

A Good Time to Review Your Finances

Springtime is said to turn a young person's fancy to thoughts of love. Thanks to the IRS, it is also a time to turn one's attention to money and taxes. After doing all of that gathering and figuring for your tax return, it might be a good time to review your financial situation and make some changes. A financial checkup at least once a year is a good idea. So how about now?

Savings provide foundation

Savings provide the foundation of your financial progress and security. Are your savings growing as fast as you would like? Would this be a good time to start saving more and to save more regularly? Would this be a good time to improve your savings habits and practices? How much would you like to save each month or each year? How best can you put these intentions into a concrete and effective plan? What can you begin doing right now?

Saving plans can be started with very little money. Consistency of your contributions is as important as size. By putting \$10 a week into an account paying 3.5 percent compounded daily, you can accumulate \$2,840.40 in five years and \$6,223.99 in ten years.

Investing expands possibilities

Investing is the machinery that produces wealth from savings. Are your investments working for you as hard as they should be? Are your investments appropriate to your current and future needs? Would this be a good time to review and revise your investment plans? Would it be a good time to convert more of your savings into investments or to change the allocation of your assets with regard to your current investments?

Investing for immediate needs like your education or a home of your own can best be achieved through safe investments like certificates of deposit, money market funds, and short-term bond funds. If you need to invest for retirement, qualified retirement plans such as IRAs allow you to invest pre-tax or after-tax contributions in tax-deferred or tax-free investment accounts.



Insurances provide protection

Insurances provide financial protection against financial losses. Are your policies appropriate and sufficient to cover those financial losses you could not afford to sustain? Are you paying too much for insurances you do not really need but too little for those you really do need? Would this be a good time to review your insurance needs and current coverage?

Would this also be a good time to shop around for better policies at better prices?

Shopping around for policies that offer the best prices for the coverage you want, avoiding policies that add things you don't want or need, and choosing higher deductibles can save you a lot of money on premiums.

Wise borrowing enhances lifestyle

Loans and credit used wisely can provide convenience, an enhanced lifestyle, and progress toward significant goals. Are your debts too burdensome for your current financial capabilities or future prospects? Would this be a good time to reduce your debt by increasing your monthly loan payments? Would it be a good time to refinance some of your loans for lower rates or better terms? Consistently carrying large balances on high-interest loans or credit cards can be very costly. The interest alone is money that you could use as part of your monthly income if you eliminate or greatly reduce this debt.

Control enables accomplishment

Financial control enables and encourages the successful accomplishment of financial goals and objectives. Are your financial affairs planned and organized? Do you make regular use of financial budgets, records, and files to help you keep track of your financial activities and make better financial decisions and plans? What steps can you take to improve your financial control?

Taking control of your finances is simple. It takes no special knowledge or skill. Just think of all those things you already do really well and apply yourself to your finances in a like manner.

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