

New Advisor Book Series Is Just Plain Smart About Maximizing Year-Round Tax-Planning and Financial Education

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H&R Block Joins with Random House Inc. to Launch Book Series

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Oct 9, 2002 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Today's volatile investment markets, along with confusing, ever-changing tax laws, are making financial decisions a daunting task for even the most savvy Americans. But now more than ever, the importance of minimizing one's taxes and managing one's finances has become crucial for all income-earners, whatever the level of their paychecks or portfolios.

That's why H&R Block has joined with Random House Reference, an imprint of Random House Inc. to launch a line of clear and practical personal finance guidebooks: the "H&R Block just plain smart Advisor Series." The first in the series, the "Tax Planning Advisor," will launch in January 2003 and cover year-round tax-planning strategies.

Four additional books in the "H&R Block just plain smart series" will be published in 2003 and 2004 and will cover personal finance, investing, retirement and home buying. A team of H&R Block tax-planning and financial experts is developing the series.

"This series will provide taxpayers and investors with actionable and basic, straight-forward guidance they can use," said David Byers, senior vice president and chief marketing officer with H&R Block. "We've also structured the series to make it easy for readers to select the topics most relevant to their lives now and in the future."

The "Tax Planning Advisor" is specifically designed to help readers take steps throughout the year that will yield tax-smart savings and financial benefits. The book's 13 chapters cover tax-related information on everything from deductions and tax credits to saving for college and retirement. Each section includes real-life tax problems and solutions, definitions of important terms, and brief advice points for readers to follow.

"The 'Tax Planning Advisor' is easy to read. We want this book and the rest of the series to inspire a confident attitude among readers," added Byers.

The "Tax Planning Advisor" represents a significant departure from the "Income Tax Guide" H&R Block has published annually since 1966. The guide was designed to provide line-by-line instruction for tax form completion. The "Tax Planning Advisor," as with the entire series, focuses on year-round planning and education.

"We are delighted to work with H&R Block on this project," said Sheryl Stebbins, vice president, Random House Reference. "Their experience in this field is unparalleled: H&R Block is one of the country's best-known and most enduring names in tax and financial services. There's a growing interest today in personal finance books and the unique approach H&R Block has taken with this series -- translating complex information into common-sense, helpful advice -- fills a distinct need in this area of publishing."

At 256 pages, the "Tax Planning Advisor" is designed to give readers easy access to what they need to know. The book is expected to retail for \$14.95 and will be available at most retail and online booksellers.

About H&R Block

H&R Block Inc. (www.hrblock.com) is a diversified company with subsidiaries that deliver tax services and financial advice, investment and mortgage products and services, and business accounting and consulting services. As the world's largest tax services company, H&R Block served nearly 23 million clients during fiscal year 2002. Clients were served at the approximately 10,400 H&R Block retail offices worldwide and through the company's award-winning software, TaxCut(R), and its online tax services. H&R Block is the only major tax and financial services company that focuses primarily on helping middle-income taxpayers achieve their financial goals. Investment services and securities products are offered through H&R Block Financial Advisors Inc., member NYSE, SIPC. H&R Block Inc. is not a registered broker-dealer. H&R Block Mortgage Corp. offers retail mortgage products. Option One Mortgage Corp. offers wholesale mortgage products and a wide range of mortgage services. RSM McGladrey Inc. serves mid-sized businesses with accounting, tax and consulting services.

About Random House Reference

Random House Reference is a leading publisher of dictionaries, thesauruses, and professional and general reference works. Random House Reference is a unit of the Random House Information Group, a division of Random House, Inc. and its parent company, Bertelsmann AG, one of the world's largest media companies. Today, with nearly 75 titles in print Random House Reference publishes branded reference products including the Random House Webster's Dictionaries, Random House Roget's College Thesaurus and Random House Treasury series.

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