



The embattled 401(k) — Businesses can still find value in this employee benefit



Today's employees may be more concerned than ever about building up retirement savings, and they'll be looking to their employers to help them meet this goal via a 401(k) plan. Companies not worried about attracting and retaining workers now will likely do so as the economy recovers and more baby boomers retire. This article looks at a number of 401(k) options — the traditional, the Roth, the Safe Harbor and the SIMPLE — and how each may or not be suited for a particular type of business. A sidebar discusses the Solo 401(k) for self-employed businesspeople.

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Paying college expenses? — You may be eligible for a valuable credit or deduction



Those who are paying higher education expenses may be eligible for a valuable tax credit or deduction. The American Opportunity credit is available for expenses incurred during the first four years of a postsecondary education. And the Lifetime Learning credit may apply to graduate courses, continuing professional education or job-skills courses. Or, one might take a deduction. The best option depends on individual circumstances.

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Moneylines: News briefs for businesses



This issue's "Moneylines" takes a look at increased IRS scrutiny of wealthy taxpayers; a survey showing that businesses are catching up on their debts; the rise in "homepreneurship"; and the increasing use of social networking among businesses.

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Practical Perspectives: Key financial issues for you and your family — Couple escapes close call with online tax scam



When Irv was using his smartphone to check his e-mail, he noticed a message purportedly from the IRS. The e-mail solicited not only his Social Security number but also the number of the checking account he and his wife had used to pay their last tax bill. Surprised and a little suspicious, he mentioned the message to their advisor when the couple sat down to discuss some other matters. The advisor confirmed all of their suspicions: It was a scam. Fortunately, no damage had been done, but the advisor warned them about "phishing" and other scams.

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