

How to record memos that become a great binder

You'll record **4 voice memos of 10–15 minutes each**. We turn them into your Operations Binder: SOPs, a role map, systems list, and the owner-dependency register. You talk; we write.

Why this matters to a buyer

"Buyers review the SOPs during due diligence to determine whether the business can run smoothly under new ownership." — Viking M&A, Jul 2026

"If it's not written down, it doesn't exist in the data room." — Diligents, Dec 2025

Brokers describe a sellable business as one with *"documented procedures, a working number-two, and a 30-day owner absence that doesn't break operations"* (Valorem Business Brokers).

Seven habits of a great memo

1. **One real example:** "Last Tuesday a no-heat call came in..."
2. **Who:** the role (and name), plus who backs them up
3. **What tool:** software, screen, spreadsheet, sticky note
4. **When:** daily, Thursdays, within 60 days

The one rule

Walk through **one real, recent example**, out loud, like you're training your replacement. Describe how it **actually** happens, not the ideal.

Buyers talk to your staff. If the binder describes an ideal nobody follows, "the buyer will notice" (Viking M&A). Honest gaps are fine. They go on the fix-it list.

5. **Numbers:** prices, fees, thresholds. "Roughly" is fine
6. **Exceptions:** what goes wrong; when they call you
7. **How you decide:** the judgment in your head is the most valuable part

Vague vs. useful (examples from our fictional sample HVAC company)

TOO VAGUE

"Keisha handles the phones and books stuff."

USEFUL

"Keisha answers, gets name, address, phone, and the problem, asks if they're a club member and the system's age, then books it in Housecall Pro, which texts the confirmation."

TOO VAGUE

"I approve the big stuff."

USEFUL

"Discounts over about \$200 and purchases over \$1,000 need my OK by text. Under that, Tammy decides."

THE IDEAL

"Every warranty gets registered after install."

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS

"Brent's supposed to enter serial numbers so Tammy can register within 60 days. Sometimes he forgets. We've lost a couple."

Never say out loud or upload

- Passwords, PINs, alarm codes. Say "Tammy has it" instead
- SSNs, tax IDs, bank or card numbers
- Employee medical, family, immigration, or discipline details
- Customer card data or home access codes
- Trade secrets you'd rather keep. Say "I apply my markup," not the formula

Skip: we can't cover these

- Legal disputes or contract advice
- Tax strategy, valuation, "what's it worth"
- Step-by-step safety-critical work (gas, electrical, refrigerant). Just say who's qualified

Practical tips

- Phone voice recorder; parked car or quiet office; radio off
- "Um," pauses, and "scratch that" are all fine
- Splitting a memo into two files is fine

The four memos (any order, one a day works well)

1 The company and who does what

- What you sell, to whom, and the rough revenue split
 - Every role: what they do, how long, who backs them up
 - Outside help: bookkeeper, payroll, IT, insurance
 - "If I'm gone 30 days, what keeps working and what stops?"
- ✓ Every role named · backups · what stops without you

2 A customer from first call to paid

- Who answers, what they ask, where they write it
 - Fees quoted; who can discount and up to how much
 - Scheduling and assigning; overbooked days
 - On the job, payment, upsells, unpaid bills, callbacks
- ✓ One real job · fees · overbooking · billing & complaints

3 Your biggest-dollar process

- Where leads come from; how you qualify
 - What goes into a price (describe it; keep any secret formula)
 - Closing: proposals, deposits, financing
 - Handoff to delivery: who orders, schedules, permits; what gets lost
- ✓ Lead sources · pricing inputs · handoff · final payment

4 Money, systems, and the "only me" list

- Numbers you watch weekly or monthly, and where from
- Who approves what dollar amount; purchasing
- Hiring and training, start to "on their own"
- Every account and whose name it's in (**no passwords**); licenses; bank signers
- End with: **"Things only I do: ..."**

Optional (5–10 min): a key employee records their own job, or you cover seasonal tasks or questions a buyer has already asked.

How much is enough?

4

memos

10–15

min each

~1 hr

total

8–14

SOPs out

You will feel like you left things out. That's expected, and it's on purpose. More recording is not better.

"A smaller set of accurate, actively used SOPs does more for buyer confidence than a thick binder no one has opened." — Viking M&A

What we do with the rest: rambling and tangents are fine. We pull out the steps and keep any "only me" task we hear. After each memo we send short feedback and 2–3 follow-up questions; answer by text or a 2-minute memo. The draft comes with an open-questions list and one revision round.

What happens next

1. **Today:** intake form (10 min) on your Start page
2. **This week:** record and upload memos; feedback on each, usually within 1 business day
3. **All 4 in:** we confirm "you've sent enough" and start writing
4. **Within 5 business days:** your draft binder
5. **20–30 min:** review and answer open questions; one revision round
6. **Final:** Word + PDF. Recordings deleted after 90 days

Quality checklist: you're done when...

- ☐ All 4 memos are recorded (10–15 min each)
- ☐ Every person or role is named, with what they do
- ☐ Each memo walks through at least one real example
- ☐ You said numbers: prices, fees, thresholds, timing
- ☐ You named what goes wrong and when people call you
- ☐ Memo 4 ends with "Things only I do: ..."
- ☐ No passwords, SSNs, card numbers, or medical info

Upload at your Start page: exitbinder.com/start · Questions: [CONTACT_EMAIL](#)