

The Complete 401(k) Picture

Many Americans have struggled financially due to their “over reliance” on their 401(k) strategy. Following guidance to always “max out” their 401(k) contributions, they may have placed all of their eggs in that basket while often ignoring other important financial issues.

Many build their personal retirement solution around 401(k) plans. And for good reason. There are multiple benefits to 401(k) ownership which make them a powerful way to save.

Systematic. Tax deferral. Potential company match. Long term growth potential.

Millions have tied their entire financial future to their 401(k) as a means of someday achieving financial independence. Consider looking at your 401(k) options with a “wide angle lens”.

Worry in the proper order.

Retirement strategies, like all other wealth building endeavors, should strive to fully protect against what may happen today before deciding how to prepare for the future. If a single unexpected life event could create obstacles for your future, it may deserve priority attention.

Therefore, before embarking on preparing for the rest of your life, make sure your todays are covered. Have your financial representative perform a thorough review of your Protection portfolio to make sure you have protected yourself against death, disability, lawsuit, a medical emergency, and even mother nature.

A sound retirement strategy must be designed to work in all scenarios. If your protection is lacking, you may consider adjusting your retirement resources until proper levels of insurance are in place.



Short Term Liquidity

Your 401(k) plan has limited liquidity features and may trigger taxes and penalties if you withdraw money too soon. So, ensure you have enough liquidity in the event that a sudden need for cash presents itself. The loss of a job, college tuitions, divorce, or even an attractive investment opportunity may require ample levels of liquid funds.

In addition, tackling debt can make your 401(k) strategy even more powerful. The presence of Liabilities like credit card debt, student loans, car payments, home equity lines, and revolving credit balances can erode the possible gains inside your retirement strategy. If you find yourself in debt or without the funds to address an unexpected financial matter, you should consider how much you are contributing to your 401(k).

Tax Savings?

Consumers have been told that, by contributing to their 401(k) plan, they can improve their cash flow. That by deferring taxes, they may have more money in their pocket now.

However, one's current cash flow position may not be improved by participating in a 401(k) plan and, may potentially limit their liquidity.

Balance Sheet Impact

As your money inside your 401(k) grows, the deferred tax on that money also grows creating a future tax liability.

The future tax will be at whatever the ordinary income tax rates are at that time that funds are withdrawn. People receive regular statements from their employer indicating their current 401(k) balance. Remember, those statements may not include the future tax liability.

When looking at your finances today or forecasting how much money you might have for retirement someday, it is important to look at how much you will get to keep "after taxes".

Financial Balance® is the key

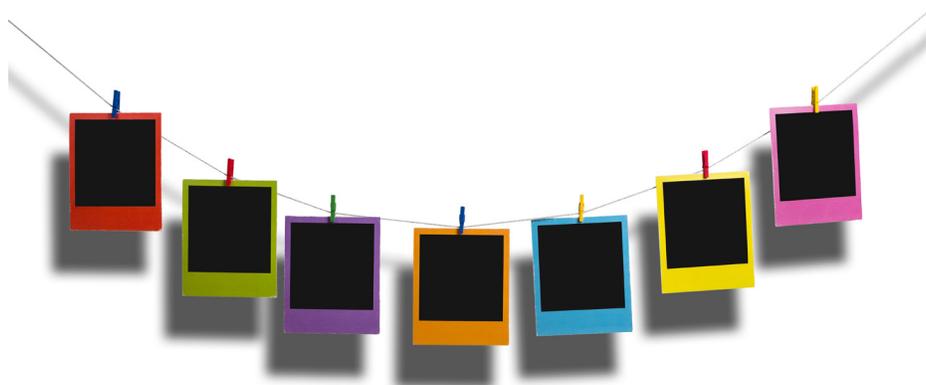
Building a sound strategy for your retirement is important, and 401(k) plans are often an important element. Being protected, having sufficient liquid funds, living without debt, and having other forms of wealth (personal investments) in addition to your 401(k) itself can provide a more balanced approach.

Financial Balance® is the key. Rather than a one dimensional approach, see how your 401(k) plan fits into your entire financial picture. Improving your Financial Balance® may allow you to be better protected, build more wealth for the future... and better distribute that wealth to yourself during retirement.

"Maxing Out" Might be Right for Some

From the time you became eligible to participate in a 401(k) plan it was probably drilled into your head that you should "max it out." What that means is that, regardless of your overall financial status, you should contribute the maximum amount allowable. While this may be appropriate for some, it may not be the best guidance for you. Let your financial representative help you build a 401(k) strategy that contains the proper level of Financial Balance®.

It's your life after all.



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