

A Practical Guide to Fractional Leadership for Owner-Led & Scaling Businesses

Q: Is a fractional executive just a part-time hire?

A: Not quite.

A fractional executive is a highly experienced leader, often ex-C-suite engaged part-time or on a project basis. They're not filling a gap temporarily; they're brought in for strategic impact during critical phases of growth, change or transition.

Q: What roles are best suited to this model?

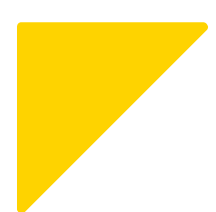
A: Most commonly:

- Fractional CFOs (financial strategy, investment readiness)
- Commercial Directors (pricing, go-to-market, sales ops)
- COOs / Operations Directors (scaling processes, delivery)
- Transformation Leads (digitalisation, restructure)

Why the Shift?

Market Trends & Data

- 110,000+ roles in the UK now labelled “fractional” on LinkedIn—up from 2,000 in 2022
- (Source: The Times, 2024)
- Mid-sized, owner-led businesses are driving this shift especially in sectors like engineering, manufacturing, renewables, and infrastructure
- Hiring full-time execs with the wrong fit can cost 2 to 3x salary in lost time and turnover
- Fractional execs often come with 15 to 25+ years of senior-level experience



is Fractional Right for Your Business?

You Might Consider It If...

- You're growing fast but not ready for full-time exec overhead
- You need quick strategic input or specialist skills
- You're preparing for sale, investment, or succession
- Your business model or market is shifting rapidly

Permanent Hire Might Suit If...

- You want someone embedded for the long term
- You're building a leadership team for the next 5–10 years
- You need ongoing client relationship ownership
- You're in a stable, long-term growth phase

Questions to Ask Before Bringing One In

- What outcome are we trying to achieve over the next 6–12 months?
- Do we need strategic input, hands-on delivery—or both?
- Are we comfortable with someone working 2–4 days a week?
- How will we measure success—and when?
- What internal support or handover will they need?

What Others Are Saying

“We didn’t need a full-time Commercial Director, we needed someone who could steady the ship, reset our pricing, and leave a legacy. Fractional was ideal.”

Chair, Infrastructure Group (NI)

“It’s not about clocking hours. It’s about delivering outcomes quickly and getting out of the way when the time is right.”

Interim COO, Growth-Stage Manufacturer

3-Step Approach to Making It Work

- Define the Mandate: Be specific, what’s the purpose, scope, and timeline?
- Onboard Properly: Give access, context, and a clear runway.
- Review Impact: Track milestones and revisit scope every 90 days.