

News Release

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AMERICAN EXPRESS ADDS NEW STOCK OPTION EDUCATION FEATURE TO EXECUTIVE FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

MINNEAPOLIS, November 8, 2004 — American Express Financial Education and Planning Services announced today it has expanded its Executive Financial Services program with the addition of StockOpter Corporate Services. Featuring highly personalized education capabilities for employees in equity compensation programs, StockOpter Corporate Services is designed for companies issuing employee stock options and other forms of equity compensation.

“StockOpter Corporate Services offers an opportunity to maximize the value of equity compensation programs for the company, its shareholders and its employees,” said Rusty Field, vice president of American Express Financial Education and Planning Services. “Most employees dramatically underestimate the value they would leave behind in their option awards if they terminated their employment. If companies want to help their key employees to be resistant to outside recruitment, they need to provide them with their ‘Forfeit Value’ and educate them on the meaning of it.”

In the first phase of the StockOpter Corporate Services program, key employees receive a personalized report that illustrates the Forfeit Value and a number of other important aspects of their option and stock holdings. American Express financial advisors, trained as equity compensation planning specialists, conduct workshops that reinforce these concepts.

To offer this expanded service, American Express teamed up with Net Worth Strategies Inc. and became authorized as a Certified Provider of StockOpter Corporate Services. The industry-leading StockOpter Corporate Services program provides an education component highly personalized to each employee, periodic updates that reflect changes and keep concepts alive in the minds of employees. Employees also have the option to request a complementary initial one-on-one consultation with an American Express financial advisor to discuss their personal situation. The service includes an executive summary of employee’s perceptions and understanding before and after the educational portion of the program. This summary helps companies design and improve compensation programs for maximum effectiveness.

American Express Retirement Services, a service group of American Express Financial Advisors Inc., provides corporations, unions and municipalities, and their nearly 1 million workers nationwide with a complete package of financial education, recordkeeping, investments and trustee services for their qualified retirement plans. For more information on American Express Retirement Services, visit www.americanexpress.com/sponsors.

American Express Financial Advisors Inc. popularized early saving and investing programs for Americans more than 100 years ago, helping give rise to financial planning, mutual funds and retirement plans in the past century. Today, American Express continues its commitment to individuals and corporations with its Financial Education and Planning Services unit of American Express Retirement Services, which delivers workplace financial education programs to more than 2 million workers nationwide.

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