NEWLY-merged business software provider MYOB said it has set its sights on bridging the gap between accountants and business owners. MYOB is set to begin work on a long term engagement program, according to chief executive Craig Winkler, who said the company's small business survey for August 2004 found that 77 per cent of business owners consider accountants to be their most trusted adviser.

However, only a quarter of respondents approach their accountant for business planning advice.

"Far too many business owners only use their accountant for compliance work such as tax returns and tax planning even though they are crying out for help on a range of issues," Mr Winkler said.

"This highlights the significant gap and potential to bring the two together that is our challenge and mission moving forward."

MYOB, which yesterday gained Federal Court approval for its $233 million merger with rival Solutions 6 Holdings Ltd, develops and delivers software, services and support for more than 500,000 businesses and over 10,000 accounting practices globally.

Solutions 6, a one-time boom stock of the 1990s dotcom era, was officially removed from the Australian Stock Exchange today after shareholders last week voted to accept a mix of shares in MYOB and a capital return scheme.

Mr Winkler said the merger would provide MYOB with the scale and scope build its business for shareholders and clients.

The merged entity will operate as one global business under the MYOB name from August 17, 2004.

Other highlights of MYOB's small business report include, the types of advice sought from accountants were: complying with the law (86 per cent), tax planning (59 per cent), record keeping (45 per cent), future planning (33 per cent) and business analysis and interpretation (26 per cent).

Only 11 per cent of business owners sought advice on raising finance and seven per cent on succession or exit planning.

Over half of all business owners only see their accountant once or twice per year.

The survey is drawn from a national sample of 2,722 small business owners and general managers of companies employing less than 20 people an was conducted in July 2004.

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