

# ENTITY BUY-SELL AGREEMENT

Do you recognize the need for a smooth transition in the event a business co-owner should die?

As a successful business owner and partner, you have developed systems to handle daily operations and attract customers. But will your business survive if one of the co-owners dies? Business owners need an agreement that allows a smooth transition in ownership and provides their families with the proceeds of the sale of their interest. The new owners can then get on with running the business instead of the business languishing in the probate court or becoming dismantled by lawsuits.

## What is an Entity Buy-Sell Agreement?

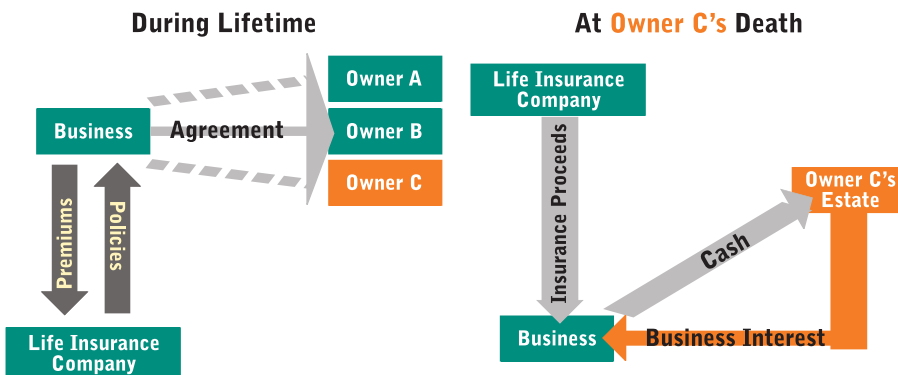
When a business has more than two owners, an Entity Buy-Sell Agreement is typically used to provide for an orderly buy out of a business interest. It lets business owners establish a reasonable price at which the business will purchase back their share of the business. A funded buy-sell agreement provides the money to purchase the remaining interest in the business.

## How does it work?

- Each owner enters into an Entity Buy-Sell Agreement with the business
- The business purchases a life insurance policy on the life of each owner
- Policies are owned by the business. Premiums are paid by the business to the insurance company and are not deductible by the business.
- When an owner dies, the insurance company pays the death benefit to the business and the proceeds are used to purchase the deceased's share at the previously agreed upon purchase price
- The deceased's estate sells the business interest to the business. This creates liquidity for the estate.

## What role does life insurance play?

A buy-sell agreement without funding is only part of the plan. The business is obligated to buy the respective interests of the owners and must have the funds to do so. Life insurance is an excellent tool for providing those funds. It may be cost effective, easy to fund and easy to understand. Life insurance proceeds are paid when the funds are needed. If life insurance is not purchased and cash is not available to pay the family, the deceased owner's family will be paid over time and will be dependent on the success of the business for the length of the term.



## Benefits of an Entity Buy-Sell Agreement funded with life insurance.

A properly funded agreement may address potential problems before they arise. It can:

- Pre-determine who will purchase the business
- Set the purchase price and terms of payment
- Create a smooth transition for management and control
- Establish a price for estate tax purposes
- Guarantee financing – whenever it is needed
- Free the deceased owner’s family from business worries
- Provide the cash needed to pay personal estate taxes
- Reduce the number of life insurance policies required (compared to a cross purchase buy-sell agreement)

### What about taxes?

There are several tax considerations to keep in mind with an Entity Buy-Sell Agreement funded with life insurance.

- Life insurance premiums paid by the business are not deductible

| TAX FACTS SUMMARY                                  |  |
|--|--|
| Buy-Sell Agreement funded with Life Insurance      |  |
| Policyowner  | Business   |
| Beneficiary  | Business   |
| Payor  | Business   |
| Premium payments                                   | Not deductible                                     |
| Death benefit                                      | Not included in income*                            |
| Estate tax value of business interest              | Value of business as defined in buy-sell agreement |
| Estate’s (seller’s) tax basis in business at death | Increases to fair market value at death            |
| Surviving owner’s tax basis                        | No “Step-up” (C Corps)                             |

*\*Except for potential for alternative minimum tax*

- Death proceeds received by the business are generally received income-tax-free<sup>1</sup>
- The surviving owners’ cost basis in the business is not increased for tax purposes by the amount of the payment (C Corporations)
- Generally, the estate tax value of the business is the value of the business as defined in the Buy-Sell Agreement

Ensuring the continuation of your business with a properly drafted Entity Buy-Sell Agreement may provide more than just a mechanism for transferring the business. It may save unnecessary frustration, thousands of dollars and many hours, by eliminating the costs and delays of potential IRS contests, litigation and challenges from other internal and external business parties.

<sup>1</sup>The Pension Protection Act of 2006 limits the death proceeds an employer can exclude from income when the proceeds are not fully applied to purchase the interest of the deceased business owner. The Act also imposes specific requirements that the employer notify the individual about the insurance, secure his/her written consent and submit annual reports to the IRS. Death benefits and tax deferred cash accumulation may be subject to the corporate Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT).

|                               |  |               |                                   |                |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Not FDIC, NCUA/NCUSIF insured | Not insured by any federal government agency | Not a deposit | No bank or credit union guarantee | May lose value |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|

This information is provided for general consumer educational purposes by Lincoln Benefit Life, Home Office, Lincoln, NE, and is not intended to provide legal, tax or investment advice. Lincoln Benefit Life issues fixed and variable insurance products that are sold through agreements with affiliated or unaffiliated broker-dealers or agencies. Lincoln Benefit Life’s variable products are sold by registered representatives, investment advisors, and agents or bank employees who are licensed insurance agents. ALFS, Inc. serves as principal underwriter of SEC-registered contracts for Lincoln Benefit Life. ALFS, Inc and Lincoln Benefit Life are wholly owned subsidiaries of Allstate Life Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL.

Guarantees are based on the claims paying ability of Lincoln Benefit Life Company.

Effective Date 10/06  
©2006 Allstate Insurance Company, Home Office, Northbrook, IL