Today’s plans for your family office can mean the difference between surviving and thriving in the future.

Protect your legacy?

Break new ground?

The better the question. The better the answer. The better the world works.
Family offices face challenges that distinguish them from other entities – challenges that, if not addressed, can reduce wealth, jeopardize family unity or derail the family’s legacy. Here are a few of the common challenges:

- In a low-interest-rate environment, it is difficult to preserve and grow family wealth over generations. Professional management is needed.
- The tax and regulatory environment varies throughout the world and is constantly shifting.
- Cyber attacks, phishing schemes and other personal attacks can create financial losses or jeopardize secrecy and privacy.
- General transitions and fractures in family cohesion threaten sustainability and continuity.
- While 62% of family business owners have not chosen a successor, choosing a discrete successor is less important than having a succession plan.

Whether you are creating a new family office, separating the family office from the family business, or shepherding an existing office, it is important to ask how you are helping your family secure its financial future and legacy for the next and future generations.

Consider the evolution of family offices

A family office can take many forms. As family wealth increases and business needs get more complex, the family office may evolve from a simple founder’s office into a complex, full-service company. And the office could revert over time.

**Founder’s office**
This often consists of an assistant or a few staff members who pay bills, make travel plans and handle the financial needs of the founder.

**Embedded family office**
A shareholder services group, it may handle the family’s personal financial affairs as well as corporate duties.

**Compliance or tax office**
A CPA-led office, it oversees investments and takes care of record-keeping, insurance and tax returns.

**Investment management office**
In addition to accounting services, it manages private equity investments, hedge funds and more, and may seek to manage money for outside families as well.

**Full-service office or private trust company**
For the most complex scenarios, this is a full-service office that manages all aspects of service: family education, tax, investment, governance and accounting, usually across multiple generations.

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1Private trust companies help a family govern, manage and administer the trusts of the family.
Our approach

Each family office is positioned at the center of the owners, families, and the businesses and investments they own. Family office leaders support the family's vision and legacy, leadership, ownership and wealth transition decisions with a focus on protection, improvement and growth. Our job is to support the legacy of your family office through our proprietary family office metrics tools for leading practices, risk, technology, strategy and design. What does legacy look like to you?

Compare leading practices in the following areas:

- Operating strategy and processes
- Organization and management structure
- Alignment of talent and other resources
- Functional process and controls
- Family governance
- Risk management

- Assess current systems and needs of the family office related to data accumulation and reporting
- Search, assist and select business technology for the family office:
  - General ledger, investment reporting, data aggregation and data integration
  - Architecture, market scan and short list of recommendations
  - Request-for-proposal process for vendor selection
  - Advise and assist with implementation efforts

- Assess levels of risk in the family office, while comparing with leading practices of global family offices
- Provide recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness, proper controls, and support the family’s growth toward a leading organization

- Assist the family office with the development of a long-term strategic plan
- Conduct family succession planning, touching on four dimensions: leadership, ownership, legacy, and the transition of value and wealth
- Coordinate with your wealth transfer advisors
- Advise on family office governance and setup (e.g., family council or committees)
Learn how to cultivate sustainable results at ey.com/familyoffice.

▶ Trending topics
▶ Conferences
▶ CPE events and more

To find out how Ernst & Young LLP's Family Office Advisory Services can support you, please contact one of our professionals:

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SCORE No. 06879-191US_6  
CSG No. 1908-3236101  
ED None  

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