# Investor Insights & Outlook

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## Don’t Pay Tax Twice

**A Mistake More Common than You'd Think**

- When I first became an investor, this was one concept that caught me by surprise. Be sure you don't pay more than your fair share of tax on your investments.
- Remember, clients of Integrity Financial receive a 20% discount off tax preperation conducted by Dave Dodgen, CPA.
- It's our way of saying thank you for your business.

Reinvestment can be a crucial component of the wealth accumulation process, as the reinvested amount compounds and grows over time. Yet if you are reinvesting dividends and capital gains (“distributions”) in funds you hold in your taxable account, it can be important to ensure that you're not paying more tax than necessary. You pay tax on those distributions in the year in which you receive them. But if you don’t keep good records, you could end up paying tax on those distributions again when you sell. For example, say you bought 1,000 shares of a fund for your taxable account at the end of 2011; you paid $18 per share for a total of $18,000. In 2012, with the share price still at $18, the fund made a dividend distribution of $0.50 per share, or $500 for your 1,000 shares. You'd owe tax on the $500 on your 2012 taxes, whether you reinvested the money or took the cash in hand. (The taxes would be deferred if you held the fund in a tax-sheltered account). If you reinvested the money in the fund, you’d now own 1,027.78 shares: your original 1,000 plus the nearly 28 additional shares that you were able to buy (at $18) with the $500 dividend distribution. If you sell now, with the fund's net asset value at $20, you’d think you’d owe taxes on your $2,555.56 profit ($20,555.56 minus $18,000), right? Wrong. You would only owe taxes on $2,055.56 ($20,555.56 minus $18,000 minus $500). Otherwise, the $500 dividends would be taxed twice.

Investments are subject to risk of principal and risk of loss. Dividends are not guaranteed. Retirement accounts are tax-deferred vehicles designed for retirement savings. Any withdrawals of earnings will be subject to ordinary income tax and, if taken prior to age 59½, may be subject to a 10% federal tax penalty. This should not be considered tax or financial planning advice. Please consult a tax and/or financial professional for advice specific to your individual circumstances.

Integrity FINANCIAL PLANNERS

### Advisor's Corner

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Charles Blozinski, CFP offers his clients the advantage of over 25 years of experience in financial services. He provides to his clients independent, unbiased financial advice in a fee-only environment. Charles is President and CEO of Integrity Financial Planners. The firm is a registered investment advisor in the State of Oregon.

# Get Your Estate Plan in Gear

### Difficult, but Essential

- Let's face it: no one wants to think about the world without us, but a solid estate plan is the blue ribbon on any person's financial plan.
- In my career, this is the one part of the plan that is most lacking. That's because it's difficult to determine what should happen to your assets when you are gone.
- Integrity can organize your estate plan BEFORE you sit down with the attorney's "meter running". Let us help you stay on track toward an estate plan that allows you the peace of mind knowing your affairs are in order.

Estate planning laws have undergone swift changes over the past several years and may change again in the years ahead. If you're creating or updating an estate plan, it's essential that you seek the advice of an attorney who's well versed in this area. Before you hire an estate-planning attorney to draft or update your estate plan, it's important to understand your role in the estate-planning process.

Find a qualified attorney: Because your estate plan will likely need to be updated as the years go by and your personal circumstances change, it makes sense to find an attorney who practices in the community where you live. This can help you meet with him/her on an ongoing basis.

Take stock of your assets: Before you meet with your attorney, spend some time enumerating your assets and their value: your investment accounts, life insurance, personal assets such as your home, and your share of any businesses that you own. Also gather current information about any debts outstanding. Your estate-planning attorney is likely to provide you with a worksheet to document your assets and liabilities, but it's helpful to collect this information in advance.

Identify key individuals: Another important aspect of estate planning is identifying the individuals you trust to ensure that your wishes are carried out once you're gone.

Executor: A person who gathers all of your assets and makes sure that they are distributed as spelled out in your will.

Durable (Financial) Power of Attorney: A person you entrust with making financial decisions on your behalf if you should become disabled and unable to manage your own financial affairs.

Power of Attorney for Health Care: A person you entrust with making health-care decisions on your behalf if you are disabled and unable to make them on your own.

Guardian: A person who would look after your children if you and your spouse were to die when your children are minors.

Know the key documents you need: When you meet with your estate-planning attorney, he or she will make recommendations about your estate plan. At a minimum, you should ask your attorney to draft the following documents.

Last Will and Testament: A legal document that tells everyone, including your heirs, how you would like your assets distributed after you're gone.

Living Will: A document that tells your loved ones and your health-care providers how you would like to be cared for if you should become terminally ill; usually includes details about your views toward life-support equipment.

Durable (Financial) Power of Attorney: A document that gives an individual the power to make financial decisions and execute financial transactions on your behalf if you are unable to do so.

Medical Power of Attorney: A document that gives an individual the power to make health-care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so.

Manage your documents: Once your estate-planning documents are drafted, destroy any older versions of them. Notify your executor of the whereabouts of your estate-planning documents, and provide copies of the relevant documents to your executor, powers of attorney, and the guardian for your children.

Plan to keep your plan current: Last but not least, plan to keep your estate plan current. One of the biggest estate-planning pitfalls is drafting an estate plan but not keeping it up to date. Changes may include change in marital status, assets, financial status, death or ill health of your beneficiaries, executor, power of attorneys, or guardian.

# Dividend Income During Downturns

Get Paid Whether the Market is Up OR Down.

- I LOVE dividend paying stocks. LOVE them. Whether the market is up or down, quality, blue chip companies are making money and when they do, they pay you a dividend.
- Dividends also help you stay ahead of inflation because many companies have consistently raised dividends for decades.  A 9 cent increase on a stock that pays $1.76 a share may seem small but that's a pay raise of 5.11%. Not bad when you're on a fixed income.
- Divdends generally come from companies whose products you use all the time. If you own companies who pay dividends, you're really paying  yourself a bit when you buy their products.
- I encourage ALL my clients to own blue chip dividend paying funds.
- Ask me how they can fit in your portfolio.

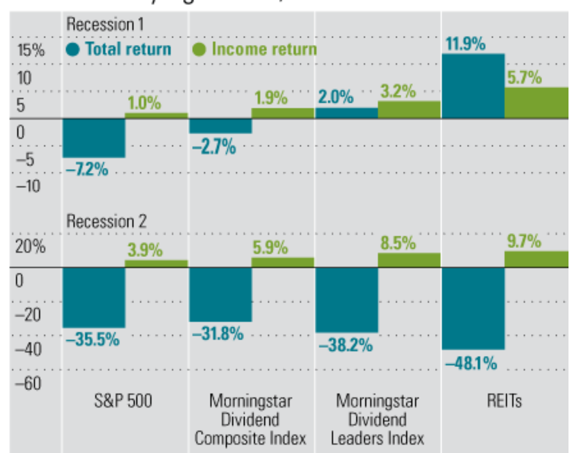
During a recession, the stock market can lose significant value. This could have a large impact on portfolio returns. Predicting the duration and extent of recessionary periods is almost impossible. During such times, income-producing investments such as dividend -paying stocks and REITs may soften losses, particularly when investors incur negative returns. This means that, if and when dividends are paid out, they have the potential to act as a cushion and are positive whether stock returns are positive or negative.

The image compares the total return and income return for the S&P 500 index, Dividend Composite index, Dividend Leaders index, and REITs for the past two recessions in 2001 and 2007. As seen in the image, dividend-paying stocks and REITs produced higher income returns relative to the S&P 500 over the given time periods (however, keep in mind that REITs are far more risky than their typical common stock counterparts). Stocks that pay dividends may serve as an income source while also providing investors with exposure to the growth potential of the stock market.

Dividends are not guaranteed and are paid at the discretion of the stock-issuing company. Diversification does not eliminate the risk of experiencing investment losses. Government bonds are guaranteed by the full faith and credit of the United States government as to the timely payment of principal and interest, while stocks and REITs are not guaranteed and have been more volatile than the other asset classes. REITs are subject to certain risks, such as risks associated with general and local economic conditions, interest rate fluctuation, credit risks, liquidity risks and corporate structure. REITs must distribute at least 90% of taxable income annually to shareholders.

The Morningstar Dividend Composite Index captures the performance of all stocks in the U.S. Market Index that have a consistent record of dividend payment and have the ability to sustain their dividend payment. Stocks in the index are weighted in proportion to the total pool of dividends available to investors. The Morningstar Dividend Leaders Index captures the performance of the 100 highest yielding stocks that have a consistent record of dividend payment and have the ability to sustain their dividend payments. Stocks in the index are weighted in proportion to the total pool of dividends available to investors. Recession data is from National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and defined by the periods March 2001–November 2001 and December 2007–June 2009. NBER does not define a recession in terms of two consecutive quarters of decline in real GDP. Rather, a recession is a recurring period of decline in total output, income, employment, and trade usually lasting from six months to a year and marked by widespread contractions in many sectors of the economy.

## Returns of the S&P 500,® Dividend-Paying Stocks, and REITs




Past performance is no guarantee of future results. This is for illustrative purposes only and not indicative of any investment. An investment cannot be made directly in an index. S&P 500 is represented by the Standard & Poor's 500®, which is an unmanaged group of securities and considered to be representative of the stock market in general. REITs are represented by the FTSE NAREIT All Equity REIT Index®. Morningstar Dividend Composite is represented by the Morningstar Dividend Composite Index, and Morningstar Dividend Leaders by the Morningstar Dividend Leaders Index. Income return and total return are represented by the compound annual return over the given time period.

# Chasing Performance

I call this "The Behavior Gap"

- Why can't people do at LEAST as well as the market? The behavior gap:
- They allow their emotions to get in the way: they get greedy or scared.
- or
- Their life gets in the way: they get busy, a loved one gets sick, they're raising their children.
- A good CFP can help keep your emotions in check and they help watch your money while your busy living your life.

Investors often endure poor timing and planning as many chase past performance. They buy into funds that are performing well and initiate a selling spree following a decline. This becomes evident when evaluating a fund's total return compared with the investor return. Overall, the investor return translates to the average investor's experience as measured by the timing decisions of all investors in the fund.

The image illustrates the investor return relative to the total return for a given fund. Over the short term, both the total and investor returns were positive and relatively similar. Over a 10-year period, however, total return greatly exceeded investor return. Investors who attempted to time the market ran the risk of missing periods of exceptional returns.

## Comparison of a Fund's Return Performance Over Time


Past performance is no guarantee of future results. This is for illustrative purposes only and not indicative of any investment. Returns and principal invested in stocks are not guaranteed. Morningstar investor returns measure how the typical investor in that fund fared over time, incorporating the impact of cash inflows and outflows from purchases and sales. It is not one specific investor's experience, but rather a measure of the return earned collectively by all the investors in the fund. Total return measures the percentage change in price for a fund, assuming the investor buys and holds the fund over the time period, reinvests distributions, and does not make any additional purchases or sales. Investor returns are not a substitute for total returns but can be used in combination with them. Data as of October 2012.

Source: The fund illustrated in this example was selected from Morningstar's open-end database.



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