Ascendrium Partners Acquires BusinessKillers? Library and Launches Cloud-Based BusinessKillers? 2.0

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The relaunch gives independent advisors a way to help business owners identify risks before a crisis or ownership transition forces a decision

Ascendrium Partners today announced its acquisition of the intellectual property of Selling Technologies, creator of the BusinessKillers? program, which since 1995 has helped insurance and financial professionals open conversations with business owners and high-net-worth families. BusinessKillers? helps advisors start the conversations business owners keep putting off. Since completing the acquisition on May 18, 2026, Ascendrium has relaunched the program as the cloud-based BusinessKillers? 2.0 and is introducing Retirement Killers?, a companion program for people approaching or living in retirement. Both are available now.

"Business owners don't act on product information. They act when they see their own situation in a story," said Daniel Hanzelka, CEO of Ascendrium Partners. "Our job now is to bring these programs to a new generation of advisors."

Each BusinessKillers? session closes with the Risk Barometer, a print or online self-assessment that gives every attendee a report on their exposure to six common risks. The owner leaves knowing what needs attention, and the advisor and owner have a clear starting point for a second conversation.

The announcement comes as a historic wave of ownership transitions gets underway. A 2026 report by the McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility estimates that about 6 million U.S. small and midsize businesses will face an ownership transition by 2035 as baby boomer owners retire, and that more than one million of them, worth up to $5 trillion, are viable candidates for sale. Yet in a May 2026 Chase survey of about 1,000 small business owners, 70% had no formal succession plan or were only in early planning, and just 8% said they were fully prepared to hand off ownership. BusinessKillers? gives advisors a way to raise those risks with owners while there is still time to act.

The acquired library includes BusinessKillers?, The Business of Medicine, FamilyMatters, BusinessKillers? Property Casualty and the Business Strategy Institute. The programs were created by Jerry and Michael Mainardi, whose four decades of work together include hundreds of television commercials, training programs and a full-length motion picture. Their programs replace slides and product talk with professionally produced video stories, so audiences feel a problem as well as understand it.

"We built these programs to help professionals start conversations that matter, without ever talking about a product," said Jerry and Michael Mainardi, co-founders of Selling Technologies. "We're glad to see the work continue in Ascendrium's hands."

BusinessKillers? 2.0

BusinessKillers? is built on six common mistakes, any one of which can kill a business: owners believing they know what the business is worth, being too busy to plan, assuming a crisis will never happen, counting on key people to stay, treating the business as their retirement, and accepting that taxes can't be reduced. Each mistake opens with a short video vignette and expert commentary, so owners recognize themselves before any solution is discussed.

Because the program is educational, it also lends itself to partnerships. Centers of influence such as accounting firms, law firms and banks, along with trade associations and chambers of commerce, can host a session for their clients or members, introducing the advisor to business owners they already serve.

Version 2.0 runs in the cloud with nothing to install. Advisors build their own version in a four-step Presentation Studio, then facilitate sessions for a room or one owner at a time. Because the vignettes carry the story, the advisor can focus on the conversation that follows, and every owner's Risk Barometer results

collect in one place.

The core content carries over from the original program, with the updates in 2.0 centered on technology and ease of use. It is the same content advisors have long credited with opening doors with business owners. In a testimonial collected by Selling Technologies, a Nebraska advisor identified as D.N., JD, wrote that the program led to buy-sell, executive compensation and charitable giving conversations: "Their programs quickly 'open the doors' to all advanced sales areas of planning."

BusinessKillers?, now an Ascendrium Partners company, is available through an annual license at businesskillers.com, where advisors can request more information.

Introducing Retirement Killers

Retirement Killers addresses the threats facing people approaching or living in retirement. Its content, The Perfect Financial Storm? 2027, is a 90-minute briefing on the seven retirement killers of 2027, presented by a guest expert. Advisors host it on demand for their own clients and prospects, and viewers can follow up with a five-minute scorecard and a conversation with their advisor. Learn more at retirementkillers.org.

About Ascendrium Partners

Ascendrium Partners is an AI-integrated organization built as the next generation of the field marketing organization (FMO) for established independent advisors. Where a traditional FMO stops at contracting and carrier access, Ascendrium adds expert sales training, advanced-markets case design, proprietary prospecting programs such as BusinessKillers? and Retirement Killers, and AI tools for sales-call preparation, coaching and analysis, practice automation and marketing. Together they help advisors open new markets and take their practices to the next level. Learn more at ascendriumpartners.com.

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Ascendrium Partners

Ascendrium Partners is the next-generation FMO for established independent advisors, adding sales training, advanced-markets case design, BusinessKillers? and Retirement Killers? prospecting programs, and AI tools to help advisors open new markets.

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