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As we near the end of 2012, we would like to remind you that if you need to arrange an appointment with one of our Accountants before December 31st, please contact us as soon as possible. ***Our office will be closed for the holidays starting December 22nd and will reopen on January 2nd, 2013.***

IN THIS ISSUE

YEAR-END TAX PLANNING

Some 2012 year-end tax planning tips include:

1. Certain expenditures made by individuals by December 31, 2012 will be eligible for 2012 tax deductions or credits including: moving expenses, child care expenses, safety deposit box fees, charitable donations, political contributions, medical expenses, alimony, eligible employment expenses, union professional or like dues, carrying charges and interest expenses, certain public transit amounts, and children's fitness and arts amounts.
2. You have until March 1, 2013 to make tax deductible Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) contributions for the 2012 year.

   Consider contributing to a spousal RRSP to achieve income splitting in the future.
3. If you own a business, consider paying a reasonable salary to family members for services rendered to the business.
4. An individual whose 2012 net income exceeds $69,562 will lose all, or part, of their Old Age Security.

   Senior citizens will begin to lose their income tax age credit if net income exceeds $33,884.

   Contact our office for assistance in managing 2012 personal income.
5. Consider purchasing assets eligible for capital cost allowance before the year-end.
6. Consider selling capital properties with an underlying capital loss prior to the year-end if you had taxable capital gains in the year, or any of the preceding three years. This capital loss may be used to reduce the capital gains.

7. Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP):
   - A Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) for RESP contributions will be permitted equal to 20% of annual contributions for children (maximum $500 per child per year).
8. Health and dental premiums for the self-employed:
   - Individuals will be allowed to deduct amounts payable for Private Health Service Plan coverage in computing business income provided they meet certain criteria.
9. A refund of Employment Insurance paid for non-arm's length employees may be available upon application to CRA.
10. Taxpayers that receive "eligible" dividends from private and public corporations may have a significantly lower tax rate on the dividends. Notification from the corporation to the shareholder is required.
11. Eligible public transit passes will be entitled to a tax credit.
12. A Registered Disability Savings Plan may be established for a person who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit. Non-deductible contributions to a lifetime maximum of $200,000 are permitted which are eligible for tax-deferred grants and bonds. Please contact our office for details.
13. If required income or Forms have not been reported in the past to the CRA, a Voluntary Disclosure to the CRA may be available to avoid penalties. Contact us for details.

2012 REMUNERATION

Some general guidelines to follow in remunerating the owner of a Canadian-controlled private corporation include:

1. Bonusing down active business earnings in excess of the annual business limit may reduce the overall tax. However, leaving corporate active business income over this amount presents a tax deferral. Professional advice is needed in this area.
2. Notification must be made to the shareholders when an "eligible" dividend is paid - usually in the form of a letter dated on the date of the dividend declaration. If all shareholders are directors, the notification may be made in the Directors' Minutes.
   Please contact our office for advice before paying an eligible or ineligible dividend.
3. Elect to pay out tax-free "capital dividend account" dividends.
4. Consider paying dividends to obtain a refund of "refundable dividend tax on hand".
5. Corporate earnings in excess of personal requirements could be left in the company to obtain a tax deferral. The effect on the "Qualified Small Business Corporation" status should be reviewed before selling the shares.
6. Dividend income, as opposed to salaries, will reduce an individual's cumulative net investment loss balance thereby providing greater access to the capital gain exemption.
7. Excessive personal income affects receipts subject to clawbacks, such as Old Age Security, the age credit, child tax benefits, and GST credits.
8. Salary payments require source deductions to be remitted to the CRA on a timely basis.
9. Individuals that wish to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan or a Registered Retirement Savings Plan may require a salary to create "earned income".
10. Salaries paid to family members must be reasonable.

PERSONAL TAX RETURNS

Child Care Expenses (CCEs) – Nanny Costs

In a June 13, 2012 Technical Interpretation, CRA notes that specific nanny costs such as transportation to travel from the caregiver's country of permanent residence to the location of work in Canada, interim medical insurance coverage, and Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) employer premiums under the Ontario Live-in Caregiver Program may be eligible CCEs.

The Ontario WSIB identifies that: “a private householder who employs a domestic worker for more than 24 hours a week must register as an employer of domestic workers with the WSIB…”

This category includes employment of domestic workers such as babysitters, nannies and nursemaids.

EMPLOYMENT INCOME

Reimbursement of Moving Expenses

In a June 26, 2012 Technical Interpretation, CRA notes that:

- Where an employer reimburses an employee for eligible expenses incurred in moving the employee and the employee’s family and household effects either because the employee has been transferred from one establishment of the employer to another or because of having accepted employment at a place other than where the former home was located, this reimbursement is not considered as conferring a taxable benefit on the employee.
- While the location of the former home within Canada is generally required to determine whether moving expenses are deductible by an employee who does not receive a reimbursement from his/her employer, it has no impact in determining whether an employer who has reimbursed such expenses has conferred a taxable benefit on the employee.

BUSINESS INCOME

Salaries to Children

In a September 6, 2012 Tax Court of Canada case, the Appellant operated a business that specialized in supplying custom window coverings and, in 2007 and 2008, deducted the amounts of $18,000 and $7,000, respectively, for wages paid to her two children (aged 15-16 and 13-14) for services that they provided to the business.

Rather than pay wages, the Appellant paid for some of the children’s extraordinary expenditures to reflect the wages.

Taxpayer wins-partly

The Court concluded that it is likely that the expenditures have both business and personal elements.

Based on the evidence, the Court allowed a deduction for 50% of the amounts claimed.

Editor’s comment

It usually reduces the risk if regular salaries are paid to provide reasonable remuneration to family members who provide services to your business.

OWNER-MANAGER REMUNERATION

Director Liability

Some points to consider with respect to director liability include:

1. The Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act hold directors personally liable for unremitted GST/HST, payroll withholdings, and interest and penalties. Directors are not necessarily liable for unpaid tax of the corporation.
2. A “director” is not defined in the Act and could include both *de jure* directors (lawfully and validly appointed according to corporate legislation) and *de facto* directors (persons that are acting as directors).
3. CRA may only take action against the director if they do so within two years of the resignation of the director. Therefore, resignation is very important as it limits liability and starts a two-year limitation period running.
4. It is important to stop acting as a director or manager, after resignation, such as not signing corporate documents. Also, appointing a new director further establishes that you have resigned your position as a director.
   Legal advice may be needed.

ESTATE PLANNING

Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

Under new CPP rules, individuals will have their benefits reduced by a larger perentage if they take it before age 65, but will have increased benefits if they defer past age 65 (as late as age 70).

For example, if an individual started receiving CPP Retirement early, previously the reduction in benefits was 0.5% per month or 6% per annum. If a person started five years early at age 60, he/she would suffer a 30% reduction. This 0.5% per month reduction has been increased to 0.6% to be phased in up to the year 2016. The benefit for deferring a receipt of CPP Retirement past 65 will increase from 0.5% to 0.7% per month and will be phased in by 2013.

Therefore, if he/she commenced to receive this at age 60, the amounts that would be received would be 36% less (60 months x .6%). If they waited until age 70, they would receive 42% more (60 months x .7%).

Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)

As the TFSA is available at $5,000 per year increments since 2009, by 2012 an individual aged 18 or over in the year is entitled to a maximum of $20,000 of contributions. Some points to consider include:

1. As dividends and capital gains are entitled to special tax treatment (dividend tax credits and a 50% tax rate), it is usually best to have investments with this type of income in non-registered plans.
2. Withdrawals made in the year cannot be replenished until the following year with the exception of qualifying direct transfers.
3. Foreign income which is subject to foreign taxes will not be eligible for the foreign tax credit in the TFSA.
4. Persons subject to U.S. tax, such as U.S. citizens, will not receive benefit for U.S. purposes as the income earned in the TFSA will be taxed on the U.S. tax return.

INTERNATIONAL

IRS Unveils New Streamlined Filing Compliance Procedures for Non-Resident, Non-Filer U.S. Taxpayers

The IRS has paved the way for non-resident, non-filing U.S. taxpayers to comply with their unmet U.S. tax filing obligations with less administrative burdens. The procedure is available for U.S. taxpayers who have resided outside the U.S. since January 1, 2009 and who haven't filed a U.S. tax return during the same period.

Compliance Risk Assessment

The new procedure is specifically designed for taxpayers who present a "low compliance risk." For these taxpayers, retroactive relief for failure to timely elect income deferral on RRSPs/RRIFs (Form 8891) is also available. Submissions that present high compliance risk aren't eligible for the streamlined processing procedure and may be subject to a full examination.

Participation

In order to participate, a taxpayer must: (1) file delinquent tax returns, with appropriate related information returns (e.g. Form 3520 or 5471), for the past 3 years, (2) file FBARs (Form TD F 90-22.1) for the past 6 years, (3) pay any tax and interest along with the delinquent tax returns, and (4) submit a questionnaire, signed under penalties of perjury, with 20 "yes or no" questions outlining the factors considered in the initial risk assessment.

Specialized U.S. tax advice is needed in this area.