



Keeping Sight of Personal Priorities

In the rush of daily business activities, business owners can lose sight of what they had originally hoped to accomplish through their continuous efforts. Over time, as the business grows, personal objectives may also change. When was the last time you stopped to reevaluate your personal priorities and goals? Here are some key areas to consider:

Building wealth

Many business owners become so engrossed in company operations that they inadvertently neglect their personal finances, particularly when most of their liquid assets are tied up in the business. To achieve financial independence and build personal wealth, it is important to make personal savings a priority. By conducting regular financial reviews and taking follow-up action as needed, you can develop strategies that will help strengthen your *personal* finances.

Preparing for retirement

Many tax-deferred, **qualified retirement savings vehicles**, such as **simplified employee pension plans (SEPs)** or **401(k) plans**, are available to business owners and their employees. The size of a company, along with the ages and salaries of its employees, often determine which type of retirement plan is most appropriate. In addition, **nonqualified plans** allow business owners to provide *selective* retirement benefits for themselves and their key employees.

Developing an exit strategy

Will your small business be marketable if and when you decide to sell? Develop an exit strategy that will help maintain the value of your business should you choose—or be forced by circumstance—to sell.

Keeping it in the family. Your company may be a **closely held business**, operated by more than one family member. If you wish to keep your company in the family, it is important to learn about **transfer tax** issues and to develop a **business succession** plan that will help secure your long-term goals.

Stay Focused

As your company grows and develops, remember to set your *personal* priorities, especially as they change over time. Annual reviews can help ensure that your business operations are consistent with your overall objectives.