**Financially Speaking**

***Periodic Checkups on Your Financial Plan***

***Can Help Promote Your Fiscal Fitness***

By Mark J. Braverman

In any given year, as many as a third of us will experience a life change that impacts our financial situation. Getting a new job or a promotion, starting a business, marrying, buying a home, having a child, receiving an inheritance, divorcing, or retiring can all create new financial needs.

Because your financial needs and circumstance change as the years pass, the only way to keep up is to periodically review your personal finances and investments. That means scheduling a review with your financial advisor at least once a year. The process can take about an hour and be one of the best investments of your time, not to mention your money, that you can make.

Once you are face to face with your Advisor, you should expect to cover four topics:

1. Updating your financial information
2. Reviewing your progress toward your financial goals
3. Examining the financial products that you own
4. Getting an update on current market conditions

Make sure to tell your advisor about any significant changes in your personal life or financial circumstances. Have you changed jobs recently? Selling your business? Are you contemplating an early retirement?

Changes in personal life can affect your financial needs. Changing employers, for instance, may necessitate the rollover of a 401K plan to another type of retirement investment. You may now need additional life or disability insurance coverage. A big pay raise can trigger a need to put away additional savings for retirement.

After catching up with your advisor, review the overall progress of your financial goals. If you are investing for retirement, are you on target? Is it time to reallocate your assets? How far along are you towards reaching other financial goals such as saving for college, buying a vacation home or starting a business?

No checkup is complete without a review of each financial product you own. Compare and contrast the purpose of owning each product with your current financial goals and risk tolerance. Review the performance of each product, any tax ramifications, and the technical aspects that may be relevant to your continually evolving financial situation.

A good example of how your life situation may dictate changes to the financial products that you own is the birth of a child. We all have dreams for our children and saving for a college education is a big one. That child depends upon your income for support, so now is a good time to review your life insurance policy to make sure your coverage is up to date.

External factors also affect your financial picture. Market conditions may create unanticipated financial or product issues. This is especially critical if you are ready to make a major life transition such as retiring or paying for a child’s education. It’s sometimes difficult to refrain from being emotional about financial issues, so your financial advisor can provide you with an objective perspective on what changes, if any, that you might need to make in your plan or asset allocation.

If changes need to be made, discuss your options with your financial advisor and agree on what steps should be taken to address them. In some instances, you may need help identifying new sources of cash to reach your financial goals.

Period financial reviews are one of the most effective ways to manage the progress toward your financial objectives. They can also help you achieve one more goal that cannot be measured on a ledger: financial peace of mind.

**Since 1978, Mark Braverman has helped clients with their long term financial needs, including wealth accumulation, preservation of wealth and the** **distribution of wealth. If you have additional questions, Mark can be reached at** [www.eMarkfinancial.com](http://www.eMarkfinancial.com) **or call 215-245-6864.**