

## The importance of estate planning

Elizabeth Thomson of ICS Trust explains why it is so important for families and individuals to have in place an estate plan, and looks at some of the problems which arise from not being prepared.



[Link to video for this interview](#)

[Link to article for this interview](#)

[Link to continuous education test](#)



### Interview

#### Elizabeth Thomson

View the profile  
& other content for  
**Elizabeth Thomson**

**Date:** Dec 2011

**Category:** Estate Planning and Wealth Transfer

**Tags:** Estate Planning, Wills, Beneficiaries

Page 1 of 1

- >> **Anybody who is not a wealth or estate planning professional, or working in the industry, is unlikely to have any conception about estate planning**
- >> **Most people like to think they will live forever and so don't need to focus on estate planning**
- >> **A further challenge that individuals face is knowing who they should contact to discuss estate planning with**
- >> **The amount of paperwork that needs to be done if somebody dies intestate is significant**

A further challenge that individuals face, added Thomson, is knowing who they should contact to discuss estate planning with.

#### **Pitfalls of not having an estate plan**

According to Thomson, the amount of paperwork that needs to be done if somebody dies intestate is significant.

Plus, the other issue is getting the assets to the real beneficiaries, she added, meaning the individual(s) who the person who dies actually wants to leave the assets to.

This is especially relevant in cases where people might die in an accident or suddenly and therefore their wishes might not be carried out.

According to Elizabeth Thomson, when she first started doing estate planning and related work in the 1970s, most clients tended to just have an offshore company for their needs – mainly either a Panamanian or Liberian company.

It was generally the case that it wasn't possible to talk to Chinese clients (in particular) about life insurance, wills or trusts, because this all involved the "death" word, she said.

However, looking at the changes in Hong Kong, for example, in terms of the practices built up and the number of private bankers working with family offices, this indicates a big change.

In recent meetings Thomson said she had in China, all clients wanted to talk about was assets held in a BVI company.

#### **Common misconceptions about estate planning**

Thomson said that anybody who is not a wealth or estate planning professional, or working in the industry, is unlikely to have any conception about estate planning.

She said most people like to think they will live forever and so don't need to focus on this. For example, some people might think that life insurance is all they need.

Plus, in Hong Kong, for example, the absence of estate duty alleviates the pressure on individuals to look at an estate plan more seriously.

Do you have any comments?  
Contact the editor:

T 852 2563 8683  
E [editor@hubbis.com](mailto:editor@hubbis.com)  
W [www.hubbis.com](http://www.hubbis.com)



© Hubbis (HK) Limited 2011  
[Disclaimer](#)