The MSO Deferral Plan is Engineered Like an F1 Car

MSO Deferral Plan: Built to the Rules. Engineered for Performance.

By: Todd Mezrah

At first glance, a Formula 1 ("F1") race car and an MSO (Management Services Organization) Deferral Plan may seem to have little in common. In reality, they are built around the same fundamental principle:



Performance depends on getting every critical component right—and making sure all those components work together as one integrated system.

"An F1 race car and the MSO Deferral Plan reflect the same engineering discipline: understanding the rules and designing components to work together within them. In both, innovation comes from applying specialized knowledge to the design and execution of the complete system," said Todd Mezrah, CEO of Mezrah Consulting and developer of the MSO Deferral Plan strategy.

An F1 car is not governed by one simple rule declaring the car "approved." Instead, Formula 1 operates under an extensive technical framework governing the engine, tires, aerodynamics, chassis, fuel system, electronics, weight, safety systems, and numerous other components.

The complete car must comply with the rules, but compliance is demonstrated largely through the inspection, measurement, testing and monitoring of its individual systems and components.

The MSO Deferral Plan works in much the same way.

There is no single provision of the Internal Revenue Code ("IRC") called the "MSO Deferral Plan." Nor should one expect an IRS ruling approving the strategy as a single packaged concept.

Instead, the MSO Deferral Plan is an **integrated tax, corporate and compensation architecture composed of multiple established components**, each governed by its own body of tax law, regulations, administrative guidance and judicial authority.

The F1–MSO Parallel

Different Components. A Stronger Outcome.

	Formula 1 Component	Function on the Race Car	MSO Deferral Plan Parallel	Why It Matters
1	Aerodynamics	Controls airflow and allows the car to perform at speed	IRC Section (“§”) 409A Deferred Compensation Plan	Deferral elections, payment timing and plan administration must comply with the rules governing nonqualified deferred compensation.
2	Fuel System	Supplies the energy needed to keep the car operating	Cash Flow / Benefit Funding Economics	The MSO must have the financial capacity to meet its deferred compensation obligations.
3	Engine / Power Unit	Generates the power that drives the car	Reasonable Compensation Analysis	Compensation retained by the operating business versus compensation shifted to the MSO must be economically defensible.
4	Driver Controls	Coordinates all of the car’s systems	Integrated Tax & Legal Coordination	Tax, corporation, compensation, and administrative disciplines must work together rather than operating independently.
5	Brakes	Slows the car and prevents problems	Governance, Documentation & Controls	The ability to manage and eliminate risks before it causes a problem.
6	Suspension	Keeps the car stable and connected to the road	Shareholder Basis	Sufficient shareholder stock or debt basis may be necessary for corporate deductions or losses to pass through and become usable by the shareholder.
7	Chassis / Monocoque	Provides the structural foundation of the car	MSO Structure & Corporate Compliance	The MSO must be properly established, operated and respected as a legitimate business entity.
8	Gearbox / Transmission	Transfers power from the engine to the wheels	Corporation to Corporation Transition	The transition must follow applicable corporate and tax rules so that the later-stage structure functions as intended.
9	Tires / Wheels	Create traction between the car and the track	MSO Fee / Transfer Pricing Analysis	The economics connecting the operating business and MSO must be commercially supportable and appropriately priced.
10	Telemetry	Continuously monitors how the car is operating	Ongoing Administration & Compliance	Proper documentation, recordkeeping and plan administration help ensure the structure continues to operate as designed.
	Complete F1 Car	Combines all systems into one race-ready machine	MSO Deferral Plan	The strength of the strategy depends upon both the validity of the individual components and their integration.

Illustrative framework only. This visual is intended for conceptual and educational discussion, not legal or tax advice.

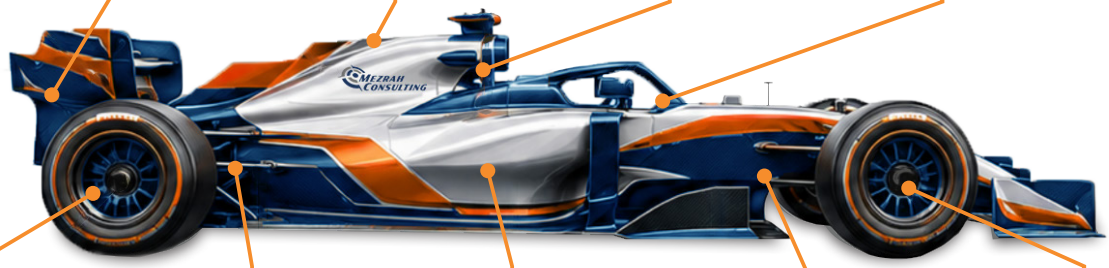
Compliance is Built Component by Component

1 Aerodynamics (Front & Rear Wing)
IRC 409A Plan Design
Performance comes from precision—the deferred compensation design must follow strict rules.

2 Fuel System
Cash Flow/Benefit Payment Economics
The plan must be fueled by a workable economic and tax-efficient funding strategy.

3 Engine/Power Unit
Reasonable Compensation Analysis
The core power source—compensation levels must be supportable.

4 Steering Wheel/ Driver Controls
Strategic Coordination of All Components
Even good parts fail without disciplined execution.



5 Brakes
Governance, Documentation & Controls
The ability to manage and eliminate risk before it causes a problem.

6 Suspension
Shareholder Basis Strategy
Keeps the system stable— maximum basis is needed for pass through economics.

7 Chassis/Monocoque
MSO Structure & Compliance
The structural foundation —the MSO must be set up and operated correctly.

8 Gearbox/ Transmission
Corp to Corp Conversion Rules
Transfers power effectively —conversion rules must be followed carefully.

9 Front Wheels/Tires
MSO Fee Analysis
The plan must be able to grip the facts—the economics and fee structure need to hold under scrutiny.



10 Telemetry/Data Systems
Ongoing Administration & Compliance Monitoring
Continuous monitoring keeps the plan on track.

Key Insight

An F1 car must function as an integrated system and comply with the rules governing the complete vehicle. The MSO deferral Plan requires the same attention to both its components and their integration. It's corporate structure, compensation, arrangement, funding and administration must work together, with individual components. The overall arrangement needs to be disciplined and evaluated under applicable tax and legal requirements.

The analogy becomes particularly useful when considering how sophisticated structures are reviewed.

A Formula 1 team cannot simply point to a compliant engine and conclude that the entire car is compliant. The engine may satisfy its technical requirements while another component violates a completely different rule.

The same principle applies to an MSO Deferral Plan.

A 409A-compliant deferred compensation plan does not, by itself, validate the entire MSO strategy.

- The plan itself must comply with IRC § 409A;
- The MSO fee must be economically supportable; (IRC 482 - transfer pricing)
- The reasonable compensation analysis must withstand scrutiny; (Note: determined by a third party)
- The corporate structure must be properly created and operated;
- The transition from one corporate structure to another must be properly executed; and
- Sufficient basis must exist to maximize deductions (losses) and economics to the shareholder.

Each element has its own job.

No Single Component Carries the Strategy

Consider an F1 car with a world-class engine but improperly designed aerodynamics. The car may have enormous power yet still fail to perform or fail technical inspection.

The same is true of an MSO Deferral Plan.

- A technically perfect § 409A document does not cure an unsupported MSO fee.
- A transfer-pricing analysis does not replace a reasonable compensation analysis.
- A valid Corp deduction does not necessarily maximize shareholder economics.

The strategy isn't successful due to only one working component; it's successful because every material component works independently and collectively.

That distinction is important.

The Better Question

Critics of an innovative strategy sometimes ask:

> "Has the IRS approved the MSO Deferral Plan?"

That may be the wrong question.

Formula 1 regulators do not approve every possible configuration of a race car before engineers design it. Instead, teams build cars within an established regulatory framework and must demonstrate that the resulting machine and its parts comply with the applicable technical rules.

The more relevant question for an MSO Deferral Plan is therefore:

> Does each component of the structure comply with the tax and legal authority governing that component, and do those components operate together consistently?

The foundation should rest upon existing statutory, regulatory, administrative, and judicial authority governing the individual transactions and relationships that make up the structure. The MSO Deferral Plan is engineered to satisfy this standard, with elegance.

Engineered, Not Improvised

Formula 1 cars are extraordinary because engineers operate at the edge of what is possible while remaining within an extraordinarily detailed set of rules.

The same philosophy applies to sophisticated tax and executive benefit planning.
Innovation does not mean ignoring established laws. It means understanding the rules deeply enough to engineer a structure that operates within them.

The MSO Deferral Plan is not a single, isolated tax strategy. It is a collection of established tax, corporate, and compensation disciplines engineered to work together.

And much like an F1 car, the quality of the finished product ultimately depends upon the quality of the engineering behind every component. At Mezrah Consulting, we are the masterful engineers that make the MSO Deferral Plan possible with innovation, creativity, compliance, and continous discipline.





More Information

For more information, email Mezrah Consulting at connect@mezrahconsulting.com or call (813) 367-1111. Visit our website at mezrahconsulting.com to learn more.

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