

Chapter XXIII

Importance of your STAR TEAM

You might be thinking, "WOW...this is all too overwhelming, way too many things to know and learn, I don't have time, I don't really care, I have to work, I have a business to run, I have to run my practice, I have to pass these exams, I have to take care of my family, I have my own things to do, come on now!"

Whatever your reason is, it is why I always advise people to build a strong team. If you have a good team of qualified dedicated professionals, they will help you avoid paying for mistakes.

To have a team of professionals means you can focus on what's important to you and be able to work with peace of mind. You do not have to worry about things that are not in your field of expertise, such as new tax laws or incentives that the government just passed, or how to structure your Estate (all assets owned by you) in order to protect it against law suits or Uncle Sam. As a result you can perform better at what you do best and concentrate on how you can make more money, take care of your health and your family.

Example: Let's say you are a physician. Realistically, you would not have time to think about how the market is doing, let alone analyze it and manage your own portfolio by yourself. On top of that you just might not have the skills for it!

I am not a handyman myself. I would rather hire a professional to perform some work I need instead of doing it

myself. I know the professional will perform the job well because he has the skills for it. Spend money wisely.

Green Nugget: Time is Money

This means if you can spend your time wisely on things that can bring you money or happiness, then you are saving the time, which also equals money. Trying to figure it out yourself can waste time and money. Spend your time only to research the basics in order to make sure the professionals you are working with have your best interest at heart and are not costing you money for their incompetence or dishonesty.

Your Star Team

For your financial success you should interview three professionals to be part of your "Star Team."

It may take some time before you find the right professionals to be part of your "Star Team," because like in any business finding good people you can trust is very difficult. Do not give up! At some point, after hiring and firing many different team members, you will see you finally put together the best "Star Team!" And they will make things much easier for you, saving you time equaling more...money? Time to spend with family? Time enjoying your hobby? Now you're getting it!

Your team should consist of an independent financial advisor or planner, a certified public accountant (CPA) or tax accountant and an attorney that has the resources that are needed to refer you to more specialized attorneys if needed.

Independent Financial Advisor or Planner

An independent financial advisor or planner that also has

access to an insurance professional, can work with you to establish a game plan for the future so that you can manage your debt in a better way, optimize your tax structure, have a solid asset protection plan in place, make best use of retirement investment vehicles and opportunities, maintain adequate liquidity and having adequate protections in place to prevent any adverse financial circumstances.

Also, make sure your advisor is independent, meaning he or she is not working for a bank and they are able to provide you as many options available in the market according to your needs and goals.

Consider working with an advisor that is a fiduciary advisor, which means an independent financial advisor, or someone held to a "Fiduciary Standard" special trust and confidence when working for a client. As a fiduciary, the financial advisor is required to act with undivided loyalty to the client. This includes disclosure of how the financial advisor is to be compensated and any corresponding conflicts of interest.

A CPA or Tax Accountant: Your "tax guy"

Many people think they do not need a CPA or a tax accountant. Like the majority of Americans, you might think you have a good handle on completing your taxes on your own, thanks to software systems and services available both on and offline.

But do you really have enough knowledge to take complete advantage of the complex tax code, which changes every year? What if your financial situation is more complex than you think? Maybe you really are that smart and have the time, but why not confirm you are, especially if it will help put more money on your napkin at the end of the year.

Sometimes when you think you are saving, you may not know you are missing many other incentives or changes made to

the tax code that year. All because you might not have the knowledge you thought you did or taxes are not your specialty. Remember those Green Nuggets...

"Spend money to make money."

"Spend pennies to protect dollars."

If you have specialized or complicated tax returns, it will probably be worth it to pay a professional. Even if you believe you don't, take the time to find out if it is true.

Attorney/Lawyer

I don't know where to start when it comes to making sure you have an attorney or a lawyer on your team. I just know at some point in your life, you need a will or an estate plan, so you may need to have an attorney or lawyer, and ready to pay!! The good news, there are unique ways now to draw up your own will, that is much less costly. I have even seen cases in which people have made their own wills with the information and programs that are available online, and established a video that described their final wishes. Now that's a green nugget!

Will: A will is a document that you draw up to determine what your final wishes are on how you would like to distribute your assets at the time of your death.

There are many different types of attorneys, and some can charge LOTS of money. So this is where you really need to do your homework before determining if you really need one. They say 50% of the people who get married will end up getting divorced, so divorce attorneys must be making a killing right? Well, maybe then it's wise that you consider mitigation before going to the courts or an attorney. So think wisely before hiring legal counsel and be very careful in making sure you find out their fees ahead of time. **NO MATTER HOW ANGRY YOU ARE!**

Some attorneys work by the hour or charge a flat fee, or a fee based on a percentage of your case.

The most important thing you must realize is that an attorney does not know it all, sometimes they may act like they do, but those are the ones you need to be careful of. Instead, they all have their own specialties, so first evaluate your needs and make sure the attorney or lawyer you work with is specialized to handle your situation.

Green Nugget: If your attorney doesn't call you back or is constantly charging you unnecessary fees, you have the right to fire him or her and have them provide a detailed explanation of those fees/charges in writing.

You will often times find that attorneys and lawyers are held to a higher standard from their BAR Association in their particular state, so never hesitate to hold them accountable to your situation. Just because your estate is worth 1 million dollars does not mean it takes any more time for them to draw up a basic document than the guy or gal whose estate is worth \$100,000 or \$10,000. Ask questions and do your own research, and that goes for any professional you are working with, your financial advisor or planner, insurance professional, CPA/accountant, attorney, contractor, plumber, electrician, professor, teacher, coach, mentor...whoever it may be.

Make sure you choose your "Star Team" wisely. Choose each member of your team based on their qualifications, their knowledge, experience, and the way you feel about them (trust and feel comfortable and confident when working with them, test them to make sure they have your best interests at heart and NOT your "healthy pockets").

The Frumpy Family now has their own "Star Team"

in place. This team took Fred many years to build. Fortunately, with the encouragement from Fred's financial advisor, Fred Frumpy and his "Star Team" decided to build a family trust a year before he passed away. It was not easy and it took some time for him to find qualified people he could trust. He knew that this team would take care of his assets and, most importantly his family when he would not be able to do it himself anymore.

Fred always worked with his independent financial advisor, CPA and business/estate planning attorney to make sure all his goals and wishes would be coordinated and protected.

When Fred passed away, Flo was surrounded by Fred's qualified and well-trusted team. The team continues to advise her and make sure that the family is well protected.

Even Uncle Floyd decided to interview the "Star Team" and agreed to work with them for his asset protection and investment management. Now that he

has two kids, Floyd has more responsibilities than he ever had before in regard to his family's future. He never knows when the day will come that he will no longer be able to fight, time is not on his side.

