



Advantage

Your Personal Finance Edge

January–February 2019

POWER UP *for the* **NEW YEAR!**

**On Your Mark,
Get Set—GO File
Your Taxes!**

**The Gentle Art
of Re-gifting**

**Want to Eat More
Healthfully? Try
Clean Eating**

**Science-based
Ways to Banish
the Winter Blues**

**Trend Alert! Propel
Your Business
Forward**

**Perk Up with
Our Coffee Quiz**

From the Firm

Power Up for the New Year!

Yes! 2019 is here—and it is likely to go by just as fast as the last few years. This means it's time to hit the ground running in order to tackle all that lies ahead.

Tax reform should definitely be on your radar. This tax season is the first time that many of the changes in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will go into effect. So, don't delay checking in with our firm about filing your taxes or clarifying any related questions you may have. The sooner you do, the sooner you'll know exactly where you stand in terms of your tax obligations or potential refunds.

Beyond taxes, there are plenty of other ways to power up for 2019. In this issue, we cover everything from helping your business take advantage of new trends to strategies for eating a little (or a lot) cleaner this year. Also, be sure to check out our java-inspired quiz to help you perk up with the right cup of coffee. There are lots of other business-boosting tips in this issue, so be sure to recharge by reading each one.

Our firm is here to help you this tax season and beyond. If you have any questions about tax reform, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Wishing you a prosperous, power-packed 2019!

Your Trusted Accounting Advisors



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On Your Mark, Get Set—GO File Your Taxes!

April 15 will be here before you know it. Now is the time to start organizing all your documents and data required for our firm to file your tax return. The following checklist will help you compile the basics.



1 Your current driver's license if any of your information on it has changed.

2 Copies of last year's return if you are new to our firm.

3 Paperwork for any new dependents including:

- Social security and tax ID numbers
- Dates of birth
- Childcare payment records (this includes the care provider's tax ID number)
- Adoption papers (if applicable)
- Form 8332 to show that a custodial parent is releasing their right to claim the child to you, the noncustodial parent (if applicable)
- Any alimony payments that have an ex-spouse's social security number
- Any death certificates

4 Proof of income from all of the following that apply:

- Form W-2 for wages/salary, federal and state tax withholding, tips and earned income credit (Your employer should send this to you by January 31, 2019)
- Form 1099-G if you are unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits
- Form 1099-Misc for compensation from freelance work (You should receive a form from all of your clients if you received more than \$600)
- Form 1099-R for annuity income, IRA and pension
- Form 1099-Div for those who have earned dividends
- Form 1099-B, 1099-S for income from sales of property and stock
- Form W-2G for any income from gambling
- Any other income from prizes and awards (like lottery winnings), jury duty pay, alimony or rentals

5 Make note of any deductions that you plan to itemize. You will need to provide records for each deduction, such as:

- Records of all expenses if self-employed, including credit card statements and receipts
- Records of expenses for rental homes
- Records of expenses related to investments
- Real estate and property tax records
- Charitable donations, including non-cash and mileage driven for charitable purposes
- Records of medical expenses
- Insurance payments
- Childcare expenses, including daycare and babysitters
- Qualifying educational expenses
- Interest on student loans
- Job-related vehicle expenses
- Classroom expenses for K-12 educators
- Relocation expenses not covered by employer
- State and local taxes paid, excluding withholding
- Invoice showing any sales tax paid on a vehicle
- Any contributions made towards retirement

6 If you are expecting a tax refund, you should also have your bank account number and routing number handy for a direct deposit of your refund into your account.

If this list feels overwhelming to tackle all at once, try compiling the information in a few one-hour sessions. If you are having trouble tracking down documents, make sure you allow enough time to contact the appropriate organizations for replacements. Also consider creating a designated folder (digital if possible) to aggregate information for easy reference. ■

Source: BusinessInsider.com

Trend Alert! Propel Your Business *Forward* this Year



If last year seemed to go by in a flash, 2019 will likely speed by as well. To help you prepare, we've rounded up the following key business trends to help you propel your business forward.

▶ **Personalization of marketing**

The more tailored an offer is to the buyer, the more effective it is at actually moving a customer to action. Consider personalizing your marketing efforts for the best results. Start by ditching the cold calls and other generic campaigns and investing in highly personalized, high-value content. According to Marketo, personalization of email, for example, boosts click-through rate by 97 percent and open rates by 26 percent.

▶ **The need to be more competitive in social advertising**

Due to the explosion of paid social ads on Facebook and other platforms, your business will have to break through even more competitive noise on social media in 2019. Many small businesses have not fully adopted Facebook and other forms of social media advertising. Given the trend toward sponsored content, this is a mistake. To stay ahead of other advertisers, you'll want to up your social media game in this area. A strong social media strategy also includes engaging fans in real time, so be sure to dedicate time to ensuring this is happening as well.

▶ **Cybersecurity taken seriously**

With cyber threats on the rise, more companies are investing in cybersecurity resources to mitigate the risk of data breach. This represents a shift from basic security readiness to proactive prevention. If your business hasn't conducted a cybersecurity audit in the past few months, take the time to analyze your cybersecurity strategy and identify any potential weak spots in your technology architecture.

▶ **The evolution of workplace culture**

A strong, positive workplace culture drives a company's ability to recruit and retain the best and the brightest. Advanced technologies, open-space work environments, flex time and remote work options are fast becoming commonplace—and what employees are looking for in their employers. If your culture is lacking, take the time this year to survey your employees and identify where you can improve.

Keeping up on current business trends and having a sound strategic plan in place will help you manage marketplace changes as they happen. Monitor the above trends and those specific to your industry so you are ready to make adjustments as needed. ■

Source: msn.com

Science-based Ways to Banish the **Winter Blues**

If you tend to feel down after the holidays—you're not alone. According to the American Psychiatric Association, as many as 20 percent of Americans experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)—depression brought on by the shorter days and diminishing sunlight. To help lift your spirits, here are five scientifically proven ways to improve your outlook.

1 Brighten up your environment

This time of year, our bodies crave more daylight. Do what you can to lighten things up...literally. Open your blinds and curtains, get outside in the sun, or sit closer to a window at work. If you're really feeling blue, invest in a lightbox for home use.

2 Just say no to sweets

We all know that chocolate, candy and other sugar-laden foods provide only a temporary fix when it comes to our mood. The next time you're tempted to get a boost from a beignet, remember that the pick-me-up effect is temporary and indulging may ultimately increase feelings of anxiety and depression.

3 Say yes to exercise

Research has proven that even mild exercise can help you feel better. A Harvard University study indicated that walking at a fast pace for about 35 minutes a day five times a week or 60 minutes a

day three times a week improved symptoms of mild to moderate depression.

4 Turn on the tunes

Along with exercise, research has shown that listening to upbeat music can significantly improve your mood in both the short and long term. So, turn up your favorite songs! And you'll feel even better if you pump up the music while exercising.

5 Pay it forward

While you may feel like huddling in your home right now, performing a little community outreach or volunteer work is a better plan. Studies have shown that these types of activities can help improve mental health and life satisfaction.

Don't let this time of year get you down. Try some of the tips above to help you get the bounce back in your step well before spring arrives. ■

Don't Miss These Tax Deadlines

Keep these dates handy to avoid paying penalties

JANUARY 15 | 2019

- Fourth quarter 2018 estimated tax payments due

JANUARY 31 | 2019

- W-2 and 1099-Misc forms due

MARCH 15 | 2019

- S-Corporation tax returns due
- Partnership, LLP and multi-member LLC tax returns due

APRIL 15 | 2019

- Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) due
- First quarter 2019 estimated tax payments due
- Personal income tax returns due
- C-Corporation tax returns due

JUNE 17 | 2019

- Second quarter 2019 estimated tax payments due

SEPTEMBER 16 | 2019

- Third quarter 2019 estimated tax payments due
- S-Corporation tax returns on extension due
- Multi-Member LLC + Partnership tax returns on extension due

OCTOBER 15 | 2019

- Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) on extension due
- C-Corporation tax returns on extension due
- Personal income tax returns on extension due

Want to Eat More Healthfully? Try Clean Eating.

The first few weeks after the holidays is when most people set a goal to eat better and get in shape. Unfortunately, not everyone goes about accomplishing these goals the right way. For example, highly restrictive diets rarely work over the long term. A better strategy is clean eating. That is, consuming minimally processed, real foods that provide maximum nutritional benefits and set you up to more easily achieve dietary goals.



Rather than focus on tracking calories, carbohydrates, protein or fat intake, clean eating is about consuming foods that are as close to their natural state as possible. Try these tips to help you adopt the principles of clean eating:

1 Make friends with fruits and vegetables

Not surprisingly, fruits and veggies are a central part of clean eating. They are ideal because most can be consumed raw. Choosing organic produce can help you take clean eating one step further by reducing pesticide exposure and potentially increasing the health benefits.

2 Side-step processed foods

Any food that contains refined sugars or carbohydrates or a lot of additives or preservatives should be avoided. Highly processed foods represent the polar opposite of what clean eaters should consume. Processed foods also take less energy to digest and absorb, meaning that you'll often feel hungry sooner than if you eat cleaner foods.

3 Read the labels

While you'll want to avoid processed foods as much as possible, there are some packaged foods that support clean-eating goals. For example, frozen and fresh packaged foods such as vegetables, fruits, raw nuts, sliced meats, cheeses and other staple foods make it easier to maintain a clean-eating lifestyle based on convenience alone. Just be sure to read labels to ensure there are no preservatives, added sugars or unhealthy fats.

4 Curtail refined carbohydrates

Another thing to look for when reading labels or the fine print on menus is the quality of the carbohydrates. Refined carbs (white flour bread, pasta, most cold cereals, cookies and the like) are highly processed and easy to overeat. They also provide little nutritional value. Instead, opt for whole grains such as sprouted grain bread, sweet potatoes and steel-cut oats.

BREAKFAST

- Steel-cut oats with skim milk, cinnamon and raisins
- Blueberries and banana slices
- Sprouted grain bread with natural peanut butter
- Coffee, tea or water

LUNCH

- Nitrate-free turkey breast sandwich with mustard, tomato and lettuce on sprouted grain bread
- Raw veggies with Greek yogurt dip
- Sprouted grain bread with natural peanut butter
- Pineapple
- Coffee, tea or water



SNACK

- Low-fat string cheese and an apple

DINNER

- Wild salmon with whole grain rice or sweet potato
- Steamed vegetables
- Milk, water or 100-percent juice

SNACK

- Plain yogurt with honey and raw almonds



5 Say no to sugar

As you might expect, sugar is one of the most important things to avoid when eating clean. Both table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup should be avoided as much as possible. Small amounts of natural sugar such as honey or maple syrup can be used in moderation. Alcohol and many condiments are also high in sugar, so be sure to avoid them as well.

6 Pump up your water consumption

We all know how good water is for our bodies, so make it your go-to drink! Unsweetened coffee and tea are also good choices. However, if you are sensitive to caffeine, substitute with de-caffeinated or avoid altogether.

As you can see, the principles of clean eating are very simple. And when paired with the practice of moderation, they can help you lose weight and boost your energy. Very soon into a clean eating lifestyle, you will also quickly appreciate the natural flavors of foods. To get you started, test a few days of clean eating by following our example: "A Day in the Life of a Clean Eater." You can also mix and match your own favorite minimally processed foods. ■

Source: Healthline.com



While you appreciated each gift received over the holiday season, there are probably a few that don't fit your personal style or you may already have. This is where the gentle art of re-gifting can be a win-win: You rid your home of unneeded items, while others put them to good use. Here's how to do it gracefully!

Once considered covert or even shameful, re-gifting is becoming a more accepted practice these days. Some people even have closets dedicated to gifts that they can pass along. Chances are that you've been the recipient of a re-gifted present... and you never even knew it. That being said, re-gifting can still be a delicate matter, so keep these tips in mind:

Never re-gift an item you receive from a member of your immediate family

If you receive something from your spouse, partner or best friend, it's likely they will find out that you re-gifted it as some point. That can hurt, so it's best to avoid.

Keep a few degrees of separation between your recipient and the original gifter

There are few things more awkward than when the person you received a gift from comes into contact with the person you re-gifted it to. Think in advance about potential conflicts in your re-gifting strategy, and keep a few degrees of separation between your gifter and the giftee.

Refresh the wrapping

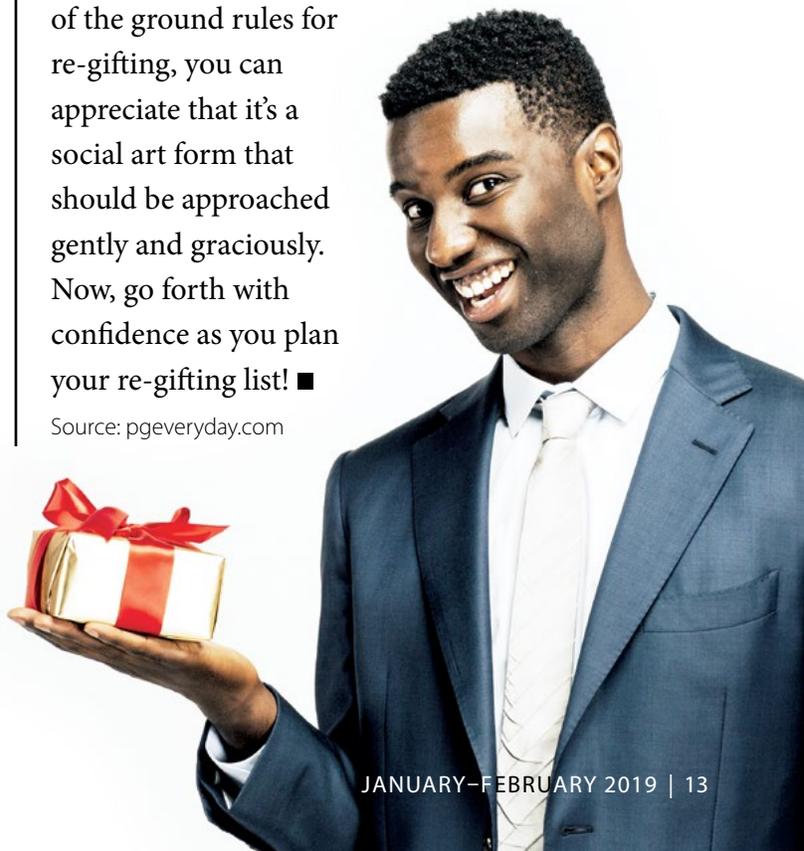
In addition to ensuring that there are no traces of leftover wrapping paper or tape on the item being re-gifted, wrap it in a way that will let your thoughtfulness shine through. Don't forget to add a nice card as well.

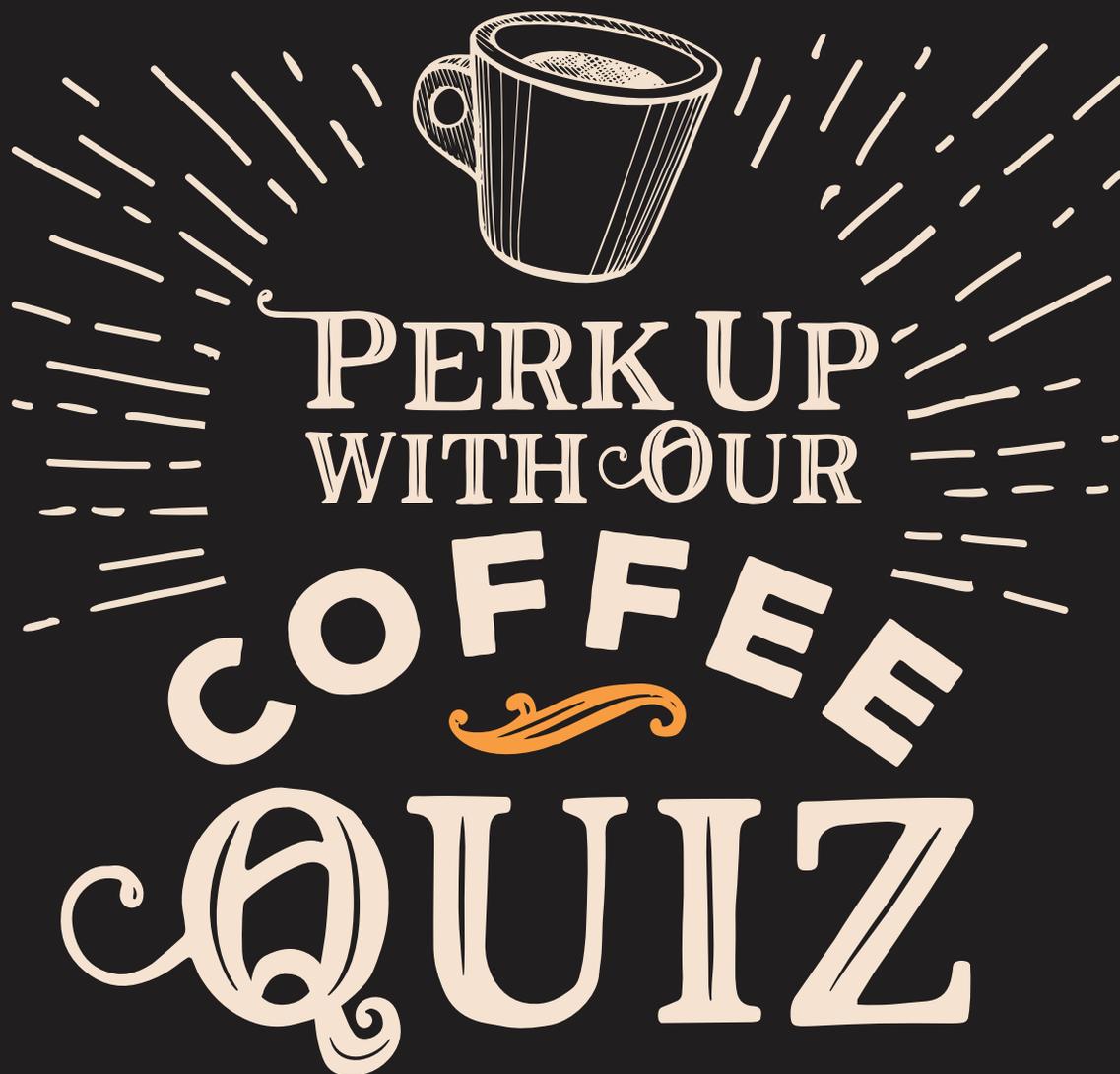
Remember that not every gift can be re-gifted

If you receive an item that would not make a thoughtful gift for anyone you can think of, consider donating it to charity or selling it. Don't re-gift just for the sake of getting rid of an unwanted item.

Now that you have a few of the ground rules for re-gifting, you can appreciate that it's a social art form that should be approached gently and graciously. Now, go forth with confidence as you plan your re-gifting list! ■

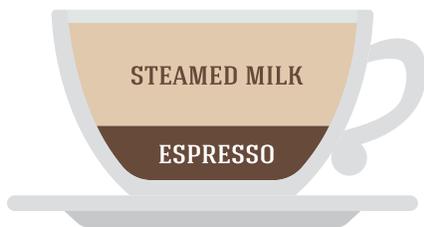
Source: pgeveryday.com





You may be a regular coffee drinker, but how often do you stray from your standard cup of joe into newly caffeinated territory? Test your java knowledge by matching the coffee drinks below with the correct ingredients.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Espresso _____ | 4. Caffé Latte _____ | 7. Cappuccino _____ |
| 2. Espresso con Panna _____ | 5. Espresso Macchiato _____ | 8. Caffé Mocha _____ |
| 3. Flat White _____ | 6. Cafe Breve _____ | 9. Americano _____ |



A



B



C



D



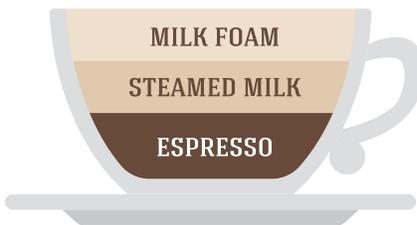
E



F



G



H



I

Answers

1.C 2.E 3.A 4.D 5.I 6.F 7.H 8.B 9.G



We take your data security seriously

Protecting your personal data from today's breed of cyber-criminal is a main focus in our firm. We continue to implement best-of-breed technologies and enhance our internal processes to keep your sensitive data safe and secure.

Thank you for making us your trusted advisor.