

Infinite Banking – How it Works

By Gary Vande Linde

Why I am Interested in the Concept

Three years ago, I left a large company where I had served as the division engineer for the past twelve years, to become part owner in a small business. The owners hoped that the experiences I had would prove useful in creating a long range plan for their business and in developing a disciplined approach to the use of their financial resources. I was comfortable with the methods and techniques needed to implement these concepts, since I had used and supported them in my previous role as an engineer. The issue that I was not prepared for, and frankly it has been a surprise, is the challenge that small businesses face in the procurement and/or development of a source of working capital to fuel the growth and expansion of their business.

As an engineer working for a large company, having a ready source of working capital was never a concern for me. Rather, if I could demonstrate that a particular piece of equipment or machinery, or change in our process, would generate either increased revenues or decreased costs enough to pay for the modification in two years or less, the money was on its way. However, in a small business setting, I was soon faced with the reality that although we could see many places where improvements to our process would realize us huge benefits in terms of cost savings or quality improvements, we had a difficult time procuring a source of capital to help us implement these changes. I soon realized that without some source of working capital, the rate at which we could grow our business was limited. It was at this time that I began to talk with what I call “money thinkers”, to see how other small businesses were cracking this nut. One day, Andrew Christensen, an uncle of mine who does financial planning, gave me a book that he had recently read on “The Infinite Banking Concept”, entitled Becoming Your Own Banker. Andrew asked me to read the book, and said that he believed the ideas could prove useful to me in solving some of our business’ cash problems.

Upon first reading the book, it seemed reasonable, sound, and caused my imagination to explode with ideas. I immediately saw a method of building working capital for our company that would solve several other problems simultaneously. At the same time, I found myself feeling skeptical. If this is such a good idea, then why are other people not using it? How could something this simple work? Are the claims being made true? How can I prove the ideas to myself? The list went on and on. So I took out a sheet of paper and began writing down every question I could think of and every potential application that came to mind. I then began to contact people who could help me analyze each question or opportunity. Over a period of about six months, I began to work through my list – adding new questions as they arose and new opportunities as they became apparent. When I got to the point that I felt confident enough to discuss the ideas in front of a group, I asked the members of my investment club if they would listen to a presentation and help me evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the idea.

In preparation of that meeting, I gave various members of our investment club copies of Mr. Nash's book and met with others individually to present the ideas over lunch. My thinking was that the ideas run counter to what many people have been taught and that people need a little time to sort through the ideas at their own pace. I believe that the ideas Mr. Nash is presenting are so simple and yet so powerful that the natural reaction is to be skeptical – cautious. If people are rushed with an idea that has such far reaching implications, I believe that they will reject the idea out of fear that something is being sneaked past them.

The following paper was what I gave to the investment club ahead of time so that they would have time to familiarize themselves with the concepts. My goal was to boil Mr. Nash's book down to a paper with the basic ideas behind "The Infinite Banking Concept", so that an individual could read through it in about ten to fifteen minutes and have enough information to stew on.

Infinite Banking – Basic Concepts

1) The essence of The “Infinite Banking Concept” is to recover the interest that one normally pays to a banking institution through the use of dividend paying whole life insurance, and then lending those funds to others so that the policy owner makes what a banking institution does. Funds may be lent to any party, including yourself, and the earnings grow within the policy tax deferred. Thus, you are both reducing your tax burden and capturing monies for yourself that a banking institution normally would receive.

2) A foundational principal of the concept is that anytime you can cut the payment of interest to others and direct that same market rate of interest to an entity you own and control, which is subject to minimal taxation, then you will have improved your wealth generating potential significantly. (Insurance companies do pay taxes – it is just that dividends in an insurance policy are not taxed – we will talk about this later.)

3) A concept or principal that must be understood before we begin is that we are not talking about **investing** here; rather we are talking about **financing**. Financing is a process, not a product. Financing involves both the creation of and maintenance of a pool of money and its use. However, we will see that when a financing system is combined with an investment system, the combination of the two will always out perform an investment system. When the system combines reduced tax liability with a financing engine and allows complete control over your investments, there appears to be no system capable of generating wealth with as much consistency or speed. (Please see page 70 – Becoming Your Own Banker, New Third Edition)

4) A second concept or principal we must all agree on is that you finance **everything**. You either finance by:

- a. Paying interest to someone else – a bank, lender, etc.
- b. Or giving up interest you could have earned otherwise. (When you pay cash, the interest that the money could have earned is forfeited.)

5) For these reasons, when we are discussing investment alternatives, we must not only weigh the return that we will receive, but we must also evaluate what we are forfeiting or giving up. This mind set will become more important as we evaluate “The Infinite Banking Concept”.

6) For all of the reasons mentioned above, every person should be fully engaged in two businesses:

a. Your occupation

b. Banking

7) Of the two businesses mentioned above, banking appears to be the one that has the greatest potential for helping a person generate long term wealth.

8) If we look at the average American, we will find that most Americans spend about \$0.24 - \$0.34 of every dollar on **interest expense** (home, car, boat, credit card, etc.). For example, if you look at the purchase of a home, approximately 85% of the monies paid during the first five years of your mortgage are interest payments.

9) Also looking at the average American, we find that about \$ 0.30 of every dollar is paid in **taxes**.

10) **Summing these quantities we see that the Average American is paying from \$0.54 to \$0.64 of every dollar they earn on interest expense and taxes.** If a legal, legitimate method could be developed to simply capture half of this loss, the wealth creating ability of the average man would be significantly improved.

11) In short, if these two sources of revenue could be captured, then you would be further along in generating wealth for yourself than if you made good investments in the market that were achieving high rates of return.

12) As a note, the methods we are about to discuss are used by Wachovia Bank to capitalize a portion of their banking system. Wachovia has purchased over nine billion dollars in dividend paying life insurance on their top executives. This pool of capital is one of the sources of working capital the bank draws on to fuel their banking system.

How Insurance Works:

1) In developing an insurance policy, several steps must take place. These are as follows:

a. Actuaries develop a statistical model based on the lives of ten million **selected** people. The model predicts the number of people that will die each year within the selected population. The model covers people from the age of birth until one hundred years of age.

b. After the actuaries have developed the population model, rate makers will take this information and determine what the company will have to charge in order to pay the death claim promised and make the whole system work.

c. Lawyers make legal and binding contracts that are offered to the public through a sales force.

d. An administrative organization made up of executives, clerks, etc., oversees and administers the whole system.

2) So far so good. The contract you sign is unilateral. The insurance company promises to do certain things if you meet the standards of acceptability and make your premium payments.

3) If you will look at your contract closely you will see that **you** are the owner of the contract, **not** the insurance company. The owner is the most important person in the play that is unfolding.

4) To make the insurance plan work, the owner (you) must make payments into the company (insurance company) and the insurance company must put this money to work in order to produce the benefits promised. This is usually done in conservative financial instruments such as bonds, mortgages, etc. Sometimes an insurance company will invest in speculative investments such as real estate or joint ventures, but this is usually a small part of the investment portfolio.

5) Now since you are the owner of the policy and not the insurance company, you outrank every potential borrower who wishes to use the money in your policy that is available to be lent.

6) Since you are the owner of the policy and you out rank every other borrower, you have absolute control over the equity (cash value) that has accrued in your account.

7) In essence, the insurance company can only lend the equity (cash value) in your policy to other places if the policy owner (you) does not exercise his option to use the money at the interest rate agreed.

8) By investing the premiums paid, the insurance company creates an ever increasing pool of money to service the policy.

9) Now at the end of the year, the directors call in the accounts and ask "How did we do on John Doe's policy in comparison with the assumptions made by the actuaries and the rate makers?"

10) Based upon this comparison, a dividend may be declared.

Why is a Dividend not Taxable?

- 1) Let's look at an example.
- 2) The rate makers determine that John Doe's policy will cost him \$1.00 / year for the insurance he wants.
- 3) Now the insurance company recognizes that several factors may cause the \$1.00 / year estimate to be wrong, such as high administrative cost, larger than expected death claims, or lower than expected earnings.
- 4) As a result they apply a fudge factor and bump the rate to \$1.10 / year. This extra \$0.10 is the capital that makes the system viable.
- 5) After a few years the directors call the accounts in and ask "How did we do on John Doe's policy in comparison with the assumptions made by the actuaries and the rate makers?"
- 6) The accounts report "we have collected \$ 1.10 in premium on John Doe's policy and it has only cost us \$0.80 to deliver the promised death benefit."
- 7) As a result, the directors now have \$0.30 to make a decision with.
- 8) Since the directors are smart people, they decide to place \$0.025 into a contingency fund and return the remaining \$0.275 as a dividend.
- 9) Since the dividend is not an actual "gain" but is rather a "return of premium", the dividend is not considered a taxable event.
- 10) Unlike a dividend declared in a security which may lose its value as the stock rises or falls, a dividend declared in an insurance policy can never lose any of its value. Once a dividend is declared it is guaranteed – it can never lose its value.
- 11) If the owner will use the "dividend" to purchase additional Paid Up Insurance (No cost for acquisition or sales commission), the result is an ever increasing, tax deferred accumulation of cash values that support an ever increasing death benefit.
- 12) This pool of money has no real governmental strings attached as to how, when or why it may be used and can be passed on to the next generation with limited or no estate taxes.

But it Seems Risky

1) A point to consider about an insurance policy is that it is designed to become more efficient over time no matter what happens. How can this be?

2) Insurance policies become more efficient over time because over the life of the policy, the cash value is guaranteed to reach the face amount of the policy. As a result, the insurance company faces an ever decreasing “net amount of risk”.

Possible Uses of the Infinite Banking System

- 1) Medical Insurance – Works well for people who are “un-insurable”.
- 2) Car Insurance
- 3) Life Insurance
- 4) Buy Sell Agreements
- 5) Pension plans for employees
- 6) Home Mortgages
- 7) Car, Boat financing
- 8) Equipment Financing
- 9) Estate planning & Wealth transfers
- 10) Charitable trust and giving
- 11) College savings plan
- 12) Leasing business
- 13) Retirement planning
- 14) Eliminates need for Social Security
- 15) Can cover multiple generations – good method of teaching and transferring wealth to successive generations.
- 16) Business financing
- 17) Others - ?

How are Dividends and Interest Payments Calculated - ?

1) Usually a life insurance policy will grow the cash value in a policy account in three ways. These are:

- a. Premium payments are credited to the cash value of the policy.
- b. Interest Payments are made on the cash value in the policy.
- c. Dividends payments are made based on the cash value of the account.

2) As a rule of thumb, a policy will have a blended internal rate of return (the rate of return – before tax – based upon the net effect of both the interest and dividend payments to the policy holder) of approximately 6% to 8%.

3) Interest payments are usually based upon the cash value in an account. Usually the insurance company will establish either a fixed or a minimum and maximum interest rate that will be paid on the cash value in an account.

4) Dividends payments are once again a function of the cash value of the policy and calculated as discussed above.

5) When you borrow from your policy your dividends continue. The reason your dividends continue is because borrowing from your policy does not decrease the cash value in your policy. Rather, the cash value in your policy is used to collateralize your loan.

6) The insurance company loans the monies to you at some rate of interest they deem necessary to make the policy work. This is what you are paying for, the use of the money.

7) If you decide to pay extra interest on your loan, the difference between what the insurance company expects and what you pay goes straight to increasing the cash value of your account.

8) This extra money grows your dividend payment and helps to create an ever growing pool of money for your “banking system”.

9) Remember that all growth within the policy has occurred tax free, and these cash values and death benefits can be passed onto the next generation with no or limited tax implications.

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Eric Standlee

<http://www.marketplace-ministry.info/personalwealth>