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You may have noticed I am trying to promote local businesses with our newsletter drawing. Do you know of any local businesses you would like to see in our newsletter that you think someone may enjoy getting a gift certificate for? Give me a call or send me an email to let me know!

I would like to thank everyone who submitted answers to our question last month. The winner of the drawing for the August newsletter question is (not drawn yet). Congratulations, (xxx)!

This month's drawing will be for a \$25 gift certificate to DeMeritt Hill Farm in Lee.

Demeritt Hill Farm offers a variety of fruits, vegetables and baked goods as well as various seasonal activities. For more information, click [HERE](#).

And the question is...

What is a back up care provider?

[Click here](#) to submit your answer by email. Good luck!



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Interesting Facts!

A summer draws to a close, we often like to look back and critique the weather we have enjoyed (or suffered through!) but there is little that can come close to the year 1816, known the world over as "The Year Without a Summer". In this part of the country alone, the temperature was below freezing every single day in May. Up to 12 inches of snow fell in New England in early June. Lakes and rivers were still frozen well into August. Thick persistent fog that blocked the sunshine and severe cold fronts moving through the area killed crops and farm animals alike, leading to widespread food shortages. Although, at the time, many thought this foretold the end of the world, it is now generally thought that a volcanic eruption in Indonesia was the cause of this bizarre, worldwide weather pattern.

Local Events!

Art' Round Town Gallery Walk: Every Friday evening, various locations in Portsmouth from 5:00 - 8:00 pm. For more information on this event click [HERE](#).

Sixth Annual Hampton Falls Craft Festival: Saturday, September 13th from 10:00 - 5:00 and Sunday, September 14th from 10:00 - 4:00 on Town Common. For More information on this event click [HERE](#).

Hilltop City Bluegrass Festival: The Festival Pavilion, Somersworth. Saturday, September 13th from 10:00 - 6:00. For more information on this event click [HERE](#).

Rochester Fair: September 12th - 21st at Rochester Fairgrounds. For more information and calendar of events click [HERE](#).

2014 Seacoast Area Walk To End Alzheimer's: Sunday, September 28th beginning at 8:30 am in Strawberry Banke. For more information click [HERE](#).

These websites are provided to you for informational purposes. We are not responsible for the website content

Estate Planning: You Can't Take It with You



Estate planning is not just a matter of saving dollars and minimizing taxes. The process of planning your estate also raises some difficult emotional and personal issues. First, it forces you to contemplate your own mortality; you are trying to plan for a time when you won't be around to make decisions. Others, particularly those you love, will be affected by the plans you make now and will be required to exercise their own judgment once you are gone. For many people, the most difficult step in the estate planning process is deciding who gets what and when.

To whom you leave your money and property is a personal decision. Most people naturally think of planning for their spouse, children, and relatives first. After the family is provided for, perhaps a favorite charity, such as an alma mater or research foundation, might be included as a beneficiary.

The best approach for you will depend upon your family, the size of your estate, and your personal wishes. Here are some guidelines to consider:

Talk to your children. When your children are mature enough to discuss financial matters, let them know, in general terms, the size of your anticipated estate and talk over your plans with them. If they are old enough, give them the opportunity to make their preferences known. Are they interested in running the family business? Do they have a preference about how their inheritances or trusts might be structured?

With inheritance comes responsibility. In most states, 18 or 21 years is the legal adult age. However, even a 21-year-old may not be mature enough to handle the responsibilities of a sudden windfall. Think about the age at which your children might be capable of meeting this challenge, and consider strategies that can help you plan for that time.

Anticipate Estate Taxes. As has often been said, two things in life are certain: death and taxes. Estate planning is the art of ensuring that one doesn't cause the other. People often underestimate the size of their estates and end up with an unanticipated estate tax bill.

If you are a business owner or professional, for instance, there is a good chance that the value of your estate already tops the exclusion amount, or will soon. Even if you don't have substantial personal wealth, hidden assets such as pension or profit-sharing plan benefits, as well as life insurance, may cause your taxable estate to exceed the exclusion amount.

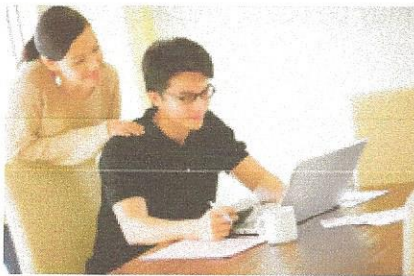
Add it all up. At death, the Federal estate tax applies to asset transfers to beneficiaries other than a spouse for estates valued in excess of the applicable exclusion amount (\$5.34 million for 2014). One of the most important elements in estate planning is calculating the value of your estate. The following steps can help you estimate your estate's worth.

Prepare a net worth financial statement listing all of your assets and any interests of ownership reduced by any and all liabilities. The total is your net worth. Be certain that you do not overlook hidden assets. Also, when subtracting your liabilities, include estimated funeral and burial expenses and the estimated costs of administering your estate (generally, 2% to 5% of the gross value of the estate). Now, subtract your charitable bequests and the marital deduction. Your entire estate, no matter its size, can pass to your spouse estate tax free. This deduction, however, does not eliminate the possibility that estate taxes may be due on assets transferred by your surviving spouse upon his or her death. For this reason, both you and your spouse must establish estate plans that will maximize asset transfers to your heirs and minimize estate taxation.

There may be some very helpful tax provisions in the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), so be sure to take the time to plan your estate carefully to minimize taxes. The better you plan now, the better you may provide for your family's future.

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How to Get Yourself on the Savings Track



Creating a financial budget can be a challenge. Committing to it over the long term may be even more difficult. But, a "pay yourself first" approach can positively impact your long-term budgeting, spending, and investing plan.

Here are a few tips to begin your budget planning and get on the savings track:

- 1) **Watch what you spend.** Begin the process by recording all your expenses, including living expenses, utilities, child care or elder care services, and necessities such as food, clothing, and medical care.
- 2) **Treat savings like an expense.** You may be more likely to put money aside if you consider your savings an expense that must be paid on a regular basis. This is what is meant by "pay yourself first."
- 3) **Allocate income in terms of percentages.** Many expenses can be gradually reduced without making drastic changes to your lifestyle. Determine what percentage of your income goes to each expense, and then categorize these expenses as either fixed or flexible. While you have little control over fixed expenses, you can control your flexible expenses. Flexible expenses are generally the ones that erode a savings plan and may sabotage a budget.
- 4) **Prioritize your expenses.** Take your list of expenses and rank them in order of priority. Eliminate the unimportant expenditures, and redirect this money to an

investment and savings program. Gradually, reduce unnecessary expenditures. As you eliminate expenditures, write a check for a similar amount and deposit it into a special savings account.

5) **Minimize taxes.** Make pre-tax contributions to an employer-sponsored retirement plan, such as a 401(k). Earnings in these retirement savings vehicles accumulate on a tax-deferred basis. Or, you may contribute up to \$5,500 (for 2014) per year (\$6,500 if age 50 or older) on a pre-tax basis into a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA), or \$5,500 (\$6,500 if age 50 or older) on an after-tax basis to a Roth IRA.

Remember, putting yourself first means making your financial future and well-being your top priority. By getting on the savings track now, you may be better prepared for the future of your dreams.

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Bringing Mom Back on the Job after Having a Baby



Losing experienced, hardworking employees can be costly for your business. So when one of your valued employees announces she is pregnant, do more than just congratulate her; think about ways to encourage her to return to work once the baby is born. While it may be necessary to allow for some adjustments to her work environment and schedule, your organization will benefit by retaining a proven contributor.

Some employees who become pregnant make a firm decision that they will stay home with their child for an indefinite period of time after giving birth, and decide to hand in their notice. Yet, others want to return to the workforce. When women fail to return to their jobs after having children, it can be due to not receiving the necessary support from their employers in order to successfully juggle parenting and career responsibilities.

Developing a strategy for meeting the needs of the parents on your staff not only raises the odds that an expectant employee will return to work after giving birth - it also improves the likelihood that the employee will remain a loyal and productive part of your team. Begin by familiarizing yourself with your basic obligations as an employer under federal, state, and municipal laws. Under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, companies with 15 or more employees are required to treat employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions in the same manner as other workers with temporary disabilities. It may be necessary to adjust the employee's work duties or grant a pregnant employee time off for doctors' appointments.

Companies with 50 or more employees are subject to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which mandates up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for medical reasons or maternity leave. Even if the FMLA does not apply to your company, you may wish to offer paid or unpaid parental leave to employees. By allowing her to combine sick days, vacation days, and even a brief paid maternity leave, a new mother may be able to piece together the time she needs to recover and care for her baby without forfeiting pay.



Remember, too, that new fathers may wish to take time off when a child is born or work a more flexible schedule after becoming a dad. Depending upon their size, employers may also have a legal obligation to provide the same amount of leave to new fathers as they do to new mothers. Before extending benefits to expectant or new mothers, check to see whether failing to provide the same benefits to new fathers would constitute discrimination.

While it is not always possible for an expectant employee to predict what changes to her current working arrangements she might prefer after the baby arrives, it is useful to set up a preliminary plan for her return before she heads for the hospital. If the position allows it, you may wish to offer the employee the option of reducing her hours, adopting a flexible schedule, job-sharing, or telecommuting. After actually returning to work, a new mother may find she needs more or less flexibility than she originally anticipated and may want to revisit these arrangements.

Most companies are not large enough to offer on-site daycare, but you may want to consider signing up with a backup care provider that specializes in assisting parents in finding emergency care for their children when their normal arrangements fail or a child

is sick. If a woman intends to nurse her baby, she may wish to take breaks to express milk. If possible, provide her with a private office or room where she can pump without being disturbed and a sanitary refrigerator where she can safely store the milk.

Making the adjustments necessary to allow a new mother to return to her job may cause some short-term disruptions and inconveniences for the employer. But sometimes even a temporary change in work schedule or location can ease the transition back to work for a new mother - or even tip the scales in her decision about whether to stay on the job. Over time, providing a supportive environment for employees through all their life stages will likely reward you with a dedicated and motivated workforce.

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