



Estate Planning

what will be your legacy?



Nurturing Responsibility

Experts say parents need to start early to instill the right ethics and attitudes about money in their children. *By Cynthia Flash*



FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD Greg Reneris eyed the leader of the Seattle nonprofit with skepticism.

He, along with about a dozen other teens who participated in The Seattle Foundation's summer "Philanthropy Camp," had \$500 to donate and he didn't want to blow it on a bad decision.

Reneris had just watched a PowerPoint presentation about how InterConnection provides restored computers to people in Third World countries. The organization uses volunteers in

Seattle to refurbish donated computers and then send them to schools in poor areas of the world. But something in the presentation didn't quite sound right to him.

"If only 1 percent of Africans have computers, where are the jobs for people who get computer skills?" the Bellevue ninth-grader asked the InterConnection representative.

That's the type of question leaders of the camp encouraged Reneris and others to ask

as these future philanthropists learned what it meant to be stewards of large sums of money. Ken and Kim Reneris sent their identical twins, Greg and Matt, to philanthropy camp to learn how to ask tough questions.

Someday, the twins will help shape the future of some of the area's nonprofit organizations by the decisions they make on how to spend the earnings from the family foundation fund their parents set up in 1998.



A group of teens enrolled in the Seattle Foundation's "Philanthropy Camp" visit a local chapter of the Progressive Animal Welfare Society to help determine which organizations they want to support in the future.

■ A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUMMER CAMP

ESSENTIALLY, THE RENERIS twins are young philanthropists. Even though they aren't donating large sums of money yet, they know they'll have to take on that role in the future.

While their friends were playing soccer, hiking in the woods and sailing, Greg and Matt attended the camp with about a dozen other local teens whose parents or grandparents have established family charitable funds.

All came to the camp from wealthy families. All attended private schools and likely would never have to worry about money issues. But that's not necessarily a good thing.

There are bigger questions their parents face, too. How do families pass down money to children without spoiling them along the way or watching them spend it frivolously? How do they teach responsible giving? The camp was a first step welcomed by the teens.

"I think it's a cool opportunity that we get to be able to give away money in the future from our grandparents," said Ashley Morrison, a 15-year-old sophomore from Everett, who attended the camp with her first cousin, Austin Long. Together, they and their two siblings will oversee donations from the David and Linda Olson Family Foundation Fund that their grandparents set up in 2006.

While at camp, the teens found out that there's more to donating money than simply giving it to their church, school or the nearest homeless shelter or food bank. They learned that wise philanthropists develop giving criteria—and then they spend time researching the organizations that they are interested in supporting.

After developing broad criteria for worthwhile organizations (e.g., must have a no-discrimination policy and a mission statement, must have local impact and headquarters, must have a public benefit and fund people in need, etc.), the teens embarked on a day-long van tour to examine two local nonprofit organizations personally. They met with the leaders, toured the facilities and peppered the organizations with questions.

"How skilled are your volunteers?" asked Margo Jennings, 14, as she tried to determine if the unskilled volunteers who repaired the computers

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PROVIDING WITHOUT SPOILING: A CRUCIAL ISSUE

With estate tax laws changing yearly, many wealthy families must find creative ways to provide for their children and grandchildren without spoiling them or setting them up for a lifetime of excess. This dilemma is significant, especially subsequent generations of children will most likely have less given to them than previous generations.

Individuals working to reduce the amount in their estates to avoid paying estate taxes have numerous options. For 2007, individuals with an estate worth less than \$2 million (\$4 million per couple) will not have to pay estate taxes. Any amount over that is subject to significant federal and state inheritance taxes.

Some parents or grandparents will take advantage of the opportunity to give tax-free gifts of up to \$12,000 per individual per year. For example, two grandparents or two parents could give each child up to \$24,000 a year from date of birth. Many opt to put these funds into a trust, which allows donors to limit how and when the money can be spent (for example, on education, transportation, to buy a home, a business, etc.).

At a rate of \$24,000 per year, children would inherit a trust fund worth \$408,000 (without counting any interest income) by the time they graduate from high school at age 17.

It is also fairly common for wealthy grandparents to pay for their grandchildren's medical or educational expenses, such as college.

"If kids are 5 or 8 years old and grandparents are paying for education, this is a great opportunity to talk about it so children can understand that the education is being paid for by the grandparents, and it's a great gift," Robin Russell, immediate past president of the Estate Planning Council of Seattle, explains. "It's a great way to pass on money and values without actually giving them cash." —*C.F.*



at InterConnection were capable of doing the job.

Following a tour of the crowded warehouse where InterConnection volunteers tear apart old computers and build new ones, the teens switched gears from an organization that provides technology around the world to the Vera Project, a nonprofit run out of the Seattle Center that provides an all-ages dance, concert and art venue for teens.

"If you had \$500, what would you do with it?" Matt Reneris asked. The question stumped the young tour leader who clearly was more comfortable talking about the bands that play at Vera than the finances that keep the organization going.

The answer was important, however, as the teens contemplated where to donate the \$500 gift. The Seattle Foundation staff tried to choose nonprofits it thought the teens could relate to. The advisers urged their students to dig deep and really consider whether the organization was worthy of their donation.

"We let them guide the process and lead the show to determine where the grant will go," explains Sarah Wirz, director of donor services with The Seattle Foundation. "They will have to defend their position with one of our board members."

THE MONEY CONVERSATION

TEACHING YOUTH about money is important for all families—and especially important for those with wealth. If children don't understand what values their families put on financial issues, the younger generations aren't likely to follow the path their grandparents or parents set for them.

"You have to have a conversation about money before you begin a discussion about giving it away," says Marguerite Griffin, senior vice president and national director of philanthropic services for Northern Trust Co.

"If you don't do that, you lose an opportunity for education." Griffin adds that if you give young persons the opportunity to manage money, you must let them make decisions on their own. That approach, of course, means you must also let them make their share of money mistakes along the way. As part of this educational process, she advises parents to discuss money basics, including the idea of compounded interest and how money grows.

"When you talk about the impact of giving over time, you have to consider whether to give now to meet the current needs of a charitable organization or invest the funds for growth so that you have more to give away later."

The conversations come in different forms. Some families speak about it regularly at the dinner table, during discussions of jobs, chores or allowances. Others pull together a family retreat, facilitated by professionals who work with the family to instill the values that are important to the parents and to develop mission statements.

"Open communication is key," says Robin Russell, immediate past president of the Estate Planning Council of Seattle and a vice president of the U.S. Bank Private Client Group. As a trust officer for some of Seattle's oldest multi-generation families, Russell suggests that families that are uncomfortable having those discussions use an intermediary such as a financial planner, accountant or trust officer. "I feel very strongly that families with wealth—or even those without wealth—have that discussion," she says.

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UNPREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

WHILE IT IS often difficult for parents to discuss money openly and honestly, those who don't talk about it risk leaving their children unprepared to deal with the money they eventually will inherit. Russell talks from her own experience working with family members for several decades.

In one case, for example, a couple in their 40s looked into buying a life insurance policy for themselves to cover inheritance taxes that their children would have to pay when the couple died. The children would inherit an illiquid family business, and proceeds from the life insurance would pay taxes so the business wouldn't have to be sold.

The couple, however, was unaware that one day they could inherit a much larger sum from their own parents. Therefore, they would need to buy more life insurance to cover that future inheritance.

Since they didn't know what their parents were worth, they underestimated their needs, which ultimately could have cost the estate significant

amounts in future taxes.

In another situation, two adult daughters inherited a large estate from their parents, without knowing previously that the money existed.

"They were very ill-prepared on how to handle it and it caused a huge amount of angst, with the children almost being resentful of their parents," Russell says. "Not only were they not prepared, they didn't have the tools, they weren't educated, there was no family-legacy planning and they didn't know what was important to their parents in terms of charitable giving."

Some individuals might fear that letting their children know about their wealth could cause them to grow up without ambition, or that they will become conceited or ungrateful.

Russell says her experience doesn't bear that out. Children will learn how to handle their money based on the example set by their parents.

"If you as parents are living a good life and you have a job or something you're doing that's giving back to society, your children will mimic you," Russell says. "If they see their parents sitting around wasting the money, that will make an impact on them and they may do the same thing."



SWEATING THE FINANCIAL DETAILS

ONE ASPECT OF the financial discussion that Russell emphasizes is the idea of parents explaining their values and ethics about money to their children.

She advises parents to take their children to volunteer at a nonprofit organization; to encourage them to give some of their allowance to a charity; and to teach them about saving money.

In addition, parents should include their children in financial-planning and estate-planning discussions with professional advisers. Take them along when you sign your will. They should be introduced to those professionals, including their lawyer, CPA, banker and trust officer, if there is one.

Teach children about credit cards and how to balance a checkbook. Take them to the bank to cash a check.

If a child gets a \$50 gift from Grandma and Grandpa, talk to him or her about what to do with it and offer several options, such as to spend part of it, save part of it and give some to charity.

"If they want to buy an iPod, tell them they have to save for it so there won't be the expectation that they can have everything that they want," Russell says.

Parents worried that their children will talk about the family's wealth should explain that this information must be kept private and that it's nobody's business but theirs. But also know that they *will* talk, and even make things up based on perceptions. Still, the benefits of discussing money with your children—in detail—far outweigh the short-term drawbacks.

"Without these discussions, they'll be sorely ill-prepared for handling money, and that translates into making bad choices, bad purchases and bad investments," Russell says. "There's a much greater chance of them being taken advantage of by bad investment advisers with bad investments. You worked hard to build your estate to make money, to save money. Don't you want to be assured that your kids are educated so they can treat your legacy with respect?"

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Succession Dilemma

Succession planning is an issue many families continue to avoid, but it can be crucial to making sure that their businesses survive change at the top.

By Cynthia Flash

YOU OWN A BUSINESS—whether it's a thriving truck-part supplier, restaurant, veterinary clinic or something else. And, unexpectedly, the unthinkable happens: You die.

Now what?

Who wants to think of such a horrible tragedy—especially when the business is going so well? You're so young and healthy, and you have children who could take over for you when retirement comes years from now.

Unfortunately, not enough people are thinking about this possibility. As a result, family businesses aren't prepared for the inevitable, when the business must be passed on. Such a move might mean being given to another family member, sold to a non-family member, sold to an outside party or liquidated. These are the only options.

For those who don't plan for the succession of their business, chances are that succession won't happen as envisioned. Owners could lose money or lose the business altogether.

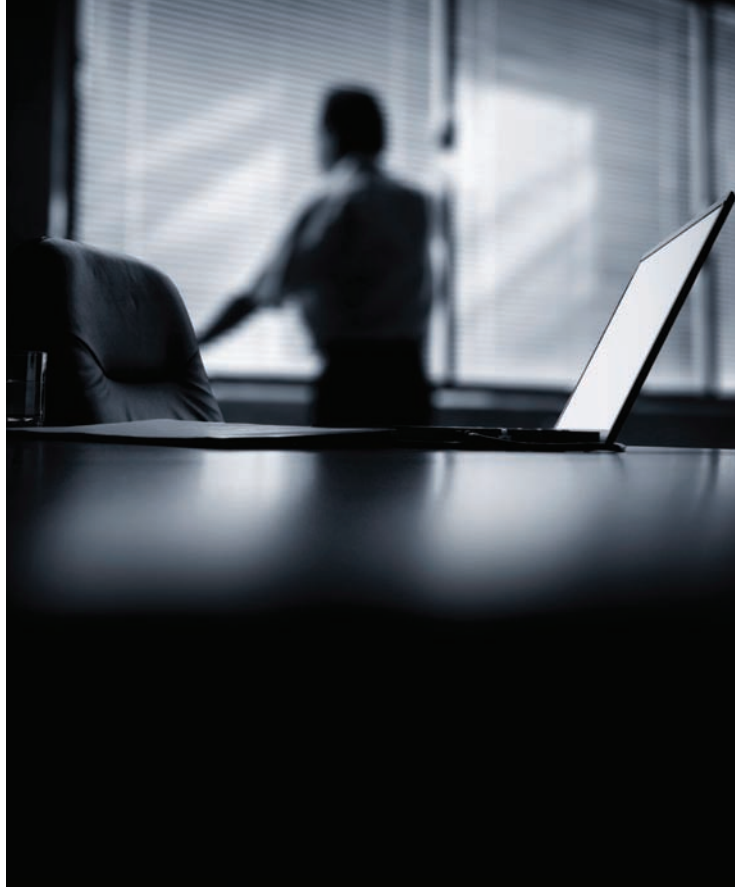
Consider the story of Wilson Products Inc., a once-thriving aircraft parts supplier. When owner Kenneth Wilson died unexpectedly in 2003, his three adult daughters had to take over. Although they had grown up around the \$12 million-a-year Auburn business, they were never trained about how to run the company and were unprepared for the rigors of managing such an enterprise. Within two years of the leader's death, Wilson Products was bankrupt. And despite being profitable, with \$20 million in business on the books, the daughters were forced to auction away the assets when they couldn't find a buyer.

Then there's the now-defunct family business of Steve Brillling, executive director of the Seattle University Entrepreneurship Center and acting director of the newly formed Family Business Institute.

Brillling's father and mother started a successful wholesale veterinary and surgical supply company in Spokane. Although Brillling's father urged him to take over the business, his mother suggested he go out on his own. He took mom's advice.

When Brillling's father died suddenly of a heart attack without a business succession plan, his mother turned the firm over to Brillling's sister and brother-in-law in exchange for a lifetime annuity. Unfortunately, the new owners weren't prepared for their roles, and the company went bankrupt in less than five years.

"No one was there to help our family handle the turnover of the business," says Brillling, who uses his family's personal experience as an example in his university classes. "No one was there to help my sister not make ultimately fatal business moves. It was not so much a question of turning over the business to the wrong person, but more a lack of good planning, training and coaching."



LOOMING SUCCESSION TROUBLE


FAMILY-OWNED businesses remain the backbone of the American economy, accounting for about 64 percent of America's gross domestic product.

In Washington state, there are roughly 5,100 family businesses with more than \$5 million in annual sales, contributing \$131 billion in services and employing nearly 1 million people.

But with so many families facing succession issues, statistics show that too many continue to ignore the topic at their peril. According to a 2007 survey by Laird Norton Tyee in Seattle, only 29 percent of family businesses nationally, with at least \$5 million in annual revenues have a succession plan. Such troubling figures remain a fact despite repeated cries from the estate-planning industry that a looming succession problem exists in America as baby-boomers prepare to retire and hand over their businesses to the next generation.

The good news for family-owned businesses in western states is that they're far more prepared. Eighty-five percent of senior-generation shareholders report that they have written and signed estate plans, according to the Laird Norton Tyee survey. Other national statistics from the survey are less encouraging:

- *Only 41 percent have a successor in line and are preparing for the transition.*
- *Some 25 percent of owners aren't confident in the next generation's ability to lead the business.*
- *Fewer than half have created a statement of family values that is intended to perpetuate throughout the firm.*
- *A whopping 93 percent have little or no income other than what they get from their business.*



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“You need to have a plan, and the time to start a plan is now. Not when you’re dead,” says Kristi Mathisen, managing director of tax and financial planning for Laird Norton Tye and a former president of the Estate Planning Council of Seattle.

This advice applies not only to traditional businesses with sales and employees, but also to any business arrangement involving family members, such as mutually held real estate or family limited-liability corporations.

The common question estate planners ask themselves—and their clients—is why don’t individuals and families take action to plan for the eventual succession of their business? The answers are varied, but easy to predict. During his years in the estate-planning business, William F. Super, the former president of the Estate Planning Council of Seattle, has heard just about every excuse possible.

“People do not deal with these issues because they are too busy. They do not want to talk about death. There are family conflicts. There are difficult issues, such as a mentally challenged or drug-addicted child. The kids think they’re entitled to run the business but are unable. Dad is not ready to let go,” explains Super, a CPA and estate-planning consultant. “Unfortunately, if these issues are not addressed and tackled, then the problems will just pop up later—likely to the detriment of all.”

COMPLEX FAMILY ISSUES

Admittedly, creating a plan takes time. It not only requires the business owner to dig into the nitty-gritty details of business financials, valuations and future leadership, but it also requires the owner to address family issues that are usually more difficult.

These issues include: Should a company be split evenly between siblings when the family members won’t have an equal role in running the business? What if there are no heirs willing or able to take over and run the place? How will the sale or turnover of a family business continue to provide income to the owner after retirement?

A business succession plan is part of an overall estate plan. “There are no two business estate plans that are the same,” says Tom Keller, a Seattle lawyer who has worked with 10,000 families and is often called in on contentious estate disputes. He’s seen many cases in which businesses had to be sold because a succession plan wasn’t in place when the owner died.

Keller urges parents not only to make a plan, but also to explain it to their children so that there is no question in the children’s minds what their parents intend to do with their business and the rest of the estate when they retire, or what steps should be taken if they pass away.

Experts advise creating a business succession plan shortly after creating the business. And if it’s too late for that, get started by calling an all-hands family meeting to talk about goals for both the family and the business.

Executing a plan will require the help of professional advisers, such as lawyers, CPAs, financial planners or perhaps life insurance professionals to help provide liquidity, in addition to trust officers who could oversee assets held by minors.



DOMESTIC PARTNERS

Washington becomes the nation's eighth state to allow domestic partners many of the same estate planning rights as married couples. By Cynthia Flash

Jamie and Eric Pedersen kissed sweetly July 23 as they officially became "registered domestic partners" in the state of Washington.

The ceremony may have been short, but the impact of the process will have a lasting impact on their lives. For the first time, the Pedersens were granted many of the same estate planning rights as any married couple.

"It was a really joyful experience," said Jamie, a Democratic state representative from Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. "We were excited about having the protection, finally, for our families, now and in the future."

This summer, Washington became only the eighth state in the nation to recognize domestic partnerships; within the first two weeks of the new law's enactment, more than 750 couples registered. In addition to recognizing same-gender pairs, the law also applies to domestic partnerships for heterosexual couples in which at least one person is 62 years or older.

The state now gives the Pedersens 29 new rights, but the couple knows it's just a start. To protect themselves before the new law passed, they made sure they had a will and estate plan. And just like married couples, they aren't counting on the new law to protect them completely.

"Domestic partners should always have valid estate-planning documents despite what may be offered under the law," advises Wendy Goffe, a leading estate-planning lawyer with Graham & Dunn, who has many same-gender couples as clients. "No rational married couple should rely on the defaults alone... There are fewer rights for same-gender partners under the law, so they shouldn't rely on these new rights either."

(continued on page 67)



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“Success in business, as well as in estate and wealth formation, relies on care, commitment, planning and persistent effort. The same can be said for business succession and estate planning,” says Gene Williams, a chartered life insurance underwriter with New York Life Insurance Co. in Bellevue and president of the Estate Planning Council of Seattle. “Security for one’s business partners, investors, lenders and, ultimately, one’s own family rests on the preparedness that only proper planning can provide.”

SUCCESSION SUCCESS

LUCKILY, MANY local businesses have taken the advice of people like Williams and passed on their businesses through the generations successfully.

The Bartell family is training its fourth generation to run the Bartell Drugs pharmacy chain. The Bridge Family is enjoying the proceeds of its sale to Warren Buffett in 2000. The Laird Norton family is in its seventh generation of running the Laird Norton Co. Phil Smart is savoring his retirement knowing that his car dealership is in the able hands of his son, Phil Jr.

Art Obero continues to be the face of Obero Sausage Co. even though the company has brought in a non-family member to lead the growing business. The second generation of the Schwartz family has been successful leading Schwartz Brothers Restaurants, even after the death of one of the founders. HomeStreet Bank continues to grow under the leadership of its third generation.

Along the way, many of these families have taken the opportunity to leave a philanthropic legacy, too, by contributing some of their earnings and assets to local foundations and charities.

Such financial success has helped give these families a brighter outlook on tomorrow. Rich Simmonds, managing principal at Laird Norton Tyee, notes that his firm’s survey found that family businesses are overwhelmingly optimistic about their future. “Now it’s time to get the processes in place to keep them that way,” he says.

There are a number of high-profile companies that have successfully executed succession plans, allowing the firms to continue to grow and thrive. Consider several past winners of the Pacific Lutheran University’s Washington Family Business Awards.

Fourth-generation family members currently run Petersen Brothers Inc. of Sumner, which specializes in highway guardrail and concrete median barrier installation. The fifth generation of the Haynes family is involved in running Rainier Connect, a Tacoma company that was among the first in the state to provide cable television, local phone and high-speed internet service. And the third generation of Wray’s Food & Drug continues to offer premium service to customers in Yakima.

“If you do [succession planning] right, it works,” says New York Life’s Williams. “Hopefully, everyone will follow the example of these successful family businesses to keep companies thriving and contributing to our community.”

KEY SEATTLE AREA AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT ADDRESS ESTATE, CHARITABLE AND WEALTH/LEGACY PLANNING:

Estate Planning Council of Seattle

Led by Gene Williams, president, the EPC is a resource for families in the estate planning process.

<http://www.epcseattle.org>

Washington Planned Giving Council

Led by Marlin Sandlin, president, the WPGC is an organization of planned charitable gift planning in Washington.

<http://www.wpgc.org>

LEAVE A LEGACY® of Western Washington

This group consists of many organizations—including the EPC of Seattle and WPGC—and focuses on helping people “leave a legacy.”

<http://www.leavelegacy.org>

Northwest Family Business Advisors Group

An organization of professionals who help facilitate the process of family business succession and continuity.

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For more information on local estate-planning resources, please visit seattlebusinessmonthly.com.

[DOMESTIC PARTNERS CONT'D.]

To be covered by the new law, domestic partners must register with the Secretary of State's office. Once registered, they receive numerous benefits, including the right to:

- Visit a partner in a hospital
- Grant informed health care consent for a patient who is not competent
- Seek information from health care providers about a partner without the partner's authorization
- Title and rights to cemetery plots and rights of interment
- Authorize autopsies, and to request copies of autopsy records
- Control the disposition of the remains of a deceased person
- Inheritance and the right to administer an estate if a domestic partner dies without a will
- Sue for wrongful death

A full list of rights can be found at: www.leg.wa.gov (type in bill# 5336 under the Bill Search function).

While the new law does not bestow all of the protections offered to married couples, Jamie Pedersen says he is happy that the new legislation corrects many past legal wrongs.

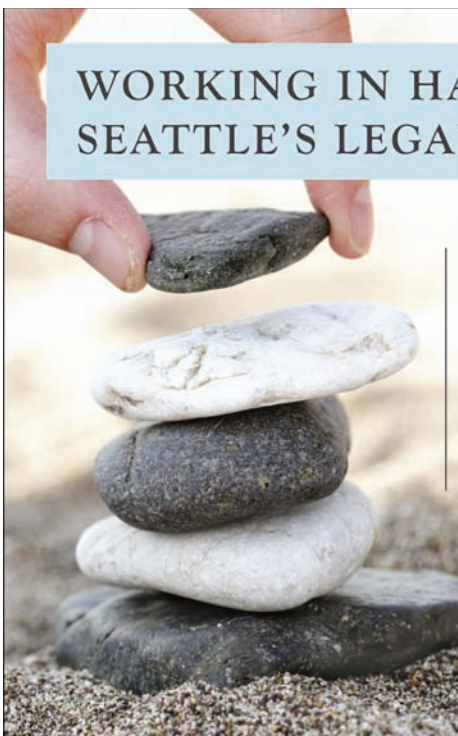
"For people whose significant other was someone not related by blood or marriage, the law before had the potential to cause some really dramatic injustices," Pedersen says.

He recalls stories of families swooping in and taking over assets of a rejected unmarried family member who had been in a long-time committed relationship. "I would advocate that nearly everyone spend a little money to make sure to get the proper planning documents," he says.

But this new law isn't for everyone. Both Goffe and Pedersen warn that there are still some couples that should probably not register as domestic partners—those in which one partner is serving in the military, is in the United States on a non-immigrant visa or is receiving public assistance.

Still, they say, couples of all kinds should draw up a will and estate-planning documents.

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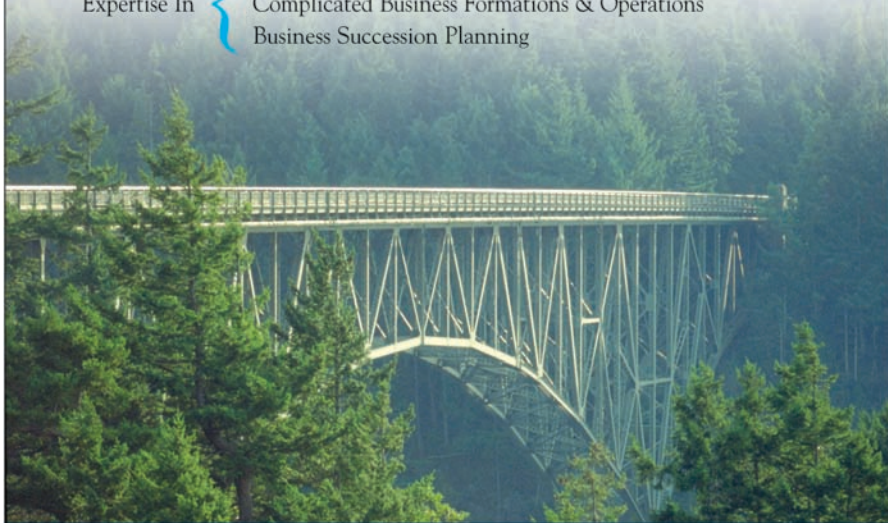


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The Estate Planning ‘Fire Drill’

The sudden-death “fire drill” works for individuals as well as businesses, says David Duryee, of Horizon Management Services. Duryee and his wife came up with binders of all the important information that their family would need if they died. The binders don’t require a lot of high-level decision making because, if both parents died suddenly, Duryee figures that his offspring would be in no shape to think clearly. “It says, ‘Here’s who to call. Here’s where all the bank accounts are. Here’s what all the assets are—passwords and all the information you’ll need. And here’s what you should do with them,’” Duryee explains. Whatever you do, he cautions, don’t put the only copy of important documents in a safe-deposit box where they aren’t going to be immediately accessible.

Here’s an example of a checklist of information you need to have instantly available to your family in case the unexpected happens:

- YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION >>** Include legal name, birth date and Social Security number. If you are, or have been, married, give the names and dates of marriages, as well as a note about where to find things like divorce decrees or any current marriage certificate. Also, be sure to note any other names you have legally used.

- YOUR WILL AND KEY ADVISORS >>** The will is among the most important documents to pass on to your loved ones. So, make sure and know where it is located. Your attorney should have a copy of your will or trust, but you should also have a copy that your family members can retrieve on their own. Note the location so they won’t have to hunt through your papers. Also list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of your attorney, accountant and any other key advisor.

- FINANCIAL AND TITLED HOLDINGS >>** List the location of all bank, savings, stock and bond accounts, along with account numbers and approximate balances. Don’t forget to include any IRAs or 401(k)s. Also, list any real estate, vehicles or similar property you own. If you are still paying for them, list the mortgage or finance company and approximate balances, as well as monthly payment due dates and amounts.

- ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE >>** If you own rental property, include the dollar amount and dates on which the rent should come in. Include any other money that anyone owes you and when it is due.

- INSURANCE >>** List all policies—including life, health, home and auto—and where your copies are filed. Include contact information and beneficiaries.

- BUSINESS INTERESTS >>** If you own all or part of your own business, list that as well as business contacts, including attorneys, accountants and, if applicable, clients.

- EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION >>** Include the date you started work and a note about where to find employee benefit information, including a contact number in the human resources department.

- MILITARY SERVICE >>** If you served, you should list the branch, dates and your discharge status, as well as where to find your discharge papers.

- FAMILY AND FRIENDS >>** Include a list, with telephone numbers, of the people who should be notified. Don’t count on grieving loved ones to remember everyone.

- FUNERAL PLANS >>** If you’ve pre-paid, you’ll need to let your family know where the documents are. But even if you haven’t, it’s nice for your family to have your instructions written down. If not, don’t blame the kids if you’re buried in a suit that makes you look fat or they sing a hymn that you hate at your funeral.

Finally, in addition to the vital information above, Duryee recommends leaving something more personal, like a note or personal history, which may be more valuable than you imagine. One Christmas, the Duryees held a family conference in which Duryee and his wife presented their fire drill checklist to their children. The kids were grateful, he says, but they had a request for more information. “They said they would like a biographical sketch of each of us.”

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

Seattle University's Family Business Institute lets family members learn the ropes before they take the reins. *By Cynthia Flash*

Those interested in learning how to run a family business more effectively have a new source—Seattle University.

Launched in September, the Family Business Institute is one of only a few programs in the region dedicated to family businesses. The institute offers a program for family business owners to learn from academics and other business leaders about how to better run a family-owned company.

The three main areas of emphasis are:

***External Roundtables:** About a dozen leaders of non-competing businesses will gather each month to participate in roundtable discussions about family business issues. Outside speakers will offer additional insights into better business management.

***Academic Programs:** Next summer, the university will begin offering classes aimed at students who will be part of their family's business and those who are interested in going into service professions that focus on family businesses. Already, the school has sponsored a two-day seminar to discuss family business issues, says Steve Brillling, acting director of the Family Business Institute.

***Research:** The institute has launched two research projects, including a collaboration with Laird Norton Tye on its 2007 Family Business Survey. In addition, it oversees a research scholarship sponsored by the Estate Planning Council of Seattle for two students to examine why so few individuals write wills.

The institute is currently searching for a \$5 million lead sponsor. The money would pay for a full-time faculty member to take over for Brillling and to run the program. Five years from now, Brillling says, "we'll have a named center, five or six roundtables going at the same time, a minimum of two classes in family business and a nationally recognized program for the research we're conducting."



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