

Taking A New Look At How

As a professional woman, you may be the family member who is turned to for help concerning “personal business matters” – in fact, your parents may be the first in line to do this. You may be asked to make sure that certain items are “in shape” – such as financial or retirement investments, trust/estate planning, insurance coverage, real estate holdings, mortgages and debt. You do want to help, but, given your hectic schedule, you just haven’t found the time yet.

And now that you’re thinking about this, are your *own* affairs in shape? Perhaps your business has become more successful, your net worth has grown too, and your family has expanded – especially if you have a “blended” family from a second marriage. In a word, your life has become more complex.

If you haven’t found the time to tend to your own affairs, you’re not alone. Today’s reality is that too many people are too busy to focus on these important matters. Unfortunately, that creates four major problems:

- ◆ You may not be invested wisely or may be paying financial advisor fees that are way out of line.
- ◆ You may not have the right insurance coverage or may be paying insurance premiums that are too high.
- ◆ Without expert estate planning advice, you may not be saving/deferring as much in annual taxes as you should.
- ◆ If you become incapacitated or die, without the correct trust documents, guardianships and buy/sell agreements in place, your personal and business holdings could go into probate. Even worse (and is there anything worse than probate?!), your estate could incur large estate taxes, leaving less for your heirs.



Camille Jayne of Matters at Hand

Even if you are aware of all of these pitfalls, few people have time to handle all of these things.

Let’s focus back on your parents. If one of them passes away or becomes terminally ill, you or another family member will need to close out joint accounts, open up new ones, retrieve life insurance and pension benefits, get property appraisals, reconcile medical bills, amend trusts, transfer titles, shut down credit cards/memberships, perhaps oversee an estate or home sale, and maybe move the surviving parent. The tasks seem endless, and, if not handled correctly and quickly, they could result in a potentially significant loss of monies. With your own career and personal life/family to run, not to mention your grieving state of mind, how will you manage all of this?

Fortunately, a new, cutting-edge industry is evolving to help people both understand and manage these important matters. The need for this is real and growing, especially for two segments: the surging Baby Boomers and the increasing senior population. And the demand for this type of service will only increase as the market expands.

Termed “personal business facilitators” or “personal busi-

To Get Your Affairs in Order

ness project managers,” they are professionals with business backgrounds who are hired on a short-term basis to gather, review and assess a client’s personal business affairs (such as those listed above). When they are hired in a pre-planning capacity, they help put all of these affairs in shape, if needed, including referrals to the most appropriate advisors to assist. When hired in the case of a death, terminal illness or divorce, the personal business project managers additionally facilitate the myriad matters that need reconciliation after such a life-changing event.

“Many times, people do not have the knowledge or the time – or are not in the right emotional state of mind – to handle these matters correctly and efficiently,” says Camille Jayne, Founder and CEO of Matters at Hand™. “Too often, people procrastinate or totally shut down. Sometimes they turn to their CPA or attorney who may not have the resources (either people or time) to resolve these matters.

“If their advisors do try to help because they care about their clients, they charge their regular hourly rates. This is certainly understandable, but the bills escalate and the client is unhappy. If their advisors reduce their normal fees drastically, that makes the advisors unhappy. In the end, no one wins,” Jayne adds.

Jayne, who is credited with founding this emerging industry, understands this all too well. She founded Matters at Hand (www.mattersathand.com) two years ago after 25 years of successfully working her way up the corporate ladder to the executive levels at Comerica Bank, Ameritech, TCI (now AT&T), and, ultimately, as Chairman and CEO of publicly traded Universal Electronics Inc. – taking UEI to the number one worldwide share in wireless control technology. In the early 1990s, friends and employees starting coming to Jayne asking if she would help recently widowed or divorced friends or family members “sort things out.” She was only too glad to help.

“My corporate career was so focused and intense, that helping these people was a wonderful way to let me feel I was giving something back,” Jayne explains. “What started as helping one person close out some joint bank accounts and getting them to a qualified trust attorney, grew into assisting nearly 100 people with over 80 tasks – and it’s still growing!” she adds.

Jayne is quick to explain that she never took the place of people’s advisors. People did not ask for her help instead of going to their advisors. Her role was to facilitate getting the advisors the information they needed from their clients to do

their jobs in a much more timely matter. Jayne was careful to never offer advice or make any decisions on behalf of the people she was assisting – nor did she ever have access to any of their accounts. And because of her large network of business colleagues, when someone needed an advisor, she introduced them to the best professionals in the area.

Over the years, the advisors suggested that if she ever left the corporate world she should consider starting this as a business. “They felt the need was huge and overlooked. It was easier and faster for them to work with me because I knew what to discover/look for, how to review it, and what to get to them. Besides, I was not in an overwhelmed state of mind, which helped everyone tremendously.

“To tell you the truth, it felt so good to help these people,” Jayne says. “They were all so grateful – the clients and their advisors!”

Now, Matters at Hand is setting the standard. Team Members in both California and Michigan are put through a diligent training process, working from a detailed procedures manual. And they work fast, usually completing everything that needs to get done in 8 to 10 weeks.

“Not only is it important for our Team Members to have the ‘smarts,’ interpersonal skills and training to work with the rest of the client’s advisor team efficiently, it is critical they have excellent nurturing and caring skills as well,” Jayne emphasizes. “We have found some very talented, caring individuals to become part of the Matters at Hand team.”

Importantly, Jayne has structured fees on a total project basis versus an hourly basis – based on the number of tasks to be completed for the client, charging easily half what the client’s advisors would have charged. Matters at Hand has clients ranging in age from 34 to 90 years old. “Our goal is to help as many people as possible – either in pre-planning or after a life trauma. We don’t want cost to be the barrier to people getting the help they deserve so they can have the peace of mind that all their affairs are in shape for their lives going forward,” Jayne explains.

The critical thing to remember is: *don’t wait* to get your, or your family member’s, affairs in order. If your schedule keeps putting this goal out of reach, get help. Conduct your life planning for the best, but be prepared. It is a gift to you and those you love. **PWM**