



Wealth Insights

TD Wealth Private Investment Advice

Monthly Insights From Aubrey D'Souza and Dennis Lau

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Estate Planning: Giving Thought to Using a Professional Executor

Taking into consideration the time, emotion and complexities associated with settling an estate, it may be money well spent to consider having a professional executor to manage the process.

There is a degree of honour that comes when a person is named as an executor.* It often indicates trust in that person to settle estate affairs with good judgment after a person's death.

But it's not necessarily an honour for everyone. It isn't uncommon for some to realize the job is more than expected: it's not just about dividing assets. There are many responsibilities, often needing to be tended to during a time of grief. This can be further complicated by sensitive issues, challenging personalities and difficult family dynamics that can often emerge when settling an estate.

Another complicating factor is that we have become an increasingly mobile society. Appointing an executor who resides in or moves to a different province, or country, can create issues for the estate or the executor. As such, there may be value in using a professional executor to help address these circumstances or benefit from the following:

Impartiality — Where assets are involved, there is often emotion. An executor must be able to act as a mediator for any conflicts. A professional can provide impartiality. From a simple family situation, to the complexities of things like creditors, lifelong relationships can be harmed and the situation can become very challenging.

Ease of settlement — Generally, an executor is given one year to wind up an estate. It is a role that can add significant demands to a person's already busy schedule, especially if the executor isn't familiar with the estate administration process. Professional



executors have dedicated time, expertise and resources to settle an estate in an efficient manner.

Deep understanding — An executor may be personally liable for certain errors when administering an estate. For complex estates, such as where a business needs to be wound up, there may be value in having an expert with professional experience to take control and settle the estate in the best possible way.

But what about the cost?

One of the main concerns in using a professional executor is the perceived cost. However, an executor, regardless of whether they are professional, is usually entitled to be paid for their efforts. Keep in mind that many professional executors offer graduated pricing in which the rate declines as the value of an estate increases.

Taking into consideration the time, emotion and complexities associated with settling an estate, it may be money well spent to consider having a professional executor to manage the process.

*Known as liquidator in Quebec.



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