

The Strategist

Estate Planning for Intangible Assets

For those that have done any form of financial and/or estate planning with us, we have no doubt discussed the importance of making sure wills, powers of attorney, and representation agreements (health directives vary by province) are reviewed regularly and kept in accordance with your current wishes.

When it comes to taking inventory of the assets that will make up your estate, we are usually first to think of those that are physical: real estate, bank and investment accounts, jewelry, art, family heirlooms, etc. However, in a world that requires an online account for just about everything, it's easy to underestimate the scale of your own digital footprint.

Have you considered how your online accounts such as e-mail, social media, payment services (i.e. PayPal), subscriptions, and other entertainment/loyalty programs should be handled? (Yes, your reward points could have monetary value!) If the answer is no, you're not alone. In a BMO Retirement Institute Survey, 57% of respondents over age 45 had not made provisions for their digital estate¹. We all know it can be difficult to keep track of various login credentials such as usernames and passwords, but do you have a record of these for your executor/heirs to access in your absence? Would you be okay with your intangible assets such as photo collections or intellectual property stored on the cloud or a hard drive "disappearing" after you're gone?

To start the process, we recommend compiling a full list of what makes up your online/digital presence. From there, consider how each of these should be dealt with in the event of your death or incapacity, then record your instructions as part of your estate memorandum. An estate memorandum is a document that allows you to keep critical information for the benefit of your executor, notary, and beneficiaries all in one place. Such information may include:

- Personal and family information
- Information on specific documents such as your driver's license, passport, health card, etc.
- The location of your will
- Information on insurance policies and bank/investment accounts
- Your computer and phone login, and online account info

Due to the sensitive nature of this document, it should always be stored in a secure place - just make sure your executor knows where to find it!

If you don't already have some form of memorandum prepared, we can help! Please ask us for a copy of the Raymond James *Estate Planning Reference Guide*, which we are happy to provide in both hardcopy and electronic formats.

¹ Estate planning in the 21st century: New considerations in a changing society. (2015) <https://bmogamviewpoints.com/estate-planning-in-the-21st-century-new-considerations-in-a-changing-society/>

Quarterly Reminders

TFSA Contribution Limit for 2020

- \$6,000 (as of January 1st)

Upcoming Holiday Closures

- Friday, April 10th (Good Friday)

2019 Personal Tax Filing Deadline

- Thursday, April 30th



Update on the Team

While most people head south to escape winter, Chris, in true contrarian fashion, did the opposite and vacationed in the Yukon for a dog sledding excursion to celebrate his 60th birthday. Travelling more than 120km over five days and four nights (and in -40°C temperature!), his crew made their way through the amazing scenery of the great white north. Although tough, the experience was a once-in-a-lifetime, and everyone returned safely with all fingers and toes intact!

Later this month, we'll be welcoming Erika back from maternity leave. And last but not least, we are pleased to report that Caitlin has successfully completed the Canadian Securities Course - congrats Caitlin!