MARINER

The cash hit the account.

Now what?

The transfer has cleared. The assets you've been waiting on for weeks, years or even decades, finally hit your account, real and liquid. Whether the balance came from a large bonus, business sale or inheritance, the moment carries weight and maybe a bit of relief. You may also hear a voice in your head saying, "Don't mess this up."

For business owners and high earners, this isn't a standard deposit; it's a liquidity event that has the potential to change the trajectory of your financial life. The decisions you make in the first 90 days can be crucial because they help set the foundation for what comes next. This is the window for strategic allocation, realistic tax-planning opportunities and deliberate choices about who to involve in the planning.

Following is a timeline to help you move through the first 90 days with clarity.

Days 0-7

Take a brief pause

Before making any major decisions, take a brief pause. Confirm that the funds have cleared, save all related documentation and avoid moving money into long-term investments until you understand the tax, estate and liquidity implications. Your first priority is preventing rushed decisions before trying to optimize every dollar.

The people-you-tell decisions

This is where things can get challenging. Wealth draws attention, and unfiltered conversations can create expectations, requests for loans or investments and even targeted scams. A tiered communication strategy allows you to notify the right people while also protecting your privacy.

Notify immediately: Your core advisory team, including your advisor, certified public accountant (CPA) and estate planning attorney.

Notify within two to four weeks: Other professionals who may need to be involved, such as your insurance specialist or business or corporate attorney.

Notify later (or never): Remember that you have no obligation to share your personal financial details with anyone. If you're pressured to discuss your windfall, consider a simple statement, such as, "We are grateful and still considering how this will impact our lives."

Days 7-14

The parking lot decision

Before you consider investments or lifestyle changes, your cash needs a safe, intentional home. At this stage, don't worry about maximizing yield. The goal in the first two weeks is to preserve your assets while you gather data and make other decisions. Each of the following options may provide liquidity while you evaluate your long-term plan, although each has different risks, tax considerations and potential returns.

- Treasury-focused or government money market funds held in a brokerage account are highly liquid with a stable value objective, but they're investment products that are not FDIC insured. They seek to maintain a stable $1.00 share price, but there's no guarantee they will do so. Interest from certain funds may also be partially exempt from state taxes depending on the fund's holdings.
- Short-term U.S. Treasury bills are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, and interest is generally exempt from state and local income taxes. If sold prior to maturity, however, their market value may fluctuate.
- High-yield savings accounts can be a viable option; however, FDIC insurance is subject to applicable coverage limits based on depositor, ownership category and institution, so larger balances may not be fully insured.

The key is to resist the urge to leave your assets in a low-yield checking account or, conversely, chase the highest rate of return without considering the potential tax implications.

Asset titling

In the first two weeks following your liquidity event, you'll also need to make some titling decisions. The manner in which your assets are titled can impact your tax exposure, creditor protections, estate planning and incapacity planning. Common asset titling options include:

- Personal or joint brokerage accounts, which are simple but offer less privacy and may expose your estate to probate.
- Revocable living trusts, which can help avoid probate and maintain privacy when properly funded and as permitted under applicable law, facilitate the management of assets in the event of incapacity and allow you to remain in control as the trustee.
- Limited liability company (LLC) or other legal entity structures, which may provide certain liability protections depending on applicable law and circumstances but also introduce additional complexity and potential tax filing requirements.

The right structure depends on your state's laws, marital status, existing estate plan and risk exposure. Your advisor and estate planning attorney can help you determine the best approach for your situation.

Tax liability

The type of distribution you receive could impact your tax exposure. Business-sale proceeds may receive long-term capital gains treatment, but the result depends on deal structure, asset allocation, holding period, depreciation recapture, inventory, receivables and any noncompete or consulting arrangements.

Bonuses are subject to ordinary income taxes. The U.S. does not impose an inheritance tax; however, federal estate taxes may apply to estates exceeding the applicable exemption amount (more than $15 million in 2026), and certain states impose estate or inheritance taxes.

It's wise to seek the guidance of an experienced CPA as soon as possible to help model your potential tax liability, determine safe estimated tax payments and avoid underpayment penalties. Consider establishing a separate, liquid tax reserve account from which to pay quarterly taxes. This can help ensure you have enough cash on hand to meet your obligations.

Days 15-30

Income tax deduction decisions

The best time to consider income tax deduction opportunities is before the cash hits your account. Once you receive your payout, it's important to act quickly if you plan to implement the following.

- Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) investments must be funded within 180 days of the date the capital gain is recognized for federal tax purposes. These investments involve investment risk, including possible loss of principal, limited liquidity and the possibility that anticipated tax benefits may not be realized if applicable requirements are not satisfied.
- Charitable giving strategies generally must be completed in the current calendar year to qualify for a deduction.
- Elective pre-tax contributions to employer-sponsored retirement plans generally must be made through payroll during the applicable plan year to reduce taxable income for the year.
- Health savings account (HSA) contributions for the current calendar year can be made until April 15 of the following year.

Days 30-90

Once you've consulted with your advisors, positioned your assets, modeled your taxes and established a communication strategy, it's time to build an intentional financial plan. Work with your advisor to develop a comprehensive plan to help guide your decision-making going forward.

If you're anticipating a large liquidity event, the best time to start planning is now. At Mariner, we offer a depth of expertise and in-house specialists to support you in the first 90 days and beyond with custom strategies that help navigate the decisions and complexities you face.

For more information visit: **mariner.com**