

# STEP JOURNAL

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## Glass half full

Welcome to Issue 4 of this year's STEP Journal. This time we focus on family business and the US and Canada, with much to dig into and enjoy.

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As I have made my way through this issue's articles, I have been surrounded by British political turmoil (the aftermath of Boris Johnson's prime ministerial resignation) and the impact of climate change-induced heatwaves across much of Western Europe. These incidents, as well as other critical global events earlier in the year (of which the invasion of Ukraine ranks most obvious), highlight just how volatile and subject to disruption the world can be. That does not seem to me likely to change, although perhaps it is also true to say that it was ever thus; both George Bernard Shaw and Desmond Tutu are, after all, credited with saying that 'we learn from history that we don't learn from history'.

Although that strikes me as rather depressing, it should also be viewed as an individual challenge, not least in the areas in which we all practise. Surely our goal should be to repeat (and enhance) the successes of the past and to avoid (or mitigate) the failures. That is why we research, analyse, advise and implement our plans, utilising lessons learned, both good and bad.

My wife and children may have views on this, but I like to think of myself as a realistic optimist. I can be swayed into pessimism by the extent of the hurdles I see in any given client scenario, but the objective always remains to improve the position, recognising that the 'ideal outcome' is often out of reach but that there are various achievable points along the way that are likely to be better than the status quo. That is why the job is both challenging and rewarding at the same time.

If you have stuck with me this far, you may fairly be asking what the point of this diatribe is and its relationship to the *Journal*. It is simply this: our professional enthusiasm for sharing experiences and wisdom and learning from those of others ought to allow us to do better than Shaw and Tutu describe. That does not mean we will not make missteps or mistakes along the way; that is a significant part of the learning process, after all. However, I still believe the glass is half full rather than half empty and the opportunity to do a better job is there for all of us - sip away on this issue with that in mind!

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