

JAN 2020

ISSUE 94

ADVISORS

magazine

401K MANEUVER
FOUNDER MARK SORENSEN

TURBOCHARGING RETIREMENT PLANS

Is Your Advisor Relatable?

More straight talk, less jargon

Debt-Free Tuition

Is it possible? Yes.

Succession Planning Success

Culture is key



WORLDWIDE JET CHARTER SERVICE

As the only true global jet charter provider, Privé Jets has become the preferred partner for elite travel agencies and savvy travelers around the world. With customers in over 70% of the globe, Privé Jets has the experience and knowledge to handle all your private aviation needs.

JET CHARTER SERVICE

- True global service
- All aircraft are charter certified
- Newest model jets available
- Ready to fly in just 4 hrs. notice
- No membership required
- Agents available 24/7

ACCESS TO OVER 6,000 AIRCRAFT



LIGHT



MIDSIZED



SUPER MIDSIZED



HEAVY



VIP AIRLINERS

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

As an award-winning private jet charter company, and proud INC 5000 company, Privé Jets strives to provide the highest level of personal service while offering meaningful experiences for all our private jet charter customers worldwide.



Caribbean's Leading Private Jet Charter



South America's Leading Private Jet Charter



With agents available 24/7, Privé Jets is more than capable of handling any and all requests that you might have.

- USA International
- United Kingdom
- Brazil

- +1-305-917-1600
- +44-208-099-0375
- +55-11-3711-9296

- Spain
- Mexico
- Switzerland

- +34-91-1895156
- +52-55-11689725
- +41-43-508-0344



info@privejets.com | www.privejets.com

Accepted Credit Cards:



*Privé Jets is a Private Jet Charter Brokerage Company and it does not own or operate any aircraft.

ADVISORS

magazine

Erwin E. Kantor **CEO & Publisher**
Michael Gordon **Managing Editor**
Jude Scinta **Editor-in-Chief**
L. Guerrero **Writer-at-Large**

Eric Daniels **Billing**

Sean Rome **Creative Director**

Matthew D. Edward **Feature Writer**
Hadrian Scott **Feature Writer**
Edwin Camacho **Senior Staff Writer**
Robert Jordan **Business Reporter**

CONTRIBUTORS & GUESTS

Steven Selengut IAR, Vitaliy Katsenelson CFA,
Elaine Eisenman, PhD & Susan Stautberg, Tim Sheehan

AN ADVISOR MAGAZINE PUBLICATION

Headquartered at: 3642 NE 171st Street, Suite 305, North Miami Beach, FL 33160 (718) 675 4060

Advisors Magazine is published bi-monthly and printed by Blurb, Inc.
Reproduction of any material from this print issue or our digital issue or transmitted in any form of
by any means without prior written consent of the publisher in whole or in part is strictly prohibited.
©2019 by Advisors Magazine. All rights reserved.

For a free digital subscription email: editorial@advisorsmagazine.com
To obtain a print issue, visit: www.magcloud.com/user/advisorsmagazine

ADVERTISING

advertising@advisorsmagazine.com

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

info@advisorsmagazine.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editorial@advisorsmagazine.com



@advisorsmagazin



@advisorsmag



@advisors.magazine

contents



ON THE COVER

18

Turbocharge Your 401(k)
Shifting the "Buy and Hold" Paradigm

FEATURES

8

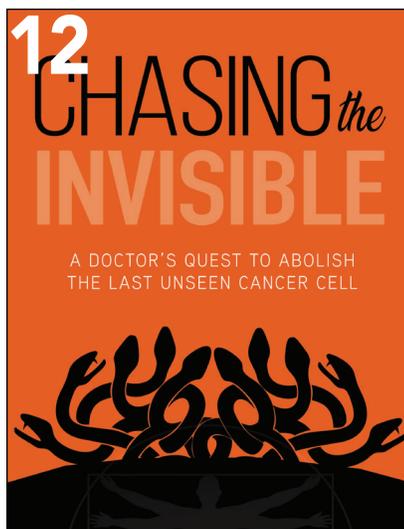
Successful Succession Planning
Sustainable companies groom
future leaders

14

Straight Talk Among Advisors
Understanding your financial advisor

32

Debt-Free Tuition
College without excessive debt:
Can it be done?



BOOK REVIEW

12

'Blue Sky' Innovation
'Chasing the Invisible' reminds
readers that innovation rarely
happens in a straight line.

MADE FOR YOU

42

Things Made Especially For You

ADVISOR INTERVIEWS

26

Tailored Solutions, Open Communication
The return to prosperity economics

28

It Takes a Village to Plan Someone's Finances
Experience is key throughout the journey

30

Education, Consistency, and Discipline
Helping clients meet financial goals

34

Long-term Care: Sooner Rather Than Later
Planning is a family affair

36

Financial Questions? "Ask Kidder"
Dialog helps clients see big picture

38

Empowering Clients to Make Sound Decisions
Financial literacy: filling the gaps

44

Closing The Gap in a Changing Industry
Thinking outside the portfolio

46

Life Insurance: Fundamental to Financial Planning
Keeping both in check

48

Focus More on Wealth Management, Less on Pensions
Investors take charge



inside. in-depth. in-step.

ADVISORS

magazine

**GET FEATURED.
GET DISCOVERED.**

**Power Profiles
a branded content opportunity.**

**YOU'LL BE IN GOOD COMPANY WITH
ADVISORS MAGAZINE EDITORIAL CONTENT.**

Happy New Year 2020

USHERING IN 2020!



This is the time of year that many businesses take inventory, reflect on the past year, and tie up loose ends. Most everyone – from large corporations to solopreneurs – like a fresh start to the new year. And in this case – a new decade! Welcome 2020!

At Advisors Magazine our introspective work examines how we will continue to deliver valuable content to our readers. As we forge ahead, we'll share our conversations with industry leaders in financial, business, economic and entrepreneurial sectors.

Our cover story, "Turbocharging Retirement Plans," features an eye-opening interview with Matthew Jackson a partner with 401(k) Maneuver, a new online tool aimed

at supercharging 401(k) account performances. On page 8, check out how company culture impacts successful succession plans. And, on page 12 we review the book, "Chasing the Invisible: a Doctor's Quest to Abolish the Last Unseen Cancer Cell" by Thomas Grogan, MD – it tells the story of innovative testing equipment needed to rapidly test tissue samples for cancer.

Financial services industry insiders often throw jargon around in client meetings, newsletters, and even marketing materials – but when an advisor uses such jargon, what does the client actually hear? Advisors Magazine asked financial advisors across the industry and across the country for their thoughts on how to relate to clients and why clear,

jargon-lite communication matters, even to investors who know their way around financial concepts.

As we capture trends and breaking news on the economy and financial events, we'll continue to speak with industry game changers to ensure we give you the best from the world of business and finance. We wish you – our readers – a prosperous 2020!

Happy New Year!

Erwin Kantor

Erwin Kantor, Publisher

LIFE IS ABOUT MOMENTS
CELEBRATING ELEGANCE SINCE 1830



CAPELAND
STEEL, 44MM
SELF-WINDING
www.baume-et-mercier.com



BAUME & MERCIER
MAISON D'HORLOGERIE GENEVE 1830

CAN CULTURE PREDICT SUCCESSION PLAN SUCCESS?

Sustainable companies groom future leaders



Several high-profile chief executives lost their jobs in 2019, potentially costing their firms billions in lost productivity. How can companies prepare for executive succession, and how does a company build the right “bench” so that sudden vacancies create less strain on the firm?

McDonald's, Nissan, and global financial powerhouse HSBC all saw sudden chief executive departures in 2019. Corporate profits might have been flying high last year, but CEO tenure at large-cap companies continued to drop like a stone to just five years – down from six in 2013 – according to a study by research firm

Equilar.

An unprecedented number of boards forced out their chief executives last year as well. The Conference Board's 2019 CEO Succession Report found that 30.5 percent of the 59 departing S&P 500 CEOs left under “nonvoluntary” circumstances. The actual total is slightly higher as the Conference Board released its findings prior

to Dennis Muilenberg's ouster from The Boeing Company following more than a year of high-profile disasters at the aerospace giant. Muilenberg's replacement, GE alumnus David Calhoun, already is approaching retirement age, however, and an industry analyst told Bloomberg News in December that they expect the new chief executive to have a short tenure and prioritize finding his own successor.

As chief executive tenure declines and increased public scrutiny on business leaders continues – several high-profile ousters resulted from sexual impropriety



allegations spurred by the “Me Too” movement – boards need to pin down their executive succession plans.

Simply put, succession planning matters.

Where do firms begin when building a succession plan, however? They can start by looking within, said Troy Hall, PhD, chief strategy officer of South Carolina Credit Union and author of *Cohesion Culture: Proven Principles to Retain Your Top Talent*.

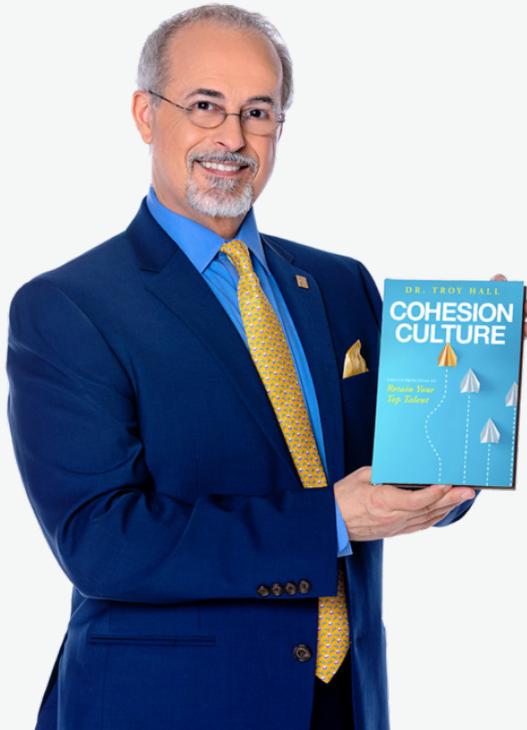
“Successful organizations that have great succession plans also have done a really good job of aligning the individual into the organization because

they’re creating the bench strength from which they want to create their succession plan,” Hall told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent interview. “Without that bench strength, what’s the point?”

Hall’s employer, South Carolina Federal Credit Union, has been named among the “Best Places To Work” by employer review website *Glassdoor*, industry peers, and state of South Carolina. Hall frequently travels worldwide to speak on how to build an organizational culture utilizing the *Talent Retention Model™* outlined in his book and used at South Carolina Federal Credit Union.

Smooth CEO successions can profoundly affect a firm’s bottom-line as well. A study by *Strategy&* – a research division within *pricewaterhouseCoopers International Ltd.* – found large companies that underwent forced chief executive transitions would have created an average of \$112 billion in market value in the years before and after the succession if it had been planned in advance. Firms with strong succession plans also suffered financially, but to a lesser extent, the study found.

A strong succession plan looks at potential



candidates within the firm and develops them over time, Hall said. For example, Hall uses a one-three-five-year system to develop potential successors in the near and medium term. A solid evaluation process is needed to determine who the candidates are and what development they need to succeed in senior roles, he added.

“Good succession plans within an organization have a mentoring component,” Hall said. “They have what are called organizational internships, where individuals have an opportunity to lead in other areas that they may not currently be in,

but which they are being groomed for or which they have an interest, and this is all handled within the organization.”

At South Carolina, potential executive candidates run through a number of “internships” within the firm. New roles also come with a “transition period” in which the newcomer observes, asks questions, and gradually takes over the position. This ensures that operations continue with minimal disruption and eases the learning curve on new senior managers, Hall said.

Firms should evaluate how individuals manage

themselves, lead others, represent the firm, and achieve organizational objectives. Without knowing the baseline, a firm cannot determine who to develop into the next generation of leaders. With it, however, the organization can begin sorting the leaders from the rest, and building a more efficient, competent firm. The firm also needs to reinforce that no position represents the “end of the line,” and instead push for performance at every level.

“People should earn their jobs every day,” Hall said. “If the succession [system] has that mentality

in place, then individuals will continue to perform.”

Performance depends on culture as well. The old adage that “culture eats strategy for breakfast” still applies today. The firms that build effective workplace cultures should be able to withstand major transitions and identify the “bench” before succession becomes an urgent problem. Firms with weak institutional cultures should start there, and work to develop the traditions, attitudes, and values that can guide the organization – once the values are identified, other issues can begin to fall into place.

“It’s about creating sustainability, and that’s what succession is, it’s sustainable,” Hall said. “Having a succession plan is a strategy, but having a culture is a way of life.”

by matthew d. edward

Blue Sky Innovation

'Chasing the Invisible' reminds readers that innovation rarely happens in a straight line.

Science needs room to breathe. Few discoveries happen on predetermined timelines or in linear fashion, and some even go unrecognized in obscure journals for decades.

In *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, the Pulitzer-prize winning grand sweep of cancer and our understanding of it over time, Siddhartha Mukherjee retold the story of Gregor Mendel's discovery of heritability. Mendel's discovery that pea plants inherited traits went unnoticed for decades after its 1866 publication. Mendel, an Augustinian monk now considered to be the founder of modern genetics, presented a theory that ran counter to the prevailing scientific consensus at the time and his work gained prominence after it was rediscovered in the 1930s.

The Emperor of All Maladies presents readers with the grand historical sweep of cancer, from the ancient Egyptians who described breast cancer as untreatable to the 1950s experiments on children suffering from Leukemia, often without parental or patient consent. Within the arc of cancer's history, however, are the innumerable scientists, doctors, and others who spent years developing incremental innovations to improve

patients' lives. Even to those who have suffered from cancer, many of these innovations remain anonymous, their names labels on products their doctors poke and prod them with. Each small step could take decades, however, and innovation rarely happens in a straight line, as Mendel's unrealized at the time discovery highlights.

Chasing the Invisible: A Doctor's Quest to Abolish the Last Unseen Cancer Cell by Thomas Grogan, MD, tells the story of one of these innovations—the testing equipment needed to rapidly test tissue samples for cancer, a process that once overburdened hospitals due to the time required versus the number of samples needing to be tested. Whereas *Emperor* offers the grand sweep, *Chasing the Invisible* takes readers to the ground-floor, exploring the day-to-day labor innovation requires, and the daunting task of funding even promising emerging technologies.

Grogan, who founded Ventana Medical Systems, Inc., in the 1980s wrote the book post-retirement, after reflecting on what his ideas, and those of the people around him, had accomplished. Ventana today is a leading developer and manufacturer of automated tissue-based

diagnostic systems and tests focused on cancer detection. In the early days, however, the first diagnostic tools that Ventana would later produce took form in Grogan's hand-drawn sketches. And had it not been for a department chairman at the University of Arizona who offered Grogan a "blue sky phase" to let his ideas develop, the ideas and the company may have stayed in the sketchbook.

"It liberated me ...

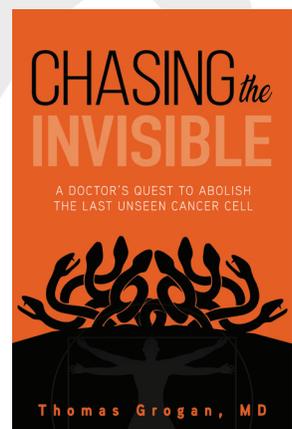
Once I started engaging in conversations, people were filling my ears up with how I should do it," Grogan told *Advisors Magazine*, adding that the support of his department chairman played a key role in giving him the "breathing room" necessary. "He always had this mentality that there was a product from intellectual endeavor, and I remember he said to me once, 'Universities have to understand that from intellectual endeavor comes wealth.' Imagine you have a boss who says 'This could be amazing, how much time do you need? How can I back you?' It's so unusual."

As Grogan covers presenting to dozens of potential venture capitalists, readers get a look at how high-potential innovations can struggle to secure funding, even as hype elevates unproven ideas. *Chasing the Invisible*, in a

sense, acts as a counterweight to John Carreyrou's *Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup*, which chronicles Elizabeth Holmes' gaslighting of investors with shoddy science at Theranos. Unlike temporary billionaire Holmes, whose false promises were eventually found out, Ventana's story shows what happens when medicine, capital, and business align in an ethical way, Grogan said.

Chasing the Invisible adds an important contribution to the growing number of books chronicling the history of cancer and medicine, and shows readers how it takes more than science to tackle life-threatening diseases.

Chasing the Invisible: A Doctor's Quest to Abolish the Last Unseen Cancer Cell by Thomas Grogan, MD. Published by Koehler Books. Available now.



SULZBERGER

CAPITAL ADVISORS



A BOUTIQUE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FIRM.

Stability. Service. Solutions.

Sulzberger Capital Advisors focuses on working with individuals and families offering investment advice, financial planning and overall wealth management. We work with a deep network of national investment service providers to find customized solutions for our clients.

Gene C. Sulzberger, JD, CFP[®], TEP, ADPA[®]
President

4500 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 205, Miami, FL 33137

E-MAIL: gene@sulzbergercapital.com

OFFICE: 305.573.4900 **FAX:** 305.573.4990

www.sulzbergercapital.com

Registered Investment Advisor.

by matthew d. edward

Do You Really Understand Your Financial Advisor?

Insist on Straight Talk

Financial services industry insiders often throw jargon around in client meetings, newsletters, and even marketing materials – but when an advisor uses jargon, what does the client actually hear? Advisors Magazine asked advisors across the industry and across the country for their thoughts on how to relate to clients and why clear, jargon-lite communication matters, even to investors who know their way around financial concepts.

Prospective investors often find themselves overwhelmed by the number of financial terms, products, and advisor qualifications that bombard them during early client-advisor meetings. Less experienced financial advisors may even think industry jargon impresses prospective clients, although typically it just confuses them. Indeed, quite a bit of the financial world's jargon can be misleading – consider bottom-up investing, for example. And many terms – like the much-discussed word “fiduciary” – can mean different things to different advisors. The result is that many advisors leave their would-be clients behind before the work even begins.

“Effective communication to help investors make informed decisions seems in short supply with no clear uptrend. Too often the dialogue centers around the perceived expertise of the broker, advisor or even the firm and the goals

of the client become an after-thought,” said Dave Wilson, social media manager for [Fairhaven](#)



[Wealth Management](#) in Wheaton, Ill. “A good advisor and, for that matter, a good financial services company should be committed to discussing financial topics and strategies in relatable language. No jargon.”

Stripping jargon from the dialog allows the uninitiated investor to join the conversation. Financial literacy continues to lag across the United States, and financial advisors need to break down complex concepts into easy to understand language to make sure their new clients know how their money works.

Americans continue to perform poorly on financial literacy studies year-over-year. According to the FINRA Foundation's National Capability Study, produced every three years, only 37 percent of the 27,564 respondents correctly answers four out of five basic financial literacy questions, down from 42 percent in

2009. FINRA is a quasi-governmental organization that regulates brokers and many Wall Street institutions. The study also showed that America ranks 14th world-wide in financial literacy, above Botswana but below other industrial nations such as Germany. Many advisors pin the lack of financial awareness on limited exposure to money management concepts in schools and universities, and as a result, financial services firms interviewed by Advisors Magazine over the past decade often describe in-house literacy programs designed to get clients up to speed.

“When I was in college and treasurer of my fraternity, I was amazed at how many freshmen did not know how a checking account worked. Looking back on your high school and college days did you have any classes concerning basic money management? I know I did



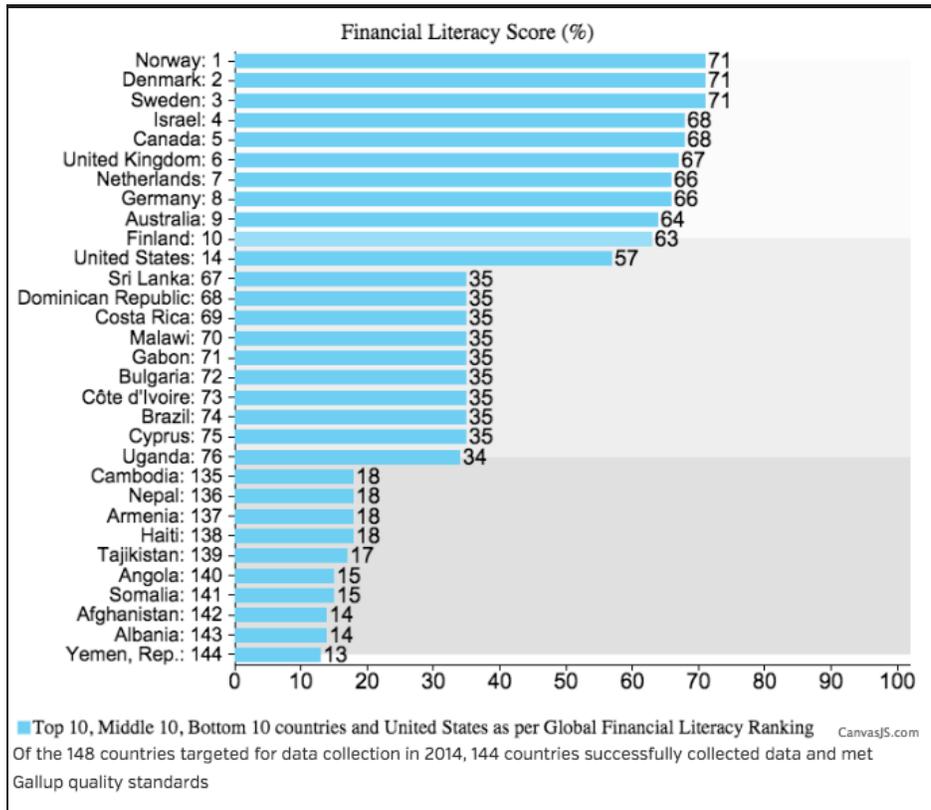
not,” said Jack Meyer, CLU®, ChFC®, the founder of Meyer [Wealth Advisors in Aurora, Ill.](#) “In my early years I listened to the instructions of the financial institutions – that's like having your opponent interpret the rulebook for you.”

Investors need to be able to interpret the rulebook themselves, and the rules need to be written clearly. Advisors need to be ready to reframe the “rules” and get clients to the point where they can parse how the rules apply to their situation.

“Financial literacy is critical as it helps people make rational decisions when it comes to almost all the essentials in their lives as managing money is the lifeblood of lifestyle,” said

FIDUCIARY

A fiduciary is a person who holds a legal or ethical relationship of trust with one or more other parties.



Arthur D. Kraus, CAP, ChFC®, an LPL Registered Principal at [Capital Intelligence Associates, Inc.](#), based in

Santa Monica, Calif. "The absence of financial wisdom leads many of our neighbors into poor decision making and financial stress."

Meyer, for his part, learned several financial lessons through experience, but many investors lack the background or exposure to learn money management as they go. Instead, the average investor needs strong upfront guidance from a solid, trusted advisor.

"A wise man woke me up one day to the fact that if you are not careful you lose much of your wealth to the government, financial institutions, and even other wealthy people. Do people really understand how a mortgage works? How credit cards work? How a 60-day interest-free purchase works?" Meyer said. "The amount of people in the United States living paycheck-to-paycheck is astounding. They are probably,

for the most part, hardworking good people. Our industry has a big job ahead – we need to spend more time as a true fiduciary and sit on the client side of the table and educate the public on sound financial principles."

The term "fiduciary" remains difficult to pin down, with many financial professionals falsely claiming to be one. Most advisors define fiduciary as putting clients' best-interests before the bottom-line, meaning that insurance agents and product salesmen do not qualify. Still, the average investor usually comes to an initial meeting with a limited, or non-existent, understanding of what fiduciary means, several advisors said. Getting a prospect up to speed on fiduciary and breaking the term down into relatable language goes a long way toward building trust.

"I find that most clients do not know the difference between a fiduciary, a broker or a dual registered advisor. When we meet with a new potential client, we need

to explain to them that we are a fiduciary and are required to work for their best interest," said Israel



Guitian Jr., CFP®, a financial advisor at [Guitian Wealth Management](#) in Pembroke Pines, Fla. "I think the

financial services industry needs to take a holistic approach to helping clients. We need to know that each client is different and that each has different goals and risk tolerances. We need to look to the big picture for each client and do what is in their best interest."

For fiduciary advisors, the concept is simple: the client comes first.

"Unfortunately, all advisors do not consider themselves to be fiduciaries – but we are. When a client entrusts us, we are fiduciaries, period," said Steve Booren, the



owner and founder of [Prosperion Financial Advisors](#) in Denver. Booren also is the author of

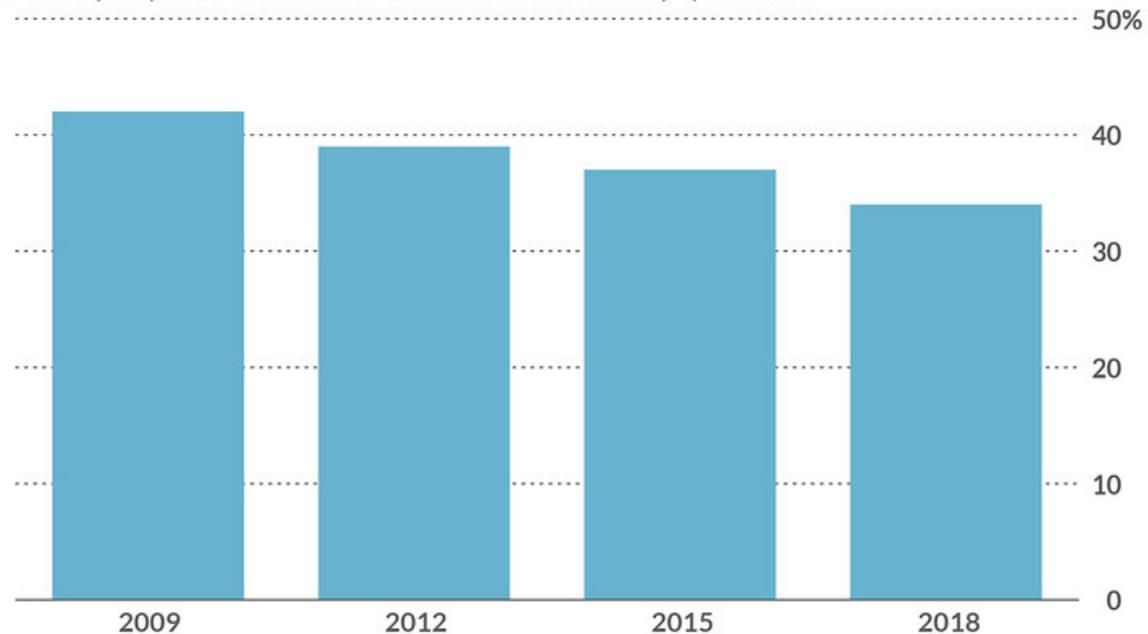
Intelligent Investing: Your Guide to a Growing Retirement Income.

The transition to a more client-focused approach, riddled with fewer pieces of jargon and designed to put the investor first is being driven by the need for customized solutions. Investors today are deluged by financial information and headlines, and sorting through it all to find how their investment goals can be met requires a skilled advisor. Advisors have noticed a shift over the past decade from a sales-based approach where products are king, to a more "consultative" approach built around clients' financial goals. Smaller advisors tend to have the advantage in this, as they can offer a more personal experience than the major players.

"What clients need is someone who can listen to their financial and non-financial matters and

Americans' grasp of financial literacy is slipping

More people are unable to answer basic money questions



Source: FINRA Investor Education Foundation

prescribe a roadmap to allow a client to advance on their wishes to what matters. Unfortunately, the big wirehouses like Fidelity and Vanguard sell on price – assuming cheap results is best,” said Frank Fantozzi, CPA, president and founder of [Planned Financial Services](#) in Cleveland. “The investment part of our industry is easy. It is the consultative, financial planning that takes time and effort.”



Relating to clients and developing a relationship based on providing fiduciary advice and financial literacy education requires effective communication. Clients need to hear from their advisors often and with messages that carry useful information – and not just

a rehash of what they can read or see elsewhere. As more clients and advisors work digitally, clear communication that provides real value will become even more important.

“I am heavily committed to, and invested in, electronic communications. I have been selling life insurance for almost three decades now. During that time, I have seen the sales process evolve from the ‘kitchen table’ featuring face-to-face meetings with your clients, to remote communications via phone, email, and text,” said



Steven H. Kobrin, LUTCF®, founder of the firm of [Steven H. Kobrin](#) in Fair Lawn, N.J. “I have served clients all across the country, and have not

personally met the vast majority of them. The challenge is, of course, establishing credibility and trust with people that have not met you in person. Thus far, I have been able to establish strong relationships with people remotely, and earn their business.”

Effective communication leads to a good client-advisor experience. If an advisor wants to relate to clients, developing the right communication strategies and tools is essential. Electronic or face-to-face, clear communication is the basis of financial education, advisor-investor relationships, and the ability to maintain the ongoing, years-long relationships with clients that will allow them to

meet their financial goals. Without it, the relationship risks falling flat and clients can be turned away by what they perceive as an unresponsive – and disinterested – advisor. Many advisors would even consider clear communication to be a part of their fiduciary responsibility to clients.

“‘Intentional relatability’ is our mission at Fairhaven,” said Wilson of Fairhaven Wealth Management. “We cannot help our clients achieve their goals without effective communication and that starts with relatability.”



*Elite N.Y. attorneys with over 40
years of combined experience!*

THE LAW OFFICE OF
Yankwitt & McGuire, LLP.

CIVIL | COMMERCIAL | FINANCIAL
SECURITIES | HEALTHCARE

140 GRAND STREET, WHITE PLAINS,
NEW YORK 10601

P: (914) 686-1500 • M: (914) 686-1504

E-mail: russell@yankwitt.com

Please visit us at: www.yankwitt.com

EXPERT ADVICE

'TURBOCHARGE' YOUR 401(K) SHIFTING THE "BUY AND HOLD" PARADIGM

Few Americans receive unbiased, third-party help with their 401(k) plans, and some even mistakenly believe that their employer actively manages the plan for them. A new tool, however, could help 401(k) holders maneuver toward the retirement they have always dreamed of.

BY MATTHEW D. EDWARD

Most people still manage their 401(k) plans through the decades-old "buy and hold" strategy, leaving them exposed to today's faster-paced financial world.

"The buy and hold strategy was great decades ago when the stock market and investments were less impacted by news cycles, and they were really more impacted by market fundamentals and consumer buying habits," said Matthew Jackson, a partner at 401(k) Maneuver, a new online tool aimed at improving account performance. "But in today's 24-hour news cycle, and with changing trade policy, changing tax policy, and consumer buying power changing on a dime because of a bad tweet, the buy and hold strategy just isn't as effective today as it was decades ago."

Few Americans, moreover, receive independent, third-party help in managing their 401(k) account.

Investors often find themselves adrift with no support and underperformance. Jackson added.

Mark Sorensen founded 401(k) Maneuver and along with partners



Matthew Jackson and Brian Neff, created an online tool where investors could receive the help they need to actively manage their 401(k) accounts. The 401(k) Maneuver platform is open to employees with a 401(k) regardless of what company they work for, Jackson said. The 401(k) Maneuver team rebalances enrolled employee accounts quarterly and works to reduce downside risk, he added.

The vast majority of Americans with 401(k) plans fail to periodically rebalance them, meaning to move around the investment allocation within their account so

that it better matches their risk tolerance and financial goals. A 2014 analysis by human resources consulting firm Aon Hewitt found that of 138 defined contribution plans—which represented 3.5 million potential enrollees—only 15 percent rebalanced their portfolios that year. That number climbed slightly once target date funds and other premixed options were excluded, but still only amounted to 19 percent.

“I can’t blame them if they are not rebalancing, because people were taught over decades to buy an investment

and hold it, and it will grow,” Jackson told Advisors Magazine during a recent interview. “And that’s true in some cases, but research shows that’s not always the most effective way to invest.”

Jackson and partners officially launched 401(k) Maneuver October 2017 after years of seeing investors struggle to manage their own plans.

“People’s workplace retirement accounts are generally their largest asset and usually the asset they get the least help with,” Jackson said. “We began to talk about the 401(k) industry and the lack of help that was provided to people. We started to do a lot of research and we found that there were some problems we thought we could help fix.”

**401(K)
CALCULATOR**

**Enter 401(k)
Account Balance :**

**Enter Interest
Rate (%) :**

**Enter Years to
Retirement:**

CALCULATE



Rebalancing 401(k) plans was one area investors needed help, but the partners identified others. The widespread use of target date funds also may leave many investors with mediocre results. Target date funds are premixed allocations—including, stocks, bonds, and cash—that become more conservative as a target date, usually retirement, approaches. The funds are run by professional wealth managers and designed to help those with little investment knowledge or skill, but the one-size-fits-all approach can fail to take into

account each investor's unique financial situation.

"I am not blaming my industry for purposefully coming up with a product many think is subpar, the target date fund. I believe our industry is trying to do a service by offering target date funds, because they do offer that rebalancing," Jackson said. "A target date fund can be better than a buy and hold strategy, however, the problem with the target date funds is that they treat everybody exactly the same. A target date fund manager's philosophy does not bend if you're a doctor in

Seattle, a nurse in Key West, or an engineer in Boston. If all of those people are age 60 and plan to retire at 65 then they're treated exactly the same and they get the same mixture of asset allocation no matter their personal tolerance to risk, no matter their capability to save."

The larger problem, however, remains that the average 401(k) holder receives no third party coaching they can rely on. Without independent advice, the buy and hold strategies of last decade become the default.



“That’s where we at 401(k) Maneuver feel the American public is being done a disservice,” Jackson said.

That disservice might be costing investors big money. Studies have found, for example, that periodic portfolio rebalancing may improve 401(k) performance by up to 3 percent annually. The 3 percent most 401(k) holders potentially leave on the table could amount to tens of thousands of dollars, or even more than \$100,000 over a lifetime of saving. Enrolling in 401(k) Maneuver may help employees take advantage of those rebalancing gains and

make up for lost time.

Investors sign up for 401(k) Maneuver online and never need to attend a face-to-face meeting. But that does not mean the tool is automated. The 401(k) Maneuver team reviews accounts quarterly and rebalances when necessary, and works with clients to address their concerns. The platform team adheres to the fiduciary standard as well, meaning that clients’ best-interests come before the firm’s bottom-line.

The online platform allows participants to access the team from anywhere. Jackson has used online tools in the past to help

investors, and clients often find it valuable to have easy access to their advisor.

“I was one of the first advisors in the country to really pioneer online sales through webinar-based advising and helping people with their applications,” he said.

The 401(k) Maneuver platform also works with other defined contribution plans such as 401(a), 457 plans, 403(b) plans and the government’s Thrift Savings Plan; the tool was named after the 401(k) due to its predominance in the market, Jackson said.

Employees across the wage, age, and industry spectrums often fail to take full

advantage of their 401(k) plans. Several studies have found that employees almost never contribute the recommended amount to their 401(k) plans and those who do tend to take the hands off “buy and hold” approach described by Jackson, leaving potential returns unearned. With pensions few and far between, investors who fail to engage their 401(k) account risk falling short in retirement.

“It’s pretty scary; this is a system where people are increasingly on their own,” Enrichetta Ravina, visiting associate professor of finance at Northwestern



Matthew Jackson & Brian Neff, 401(k) Maneuver Partners

University's Kellogg School of Management, said referring to a study she led on the widespread underfunding of 401(k) plans. "This is something they need to know about."

Financial literacy often lags among investors. Investors who know their own 401(k) well, tend to be rare due to the complex, legalese disclosures that accompany them. Plan holders need to understand how their money can work for them in order to make decisions aligned to their financial goals.

"Financial literacy is important because it helps the consumer buy

financial products rather than be sold financial products," Jackson said. "I don't believe that any of my clients should ever have to take my word for it because I know best."

The 2008 financial crisis shook many would-be investors' faith in the market. Even today many hesitate to commit money to their 401(k) plans or other investment tools.

"People are more doubtful and hopeless that the stock market and their investments will give them the type of retirement they've always dreamed of, and people are biting their nails worried over the next 2008," Jackson

said, referring to the economic downturn that devastated the country a decade ago. "The change in their mentality has been that they're still waiting."

The financial media does not make matters any better. The constant drumbeat of contradictory information and sensational headlines can leave investors frustrated and anxious. For many, making a decision on where to put their assets is difficult.

"When we look at the talking heads on TV, you have someone making half a million dollars telling you why the next market crash is going to happen tomorrow. And in the next breath you have another person making half a million dollars telling you why there's going to be another increase in the market that it will be the greatest market run in history," Jackson

said. "It creates a lot of confusion, and confusion causes paralysis. And paralysis causes investors in America to invest less, become less hopeful, and become disconnected with the type of retirement they'd always hoped for."

For many investors, funding their 401(k) is the first step toward retaking their financial future back. The 401(k) Maneuver platform allows investors to get the support they need to potentially maximize their account, and to reach the retirement they dreamed of.

"We're like that turbocharger you would bolt on to the engine of a car," Jackson said. "Our goal is to help 401(k) participants squeeze the most out of performance during good markets and minimize loss during bad markets."

For more information on 401(k) Maneuver, visit: 401kmaneuver.com



401(k) Maneuver is offered by Royal Fund Management, LLC which is registered as an investment adviser with the SEC and only transacts business in states where it is properly registered, or is excluded or exempted from registration requirements. SEC registration does not constitute an endorsement of the firm by the Commission nor does it indicate that the adviser has attained a particular level of skill or ability. Royal Fund Management, LLC, is not affiliated with or endorsed by NASDAQ.

DESIGNED FOR PERFORMANCE.
ENGINEERED FOR ELEGANCE.



TUDOR





TUDOR HERITAGE
CHRONO

TAILORED SOLUTIONS, OPEN COMMUNICATIONS

Fiduciary's approach to financial planning

Investors need more than advice on asset allocations or which stocks to buy – they also need an advisor who communicates often and in language they can understand. When the market fluctuates, investors may make rash decisions, and it takes a trusted advisor who can communicate and educate to explain to clients what is happening to their money. Redhawk Wealth Advisors, Inc., understands that clients need frequent and useful communication. The firm even works with other advisory firms to improve their client communication processes.

“We built the solutions to problems that both our respective clients and our industry were not really solving at all,” said Dan Hunt, AIF®, CRPS®, Chief Executive Officer of Redhawk Wealth Advisors, Inc. “One of those problems was the lack of meaningful contact, especially when markets go the wrong way. Everybody suddenly doesn’t want to communicate. Our solution requires that all clients are communicated with on a regular basis and that each communication is meaningful and material.”

Redhawk Wealth Advisors, based in Minneapolis, offers clients a full suite of wealth management and retirement



HELPING CLIENTS
AND ADVISORS
PREPARE FOR A
BETTER FINANCIAL
OUTCOME



planning services. The firm’s services are supported by proprietary technology, comprehensive clearing and compliance services, practice management, and training and research. The firm works with small business owners, individual investors, and offers support services to financial advisors nationwide.

Hunt founded Redhawk Investment Advisors in 2005 (later became Redhawk Wealth Advisors in 2008) after a difficult inheritance dispute with distant relatives who came out of the woodwork following a death in the family. The experience taught him that proper financial planning matters when it comes to protecting family wealth and ensuring it gets passed on to the right people.

Providing tailored financial solutions to clients, the firm utilizes a thorough process to take a holistic view of clients’ finances and each investor’s individual plan reflects their financial goals.

“As a fiduciary you have to do whatever helps each individual client or family the most, so in that sense no two clients can be exactly the same,” Hunt told Advisors Magazine in a recent interview, adding that the

financial plan also needs open and honest communication between both parties.

At Redhawk Wealth Advisors, open conversations are the norm. The firm acts as a fiduciary, meaning investors’ best interests come before the bottom line. Hunt takes an approach to client finances called the “do unto others model.” If an advisor sells a product, Hunt said, then it should be a financial tool they themselves use, or would use. Clients who ask their advisors for references, success cases, and other typical statements of credibility risk are being led astray. Instead, a true fiduciary advisor should be willing to disclose how their own finances work, he said.

“If they offer to sell me a certain product, they had better be ready to show me how it worked for them,” Hunt said. “The optimal way to feel an advisor out is to simply test the do unto others model, because an advisor could simply say anything.”

For more information on Redhawk Wealth Advisors, Inc., visit: redhawkwa.com



CURED WITH FLAVORS OF ANOTHER FAVORITE



Every Arturo Fuente OpusX cigar is crafted from rum barrel-cured, Dominican tobacco, and hand-wrapped in robustly flavored rosado leaves.

Find yours today.



It Takes a Village to Plan SOMEONE'S FINANCES

The return to prosperity economics

Many investors take a “get-it-done” approach to financial planning – they talk to a wealth manager, try to educate themselves, and put their money where they think it will work best.

What these investors miss, however, is that relying on a single financial professional for all of their needs might produce subpar results. Instead, a team-oriented approach that brings together financial planning, insurance, and other services could be better.

“We’ve actually developed what’s called an integrated resource network of financial services that follows a family office model,” said Bruce G. Wehner, Cash Flow Strategist at e3 Wealth who is based in St. Louis. “An insurance producer might not want to give up the assets of an individual for an equity product because that’s less money to go into insurance. It takes a special team of people to work together side-by-side and create plans that benefit the individual and their family. It’s about teamwork and that, we believe, is unique in our field right now. Most people work with an individual advisor.”

e3 Wealth, with offices across the country, provides comprehensive wealth management and alternative investment services based on a model that is “counter-intuitive” to what traditional advisors use. They subscribe to an “Advance &

Protect” philosophy, which focuses on minimizing risk across four areas: market volatility, inflation, taxes, and longevity risk. The firm currently advises more than \$500 million in assets and calls itself part of the prosperity economics movement, which steps outside of the traditional stock and bond investment paradigm and takes a broader view of investing, financial planning, and risk management.

Prosperity economics, started in 1999 by Kim D. H. Butler, returns financial planning and investment management to the pre-401(k) world. The movement focuses on risk management, holistic wealth

“It is Not Enough to take steps which may someday lead to a goal; each step must itself be a goal and a step likewise.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

management, and minimizing consumers’ exposure to big banks, Wall Street, and corporate interests. Proponents of the movement often say that Butler did not discover it, but rather “rediscovered” it.

At e3 Wealth, Wehner works to educate clients on how their money



works for them. Investors often struggle with their finances given the numerous pressures they deal with such as work, family, and health; these would-be clients are competent

and educated, but their skills lay outside the world of money. A trusted advisor can help bridge the gap for these investors, educating them on the possible moves they can make to reach their financial goals.

“I often tell our clients, I understand why you’re confused,



because you're getting mixed messages from the media every single day," Wehner told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent interview. "We explain every financial product we put in front of a person and explain why we're putting it in front of that person."

e3 Wealth takes advantage of alternative investments such as real estate or oil and gas to build income streams for clients.

These investments can be complicated to access, however, so a capable advisor is key, Wehner said.

"The problem is that with most of these, you need to be an accredited investor. You cannot advertise for these things; you have to go through the private channels. So, people are never exposed to it, they're never exposed to these investments," Wehner said. "Hopefully we get our government to realize that there's some merit to getting people into these alternative investments. It's not that we're thinking outside the box, it's that there's a bigger box out there and we don't know what that box contains."

Wehner uses a four-step model to working with his clients: education, competence, action, and trust. The

process starts with education to build investor competence, but the goal is action, Wehner said.

"When investors take action, it makes us feel good that our processes are working properly. And when they don't take action, then we reframe our education until they understand enough to take an action," he said, adding that the process starts slow to not overwhelm clients and that actions should be taken in measured steps. "Of course, we don't want to eat the elephant all at one sitting."

Action matters inside and outside the financial realm. Even successful investors who retire with enough money can find themselves falling into bad post-retirement habits. Wehner remembered a friend and client of his in the past who retired without a plan for how to spend his time. That friend, a former teacher who Wehner worked alongside in his previous career, was "brilliant," Wehner said, but lost sight of how important staying active and engaged can be post-retirement. Unfortunately, Wehner's friend died only seven years into retirement at 69.

"I believe it's because he lost purpose in life and because he wasn't doing any physical activity,"

Wehner said.

Wehner credits his former teaching career with giving him the ability to connect with clients and explain their finances to them. He also is the co-founder of *The Money Advantage* podcast, which is aimed at helping entrepreneurs live the life they dream of having. The ability to educate clients is key in today's investing environment where clients are bombarded daily with differing views, products, and alarmist headlines. For these clients, making a decision with confidence can be difficult.

"People want to have confidence that they're making the right decision," Wehner said. "Gone are the days of finding a financial advisor and just saying 'I trust you, here's my money.' They have seen many bad things that have happened during their lives. We tell them that we don't want them to just have faith in us, we want them to understand what they're getting into."

For more information on e3 Wealth see e3wealth.com



Education, Consistency, and Discipline Helping clients meet financial goals



Adam Lampe, CEO & Co-Founder
Mint Wealth Management

Continually providing clients with comprehensive "Total Solution" to their financial and related personal needs.



A robust retirement plan requires more than strong returns. It also requires strong planning to avoid debt, mitigate taxes, and reduce risk.

"I recently had a client who wanted to spend a tremendous amount on a new house," said Adam Lampe, chief executive officer and co-founder of Mint Wealth Management. "If you do this," he said he told his client, "you have to make 5 percent for the rest of your life, and there's some years in the market where we don't make 5 percent. Understand that for you to meet your goals, one out of every four years you're going to be down in the market, and if you're not comfortable with that then you have to bury your money in the backyard."

Mint Wealth Management, based in Houston, provides comprehensive financial management services including estate, tax, and

investment planning. The firm does not require a minimum asset level to sign on as a client and serves hundreds of families with an average combined investment account of \$1 million with a 98 percent year-over-year client retention rate.

Mint Wealth Management takes clients' full financial picture into account to develop a holistic plan for them to achieve the retirement they want. Lampe begins with client education, empowering clients—and prospects interested in signing on with the firm—to make the best choices they can for themselves, and to understand how their money works.

"Education is the key, and my goal is to educate you to confirm things you already know or teach you things you don't know, because what I want to be is a sounding board," Lampe told *Advisors Magazine* during a recent interview, adding that he encourages clients to get past their hesitancy in discussing their finances, especially with family members, so that every option can be considered.

Often, investors hesitate to talk to their children about the family finances, but Lampe encourages them to "shatter the money taboos," he said.

"It's so critical that people understand all

the options out there," Lampe said. "I tell clients, 'I want you to use me as a human version of Google, because there's so much misinformation out there.' I feel like it's my duty as a trusted advisor to make sure people get good advice."

Lampe also illustrates the need for financial discipline using success stories from around the industry. Most successful investors and retirement savers are "allergic to debt," he said, or at least "bad debt." Sticking to the plan during rough years also makes a difference, he said.

"There's a presentation that we go over with our clients about being disciplined. We show them that if you'd been in the stock market for decades, your average return would be 7 or 8 percent per year. But, if you left the market due to a behavior mistake, and let's say you missed the best 40 days in 20 years, your return goes from almost 8 percent to -2.4 percent," he said. "That is so critical that we avoid those kinds of mistakes."

To learn more about Mint Wealth Management, visit: mintwm.com

Adam Lampe offers advisory services offered through investment advisors, a division of ProEquities, Inc., A Registered Investment Advisor. Securities offered through ProEquities, Inc. A Registered Broker-Dealer, Member, FINRA & SIPC. Mint Wealth Management is independent of ProEquities, Inc.



**THE HIGHER THE ALTITUDE
THE BIGGER THE PICTURE**

WE GIVE YOU THE GIFT OF BEING THERE.

NETJETS[®]

Global Resources of Berkshire Hathaway • 50 Years of Leadership • All for you

Paying for

COLLEGE

without building excessive debt: Can it be done?

Strategic planning pays off

Americans owe \$1.5 trillion in student loans, a slow-moving crisis that has left many unable to buy homes, start families, or pursue the careers they want. And the problem continues to grow, 69 percent of students took out loans in 2018 and graduates that year averaged \$29,800 in debt. Students' parents often take a hit as well, with 14 percent holding an average of \$35,600 in federal Parent PLUS loans.

Student loans dwarf credit card and auto loan debt. Americans owed \$840 billion on their credit cards and \$1.21 trillion in auto loans in 2018. Add in the fact that student loans, generally, cannot be discharged in bankruptcy and that tuition costs continue to rise, and the need to effectively approach college planning becomes apparent. College planning needs to start early, however, to avoid the missteps so many student loan borrowers make.

"Some parents put it off until ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade. Now, they're staring at a \$60,000 per year expense

coming in and they're stuck between a rock and a hard place," said Brian Safdari, president and founder of College Planning Experts, Inc. "We work with parents in high school. It's a game – it's a strategy. Just like there's tax planning, there's higher education planning to position your income and your assets around the financial aid forms which determine how much money you're going to get from the college."

College Planning Experts works with families preparing to send their children to college. The firm guides parents through college selection, financial aid preparation, and helps clients develop a strategy to pay tuition without taking on excessive debt or lifestyle restrictions. The firm works with tools and approaches that go beyond the 529 savings plan or other generic strategies that a traditional financial advisor might use.

"We can't be thinking about, 'Well can we reduce lifestyle expenses and use all of your savings and take that and just pay full price for college.' Instead we can take that and go to

private schools that are cheaper than going to a state school," Safdari told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent interview. "We show parents how you can go to a private university that costs \$60,000 or \$70,000 per year and still get 40, 50, or 70 percent off the college expense so that it's more manageable."

Even middle- and high-income families need effective college planning strategies so that their children can avoid high debt loads, Safdari added.

Financial aid, often thought of as exclusively for low-income students or those with academic or sports merit scholarships, can actually be taken advantage of by families across the wealth spectrum depending on which college or university they





EDGE PLANNING

choose.

"Most middle- and high-income families don't understand that because they hear the term financial aid and assume it's for low-income families," Safdari said. "The people that are giving them information are not doing anything malicious, they're just sharing their experience. Well, it's not a one-size fits all and every school is different."

Parents need to take an active role in the college planning process as well, but they need to be careful with who they trust.

"There's a lot of information and Google is very powerful. I tell parents that, generally, when you're reactive versus proactive, that's when you get yourself into a lot of trouble because you're asking so many questions, you're talking to so many people—and parents typically like to talk to other parents. One of the biggest mistakes that parents make is talking to another parent," Safdari said. "That's because they're asking other parents that probably made mistakes and don't understand the process or how the higher education system works."

Parents who lack an understanding

of the system should find a trusted advisor who can guide them through their options. Safdari said that many parents still burdened by their own student loans often walk through his door looking for help planning their children's education.

"They probably did it themselves, they got into that mess because they didn't plan ahead," Safdari said. "When they come to me, if they had debt or still have debt on their own, one of the reasons they hire me is because they don't want their kids to go through having that debt or taking out the wrong loans."

College Planning Experts takes a holistic view of the prospective student, looking at what they want to do with their lives, which institutions they want to attend, and whether those universities can deliver the return on investment needed to make up for the cost of attendance. And while many families hope that financial aid officers and the institutions themselves can offer advice on how the system works, Safdari said those options often fall short.

"Unfortunately, the financial aid office at most universities doesn't do

a good job. They're not there to sit down with a parent and look at all of their options," he said. "Specifically, what we do is sit down with a parent and we work out their college costs."

Without that tailored, professional advice, parents could find it difficult to play the college game.

"Education is so expensive," Safdari said. "And because it's so expensive you can literally be broke and be bankrupt before even coming into the workforce if you don't understand how to handle the higher education system."

If you are a parent of a high school student and would like a complimentary 30 minute phone consultation to quickly and easily show you how to avoid any pitfalls, or learn the strategies that apply to your family, email Brian at brian@CollegePlanningExperts.com or call his office at (818) 201-4847.

For more information about College Planning Experts, Inc., visit: collegeplanningexperts.com



COLLEGE PLANNING
EXPERTS

LONG-TERM CARE: Sort it out Sooner Rather than Later PLANNING IS A FAMILY AFFAIR



For families with elderly relatives, the prospect of long-term care, and how to pay for it, can be intimidating. The average 65-year-old today has a 70 percent chance of needing long-term care, and those who need it will use it for an average of two years, although for 20 percent that number jumps to five years.

Many families fear the long-term care question for financial reasons – a room in an assisted living facility runs \$3,628 per month on average, and nursing homes can double that cost easily. Add in longer lifespans and increasing health care costs, and it becomes easy to see why many families are afraid to even touch the subject. But at some point, families

need to bring in a trusted advisor who can help them sort out their long-term care needs and develop a payment plan.

“We start with the kids in the middle, the 45-year-olds to 55-year-olds, and say ‘How are we going to take care of your parents? Who is responsible?’ and you find that, being a planner, you deal with the brother or sister who is going to be doing the most,” said Andrew G. Palomo, CFP®, AIF, managing member and founder of Pillar Financial Advisors, LLC. “Once you start thinking about it, the fear goes away.”

Pillar Financial Advisors, based in Oak Park, Ill., provides comprehensive, tailored wealth management services to clients large and small. The firm does



not maintain a minimum asset level to invest but rather seeks relationships with prospective clients who have clear goals and want to take charge of their financial futures. The firm provides retirement, estate planning, investment management, and insurance services, to name a few, and uses a holistic approach to client wealth, Palomo said.

Many prospective investors delay dealing with their finances. Even educated professionals can feel intimidated when working with complex financial concepts and industry jargon. For Palomo and the team at Pillar Financial Advisors demystifying finance makes up a large part of the client education process.

“The initial part of our consultation is that we put it out there that the financial services industry spends a lot of money every year using big words and making things seem more complicated than what they are,” Palomo told

Advisors Magazine during a recent interview. “And what we’re known for is plain talk and simple answers. We try to break a financial product down to what it is and how it would work for you, and against you, and what particular goals this tool would help with. We really let our clients off the hook initially by telling them that it is completely understandable to have seemingly dumb questions, because there’s billions of dollars spent every year to make you feel that way. We’ll help you sort through it.”

Sorting through financial problems, especially long-term care, needs to be a family affair, Palomo said. If a family works together to plan their financial future, then achieving their goals becomes that much simpler.

“It’s really fun and easy when you have everybody in the family on the same page and thinking about what to do,” he said.

For more information see pillarfp.com

KEEP WALKING.
JOHNNIE WALKER.



Financial Questions?

"Ask Kidder®"

Dialog helps clients see big picture

Worried investors make hurried decisions, sometimes derailing years of careful planning and pushing financial goals further out of reach. To keep investors from panicking, a trusted advisor needs to be ready to answer questions and create a supportive environment for clients who feel unsettled.

At Kidder Advisers, Inc., openness to questions became the firm's slogan: "Ask Kidder."

"We didn't develop that, it actually came from our clients," said Keith J. Gredys, JD, AIF®, chairman and chief executive officer at Kidder Advisers Inc. "They said, 'If we have a question or an issue, all we have to do is ask Kidder and they'll have the answer or they'll find the answer for us.' If you have a relationship with the client then you can have a dialog so they can ask questions. From that perspective, if you're all on the same wave-length then it's easier to make decisions and the conversation is more about us rather than 'What are you doing for me?' There's more of a back-and-forth dialog."

Kidder Advisers, based in Des Moines, provides tailored wealth management and benefit solutions for individual clients and organizations. The firms qualified plans for organizations typically manage \$4 million or more and include more than 30 participants, while individuals typically need to meet a minimum asset level of \$500,000 to sign on as clients.

The firm offers custom solutions to clients and takes a holistic view of investors' financial situations and goals. As a fiduciary firm, all clients' best interests

come before the bottom line.

"We're getting into tailor made design solutions not just generic matching and the like. We're looking at the overall financial health of businesses and individuals," Gredys told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent interview. "Clients might understand what they do, but when they get into the financial aspects, they're out of their comfort zone. So, our job is to educate them so that they can make decisions, we're not trying to sell products, we're trying to develop a solution for them to satisfy their financial needs."

The clients – whether individual or institutional – needs to take an active role in their own finances, Gredys added. While Kidder Advisers' fiduciary duty puts clients first, it's up to the client to understand what questions to ask and when to work with their advisor.

"If you look at the understanding of fiduciary, if you do not understand an aspect of your finances, then it is your responsibility to engage competent individuals," he said.

Gredys said that today's investor needs to be prepared to work closely with their trusted advisor. Financial literacy among clients is often lacking, and while a competent advisor can fill in the gaps, the investor is the one who knows where those gaps are. For instance, long-term care options typically overwhelm clients, he explained, and the number of products available, family dynamics, and financial goals all complicate long-term care planning. That means an advisor has to listen carefully and work closely with an investor to ensure they understand their options.



"Each situation is different because everybody is on a different time frame, spectrum, and in a different health situation," Gredys said. "But by providing choices – and showing that there are potential choices, whether they assume that risk or not – they're in that decision-making process as opposed to saying, 'I have no clue whatsoever,' and then it hits them later on. It's about being open and frank about all aspects."

Kidder Advisers takes an approach that includes both "offense" – accumulating assets – and "defense" – protecting existing assets from risk – and offers clients a mixture of tools designed to accomplish their financial goals.

"I've always incorporated an approach that, at least if we're looking at investment management, incorporates both active and passive investment styles and I'm still primarily focused on asset allocation there," Gredys said. "Then there's the more risk management style of investing that might incorporate some additional

resources and tools to mitigate risk, whether it is insurance-based, tax-based, or whether it might be alternative investments. Each of those is done on an individual basis to move into risk minimization in the portfolio."

The personal touch offered by Kidder Advisers provides a higher level of service than investors can find through automated tools or at larger, impersonal firms. One client, Gredys said, often only worries about the market when it's about the hit bottom, whereas others require more communication to keep them from panicking.

"When that client calls me and says 'Do you think it's time to sell?' that's when I know 'Okay, it's time to buy.' Most other clients would have come in or been nervous and called up," he said. "It's that psychology that a robo-advisor can't offer. That's where people will make those poor decisions or emotional decisions or however you want to

term it. The only thing that can handle that, in my opinion, is a live person that's talking on the phone or in person to give them that reassurance."

The personal approach is why clients know that their financial concerns can often be addressed simply by "asking Kidder."

"It's not what you have, it's how everything you have works together. That sums up a lot of what we're trying to do for individuals, business owners, participants," Gredys said. "It's to help them see the bigger picture, what's the picture supposed to look like in their life puzzle."

For more information about Kidder Advisers, Inc., see kidderadvisers.com.

Securities offered through IFP Securities, LLC, dba Independent Financial Partners (IFP), member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advice offered through IFP Advisors, LLC, dba Independent Financial Partners (IFP), a Registered Investment Adviser. IFP and Kidder Advisers, Inc. are not affiliated.

KidderAdvisers



Ray E. Hansen, AIF®
President/Shareholder



Stacy G. Van Blair, CRSP, QKA
Senior Vice President



Dr. Elio Chiarelli, Jr., Ph.D., AIF®
Vice President/Shareholder



Matthew Gredys
Vice President/Shareholder

EMPOWERING CLIENTS

TO MAKE SOUND FINANCIAL DECISIONS

Financial literacy: filling the gaps

KEY INSIGHTS

- On average, U.S. adults answered only 51% of the P-Fin Index questions correctly.
- Personal finance knowledge is highest in the area of borrowing and managing debt and lowest in comprehending risk.

TIAA Institute-GFLEC Personal Finance Index, an annual assessment of U.S. adults' financial literacy.

Industry professionals tend to agree that financial literacy among investors remains surprisingly low. However, the investors who do know the basics might not be any more prepared than their peers.

“Even if someone knows some of the basics: budgeting, saving, investment, and insurance, many still don’t truly understand how the pieces fit together and the value of having a financial plan,” said Ira G. Rapaport, chief executive officer of New England Private Wealth Advisors, LLC. “Not enough is done to promote financial literacy. Sometimes classes are available in high school or college but typically as electives. At that point, most people may not be that receptive as they likely haven’t really started to make any significant financial decisions. Often times, it isn’t until people get their first job, have access to a 401(k), or have to start paying back college debt that financial literacy becomes important to them.”

New England Private Wealth Advisors, based in the Boston suburb of Wellesley, provides comprehensive wealth management services to high net worth individuals, families, and institutions. The firm is an independent, fee-only advisor registered with the Securities and

Exchange Commission, and they act as a fiduciary, meaning that clients’ best interests come first.

No matter how many studies experts conduct on financial literacy, the results remain stagnant.

The 2019 TIAA Institute-GFLEC Personal Finance Index Study – which measures financial literacy and wellness annually – found that American adults could correctly answer just 51 percent of the survey questions, on average. The 2019 results topped 2017 and 2018, but only by 1 percentage point year-over-year. The study results show that many Americans lack the skills to manage their own money, and with that comes the risk that they may fail to fully prepare for emergencies, market downturns, and/or retirement.

“Those with greater financial literacy are more likely to save and plan for retirement,” Rapaport told Advisors Magazine. “Eighty-eight percent of those with high financial literacy save for retirement on a regular basis, compared to 37 percent of those with low financial



literacy.”

New England Private Wealth Advisors works with clients to ensure they understand how their money works. Understanding financial concepts can be difficult, especially for busy professionals who need to devote time to their own endeavors, so Rapaport and his team work carefully to find what troubles clients and where the gaps in their knowledge exist.

“Confusion can arise in any conversation. Each party brings a separate base of knowledge, experiences and concerns. This is especially true when it comes to talking about something as emotional as money or retirement,” Rapaport said. “In all of our discussions with clients, it is our job to listen intently, develop an understanding of their point-of-view and concerns, and provide relevant education.”

Clients who master, or at least grapple with, financial literacy will likely be better positioned long-term, Rapaport added. Boosting clients’ financial literacy is key in preparing them to take control of their future

and achieve the retirement, home purchase, or investment goals they seek.

“Those with greater financial literacy have a greater propensity to track spending. Sixty-three percent of those with high financial literacy usually or almost always tracked their spending, compared to 54 percent of those with low financial literacy,” he said, citing the 2019 TIAA study. “Those with greater financial literacy are less likely to be financially fragile. Eighty-five percent of those with high financial literacy could certainly come up with \$2,000 if an unexpected need arose within the next month, compared to 25 percent of those with low financial literacy.”

New England Private Wealth Advisors works with clients to break down complex concepts into language they readily understand. But there comes a point at which information overload sets in, so Rapaport and his team take care to keep things simple and to present only what clients need.

“Providing clients with choices is important, however, too many choices



Ira G. Rapaport
Managing Member / CEO

NEPWA is dedicated to offering transparency, in-depth analysis and aggregated reporting through leading-edge technology.

We partner with innovative providers who share our commitment to exceptional client service and information security.

FIRM AT A GLANCE	OUR DISTINCTIVE APPROACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEC Registered Investment Advisor Fee-Only • Professional Certifications include: CFP® Professionals, CIMA®, CFA®, AIF®, CPA/PFS, ChFC® • Assets Under Management: Approximately \$2 Billion • Serving high-net-worth relationships and institutions throughout the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize a Fiduciary Process • Broad Based Planning Services include Income Tax, Estate, College, Retirement, Insurance, Charitable Giving and Executive Compensation • Open Architecture and Customized Portfolios • Incorporate Active and Passive Managers / Funds as well as Alternative Strategies

retiree's income, most firms have cut back and left savers to navigate 401(k) plans, Roth IRAs, and the stock market themselves. A trusted advisor, however, can help fill the gap left by the employers of previous decades.

At the same time, increased longevity has complicated retirement planning. Today's saver can expect to live roughly six to 10 years longer than their grandparents did, and that future technological or health advances may push those numbers higher. Retirees now face a 10, 20, or even 30-year retirement and could potentially be retired for as long as they were working.

"Longer life expectancies imply individuals may need to depend on their accumulated savings to provide income for a longer period in retirement compared to previous generations. Among evolving personal and family goals, calculating financial needs for a period of more than 20 years can be an extremely daunting task," Rapaport said. "Since most companies are no longer offering pension plans, individuals and families are now asked to take more responsibility for their own financial security in retirement."

Families can share that

can lead to confusion and clients feeling overwhelmed," he said. "We typically focus on presenting the one or two solutions that best meet the client's need. We then review the solutions presented in detail to help ensure the client understands them fully before making an informed decision."

And while commission-based advisors might take a hurried approach to getting a client "in and out," Rapaport's team works with investors to make sure they stay focused every step of the way. As a fiduciary advisor, Rapaport does not push products or insist on certain asset allocations, each client is instead taken as a whole and has a custom plan tailored for them.

"We take a holistic view,

involving our clients and their spouses in every aspect of the planning process and frequently engage their other professional advisors in the discussion. We welcome any questions and are willing to spend whatever time is necessary to ensure our clients fully understand and are comfortable with any recommendations we present," Rapaport said. "Depending on a client's current financial understanding, we tailor our explanations to best help them understand our thought process and recommendations."

Financial literacy has taken on greater importance as employers continue to reduce retirement support. Whereas pension plans once provided the bulk of a





"However, their unique situations often require more sophisticated planning and a greater depth of knowledge or understanding. Our consultative team approach is designed to educate our clients, whatever their situation may be, empowering them to make sound financial decisions consistent with their core goals and values."

Empowerment is the goal. Investors, whether just starting out or nearing retirement, need to be fully informed to make the best choices possible. Financial literacy is a first step, but developing a strong relationship with a capable advisor also is necessary. Finally, the advisor-client relationship has to be strong enough to build investor confidence to the point of taking action, because days, weeks, months, or even years of financial literacy education amount to nothing if clients fail to use it.

"Clients should look for an advisor willing to serve as a patient educator, providing as much detail and assistance as necessary," Rapaport said. "The most effective financial advisor is not there to make decisions for clients, but to provide the tools and assistance needed for the client to comfortably make their own prudent choices."

For more information on New England Private Wealth Advisors, LLC, visit: nepwealth.com

responsibility with a trustworthy, fiduciary advisor who can guide them through the steps toward building a sustainable financial plan. Financial literacy is a big part of that as well, as investors need someone who can guide them through the years of evolving financial goals, plans, and shifting priorities.

"In the years before retirement, working with an advisor and becoming more financially literate can help individuals develop an understanding how to best allocate financial resources to meet immediate needs and maximize the potential for achieving future goals," Rapaport said.

Many investors may shy away from "education," feeling that

they already are experienced, capable professionals in their own right. But a lack of financial literacy does not mean a lack of education, it means only that the investor is working outside their comfort zone and needs a guide. Investors who have accumulated significant assets face even greater challenges in learning the financial ropes; their assets typically require a detailed approach and a professional eye to ensure sufficient care is taken to protect and grow those investments.

"The vast majority of our clients have been very successful in their lives and typically have a firm grasp on many basic and intermediate level financial concepts," Rapaport said.



New England
PRIVATE WEALTH ADVISORS, LLC



1



4



5



2



3



6

In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best everything.

1 RENT-A-SHELBY — SIXT

After a long flight, wouldn't it be a welcome surprise if instead of offering a nondescript subcompact or sedan, the rental counter handed you the keys to a supercharged Ford Shelby GT-500? SIXT Rent A Car, the Germany-based, high-end auto agency, now offers the 600-horsepower, 5.0-liter, V8-powered car, that is based on the Mustang fastback that Ford introduced in the 1960s. The manufacturer, Shelby American, was founded by celebrated auto designer Carroll Shelby (of Cobra fame). The vehicle comes in the company's signature orange-and-black color scheme. sixt.com

2 FASHIONABLE FLASK — SEAMUS GOLF

Not all flasks are meant to be inconspicuous, as proven by this 6-oz. vessel (\$55) from Seamus Golf. The Oregon-based company, known for its tasteful handmade golf accessories, now offers a basic flask covered in wool tartan that's been sourced either from local mills in the Pacific Northwest or the United Kingdom. Each is made to order and can be customized with a leather label and your tartan of choice. seamusgolf.com

3 COUNTRY CUSTOM — LYLE LOVETT FOR HAMILTON SHIRTS

The idea of high-end, hand-sewn shirts usually brings to mind the business garments that are the purview of London's Jermain Street. But what if your style happens to be more down-home? The American shirt maker Hamilton offers designs inspired by country-music star Lyle Lovett. The singer contributed such touches as a deep yoke with matching pockets, a trim fit and carved horn buttons. Shirts can be customized by collar, sleeve and chest measurements as well as ordered in relax fit. And just like London's Turnbull & Asser, they come with three-button sleeves. hamiltonshirts.com

4 COMING TO AMERICA — RICHARD JAMES

Richard James, the Savile Row tailoring house that was founded in the premise of pushing boundaries, has done literally that with the recent opening of a New York City store and it plans for other U.S. locations. Far from the staid image of the London's bespoke clothing mecca, the shop has championed fashion-forward apparel with inventive colors since its 1992 founding. The new location recently displayed items from Elton John's wardrobe in support of the film *Rocket Man*, but they also make styles for the earthbound. richard-james.com/us/

5 THE RED LIGHT — EVE SYSTEMS

Harsh lighting is the enemy of relaxation and reflection. Instead of flooding your man cave with severe bulbs or tubes, consider the soft and controllable light of the LED strip. The 6.6-foot Eve Light Strip provides accent lighting that is easily installed, can be cut to measure (down to one foot) or extend to 32.8 feet. When connected by iPhone app, voice commands control a huge range of colors and brightness (up to 1,800 lumens). evehome.com

6 BENTLEY CENTENARY PENS — GRAF VON FABER-CASTELL

Bentley Motors, the company synonymous with the dawn of the auto racing, is marking its 100th anniversary with two special limited edition models. Didn't get on the waiting list? Don't want to dip into your trust fund? Graf von Faber-Castell, the maker of fine writing instruments, is offering another road in: the Graf von Faber-Castell for Bentley Limited Edition Centenary range. The fountain (\$660), rollerball (\$600) and ballpoint (\$545) pens incorporate such Bentley style cues as a diamond quilt pattern, knurling and its trademark "B" on the cap. graf-von-faber-castell.com/us

Preserve your wealth with CitiTrust's knowledge and
Financial Management Solutions

WWW.CITITRUST.BIZ

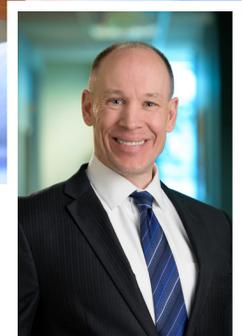


BELIZE | BVI | MALTA | UK | SAMOA | BRUNEI | BRITISH ANGUILLA | CYPRUS | GIBRALTAR | ISLE OF MAN | GENEVA |
JERSEY | LIECHTENSTEIN | LUXEMBOURG | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES | CHINA | SWITZERLAND | MARSHALL ISLANDS



CLOSING THE GAP IN A CHANGING INDUSTRY

Thinking Outside The Portfolio



Karl Frank, CFP®, AIF®, MSF, MBA, MA
President of A&I Financial Services

The financial services industry faces several disruptive forces and advisors need to stay ahead of the curve. Fee compression, an aging advisor workforce, new technologies and other market shifts are just some of the issues facing today's advisory firms.

"People in our industry are worried about our fee compression here at my level, the advisor level, dealing with real people. But the compression will continue to accelerate at the levels above me – at the ETF and mutual fund level, at the custodial level," said Karl Frank, CFP®, AIF®, president of A&I Financial Services, LLC. "It will continue to drive toward zero and may be at zero before we know it. So, I have an obligation to my clients to know that we're safe."

Based in Englewood, Colorado,

A&I Financial Services provides comprehensive wealth management and tax planning services to families and small business owners across the state. The firm's clients average \$2 million in assets under management and the advisory team specializes in serving clients with different financial planning needs, such as business owners, retirees, independent women, and professional coaches and athletes.

A&I Financial Services acts as a fiduciary, meaning clients' best interests come before the bottom line. To that end, the firm works with clients to "close the gap" in financial knowledge, with extensive conversations intended to help investors understand how their money works for them. Meanwhile, the company also is closing the gap between the

financial industry today and the emerging market forces that will change finance in the years to come.

"Close the gap, I love that phrase," Frank told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent interview. "We start to build a custom, tailored plan for a family in a very unique way, but the initial meeting starts the same – we have a safe conversation about what means the most to them so that we can focus on the purpose of the investments, not just the performance. That way we're not distracted by the things that can keep us from achieving our goals."

Frank takes an active role in investor education and in improving the financial services industry, both in the firm and the greater Englewood community. For example, Frank served as president of

Why choose A & I Financial Services?

Since 1986, a track record of financial planning success for our clients

- Leadership within the national and Colorado Financial Planning Association Service to the national Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards
- Commitment to the Denver business community and philanthropic organizations
- Frequent contributors to local news stations, including 9 News KUSA and Channel 4 KCNC
- Recognized by industry associations and featured in publications
- Columnist for MarketWatch



A&I FINANCIAL SERVICES LLC
Optimizing Assets and Income



the Financial Planning Association of Colorado and launched Denver Financial Planning Day in 2009, which brought together the best CFPs in the state to provide advice to everyone across the wealth spectrum. That event has since become a model for other cities around the nation.

Frank's community efforts attracted national attention from fellow financial advisors, and he was selected and profiled as a "Leader in the Profession" for the June 2012 issue of the Journal of Financial Planning. Frank also has made several television and print media appearances as a financial planning expert.

The focus on education also means that prospective clients can expect language they understand and a lack of complex financial jargon. A&I Financial Services works with prospective investors to break down barriers to understanding and provide solutions aligned to clients' financial goals.

"We give before we get and it's served us very well," Frank said. "One of the biggest differences between us and other firms is it happens here. Our financial plans are one-pagers, and they're very graphical. It's behind the scenes that are unique for a family, it might be really simple on that paper but there's a ream of paper behind that one-pager."

Financial education empowers clients to make their own decisions and put their money to work.

"We can pull out our 401(k) disclosures and we can pull out any sort of fee disclosure and if you have a fiduciary advisor it should be completely transparent. But financial education is

where you'll feel confident that actually is the truth because without it you'll never be 100 percent sure that you're being told the truth by whoever you talk to," Frank said.

But even financially literate and savvy clients need help. A trusted, fiduciary advisor is able to help clients see the big picture, consider options, and see solutions that might not be obvious at first. To do that requires patience, the ability to listen, and the willingness to put clients first, Frank said.

"The greatest value of a wealth manager is his ability to listen and understand and make sure the current situation is not going to permanently destroy the financial success of the client," he added.

A&I Financial Services intends to reevaluate its value-chain going into 2020. The firm currently has the capacity to grow assets under management – with a back office team in place to handle growth and keep costs down by leveraging scale – and also plans to look at emerging investor concerns such as cybersecurity and the role of automated investing tools, Frank said. Advisors cannot become complacent amidst so many simultaneous industry changes and need to consider what is best for clients beyond the products in their portfolios, he added.

By taking a holistic view of investors and the industry, A&I Financial Services hopes to close the gap between today and tomorrow so that clients are prepared for whatever comes.

"I think a lot of my competitors and friends in the industry need to be thinking about that too," Frank said. "There are massive changes going on and it's time to reassess everything,"

For more information about A&I Financial Services, LLC, visit: assetsandincome.com

Securities provided through Geneos Wealth Management, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advisory services offered through A & I Financial Services LLC

LIFE INSURANCE: FUNDAMENTAL TO FINANCIAL PLANNING

Keeping both in check

Everyone eventually needs life insurance, whether they sign up for a policy or not. The average person, however, remains woefully underinsured in America – and that means their family will pick up the tab when they pass away.

“Everybody’s an insurance company of sorts,” said Dr. Guy E. Baker, CFP®, founding partner and managing director of BTA Advisory Group, an insurance broker. “You’re your own insurance company because you haven’t laid off the risk with a policy – you’ve accepted the risk yourself. Your family is going to fund whatever the value insurance would have provided for your heirs or others, or they have to get it from another source.”

BTA Advisory Group, based in Irvine, California, provides life insurance solutions to clients who recognize that an adequate policy can ease the burden on relatives after they pass away. Baker also directs Wealth Teams Alliance, a full-spectrum wealth advisory firm that offers clients financial planning, investments, and retirement solutions. The firm does not require a minimum asset level for clients to utilize their management services, with Baker adding that the clients’ personality fit with the team means

more than their bank balance.

Americans often neglect to properly insure themselves according to LIMRA, a global research and consulting association serving the insurance industry. Their 2017 study found that 61 percent of adult Americans had life insurance, down from 70 percent in 1984. Approximately one third of those people relied on group life insurance, however, leaving them vulnerable to an insurance gap if they change jobs or lose it.

Even those who hold their own policies often fail to take on enough coverage. The average policy includes \$126,000 in coverage, but LIMRA’s data shows that the average policy needs amounts to \$459,000. Moreover, almost half (47 percent) of the insured respondents carry coverage amounts of \$100,000 or less, including 21 percent who hold a benefit amount of \$25,000 or less.

With the average American underinsured by \$300,000, a trusted advisor who can help them navigate the risks of remaining uninsured and the need to properly plan their future can help families avoid unnecessary pain and chaos following the loss of a loved one.

Many consumers, however,



Dr. Guy E. Baker, CFP® is the founding partner and managing director of BTA Advisory Group and Wealth Teams Alliance



find discussing life insurance to be uncomfortable. After all, most people would rather put death out of mind and push it further and further into “the future.” That approach creates risks to families, businesses, and hard-earned wealth, Baker said. Additionally, the range of policy options available and the lack of understanding surrounding how much insurance is enough means a solid advisor is needed to guide clients through the selection process.

“How much insurance do you want? What’s the type you should buy? And how much should you pay? The steeper the price, the less the desire. People tend, when they’re solutions-based, to think more about whether they really need that solution,” Baker said. “And, of course, since death is one of those events people want to ignore, they rarely will talk about it. Besides, it only happens once, so they tend to push it off as far into the future as possible, without realizing they might be hit by a car tomorrow.”

Baker wrote the book on life insurance, literally. One of his best-selling books, *The Box*, presents an easy-to-understand discussion about mathematics of life insurance. The book has become a fixture in life insurance offices nationwide, with more than 1,000,000 copies distributed throughout the industry.

Baker is a frequent writer and speaker throughout the financial services industry as well, and he has

spoken to advisors in more than 40 countries. Baker’s most recent book *The Great Wealth Erosion* teaches investors how to control the four critical factors that oftentimes make or break long-term investment success. Other books Baker has written include *Investment Alchemy*, a guide to stock market management, and *Baker’s Dozen*, which covers Baker’s thirteen fundamental principles for financial independence. Baker’s *Dozen* has more than 50,000 copies in print.

Just as many people lack the right insurance, an effective financial plan can drift away from an investor’s financial goals over time. WTA works with clients to keep their plans current, and to make sure their money is aligned to their financial goals.

“It’s easy to be in denial about what you should be doing and how you should be doing it,” Baker said. “People are so busy being successful, whether that’s in their careers or their personal lives, that they don’t have time to pay attention to the impact changes cause along the way. A plan that started out by design becomes a plan by default because time erodes away good intentions.”

Both of Baker’s firms are looking for long-term relationships. The firm strives to understand clients’ unique financial situations and needs, and works to educate them on how to invest their capital using a strategy developed from five Nobel Prize laureates. The custom solutions offered can adapt as clients’ situations change over time. When changes happen, whether in the market or in a client’s life, a trusted advisor from the firm can work with them to offer the “wisdom” that comes with experience, Baker said.

“You have to know the people well enough to know how to address their concerns,” Baker said. “Unless the advisor has those skills, and has the ability to help somebody deal with problems, then the problems are never going to be front and center. Most advisors focus on solution, not problems. In the long-run, the real issue is the connection between a credible advisor and the people who love someone or something.”

For more information on the Wealth Teams Alliance visit: www.wealth-teams.com

**WHETHER
YOU ARE AN
INDIVIDUAL,
AN EMPLOYEE,
OR A BUSINESS
OWNER, OUR
FIRM IS HERE
TO HELP YOU
NAVIGATE
THROUGH
EVERY
STAGE OF
YOUR LIFE.**

TODAY'S RETIREES

FOCUS MORE ON WEALTH MANAGEMENT, LESS ON PENSIONS

INVESTORS TAKE CHARGE

Pensions once funded a majority of American workers' retirements – at least in part.

Since the 1980s, however, the pension essentially has become an endangered species, with the retirement risk shifting to individual savers via 401(k) plans and other investment products. Where the American worker once relied on a pension and Social Security to provide "mailbox money," guaranteed to arrive every month, today's retiree needs to take charge of their own financial future.

Today's retiree is not alone, however, and a trusted advisor can help turn surviving a pensionless future into thriving in one.

"Income planning is likely the number one scenario that we work with. Pensions

are fossilizing as we speak – only 17 percent of the top 100 companies now offer them to their employees," said Robert DeChick, founder and chief executive officer of Courtland/Walker Financial Group. "With pensions going by the wayside and actually exiting the mainstream financial markets, we have to make up that income somewhere. That automatically negates a cookie cutter approach."

Based in Clermont, Florida, Courtland/Walker Financial Group provides comprehensive wealth management, retirement planning, and insurance solutions to clients from across the wealth spectrum.

The firm offers tailored solutions designed to fit clients' unique financial goals, rather than one-size-fits-all asset allocations that fail to take into account an individual investor's needs.

Courtland/Walker Financial Group acts as a fiduciary, meaning clients' best interests come before the bottom-line, DeChick said. That means clients can have access to any financial service or product that fits their individual situation, he added.

"In today's investment and financial planning landscape, you cannot have that cookie cutter approach whatsoever," DeChick told *Advisors Magazine* in a recent

interview. "As a fiduciary, it means we have the ability to reach out and touch, as an independent advisor, any company or any strategy to customize a plan based on a client's individual needs. The reality in this industry is that every single household you come into contact with is unique – it will show sooner rather than later, whether or not you're trying to deliver a standard cookie cutter model, or whether you're customizing a plan based on their needs."

The retirement landscape has changed dramatically over the past three decades. Corporate cost-cutting and risk deflection pushed pensions to extinction. A



2017 Willis Towers Watson [study](#) found that Fortune 500 companies offering traditional pension plans dropped 86 percent, 251 to 34, between 1998 and 2013. That means one leg of the old retirement “tripod” – savings, pensions, and Social Security – has been knocked out from under savers.

Meanwhile, new pressures such as increased longevity and the so-called “sandwich generation,” the savers responsible for caring for aging relatives and college-aged children at the same time, further complicate the investment process. The new investment world requires careful investor-advisor collaboration.

“We’re now in a very unique landscape that many consider to be uncharted waters,” DeChick said. “One thing I see other advisors struggle with is setting expectations, meeting expectations, and making sure –year in and year out – you rehash those expectations.”

One of the expectations DeChick sets: growth no longer remains the one and only objective for client portfolios. Instead, the newer, more complex landscape requires an advisor who can help clients preserve their initial capital, reduce risk, and prepare for an eventual down market. Clients come to him not to get rich, but to protect and grow their wealth, he said. Courtland/Walker Financial

Group works with clients to ensure they understand how their money works. The firm conducts seminars throughout the year for both clients and the public on everything from investments to estate planning. The company prioritizes client education so that investors are empowered to make the decisions that best align with their financial goals. The seminars show prospective clients what it means to work with a fiduciary advisor who puts them first.

“You are giving them information, education, and the ability to make a determination about what it’s actually like to meet with you one-on-one and discuss their financial situation,” DeChick said.

DeChick also reinforces his role as fiduciary by offering asset classes he knows inside and out. Recommending that clients invest or divest in a product that an advisor has no first-hand experience with can lead to poor decision-making and subpar portfolio performance, he added.

“One of the biggest mistakes any of us advisors can make is to talk poorly about any investment that he or she knows nothing about or is not even licensed to talk about,” DeChick said. “Those are real perils, real problems for investors. Unfortunately, most investors don’t know the difference and because of that they’re being talked to by, for instance, a licensed insurance

agent who is recommending them to liquidate securities accounts or liquidate portfolios that the agent is not licensed to offer, but yet is recommending to liquidate those accounts.”

Prospective clients should check whether their advisor is truly a fiduciary, DeChick said. Many non-fiduciary advisors claim to be fiduciaries and investors need to be prepared to sort out a genuine advisor from a product pusher who may not have their best interests at heart.

“If you’re an insurance agent there’s nothing wrong with that, but what is wrong is an insurance agent portraying themselves as something they are not,” DeChick said. “If that portrayal is inaccurate right at the front gate of a conversation or an appointment, then everything else is negated.”

For more information on Courtland/Walker Financial Group, visit: courtlandwalker.com



Securities Offered Through D.H. Hill Securities, LLLP. Member FINRA & SIPC. Advisory Services Offered Through D.H. Hill Advisors, Inc., A Registered Investment Advisory Firm.

thewebempire™

“ Complete, inspired, non-traditional web services, for all type of businesses ”

John Varsamis | CEO

WEB
DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

SEM
SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

NET
DATA CENTER SERVICES

FROM OUR CLIENTS:

“The Web Empire delivered more than expected ”

“ doubled our clients in less than 3 months ”

“I would recommend The Web Empire without any hesitation!”

“ The Web Empire has allowed me to focus more on what I love to do ”

“ exceptional level of integrity ”

“ very helpful and always attentive to the needs of my business ”

“My project is treated as the highest priority and deadlines are never missed ”

“SEO helped us appear at the 1st page of Google ”

“ clever interactive design ”

www.thewebempire.us
718 717 2867

**Custom Website Design Complex API Development Search Engine Marketing
Vertical Markets Solutions CMS Based Platforms NY Based Data Center**

Multiple Times Awarded For Our Services:



Proud To Be A 5 STAR Google RATED Company:



exceptional.
from start
to finish.



Exceptional. It starts with a prestigious Pennsylvania Avenue address and a venue that fuses dramatic architecture with sophisticated design. It's an attitude reflected in all we do. From our experienced sales and event planners to our discerning culinary team, the entire staff at the Ronald Reagan Building is dedicated to making your event exceptional—from start to finish.

Prime Location | Flexible Spaces | Natural Lighting | Innovative Catering | Impeccable Service

202.312.1300 | events@itcdc.com | RRBITC.com
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004
A Project of the U.S. General Services Administration



LIVE FOR

AT THE HEART OF ROLEX
LIES A STRONG AND POWERFUL BELIEF:
LIVE FOR GREATNESS.
THE VERY SPIRIT OF WHO WE ARE,
IT DEFINES OUR TIMEPIECES.
MAKES OUR CROWN ICONIC.
YET GREATNESS IS WITHIN EVERYONE.
PASSION. DRIVE. INSPIRATION.
THEY EXPLAIN THE HOW AND WHY
RECORDS ARE BROKEN.
BREAKTHROUGHS ARE MADE.
MOUNTAINS ARE CONQUERED.
MORE THAN A DESTINATION,
GREATNESS IS A JOURNEY
THAT NEVER ENDS.

GREATNESS



OYSTER PERPETUAL DAY-DATE II
IN PLATINUM


ROLEX