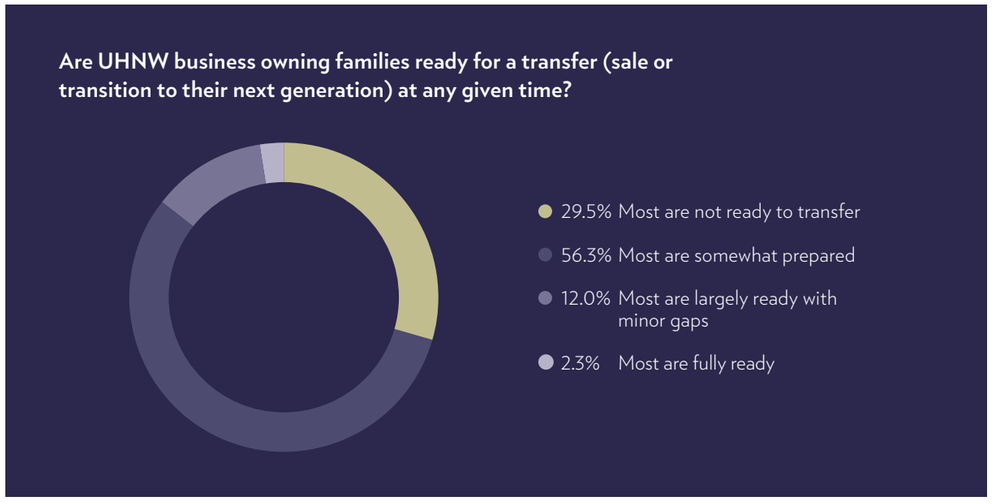
This year’s survey delivers a portrait of wealth that is increasingly self-aware. Families are diversifying with geopolitical foresight, reorienting around legacy and long-term purpose, and discovering that the real work of an exit begins long before any offer arrives – and continues long after the proceeds land. The business may be what built the family’s fortune. The family, it turns out, is what determines whether that fortune endures.



The readiness gap: why most family businesses are not prepared for a transition

Most family businesses spend years preparing for growth. Far fewer prepare themselves for the decisions that ownership transition will eventually require. The Family Barometer 2026 reveals a striking readiness gap – and why closing it may be the most consequential decision a family ever makes.

- Just 2.3 per cent of families intending to exit are fully ready, despite most expecting a transition within five years.
- Family misalignment is the most commonly cited barrier to sale readiness, ranked above tax, legal, and governance issues.
- Emotional attachment and valuation disagreements are the gaps most likely to derail a family exit process.





"Structures designed for running a business are not always suitable for selling one."

Hendrik Kuhl, Head Wealth Planning Germany, Julius Baer

There is a quiet irony at the heart of many family business exits. A company that has performed well generates confidence in its owners that extends well beyond the balance sheet – and when the business looks ready, the family, almost instinctively, assumes it is too.

This year's Family Barometer suggests otherwise. Fewer than one in five families considering an exit are genuinely prepared for one, and just 2.3 per cent are fully ready. A further 12 per cent are 'largely ready with minor gaps'. The rest sit somewhere between 'somewhat prepared' and entirely unprepared. Preparation does not commit a family to selling. It gives the family the ability to choose confidently whenever the right opportunity eventually presents itself.

Prepared for growth, unprepared for exit

This is the readiness paradox. The very disciplines that build a thriving company — operational focus, financial rigour, growth investment – say little about whether a family can make the collective, values-aligned decision to sell it. Business success, in other words, creates a false sense of security. Preparing a business and preparing a family are related tasks, but they are not the same discipline.

"Business owners often wear their CEO hat when a sale comes up," says Hendrik Kuhl, Head Wealth Planning Germany at Julius Baer. "They think about valuation, negotiations, structures, and transactions. What they often forget is that they are not only business owners. They are also parents, spouses, wealth owners, and family members."

Readiness, then, is best understood as a continuum – one whose technical surface conceals territory far harder to quantify, from the quality of family governance to the emotional willingness to let go of something that may have defined a family for decades. The visible technical work often masks a deeper challenge: preparing the family itself to make a shared decision when the time eventually comes.

Getting the house in order

What the technical dimensions of exit readiness require is reasonably well understood: simplified ownership structures, tax and legal arrangements fit for a transaction rather than merely for operations, audited financial reporting, and contingent liabilities resolved long before a buyer's advisers start asking questions.

As Hendrik notes, history itself can become an obstacle: "Businesses grow over time. They acquire companies, establish operations in different countries, and build structures that make perfect sense from an operational perspective. The problem is that structures designed for running a business are not always suitable for selling or transferring one."



"What families need at this stage is someone who can capture the whole picture: the commercial dimension, the family dynamic, and the question of what wealth is actually for. Those conversations have to happen before a transaction, not during one."

Silke Tschatsch, Head of Wealth Planning Switzerland and Germany, Julius Baer

The same blind spot affects how owners approach their day-to-day decisions. "Business owners often continue investing and restructuring as though they intend to own the company forever," he adds. "The question should always be: what is my ultimate goal, and how do today's decisions support that goal?" The objective is to ensure the business is ready whenever an opportunity eventually arises.

Governance readiness: can the family make a decision?

A business exit is, among other things, a governance stress test – one that forces binding decisions on pricing, structure, the choice of counterparty, and what happens to the proceeds, often simultaneously.

Hendrik draws a useful distinction here. Governing a business and governing a family are responsibilities that draw on overlapping but distinct skills. Family councils, constitutions, and regular assemblies only create the architecture for aligned decision-making – they do not guarantee it, and that architecture has to be tested in lower-stakes conversations long before any transaction arrives.

"Many families have constitutions that sit in a drawer," he observes. "But governance only does its job when it becomes part of the family's ongoing decision-making process." Good governance creates clarity before difficult decisions become urgent. Families that practise decision-making over time rarely have to invent a process under the pressure of a transaction.

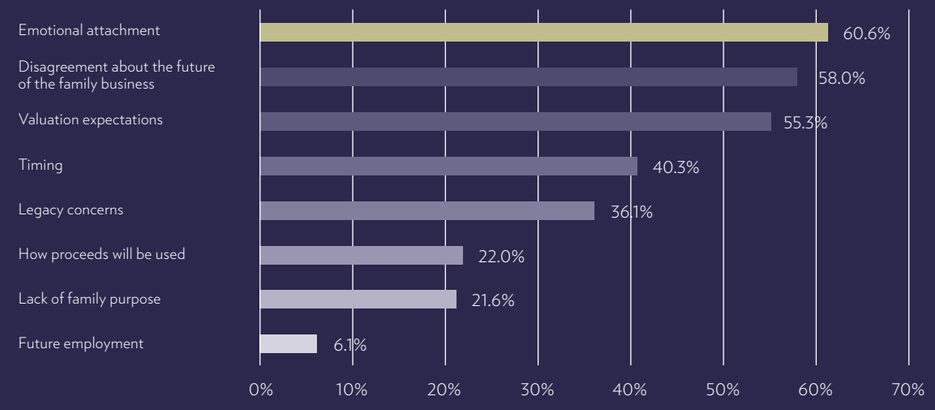
What the numbers don't capture

Perhaps the most striking finding from the Family Barometer is that when families enter exit discussions, the most commonly cited source of misalignment has nothing to do with structures or governance at all. Emotional attachment tops the list globally – cited by more than 60 per cent of advisers overall, and rising to almost 79 per cent in Latin America.

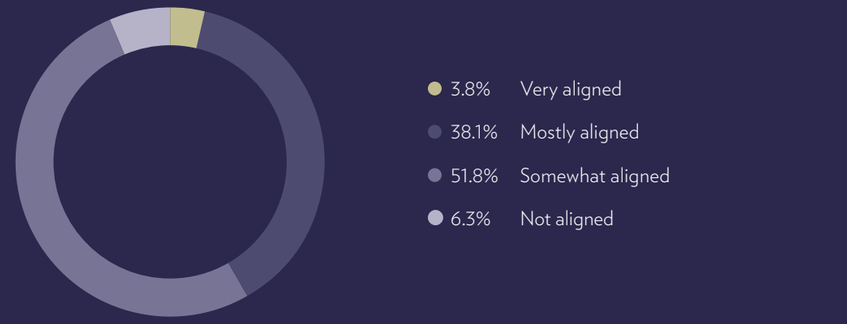
In multi-generational businesses especially, the company holds family history and shared identity beyond its economic value. For a founder who has spent decades building something, the prospect of a sale can feel existential.

"Families instinctively retreat into the areas they know best — structures, figures, legal considerations – because those topics feel familiar and manageable," explains Hendrik. "The emotional side is much harder. I would go so far as to say that families sometimes emotionally avoid it."

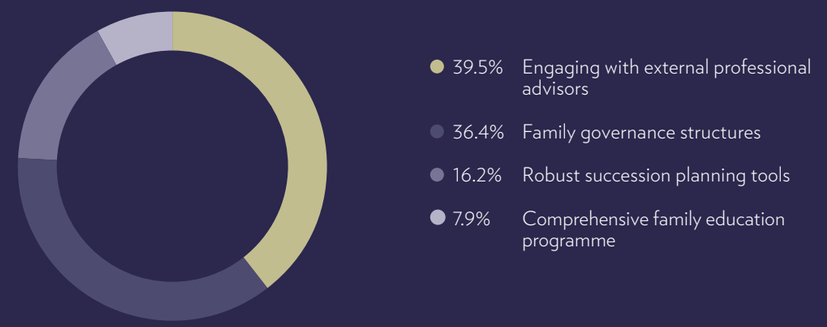
Which alignment gaps are most common when a family takes an exit decision?



Are family members generally aligned when exit discussions begin?



If alignment exists, what factors contributed most to this alignment?





Questions such as “What will my role be after the sale?” or “What does success look like for my family?” resist easy answers – and families who avoid them tend to find they resurface at the worst possible moment, when a transaction is already in motion.

Where families stand when exits begin

One Family Barometer finding deserves particular attention: when exit discussions begin, the majority of UHNW families are described by their advisers as only ‘somewhat aligned’. A further 6.3 per cent enter those conversations in open disagreement, and under 4 per cent are very aligned from the outset.

Emotional attachment accounts for much of that misalignment, cited by more than 60 per cent of advisers globally. Beyond it, the most prevalent gaps concern disagreement about the business’s future direction, timing and valuation expectations, followed by questions about how proceeds will be used and legacy considerations.

Misalignment often remains hidden until a transaction forces difficult decisions. By then, disagreements can begin to influence negotiations, timing, and valuation. Unresolved family disagreements have a way of surfacing during due diligence, weakening negotiating positions at precisely the moment when a unified front matters most.

Beneath the headline disagreements, subtler tensions are often at work too — among them, conflicting ideas about what a fair outcome actually looks like. “Parents often try to divide ownership equally among their children because that feels fair,” says Hendrik. “What is striking is how rarely families explicitly discuss what fairness means to each family member.”

The next generation’s involvement is a related concern. In most cases, the next generation is consulted but has no formal vote. Only around 18.5 per cent actively participate with equal say. Hendrik sees this as a source of preventable misunderstanding: “I have seen situations where parents say, ‘If I had known you weren’t interested in taking over the company, I would have sold it five or ten years ago.’”

What creates alignment?

External professional advisers emerge from the survey as the leading contributor to family alignment where it exists – cited by approximately 40 per cent of respondents globally – with family governance structures following at around 36 per cent. Worth noting alongside this: some 77 per cent of families would consider an exit if it helped preserve family unity, a finding that reframes the whole question.

Hendrik’s advice is strikingly practical. He asks families to take two blank sheets of paper: on the first, draw life as it is today; on the second, life after the transition. “The most important starting point is not the transaction itself,” says Hendrik. “It’s understanding what kind of life you want to create once the transaction is complete.”

Readiness begins years before any transaction

What the Family Barometer makes clear is that the most successful transitions begin long before a transaction occurs. Well-exercised governance ensures the family can reach decisions under pressure, and the habit of honest family dialogue means that when an opportunity arises, the family is positioned to act on it with conviction.

Most families, the data suggests, are somewhere in the middle of the readiness continuum – aware that a transition is coming, but without everything in place to meet it well. The gap between intention and preparation is where families most often lose flexibility. Those who invest early in governance, dialogue, and ownership structures give themselves the greatest freedom to respond confidently whenever the future presents an opportunity.

Selling at the right time: a question of markets, mindsets, and momentum

The search for the perfect moment to sell often focuses on valuations and market cycles. Yet the Family Barometer 2026 suggests that the most successful exits occur when favourable conditions coincide with family alignment, clear priorities, and the conviction to make a timely decision.

- Family misalignment remains one of the principal barriers preventing UHNW families from acting on attractive exit opportunities.
- Emotional attachment and behavioural biases can delay exit decisions unless families establish objective decision-making criteria.
- External advisers strengthen family alignment by integrating commercial, governance, and wealth planning perspectives into one strategy.

After years – sometimes decades – of building a successful enterprise, a family business eventually reaches a point where a different question comes into focus: is this the right moment to realise the value that has been created?

This year's Family Barometer identifies succession challenges, favourable market conditions, and ownership fragmentation as some of the most common catalysts for considering a sale. Yet family misalignment and uncertainty about the future often prevent families from acting when opportunities arise.

"Favourable markets create opportunity," says Philipp Dialer, Partner, Strategy and Transactions at EY Switzerland. "But markets alone don't make decisions – families do. The difficult part is knowing when favourable market conditions genuinely align with what the family wants to achieve."

Reading the market

Market timing remains one of the most visible influences on any business sale. Valuation multiples rise and fall with economic cycles, while interest rates, capital availability, and sector sentiment all shape buyer appetite and the prices that strategic and financial investors are willing to pay.

Those conditions seldom remain favourable for long. Financing costs, acquisition strategies, and geopolitical uncertainty can quickly alter investor sentiment, leaving businesses facing a very different market only a year later.

"Markets alone don't make decisions – families do."

Philipp Dialer, Partner, Strategy and Transactions, Ernst & Young Ltd – Switzerland

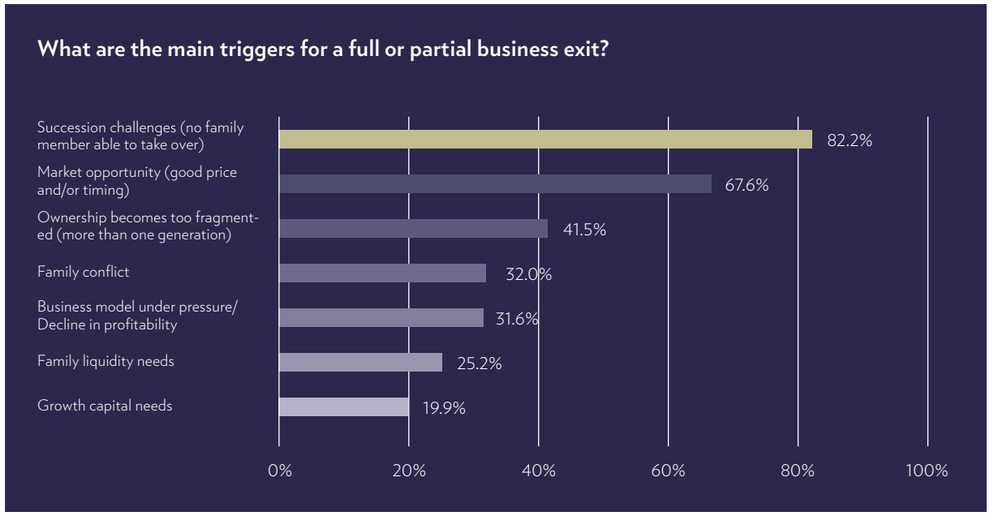


"Families sometimes assume there will always be another opportunity," Philipp says. "In reality, every valuation window reflects a unique combination of market conditions, buyer demand, and business performance. The key is understanding when the opportunity is strong enough to merit serious consideration."

When families and markets move at different speeds

Even when markets create an attractive opportunity, families are not always ready to act. Founders, successors and shareholders often see the business through different lenses. Some believe the company still has years of growth ahead, while others see a chance to diversify wealth, reduce concentration risk, or begin the family's next chapter.

The Family Barometer suggests that consultation with the next generation remains inconsistent, with only 18.5 per cent of the next generation cited as participating actively in discussions. Philipp encounters this regularly in conversations with entrepreneurial families. "One of the most difficult questions I ask families isn't whether they can sell," he says. "It's whether everyone around the table





"The objective is to create the dialogue that allows families to understand one another's priorities."

Marco Sella-Rolando, Head of Wealth Planning International, Julius Baer

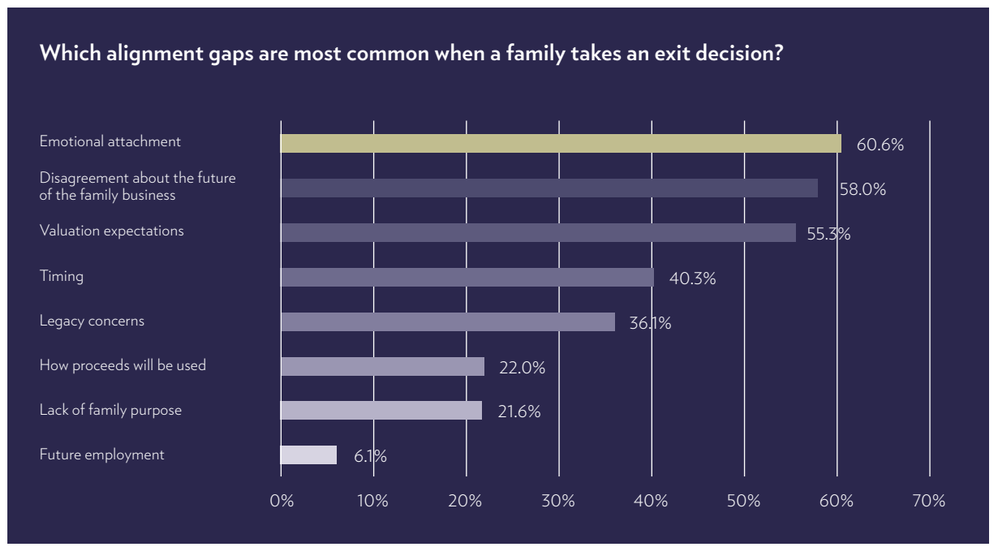
would reach the same conclusion if the right offer arrived tomorrow."

Marco Sella-Rolando, Head of Wealth Planning International at Julius Baer, believes that those conversations are fundamental to good decision-making. "Different generations naturally bring different perspectives to the family business," he says. "The objective isn't to eliminate those differences, but to create the dialogue that allows the family to understand one another's priorities."

Successful families focus on building clarity around the decisions only they can make. "We encourage families to discuss their long-term objectives, explore different ownership scenarios, and agree what would justify a sale before an offer ever arrives," says Thomas Fisler, Partner, Head Private Client Tax Services at EY Switzerland. "While that might not guarantee consensus, it does make it easier to respond confidently when the market presents an opportunity."

The psychology of timing

Markets are only part of the timing equation. Behavioural finance suggests that successful entrepreneurs can also become prisoners of their own success.



Years of making successful long-term decisions reinforce confidence in waiting a little longer. The Family Barometer identifies emotional attachment to the business as the most common source of family misalignment during exit decisions. For many founders, the company embodies decades of commitment, sacrifice, and family identity.

"The business represents something different to every member of the family," Thomas says. "For one person it's an investment, for another it's a life's work, and for someone else it's the family's future. Those perspectives inevitably influence how people think about timing."

Rather than relying solely on instinct, families benefit from testing assumptions against independent market evidence and openly challenging one another's expectations. "One of the most valuable exercises is to ask: 'What evidence would convince us that this is the right time?'" Thomas says. "Agreeing on that answer in advance helps families distinguish disciplined judgement from simply hoping for something better."

Beyond the transaction: confidence to act

Even when market conditions create an attractive opportunity, some families hesitate because they are uncertain about what comes next. Yet the Family Barometer suggests that the vast majority of UHNW families would consider an exit if it helped preserve family unity. The finding underlines an important point: the right time to sell is often defined as much by clarity about the family's future as by confidence in the valuation.

"Families often think about structuring in the context of a transaction," Thomas says. "We tend to look at it from the other direction. The important question isn't simply how to complete the sale, or what the immediate tax outcome may be – it's what the family wants to achieve once the proceeds have been received. When that destination is clear, decisions about timing often become much easier because the tax, ownership, and wealth planning considerations can be assessed against a shared long-term objective."

Families want to maintain long-term financial independence, protect their legacy, and create opportunities for future generations. When those priorities have been discussed and understood, favourable market opportunities become easier to evaluate because the decision is grounded in a shared vision of what success looks like beyond the transaction.

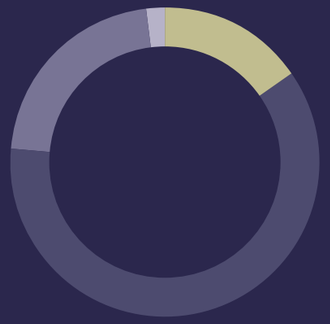
Marco believes this perspective becomes even more important for internationally active families. "Global families often have to reconcile different jurisdictions, ownership structures, and generations around a single long-term vision," he says. "When that vision is clear, complexity becomes far easier to navigate and families are better equipped to act decisively when opportunities arise."

"The important question is what the family wants to achieve once the proceeds have been received — and how relevant tax, legal and ownership considerations can support that objective."

Thomas Fisler, Partner, Head Private Client Tax Services, Ernst & Young Ltd – Switzerland



Would UHNW families consider an exit if that preserves family unity?



- 15.5% Yes, definitely
- 60.9% Rather yes, this could be considered
- 21.7% Rather no, this is not a key consideration
- 1.8% No, this is not in any way a consideration

One family, one strategy

Timing decisions rarely belong to a single discipline. A favourable valuation may coincide with complex tax implications, cross-border ownership issues or differing priorities within the family. In many cases, the practical challenge is not only to identify the technically correct structure, but to ensure that the tax, governance, and liquidity consequences are understood by the family before a binding decision is made.

The Family Barometer identifies external professional advisers as the leading contributor to family alignment during an exit, combining technical expertise with an objective perspective on difficult decisions.

“Families aren’t looking for separate tax, legal, and corporate finance opinions,” Thomas says. “They’re trying to answer one question: ‘Is this the right decision for our family?’ Good advice brings those perspectives together and helps families understand how the opportunity, the tax considerations, and the long-term implications fit into one coherent decision.”

Where businesses span multiple jurisdictions and ownership structures, an integrated approach helps ensure that commercial opportunities are assessed alongside family objectives, making it easier to act decisively when the timing is right.

Recognising the right moment

Business owners naturally search for the perfect time to sell. They monitor valuations, interest rates, and buyer appetite, hoping that markets will reveal the answer. “In my experience, the question is rarely whether there will be another opportunity,” Thomas says. “It’s whether the family will ever again find itself equally aligned while market conditions are equally favourable.”

Perhaps that’s the defining insight from this year’s Family Barometer. While families cannot choose the market they inherit, they can shape the decisions they make within it. The right time to sell emerges when commercial opportunity, family alignment, and a shared vision for the future come together – and families have the confidence to act.



Life after liquidity: the post-exit journey

Selling a family business ends one enterprise, but leaves another intact: the family itself. A well-governed family does not begin thinking about family governance only after an exit. Family, ownership, and business governance should operate in parallel well before any transaction. Following a sale, however, the balance between these governance systems changes: the operating company is no longer the family's principal shared asset, and existing family and ownership governance must be adapted to the stewardship of liquid and diversified wealth. Governance, investment, and stewardship become the foundations of the family's next chapter.

- A business sale removes the corporate governance framework surrounding the operating business. It does not replace family governance; rather, it makes established family and ownership governance even more important and may require those arrangements to be expanded for the joint stewardship of wealth.
- Successful post-exit planning starts with the family, aligning governance, investment, and long-term objectives.
- The families that navigate the transition most successfully bring the same discipline to stewarding wealth that built the business.



"That switch from entrepreneur to wealth owner is a completely new experience."

María Eugenia Mosquera, Head of Wealth Planning – Key Clients & Family Office Services, Julius Baer

Selling a business is one of the most significant events an entrepreneurial family will experience. For years, the business has supplied identity, structure, and a shared sense of purpose. Once ownership has changed hands, however, the family faces a fundamentally different task: shifting its focus from running an enterprise to stewarding wealth.

The shock of liquidity

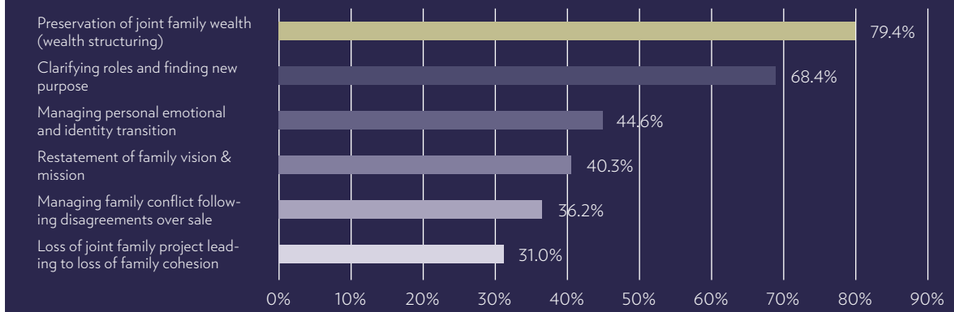
Part of the difficulty lies in what advisers often describe as 'the shock of liquidity'. After years of concentrating their attention, energy, and capital in a single operating business, owners suddenly face a much broader set of decisions about their future.

As Maria Eugenia Mosquera, Head of Wealth Planning – Key Clients & Family Office Services at Julius Baer, observes: "Many entrepreneurs have spent their entire lives building and managing a business. Suddenly they sell that business and find themselves sitting on a large amount of liquid wealth without necessarily knowing what to do next."

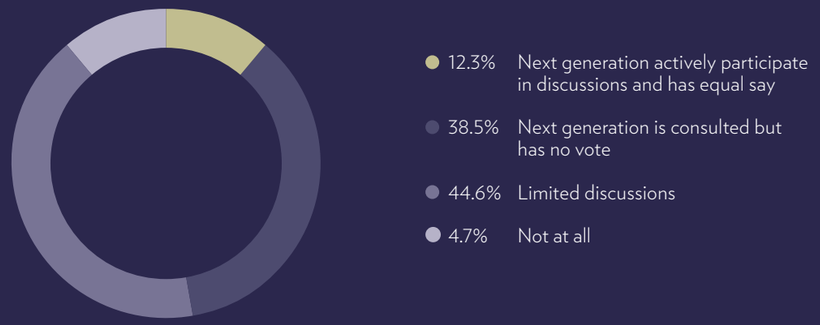
The Family Barometer 2026 suggests that the post-exit agenda shifts quickly from executing the transaction to organising the family for long-term ownership. Preserving joint family wealth (wealth structuring) ranks as the leading priority (79.4%), followed by clarifying family roles and finding a new sense of purpose (68.4%).

Maria's advice is straightforward: "The first message should be: don't panic." Time spent organising the family before making investment decisions is rarely time wasted. "Before discussing investments," she says, "families need to understand what decisions need to be made, and how they will make those decisions together."

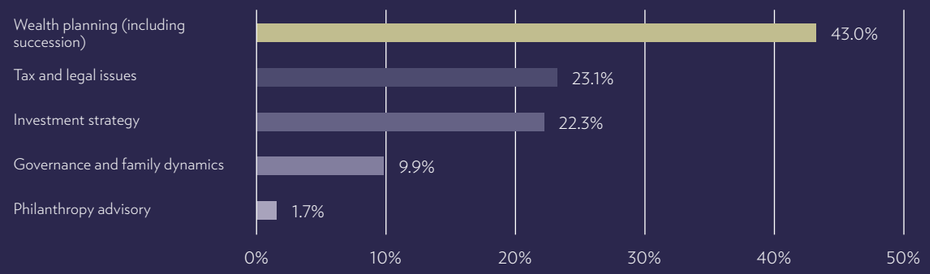
Which non-financial issues required the most attention after exiting the family business?



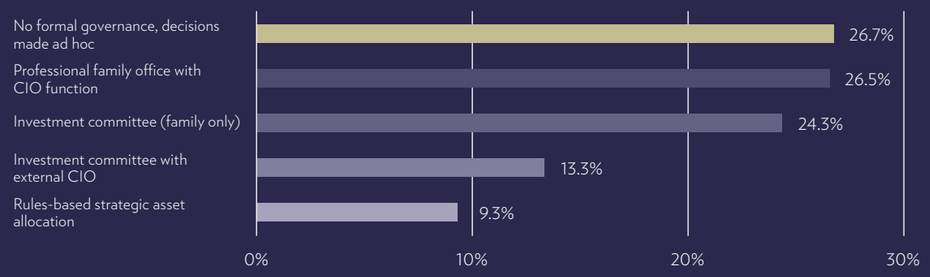
To what extent does the current generation consult with the next generation/ successors on the implementation of the post-sale strategy?



After a business exit, which would be the areas that your clients most often need additional expertise in?



After an exit, what investment governance structures do UHNW families most commonly implement?



Different families, different journeys

No two post-exit journeys are the same because no two families are organised in the same way. The questions a founder faces after selling a business are very different from those confronting a third- or fourth-generation family with multiple branches and shareholders.

For a founder, the transition is largely personal. The individual who built the business often remains the principal decision-maker, but the focus shifts from managing an operating company to managing capital.

As Maria notes, “That switch from entrepreneur to wealth owner is a completely new experience. The skills that helped create a successful business don’t automatically translate into managing family wealth over the long term. New questions emerge around asset allocation, governance, and succession.”

As ownership becomes more widely shared, the challenge changes. “The complexity increases enormously,” Maria observes. “A third-generation family may include multiple branches and dozens of shareholders. Investment questions quickly become governance questions: Who participates in decision-making? How should family branches be represented? What role should younger generations play?”

This year’s findings suggest that many families are still working through this transition. Almost half report only limited discussions with the next generation about post-sale strategy, while nearly 40 per cent say younger family members are consulted but have no vote. Full participation is reported by just 12 per cent of respondents.

A new framework for the family

One of the most overlooked consequences of a sale is the disappearance of the governance structure that the company once provided. Before the transaction, boards, management teams, shareholder meetings, and formal reporting processes are in place. Roles are generally clear, and accountability is well understood.

With the operating company no longer at the centre of family life, those familiar structures fall away. “The family suddenly has to answer a different question,” says Maria. “How do we govern ourselves and the ownership of our wealth?” It’s a challenge mirrored in the Family Barometer findings. Respondents identify governance and family dynamics among the areas where families frequently require support after a liquidity event.

The governance structures that typically emerge after an exit recognise that, while the business may have been sold, the family still needs a way to make decisions together. Family councils, assemblies, and investment committees each have a role to play, supported in many cases by a family constitution that sets out common principles and expectations. “In time, these structures can become the institution that succeeds the business itself,” adds Maria.

Turning intentions into lasting structures

Agreeing how a family will make decisions is only the beginning. Those decisions must then be translated into legal arrangements that can endure across generations. The Family Barometer indicates that many families have yet to take this step. While some establish formal governance through family offices or investment committees, many continue to make investment decisions on an ad hoc basis, highlighting the importance of putting lasting structures in place.

For Maria, governance and wealth structuring are inseparable. “Wealth structuring is the mechanism that makes the family’s objectives enforceable,” she explains. “It gives legal effect to the family’s governance arrangements.” The appropriate structure varies according to each family’s objectives, circumstances, and jurisdictions. It may combine private investment companies, partnerships, trusts, foundations, life insurance solutions and, where appropriate, dedicated investment vehicles within a single framework.

Maria recalls advising the founder of a first-generation family business after its sale. Following the development of a family constitution, the family implemented a multigenerational trust-based wealth structure in which the founder retained defined investment powers while delegating part of the

"Private label funds are about improving efficiency, reducing complexity, and creating a more effective framework for managing wealth over time."

Roman Berri, Head of Offering Management & Development, Julius Baer



portfolio to Julius Baer. The family's investment strategy was formalised in an Investment Policy Statement, providing a framework that could adapt as the family evolved.

"The objective was never simply to create a legal structure," Maria says. "It was to create a framework that could evolve with the family while giving future generations clear governance and a well-defined investment process."

Owning wealth together

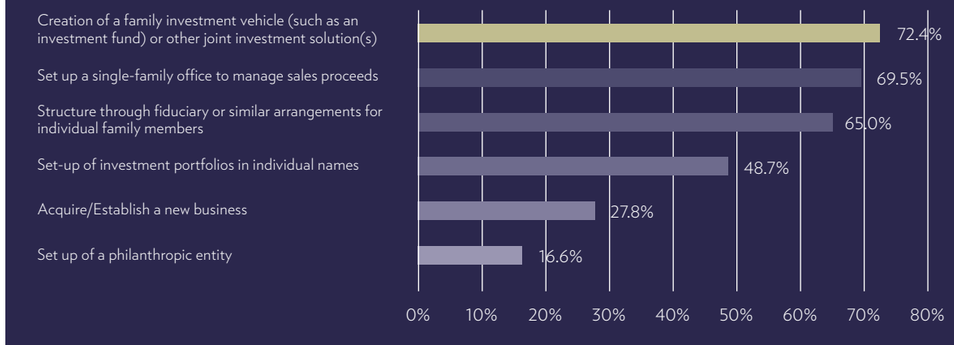
Once governance is in place, attention turns to ownership structures. Here too, the right solution depends on the family. A first-generation entrepreneur may need little more than a private investment company or special purpose vehicle, while larger families often require more sophisticated arrangements.

The Family Barometer suggests that families are remarkably consistent in how they organise ownership after a sale. Investment vehicles emerge as the most common post-exit structure, followed by single-family offices and fiduciary arrangements.

The popularity of investment vehicles reflects their flexibility. Roman Berri, Head of Offering Management & Development at Julius Baer, notes that structures such as private label funds can simplify both administration and governance. "For many wealthy families, vehicles like these are not primarily about achieving higher returns," he explains. "They're about improving efficiency, reducing complexity, and creating a more effective framework for managing wealth over time."

Ownership structures should reflect the family's objectives and the way it intends to make decisions over time. As Roman notes, "whether wealth remains

What are the most common ways for a family to proceed after an exit?





pooled or is progressively allocated to individual branches depends on the family's objectives, relationships, and long-term plans."

When does a family office make sense?

The family office (69.5%) is the second most common post-exit structure identified in this year's survey. For families with increasing complexity, it can provide a central coordinating function, bringing together investment oversight, reporting, and administrative support.

The appropriate model depends on the family's size, complexity, and governance needs. A first-generation entrepreneur may need specialist advice, ownership structures, and consolidated reporting without the cost and complexity of employing a dedicated in-house team. In these situations, hybrid arrangements that combine external expertise with family oversight can often provide the right balance.

The equation changes as families grow. Maria describes the example of a multi-generational family that sells its business and establishes a family office as its next shared enterprise. "They replace entrepreneurship with investment management as the family's common activity," she explains. "The family office becomes the organisation through which successive generations make decisions, oversee investments, and preserve a shared sense of purpose."

For Maria, the family office succeeds when it provides more than investment oversight. "It creates a new framework for identity, purpose, and stewardship that can sustain the family for future generations."

A new investment mindset after the exit

Eventually, every entrepreneurial family reaches the same question: how should its newly created wealth be invested? For Reto Hintermann, Head of Outsourced CIO at Julius Baer, the transition from business owner to long-term investor is one of the defining challenges after a sale.

"The first challenge is almost always capital deployment," he says. "Before the sale, the family's wealth is largely invested in the business. Afterwards, they suddenly find themselves holding a very large amount of cash." Leaving the proceeds in cash is rarely a long-term solution. "Inflation erodes purchasing power, and capital that once served as a reserve for the business now needs to support future generations," says Reto.

That shift in purpose is reflected in the Family Barometer. Capital preservation (64.9%) and long-term capital growth (62.8%) emerge as

families' two highest post-exit priorities, followed closely by replacing the income once generated by the operating business (53.2%). Regional differences are equally revealing: preserving wealth ranks highest in Europe and Latin America, while families in Asia and the Middle East place greater emphasis on enduring growth.

Preparing the family's capital is only part of the journey after a liquidity event. Families also need to prepare the 'human capital', that is, the people who will one day be responsible for it. The Family Barometer observes that many next-generation family members are still only partially involved in post-sale decisions, underlining that stewardship develops over years rather than through a single event. "Education, gradual participation, and guidance from earlier generations remain among the most valuable investments a family can make," says Maria. "Ultimately, preparing the next generation for wealth is every bit as important as preparing wealth for the next generation."

Preparing the family and organising its financial capital are therefore two sides of the same transition. Strategic asset allocation provides the bridge between those objectives and the investment portfolio. It establishes the family's long-term risk profile, with every subsequent decision – from managers to products and individual opportunities – flowing from that foundation. Its success is measured by whether families can remain committed to the strategy through changing market conditions.

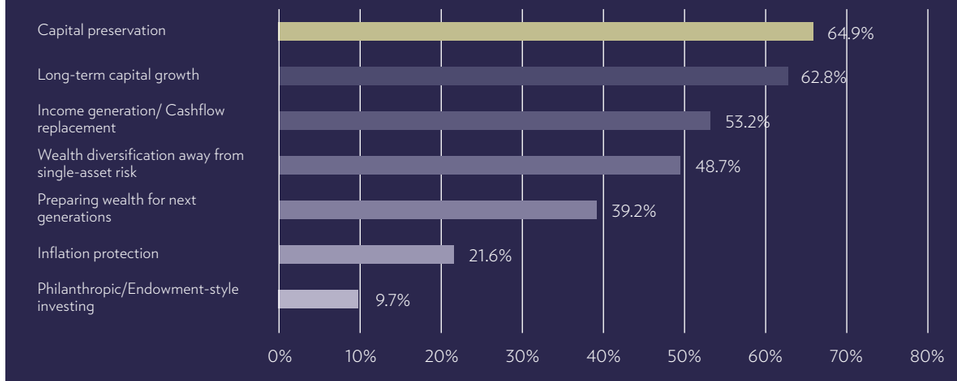
Discipline over prediction

For many families, that requires a different relationship with their advisers. Reto describes the Outsourced CIO (OCIO) model as a partnership rather than a traditional discretionary mandate. "The starting point isn't a portfolio," he explains. "It's the client's overall situation. We want to understand how the family is organised, where decisions are made and what objectives they are trying to achieve."

That perspective also helps families avoid one of the biggest post-exit risks: abandoning a sound strategy when markets become volatile. Entrepreneurs are accustomed to taking concentrated risks in businesses they understand; financial markets feel very different.

"The greatest danger is not necessarily market volatility itself," says Reto. "The danger is that investors become uncomfortable and start making emotional decisions at the wrong moments." Discipline, rather than prediction, is what preserves wealth over time.

After a business exit, which investment objectives become most important for UHNW families?



"Capital that once served as a reserve for the business now needs to support future generations."

Reto Hintermann, Head of Outsourced CIO, Julius Baer



Diversifying for the future

One way of expressing that discipline is through diversification. Once the investment framework is in place, families can begin reducing the concentration risk that accumulated while their wealth was tied to a single operating business.

Many families gradually increase allocations to private equity, private credit, infrastructure, and hedge funds. This process rarely happens overnight. "Alternatives require patience," says Roman. "Building a meaningful alternative allocation is often a multi-year process."

Reto sees the same pattern. "Having worked for years to create liquidity through the sale of a business, many entrepreneurs are understandably reluctant to lock capital away again in private markets. Exposure to private equity, private credit, infrastructure, and hedge funds is therefore often built up gradually as confidence grows."

Diversification also changes the type of expertise families require. The Family Barometer suggests many families combine family oversight with external investment expertise after a liquidity event, reflecting a simple reality: building a successful company and managing a diversified investment portfolio call for different skills. "The greatest value advisers provide is often not access to products," says Roman, "but helping families translate long-term objectives into disciplined investment decisions."

From entrepreneur to steward

Selling a business often feels like the culmination of an entrepreneurial journey. In practice, it opens a new phase in the family's history.

For many families, the operating company once provided the structure through which decisions were made and a common sense of purpose. After a sale, those functions have to be recreated in different ways. Governance frameworks, ownership structures, investment policies and, for some families, a family office become the foundations of the family's next chapter.

The Family Barometer finds that the families who navigate this transition most successfully understand that wealth carries responsibilities as well as opportunities. Lasting success depends on clear governance, disciplined investment, and a common vision that extends beyond the founding generation.

Ultimately, the legacy of a business sale is shaped over decades rather than on the day the transaction completes. A successful exit is not measured by the price achieved on the day of the transaction, but by what the family is still able to achieve with that wealth decades later.

Asia: a region in transition

Asia is entering a new phase of wealth creation. Across Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia, many business-owning families are approaching their first major succession or liquidity event. As first-generation wealth gives way to multi-generational ownership, demand for governance, ownership structures, and family offices is growing rapidly.

According to Christos Anagnostopoulos, Head of Family Office Solutions/Advisory Asia at Julius Baer, these decisions often unfold simultaneously. “Families are confronting these questions in real time,” he says. “Does the next generation want to take over? Are they prepared to do so? If not, what alternatives exist?” In Asia, the liquidity event is often just one part of a much broader transition.

According to the findings of this year’s survey, these conversations remain largely founder-led. Asia records the lowest level of active next-generation participation in post-sale planning (8.4%), while also reporting one of the highest levels of families where the next generation is not consulted at all.

From family business to family office

The same transition is evident in how families organise their wealth. Among ultra-high-net-worth respondents in Asia, more than three-quarters (75.5%) say they would establish a single-family office after an exit – the highest proportion of any region.

Yet the preferred model is rarely one of complete self-sufficiency. Families are more likely than elsewhere to retain strategic decision-making within the family while relying on external investment professionals for specialist expertise. As Christos notes: “Unless you are a large-scale family office with substantial resources, it is difficult to build dedicated teams across every asset class, as well as manage non-investment functions such as legal affairs, operations, and estate planning. Most families will need external expertise in some areas.”

Once a business has been sold, the scale of wealth often changes the nature of the challenge. “The wealth becomes significant enough to require institutional management,” Christos observes. “And for many families, it also becomes their primary source of income. It has to be managed properly.”

From trusted advisors to professional governance

This shift brings new demands, not only in investment oversight but across the entire structure of the family office. A common practice is to appoint individuals to leadership roles who worked closely with the family in their operating business. They are often deeply familiar with the family’s values and have a longstanding track record of supporting the family through key milestones.

As the focus shifts from business operations to long-term wealth stewardship, however, the scope of their role evolves. Their responsibilities now span functions across investment management and complex non-investment domains – from governance and succession planning to the coordination of legal, tax, and administrative affairs.

Successfully navigating this transition requires careful consideration. Preserving the trust and cohesion of the founding generation while introducing more structured, sustainable ways of working calls for thoughtful planning: clarifying roles, strengthening support systems, building robust governance frameworks, and integrating new processes – without undermining longstanding relationships.

Answer options	Europe	Asia	Middle East	Latin America
Next generation actively participate in discussions and has equal say	13.0%	8.4%	16.7%	17.0%
Next generation is consulted but has no vote	39.0%	42.0%	45.0%	19.1%
Limited discussions	44.1%	41.3%	38.3%	59.6%
Not at all	3.9%	8.4%	0.0%	4.3%

Keeping the entrepreneurial spirit alive

At the same time, many founders remain relatively young and keen to keep building. Rather than retiring, they often divide their wealth into different pools: one professionally managed for long-term preservation, the other reserved for entrepreneurial ventures and direct investments.

“In some cases, families carve out a pool of capital that they can continue to invest as they wish,” explains Christos. “That allows them to remain entrepreneurial while ensuring the majority of the wealth is managed in a disciplined way.”

The result is a distinctly Asian model of post-exit wealth management. Families are professionalising the way wealth is owned and managed without losing the entrepreneurial mindset that created it in the first place.

> “Families are confronting these questions in real time. Does the next generation want to take over? Are they prepared to do so? If not, what alternatives exist?”
>
> Christos Anagnostopoulos, Head of Family Office Solutions/Advisory Asia, Julius Baer



Survey 2026

Surveyed population

1789 Recipients of survey, of which:

959 Julius Baer experts

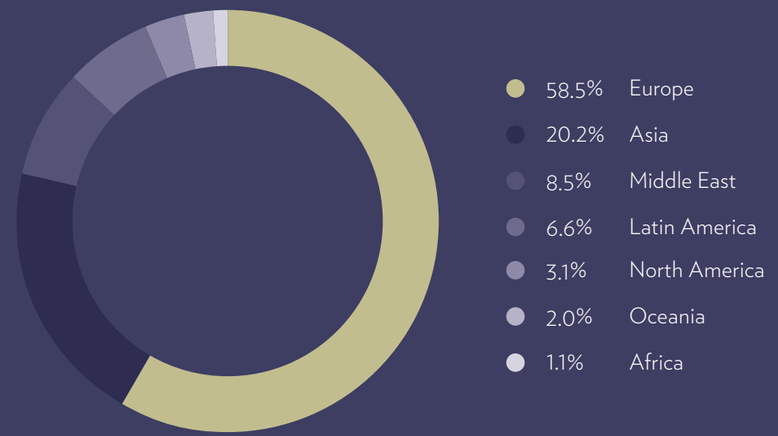
510 EY experts

320 Third-party experts

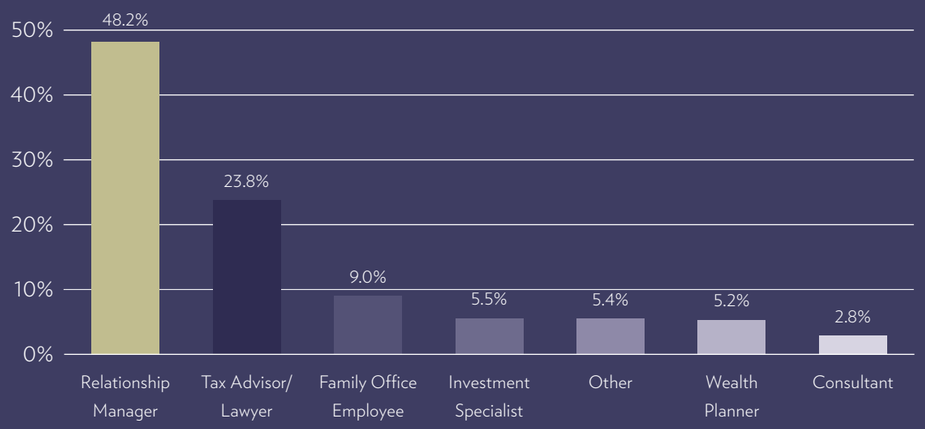
39.6% **Overall answer rate**[1]

[1] The survey was distributed to selected subject-matter experts who have different client interactions to ensure the highest coverage and most holistic responses. Corresponding roles are: Relationship Managers, Tax Advisors & Lawyers, Family Office Employees, Consultants, Wealth Planners, Investment Specialists, Others

Where are the UHNW clients (i.e. CHF 50m+ total wealth) of the respondents mainly based?



Main type of professional touchpoint of respondents:



The Julius Baer Family Barometer, in collaboration with EY:

The Julius Baer Family Barometer is our yearly global survey to gather the opinions of professionals who work with and advise wealthy clients and their families. Once a family-owned bank, Julius Baer has ensured that family stays in our DNA. This year, we are collaborating with **EY Switzerland and its global network of firms** to enable more relevant insights and share our common views. In 2026, we surveyed in-house and external experts who shared their insights.

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