

Making the Case for 5-Star Service

Connect with Your Clients.
Shape Your Future.
Differentiate *You!*



A Whitepaper for Financial Professionals

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Introduction

As the investment world continues to increase in complexity and the media continues to highlight the bad apples of our industry, we have to work harder to build trusted relationships with clients. Trying to impress prospects with industry jargon and fancy new products and features is not the route to success; developing and cultivating relationships through knowledge and excellence is where success will be realized.

As the respective business owners of **KNOW NO BOUNDS** and **Paragon Resources**, knowledge and excellence are at our very core. “Know” serves as the root of the word knowledge and “Paragon” means excellence! When you couple actions based on your *client knowledge* with *service excellence*, you truly have the foundation for success in your financial practice.

Through our consulting and coaching experiences, we have noticed several common themes in the financial advisory industry. So many teams want to grow their business and make the practice more efficient but feel they cannot do so because running the team and the business all take so much effort... there just is no time!

Most of you reading this whitepaper already have a practice, a book of business, a team, and a pipeline of prospects yet something isn't right. Maybe you are suffering from *growing pains* in your business. Perhaps you are overwhelmed by the increase in the activities it takes to conduct business and continue your success. Perhaps regulatory demands are hindering your growth rate or things are falling through the cracks and you feel disorganized. Maybe you feel you've ignored some of your clients and you fear you will lose them, or even worse, you already have lost a couple of good clients. We want to change all this! We want to help you run your business rather than let it run you! If any of the aforementioned scenarios resonate and keep you up at night, then implementing an organized service model and process into your practice is for you! We hear so many advisory teams utilize the phrase – “We want to grow our business, but...” It is time to eradicate the “buts” and enact new activities that will create positive change for you, your business, and your life.

Today's environment creates the need to deal with an ever changing society; survival will not occur by doing things the same old way. Service is no longer something businesses just offer; it is the backbone of the culture of the practice. Think about your practice and your team like a portfolio of investments. Would others recommend you? Would you buy you knowing what you know about your business? Take a hard and honest look in the mirror, seek the truth, and open your minds to the possibility of running your practice a little differently. If you decide you have indeed ignored the service side of your business for too long and are committed and ready for change, it's time to turn your practice into a powerhouse service portfolio where clients stick around forever, recommend you, and want to buy more!

We believe so strongly in the concept of service that we developed a simple five-step process to help advisory teams truly differentiate themselves and deliver extraordinary service on an ongoing basis. Our process is written based on specific and direct feedback from financial advisory teams around the country to ensure it will make a tremendous impact on your business. We conducted a survey to help us take the pulse of the industry and to make certain that we included and addressed the concerns and issues the field is experiencing. You will find several references to the service survey throughout this document, but if you'd like to download a full summary, please visit:

www.ParagonResources.com/library/servicereport.pdf

This whitepaper focuses on **making the case for delivering 5-Star Service** within your practice as we believe it is **service** that can, and should, drive your sales and ultimately creates the basis of the success of your long-term relationships. If you believe we do in fact “make the case,” we suggest you consider purchasing our book, **Know Service**.

This “how-to” resource provides detailed step-by-step instructions, activities, letter templates, checklists, scripts, and tools on implementing a sustainable service model into your practice. Purchase information is available at the end of this whitepaper.

Making the Case – Differentiating You!

With the amount of investment professionals, firms, and technological resources available in our world today, people have a choice when seeking help with their finances. After researching hundreds of jobs, MONEY Magazine and Salary.com rank “Financial Advisor” as the third best job in relationship to growth, pay, benefits, and stress¹. The U.S. Department of Labor projects employment in the investment securities sector will grow by 15.8% by 2014². Mergers and acquisitions in the industry are a regular news event and firms that previously had nothing to do with wealth management are now playing in your backyard. Also, the fact that the number one complaint in our industry is that clients do not feel they hear from my Financial Advisor enough results in many taking their assets elsewhere³.

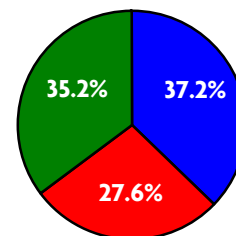
With all of this competition and noise in the industry, you must be able to answer one key question about your practice. Why should anyone do business with you? If your clients or prospects have not already asked you this question, your luck will soon run out. If they have asked and you responded that your service is better than everyone else’s, you just gave the same answer as thousands of other advisory practices! Face it, when all of you sell the same “products”, service is the natural response to help differentiate yourselves; however, if you plan on using service as your answer, you better be able to back it up with a clearly defined service model with real and valuable deliverables. If not, you will join those professionals who don’t walk the talk and whose clients experience no special benefit and therefore begin to look elsewhere. If your service merely “exists,” you will become extinct; if your service is well-defined, distinct, and exemplary, you will thrive and join the ranks of those advisors who are not only successful in terms of revenue, but also in making a difference in the lives of their clients. You will experience personal satisfaction, long-term client retention, and build a business that is valuable to you and your clientele.

Making the Case – Advice. Performance. Service.

In your journey to becoming financial professionals and establishing an advisory team, you gained knowledge, credentials, and confidence along the way. You can give **advice** that ultimately provides **performance** and results to your clients. However, these are past tense elements that can be replicated by many. Yes, you have continuous learning requirements and you have a constant need to perform, but it is indeed **service** that directs the future. It’s not about just doing the business; it’s about the quality of the business that you do. This is not a job – it is a purpose-driven career, a passion, and indeed a part of who you are. Service isn’t about reacting to random needs; it’s about *leading* your clients in their financial decisions. You can no longer be complacent about service; it can no longer be “somebody else’s job” that just happens on its own. Service has to be proactive, organized, and continuously delivered to exceed expectations and turn your clients into champions and advocates of your practice. It results through mutual commitments between you and your clientele and benefits all.

What do YOU want your clients to experience from a relationship with you? Jump into their shoes and ask yourself, “What do THEY want from this relationship?” Is it trust, consistency, friendliness, responsiveness, comfort, and to feel at ease about their financial situation, both in the present and future? How can you provide this to them? Your credentials

What weight (%) do your clients place on each of these factors when working with you?



■ Advice/Competence ■ Portfolio Performance ■ Service
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and advice, as well as your past performance definitely play a role. However, it is the connections you make and the service you deliver that ultimately result in the ideal advisor-client relationship.

Making the Case – The Sales versus Service Quandary

Many financial advisors hear the word service and think “that’s not my job, that’s my sales assistant or staff’s job” and totally tune out. This is the wrong thinking! We believe that service and sales are not two separate entities; in fact they are interdependent on one another and one cannot thrive for the long term without the other. Once you begin executing a well-orchestrated service model, the benefits are not just “happier” clients; the benefits include increased assets, revenues, and referrals. The service you provide will drive your sales!

The success of a financial services practice is determined by how well its members develop quality relationships, not by how many transactions it makes. The more time you spend with people and the more you get to know them, the stronger and more valuable your relationships become. There must be open, honest and consistent communications, trust, respect, and appreciation for relationships to thrive and prosper. Building rapport with someone often takes a considerable investment of time during the beginning of a relationship. Without this investment, you will not close the prospect. To gain a lifelong client, you must continue to invest time and effort into the relationship. You must have a commitment to a lifetime of service. We realize the team needs to generate sales in order to create, sustain, and live the life that individually you all envision, but the practice must recognize that it is your service that will make or break your client relationships and ultimately then, your sales. Why invest so much energy in acquiring clients during the prospecting phase if you are not going to invest the necessary resources to keep the client? Finding, developing, deepening, and subsequently retaining relationships are the keys to true success. Service is the foundation that all of these elements are built upon. Simply stated, service ultimately drives sales.

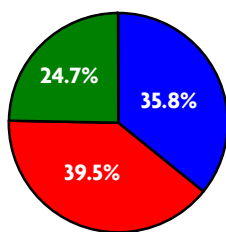
Making the Case – Expect the Unexpected

Client satisfaction is driven by expectations. Clients can often have wild expectations unless you both proactively define them from a performance and a service standpoint. It is up to you to initiate this conversation BEFORE they become a client and you do so by articulating your service model. Your service model should clearly define the commitment you make when working with clients, which in turn sets expectations. Ultimately, as long as you do what you say you are going to do, when you said you would, your clients will stick around. The strength of the relationship will be based on whether you meet, exceed, or fall short of those expectations.

When a prospect agrees to do business with you, they know the result will be some selection of products, whether it be stocks, bonds, insurance, etc., to fulfill their objectives; what they don’t know is the level of service you are going to

provide them. A properly devised service model should be communicated early in the relationship and it should anticipate the needs of the client. You are not selling product, you are selling a comprehensive solution to their financial needs; frankly, you are selling you. Sure, there will be conversations around what products you’ll use and the fees associated with them, but what they really want to know is whether you’ll be there for them. You win the long-term client with *service* expectations not *sales* expectations. Performance of any given investment in the portfolio is unknown no matter how much research you have done. Service is a sure bet and is the only thing you have control over. If a client’s service expectations are not at least being met, the practice will lose clients and have to work harder each month

Has a client ever left your practice due to service issues?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

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to find replacement revenue through new sales. Remember, in this business there is more money to be made in client retention than client acquisition.

Making the Case – Complacency

You've spent years building your practice, your credentials, finding the right team to work with you, and aligning yourself with strategic partners. You have chosen your firm for life, one with whom you feel you have the best fit, whether wirehouse, regional, banking, or independent. You have clients, many with substantial assets, you have a pipeline of prospects, you're winning your firm's incentive trips, and you're making a "decent" living. You think you have arrived in the world of long-term success and can enjoy the fruit of all your hard work. **WRONG!** We don't mean to offend you, but we would like you to seriously think about the consequences of resting on your laurels. If you do not focus on the service aspect of your business now, your clients will drop you like a hot potato and there are enough other hungry investment professionals out there to sell them the sizzling steak.

Are you really delivering the "ideal client experience?" Is service just a word you use or do you have an organized plan of activities that are delivered regularly to your clients? The old phrase of the "proof is in the pudding" translates in this case to the proof is in the actions and activities, not what you say verbally or in your marketing brochure. Saying "my service is superior" is easy; showing it is something quite different. You must do more than just say the words; your actions must support the words in order to deliver a consistent message and achieve the results for which you seek! The ideal client experience is about being keenly aware of **all** client encounters and consistently eliciting a positive response each and every time. Are you really engaging in the right activities to provide excellent service or are you paying "lip service" to the concept?

Survey Results – Proactive versus Reactive Service

Reactive

- ★ Responding to client inquiries and requests – 56% say works extremely well
- ★ Responding to service problems or mistakes – 50% say works extremely well

Proactive

- ★ Communicating with clients on a proactive basis – 50% needs some or significant improvement
- ★ Conducting client appreciation activities or events – 59% needs some or significant improvement
- ★ Showing clients you appreciate their business – 50% needs some or significant improvement
- ★ Capturing all or most of your clients investment assets – 40% needs some or significant improvement
- ★ Anticipating your clients' non-financial needs – 54% needs some or significant improvement
- ★ Getting to know your clients' family members – 64% needs some or significant improvement

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You may be generating commissions and fees in excess of any of your previous years; you may think your clients are satisfied with the performance, advice, and service your team is delivering, but do you really know this for a fact? As soon as you become complacent, you will lose business. Each day the bar is being raised higher and higher and the industry is under more scrutiny. Be honest with yourself; are you and your team spending the necessary time in "client-keeping" service? If you feel a little uncomfortable with that question – good! We want you to retain clients for a lifetime, experience ongoing success, and do what is in the best interest of your clients. Get out of your comfort zone and read on!

Making the Case – Perception is Reality

The Gallup Organization⁴ polls the public on their opinion of professionals and the results don't fare well for the "stock broker" (it's what they call you, sorry!). Consistently since 1981, you have been in the bottom rankings for public opinion. Less than 20% of the respondents rate a stock broker's honesty and ethical standards as "very high" or "high." This means that over 80% of the general public rates you as "average, low, or very low" in this area. How do you become a trusted advisor if that is the perception you are up against? The world is filled with negative messages day-in and day-out from newspaper headlines, news programs, and other media outlets, not to mention the horrific "word-of-mouth" stories that further taint our industry and our business. How do you even try to fight this? Executing a service model that puts you in front of your clients and solicits their feedback on a consistent basis will help transform their current perception into a new more positive reality!

Making the Case – Gain More Wallet-Share, Earn More Business

Clients with investable assets of \$500,000 to \$5,000,000 will utilize the services of two or more advisors 60% of the time⁵. Being the sole advisor for your client should be your priority or you have the potential of losing what assets you do have to another advisor who is better serving the client. Organic growth is one of the most valuable results of implementing *5-Star Service*. By deepening the team's relationship with your current clients, you in turn increase assets under management, identify cross-selling opportunities, and ultimately increase client loyalty. Then an interesting thing happens. Your clients start talking about how great you are to friends and family. With your client's endorsement, referrals start rolling in. You find yourself not looking for clients, but instead they are looking for you.

Making the Case – Don't Ignore the Elephant in the Room

With the estimated \$41 trillion baby boomer wealth transfer demographic⁶, clients are placing a higher value on building a relationship with their advisors. Performance and wealth accumulation certainly remain part of the equation, but the aging population is beginning to care as much about legacy and preservation as asset growth. According to Ken Dychtwald, President and CEO of market research consultants, Age Wave⁷, "many people wrongly assume the most important issue among families is money and wealth transfer – it's not. An inheritance focuses primarily on the money, but a true legacy also includes memories, lessons, and values you teach to your children over a lifetime." You can't help your clients with their legacy if you don't really get to know them. In addition, today's more complex financial world includes an expanded menu of product and service choices, increased rules and regulations, more accessibility to information and research, etc., and is breeding clients who want to be more hands-on than hands-off. They want rapport with their advisor. This means investing more time and delving deeper into the clients' interests and passions in addition to their standard financial statistics and objectives. Today's demographics bring a whole new meaning to "know your client!"

Making the Case – Systems = Increased Capacity

Many advisory teams we meet use the "just wing it" approach to running their practice. Just mention the word "system" and they cringe. Yes, they are successful, but they are also usually stressed, over-worked, and their home life is nonexistent. They are fully aware that with a little organization, the practice would run far more smoothly and efficiently. With the same amount of time exerted, they would be able to yield more results, which leads to more profit. Systems do not preclude personalization; in fact they enable you to have the time to be personally attentive to your clients. A good service model should include systems for everything you do for a client and can include communication scripts or letter templates, meeting checklists, utilizing a contact management technology, and sending out a thank you for a referral received. Instigating specific procedures and processes for all aspects of your business will make both the practice and the team more effective, which leads to an increase in capacity, which in turn allows you to either help more clients or do more for your clients.

In summary, these points should help you realize what a difference a well-executed service model will do for your clients, your team, and your practice. The ultimate results of implementing a *5-Star Service* plan are not just more “warm and fuzzy” clients, they include:

- ★ An increase in both assets managed and revenues generated.
- ★ An increase in asset retention, client retention, and client loyalty.
 - ★ An increase in referrals by building client advocacy.
 - ★ A more efficient practice and team.
- ★ Personal satisfaction in doing right by the client.

The Process: 5 Steps to *5-Star Service* - An Overview

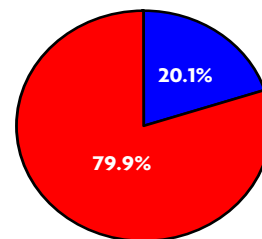
The next few pages provide an *overview* of our *5-Step* process to developing and executing a service model that will truly differentiate you, your team, and your practice. Again, if you are interested in learning more, we suggest purchasing our book, **Know Service**, which will provide you with instructions, tools, and activities to make it all happen! Although our process is intended to work with both new and existing clients, the majority of the work revolves around deepening your ideal *existing* relationships. These are the clients your competitors wish to steal; the process shows you how to retain them and eradicate vulnerability to client departures. Let’s take a quick look at our five A’s: Analyze, Allocate, Assemble, Activate, and Assess.

Step 1: Analyze – Classify Your Book

Your first activity is to **Analyze** your book of business. You really need to understand and “KNOW” your clients in order to classify your book. It is the organization of your clientele that is truly at the heart of your service model.

At **KNOW NO BOUNDS** and **Paragon Resources**, we are big believers that every client in your book of business deserves some level of service or they shouldn’t be a client of your practice. Obviously your resources should be spent on your best clients; however, no one should be ignored. So you have to understand your book and your clients first. You need to know where the majority of your business is coming from and identify your best clients! You need to recognize which relationships are profitable, which relationships proactively provide referrals, which relationships you really enjoy. So performing some analysis will help you gain a better understanding of your current situation; it will help develop the all important definition of your ideal client relationship and subsequently define criteria to segment your practice ultimately delineating specific levels of clientele, such as A, B, and C. (As an aside, survey results reflected that 93.8% of respondents were trying to eradicate clients from their lowest segment. This statistic clearly shows the importance of understanding your ideal clients and maximizing those relationships to increase both your overall business and time efficiencies.) As each financial advisory practice is different, *how* you analyze and segment will vary and our first step in the process allows you to devise the segmentation criteria that are right for your business model and style.

Do you have a written definition of your ideal client relationship?



■ Yes ■ No

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Step 2: Allocate – Devise Your Service Menu

The second “A” in the process is **Allocate** and here you need to devise a service menu and specifically distinguish the type of services the practice should provide to each of your newly segmented clientele. Some menu items may depend on the type of firm with whom you work and others are individualized based on team preferences, feasibility, and style

of business. You should identify core service ingredients for all segments and then those additional service ingredients you'll provide to your best clients or true advocates within the practice. Most importantly, your service menu should define the communication and appreciation items each level of client will receive. Remember, communication is the number one client complaint in our industry, yet communication is the very foundation for client relationships and service.

The service menu you devise will help you properly set client expectations and will lead to a service commitment agreement. Each segment of your client base will know exactly what to expect, and your team will know precisely what needs to be delivered at what intervals.

Survey: How frequently SHOULD you PROACTIVELY communicate with your best clients?

- ★ Over ½ of the respondents answered monthly, with the next highest response being quarterly.
- ★ 2% of respondents indicated two times per year and 11% indicated 24-52 times per year.
- ★ Several open-ended responses included statements such as: “As frequently as they desire”; “Based on clients’ needs and requirements”; “I let my clients dictate how often they prefer to communicate.”
- ★ Forms of communication included: reports, phone calls, reviews, emails, cards, events, education, and research.

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Step 3: Assemble – Compile Your Resources

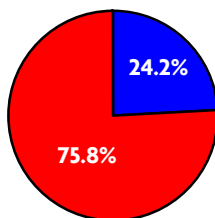
Our third step in the process is **Assemble**. In this step you should identify and assemble the resources required to activate the service menu. Ultimately in this step, you are looking to define the total means available to implement your service menu and take your practice to the next level. You need to think about ALL your resource providers; these include people, technology, and knowledge. You will be defining the “who” and “what” that will aid in the delivery of your service initiatives. Additionally, you will decide “where” you will find these resources. Remember, there are many different people and facets that affect the service side of your practice. From the branch receptionist, to home office product specialists, to your preferred wholesalers and so on; these are all people resources you need to identify and subsequently optimize. You will be building accountability into your process and assigning responsibilities to leverage both time and talent! At the end of this third step, Assemble, you will have a master list and a plan of exactly how to maximize all resources going forward.

Step 4: Activate – Execute Your Service Model

With a newly segmented book of business, an ideal service menu and the right resources required, the time has come to **Activate** the plan! You need systems and processes so the service initiative is delivered *consistently* for the long-run.

This fourth step, Activate, is purely about implementing, executing, and doing.

Do you have a written service agreement defining exactly what the client should expect by doing business with you?



■ Yes ■ No

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One of the most common challenges in execution is developing processes that result in your service initiatives running like a well-oiled machine yet give an air of customization. In order to *minimize the time* and *maximize the result*, you have to find the balance of the super-efficient factory and personalized high-touch services for each client. This is where the work from the **Analyze** step will add value as team awareness of each client is vital to execution. This is also where today’s technology can play a role. Your practice needs

to have standards for each activity to increase the pace of execution but allow for customization.

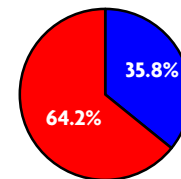
There are an enormous amount of advisors who avow that service is what differentiates them, but they have nothing to back it up – it’s just words not actions. It is the activate stage that will differentiate you. The execution of your service menu will **show** your clients your commitment to service. The processes and tools you use may initially seem like more work, but will soon become positive habits and activities that become a normal part of your practice management. Activate is your opportunity to really connect with your clients, establish commitments to each other and differentiate your advisory practice.

Step 5: Assess – Evaluate Your Service Model

Just as you perform client reviews and rebalance portfolios, you must **Assess** whether your service menu is attaining the results you set out to achieve. Step five involves ideas on how to evaluate your service from everyone’s perspective – yours, your teams, your external partners if you have them and, most importantly, your clients. You should use strategies such as client surveys on a regular basis; you should evaluate your service ingredients and the systems your team uses to deliver your menu. You should “grade” yourself on how well you know your best clients and determine if any clients should be considered for movement up to a higher tier.

By the end of the Assess phase, you will have all the information necessary to identify what is working and what is not within your service model. This is the time to fine-tune and make any necessary tweaks or changes to your service model. Regular review and adjustments ensures ongoing success with your clientele.

Do you survey your clients on the service you provide?



■ Yes ■ No

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Closing Thoughts

Our *5-Star Service Process* is not about wowing new clients or providing 90 days of exceptional service; it is about a lifetime of service that leads to increased business and client retention. This is about transforming the ordinary to extraordinary from both a business perspective and a relationship perspective. Client names become client relationships; casual interactions with other professionals and product providers become partnerships; your business dramatically increases and the team’s name and reputation become infamous in the community. In order to achieve long-term unvarying delivery, you must have a service model with standards, processes, and systems in place, in addition to the team’s all important commitment to providing your clients unbeatable service. It is far more profitable and takes less time to maximize current clients than it is to go after new ones; therefore our process really focuses on deepening your existing client relationships. However, the process also translates into finding more clients like your best clients and then servicing them in a way that will absolutely keep the competition away! Certainly we are all aware that portfolio performance has its place of importance, but service is where you will make or break your relationships. It is the small things you do that will make a big difference to your clients’ loyalty and commitment to your practice. Creating, communicating, and delivering a well-orchestrated service model with distinct levels of service will translate into positive, rewarding client experiences and increased business!

So no more excuses. No more trying to justify or rationalize why you are ignoring a critical area of your business. No more believing that your clients are any different than anyone else’s. No more thinking it’s just a numbers game driven by performance. It’s time to face reality. This is a relationship business and your success is defined by your ability to build strong, profitable relationships, and that ability is primarily defined by the service you deliver. It’s time to take action and

make decisions that will ultimately save you from the realm of extinction and take you into the sphere of long term success and satisfaction. It's time to stand up and deliver exceptional *5-Star Service*. It's time to **Know Service. Connect with Your Clients. Shape Your Future. Differentiate You!**

More Information

Our focus and commitment to the industry is to introduce solutions to your servicing issues. In addition to the book "Know Service. Connect with Your Clients. Shape Your Future. Differentiate You!" we design customized team and firm-wide training programs and offer practice management consulting services on an individual team basis. **KNOW NO BOUNDS** and **Paragon Resources** are big believers in providing actionable ideas so our resources won't be pages of theory and concept. Instead, we include simple explanations, instructions, samples, and actual tools for you to implement into your practice.

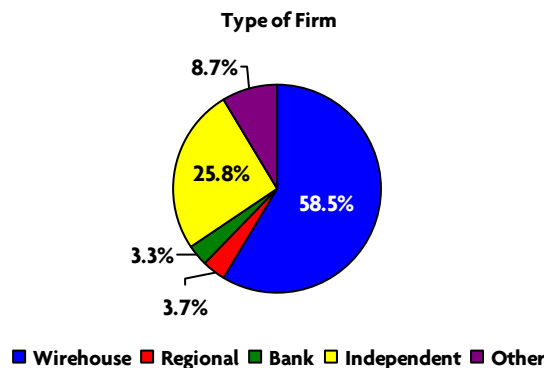
For inquiries on our consulting and training services and our products, please contact us at 770.319.0310.

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410 volunteer survey participants
Average Years in Business: 16.3



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About the Authors



Sarah Dale
President & Founder
Know No Bounds, LLC

Overview: Founder of **KNOW NO BOUNDS**, Sarah's unique background combines the roles of business development, service, and leadership. Her career has evolved from success working with clients to developing products and programs, implementing strategies for building and leading teams, developing and delivering training and coaching initiatives, creating efficiencies, and growing revenues.

Experience: Sarah started her career in the financial services industry in 1990. Her background includes serving as President of a training and online solutions company where her responsibilities included creating and managing all areas of a small business that provided coaching and development services to financial professionals. Sarah created and delivered business building content, including virtual programs utilizing web-based technology, printed materials, workbooks, e-books, whitepapers, audio visual CDROMs and live seminars. Tools consisted of fresh actionable ideas, client acquisition strategies, client development techniques, leadership ideas, and practice management opportunities.

Sarah also served as a director of marketing and training for a regional, full-service investment firm. She served on the management committee responsible for the strategic development and management of the firm and was responsible for forming and running the *Creative Business Development Department*. Her overall responsibility included marketing, advertising, public relations, corporate communications, the web, sales incentive programs, and the development and facilitation of training programs. Additionally, Sarah works as liaison between the brokerage firm and parent company developing referral programs and exploring areas of integration. She chaired the Private Client Group's annual sales conferences, *Service Plus* Committee, Marketing Committee, and Training and Development teams.

Educational Background and Publications: Native to the south of England, Sarah earned her bachelor's degree from the E. Claiborne Robins School of Business at the University of Richmond. She is also a graduate of the Securities Industry Institute at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania where she served as senior class representative. Sarah holds series 7, 9, 10, 63 and life and health licenses. First published in 1995, Dale co-authored "The Question and Answer Book of Money and Investing" and in 2005 published "Developing Your Wealth Management Dream Team for Long Term Success." Numerous articles have also been published on several financial services related web sites.

Philosophy: Sarah is described as **passionate, loyal, and unique!** Her motto is "*have faith, have fun, and love what you do, for life is too short for anything less.*" Her goal is to make a difference in everything she does and become a true advocate for each and every client.

About the Authors



Krista Sheets
President
Paragon Resources

Overview: President of Paragon Resources, Krista considers herself a Team Architect and Developer helping financial professionals design team infrastructures for continued success. She consults with teams on partnership viability, identifying team member roles and responsibilities that capitalize on each person's talents, optimizing the team structure for efficient service, and minimizing practice management issues through proven processes. Krista provides an objective, expert analysis that helps successful investment professionals make wiser decisions on the growth of their practices. She is most effective working with teams who have a commitment for excellence and internal firm departments who want to be leaders in the industry.

Experience: Krista joined Paragon Resources in January, 1997. New to the investment advisory business, she started from the ground up. Mentoring with Paragon's Founder, Steve Saenz in his training, consulting, and coaching roles, Krista has been exposed to many of the practice management issues that plague the industry. With a desire to solve problems and help people work more effectively together, she focuses her work on helping teams capitalize on their most valuable asset - their people. She has worked with hundreds of teams in all stages of development and with several Wall Street firms building results-driven solutions. In 2003, she became Managing Partner at Paragon Resources and in 2006 became President and Owner. Krista shares her industry expertise by contributing articles and interviews to several industry trade publications and participating in industry conferences, webinars, and discussion panels.

Educational Background and Personal: Krista, born and raised in Southern New Jersey, ventured to Boston University where she graduated in three years with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Possessing an entrepreneurial spirit and growing up in a family business, she decided to return to her roots after college to gain more business ownership experience. There, she oversaw all operations of this multi-million dollar business and managed a large staff. From this experience, Krista realized she wanted to learn more about effectively managing and leading people. With a move to Atlanta, Georgia, Krista extensively trained in Human Capital Management and achieved the Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst designations from Target Training International. With her insatiable quest of continuous learning, she continues to train with highly-respected pioneers of employee performance assessment firms to gain additional expertise in this rapidly growing industry. While currently living in Atlanta, she enjoys life with her friends and three rescue cats who all have become her "Southern Family." Her passions include gourmet food, wine, nutrition, travel, and helping stray animals in the community. She is a proud Aunt of Kelsey, Nikki G., and Jack.

Philosophy: Krista believes you must live life with passion and everything else will take care of itself! **"When we spend our lives doing what we were meant to do, everything else just seems to fall into place."** Her goal is to help people uncover their true talents so they can achieve personal success, happiness, and fulfillment.