



## Who's your **FINANCIAL ARCHITECT**? Is It You?

Who's my what? "**Financial Architect**?" You may be silently saying "I've never even heard of such a thing". And that may be costing you more than you could ever imagine! Would you build a home without an Architect? Would you build a skyscraper without an Architect? Would you build anything of major importance without an Architect? How important to you is your Financial Plan?

**Financial Architecture** is one of those little known secrets that most people don't even know exists and that once you learn of its existence you think "how did I live without this for so long?" So what is it? Let's take a look at both parts of this title.

**Financial Planning?** In general usage, a **Financial Plan** can be a budget, a plan for spending and saving future income. This plan allocates future income to various types of expenses, such as rent or utilities, and also reserves some income for short-term and long-term savings. A financial plan can also be an investment plan, which allocates savings to various assets or projects expected to produce future income, such as a new business or product line, shares in an existing business, or real estate.

A very easy way to understand **Financial Planning** would be to say "my **Financial Plan** is the decisions I make on what to do with my current income/assets to make sure that life is the way I want it to be today *AND* the way I want it to be during retirement and after I pass away". It is all decision making based on your goals related to anything that is effected by money.

**Architecture or Architectural Design?** As a process, **architecture** is the activity of designing and constructing buildings and other physical structures by a person or a machine, primarily to provide shelter. A wider definition often includes the design of the total built environment, from the macro level of how a building integrates with its surrounding landscape (see town planning, urban design, and landscape architecture) to the micro level of architectural or construction details and, sometimes, furniture. Wider still, architecture is the activity of designing any kind of system.

With those two definitions in mind, let's define **Financial Architecture** as "The careful, thorough process of deciding what you want your life to be like today, tomorrow, during retirement and after you have passed away and from those goals designing a Mortgage Plan, Estate Plan, Retirement Plan, Insurance Plan and a Tax Plan that work in harmony to create efficiencies that make sure that these goals are actually reached.

You see, in Architectural Design and the Construction industry there is a very well established and successful order to which important projects are built and goals are realized. If the goal is to build a custom home the process would look something like this:

1. **Architect:** Create the Vision of the Final Outcome of all the work that is to be done. In other words, "Mr. and Mrs. Client what type of home would you like us to build for you?". Through asking questions, showing options and a lot of back and forth eventually there is an artist's rendering of the finished product and Mr. and Mrs. Client say "I want that! Built it for us!".
2. **Architect:** Create the Plans (Blueprints) that tell everyone, IN EACH INDUSTRY INVOLVED, what they need to do to make Mr. and Mrs. Client's dream come into existence. There are Framers, Plumbers, Electricians, Masons.... you get the idea. They each have plans that tell them how to use their knowledge and skills to make the client's dreams come true.
3. **General Contractor:** Hire the subcontractors and hold them accountable to actually doing what the plans say, in the right order, to make sure that Mr. and Mrs. Client's dream home is built exactly the way they wanted it

In essence the whole process can be summed as having: 1<sup>st</sup>, The *Vision* for Desired Outcome, 2<sup>nd</sup>, *Plans* to accomplish the goal and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Doing the *Work*. *Vision, Plans, Work...* in that order, is how homes and multi-billion dollar skyscrapers are built.

The questions to ask yourselves are these:

- Are our finances important to us?
- Does it matter to us how our life turns out?
- Do we care what type of lifestyle we have today and what type of lifestyle we will have during retirement?
- Does it matter to us what life will be like for our heirs when we pass away?
- Do we care what life will be like if we are sued?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then consider the following ones:

- Do you have a **Financial Architect** who understands all of the financial industries, knows your *Vision* for the Desired Outcome in every area of your financial life, has created the *Plans* that tell each professional in each area of finance what they need to do to make them come true for you and then holds them accountable to doing what the Plans tell them to do as they do their *Work*?
- Phrased another way: Do you currently have a *Financial Architect*; Mortgage Planner, Estate Planner, Retirement Planner, Insurance Planner, and Tax Planner who collectively work from the same set of *Financial Blueprints*?

We want you to picture walking into a builder's office and saying "We would like you to build the home of our dreams" and the builder says "Great! We will start tomorrow". The next day a gigantic team of construction workers from all types of industries show up at your house. There is no General Contractor, no Blueprints and all of the workers happen to be mute so they cannot talk to each other while they work! To make matters worse they have all been offered a commission type of pay structure on this job and will not be paid until they finish their parts so each mute worker dives right into his part of the job, with no plans to follow, no General Contractor to hold them accountable and no way to talk to each other. Needless to say the job does not go well; you do not get the home of your dreams.

Would you hire the team we mentioned above and take that type of approach to building the home of your dreams?

***ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING THIS TYPE OF APPROACH AND THIS TYPE OF TEAM TO BUILD YOUR FINANCIAL DREAMS / THE LIFE OF YOUR DREAMS?***

If you have been using the, No Clear Vision / No Comprehensive Plans / No Accountability / Workers Who Don't Talk to Each Other approach to try to accomplish the life of your dreams, then you may have outgrown your current financial plan and team. If this is the case, then the truth is that you have been acting as your own **Financial Architect™**.

My name is Charlie Jewett and I started **MERIT** Planning to assist clients in taking their finances seriously, avoid costly mistakes and actually realizing their financial goals and dreams.

While our competition may settle for diversified portfolios, selling stocks or peddling annuity products, that approach is a weak representation of ONE of the FIVE important areas of your financial plan. To truly accomplish your goals, you need to have all five of the following areas optimized and working harmoniously:

1. **Mortgage Planning**
2. **Estate Planning**
3. **Retirement Planning**
4. **Insurance Planning**
5. **Tax Planning**

The bottom line is this:

- If you don't have all 5 of these advisors talking to each other, you have inefficiencies in your plan. You will have to work longer or keep less of your money in every stage of your life.
- We find these inefficiencies, ask you if you want them corrected, put the work in to optimize each area and let you enjoy the benefits of truly taking your Financial Plan seriously.

So What's the Verdict? Is It You?