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SMALL BUSINESS

72% of Small Businesses Don't Have Succession Plan

Sep. 05, 2017

There may be nothing more certain than death and taxes, but Americans like to push thoughts of that first topic away. Perhaps that's why almost three-fourths of U.S. small businesses don't have a succession plan and most small business owners don't have a will.

That's according to the 2017 Make-A-Will-Month survey by [Rocket Lawyer](#), an online provider of legal services. In the survey, 72% of entrepreneurs did not have a succession plan for their businesses, and the majority of Americans do not have a will in place. Rocket Lawyer has surveyed American consumers since 2011, and released data in an annual report illustrating the knowledge gap in estate planning. Year-over-year, from 2011 – 2016, Rocket Lawyer's estate planning data revealed that over half (51.3%) of Americans do not have a Will in place.

This year, Rocket Lawyer added an additional survey focused on SMBs to highlight how critical it is to have a proper succession plan (or Business Will) in place to legally protect small business owners and their families. Typically, a significant portion of the wealth and income for SMBs and their families and/or beneficiaries (as well as any business partners you may have) is tied up in the business, so it's important your wishes are communicated before you pass or have a change of life circumstance occur.

“We all lead very busy lives and while the average adult and small business owner knows they should create an estate plan, many procrastinate, leaving their assets as well as businesses at risk,” said Charley Moore, Founder and CEO of Rocket Lawyer. “Drafting a Will enables people to specify their final wishes, take care of loved ones, protect assets, businesses and prevent family disputes.

Additional key findings from Rocket Lawyer’s Make-a-Will-Month survey include:

- Seventy-five percent of consumers said that online bank/financial accounts are the most important digital assets, and the one they are most likely to pass on to loved ones
- Thirty-nine percent of consumers when asked if they’d like their social media footprint to live on after they are deceased answered that they “hadn’t thought about it yet.”
- Year-over-year, the number one reason why more than 50% of consumers do not have a Will in place because they “haven’t gotten around to it yet.”
- Eighty-seven percent of small business owners were not aware that there are Wills that can be created to specifically protect their businesses.

For more information on Make-a-Will Month, please visit:

<https://www.rocketlawyer.com/make-a-will-month.rl>

Methodology: Rocket Lawyer surveyed 600+ consumers ages 18 and over the week of August 8 – 16, 2017 and 150+ small business owners ages 18 and over the week of August 9 – 22, 2017 The survey was commissioned by Rocket Lawyer and conducted by SurveyMonkey. The margin of error is at the 95% confidence level for the overall results is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

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