Results-Driven Solutions February 2016 Newsletter

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The ultimate success of a financial services practice means maximizing ROP=Return on People™

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> "The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails."
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> ~ ***William Arthur Ward***

Here is the latest edition of our newsletter for financial professionals. Please feel free to share the content of this newsletter with anyone who can benefit from it. And, if there is anything that you would like for us to include in future newsletters, let us know! We base our newsletter content on your specific needs and what we hear from the field. To submit a topic that you'd like to see in upcoming newsletters, please email us at info@ParagonResources.com or info@knownobounds.net.

Taking Control – Be the Difference

2016 has definitely started out as an interesting year; to some, it may even feel like the roller coaster ride that never ends! With market volatility, the uncertainty of presidential candidates, bizarre weather, and new scandals every day, it seems as if negativity is everywhere. In a world where pessimism may seem to be at every turn, it's time to seek ways to regain a positive approach to your practice, your clients, your family, and your community. You must maintain perspective, both personally and professionally, and draw inspiration from various sources. It's time to take charge of that which is in your control – step up to the plate and make a difference!

Take Control of Your Time

Time seems to have become the most precious commodity. Adding more hours to the day is not a viable option, so you need to manage the time that you have. Get organized; engage in the activities that will lead you to achieving your goals. There is no single, right organizational system, but find one that fits your practice and works with your team. Don't set yourself up for frustration; ensure that your daily activity plan is realistic and don't let others take control of your day. Most importantly, be sure to include your personal or family activities in your organizational system. Define what's important and make it your reality! Take a look at our Practice Management Time & Task Management Resource Kit to help you create your ideal schedule.

Take Control of Your Communication

Lack of communication remains the number one client complaint in our industry and miscommunication is typically what fuels personal relationship issues. This should be an easy item to fix but clearly this is not the case. When the markets take a wild ride, financial professionals MUST proactively communicate with their clients. No hiding in your offices and asking your team members to take a message. Get out there and let your clients know that you are actively taking care of their financial situation with your firm's research and your own personal capabilities. When there is downbeat news that needs be shared, DELIVERY is key! It is important to not only use the right words, but also to deliver the message with the right tone. Perpetuate the positive and remember the difference between being realistic and being negative. Also, this is not the time to skip your team meetings. Reinforce reality with your team. Be authentic and transparent with them. It is vital that they also get the insight that they need to best serve the clients during what can be very emotional days. Likewise, while at home, be sure that you are listening and sharing with all members of your family on a regular basis. Consider our MapMyStrengths.com DISC and Motivators Assessments to learn more about the preferred communication styles of you and your team members.

Take Control of Your Client Service

Particularly during uncertain times, clients are very susceptible to the attention of other advisors. To ensure that your clients are not part of the 81% looking for a new advisor, you must build a service model that articulates, demonstrates, and validates the value that your team offers. You need to take the time on a regular basis to let them know how important they are to your practice. Simple thank you cards, personalized notes, and small tokens of appreciation can make a big difference to them personally and also to your client retention ratio. Exceeding clients' expectations from a service standpoint will make a huge difference, particularly when performance expectations may not be met. Service is more important today than ever. (This is the foundation of our book, Know Service: Connect with Clients. Shape Your Future. Differentiate YOU. This 195 page book provides a simple 5-Step Process to help your team create a systematized service model within your practice. It is loaded with over 55 tools to help you implement the ideas into your business.)

Take Control of Your Perspective

When times get rough and you need something to get through the hectic day, gratitude and being thankful for every little thing in your life can help provide your fuel. Your clients, your team, your centers of influence, your family, and even strangers can contribute substance and value to your life. Acknowledging others, giving gifts to others, and performing random acts of kindness are great ways to put a smile on someone else's face and provide a sense of fulfillment in your own life.

Instead of getting caught up in the depressing headlines or non-constructive attitudes, create time to do something nice for others. Make a donation to a client's favorite charitable organization. Take a team member out to lunch. Meet a center of influence for a coffee. You can also make an enormous difference in someone's life by visiting a senior's home, serving at the homeless shelter once a month, or just listening when a person needs a friendly ear. Create a work and home environment filled with encouragement, recognition, and the 'pass it forward' concept. You'll breed more loyalty along the way, feel good about yourself, and make a positive difference in someone else's life. By focusing on things that are in your control, you will create a more pleasing environment for all around you.

Take Control of Your Actions

It's very easy to get caught up and follow the crowd when you are surrounded by negativity. Don't fall into this trap – dare to be different and unique. Avoid the water cooler conversations, turn off the TV, and don't take out your frustrations on others. Misery loves company – don't accept the invitation! In your practice, focus on the long-term plan and objectives of your clients, not the 'idea of the day'. Don't worry about what everyone else in the office or neighborhood is doing; live YOUR dream, not someone else's.

Is attitude everything? It may not be everything but it is a good starting point! Without a positive one, we do nothing but perpetuate the cycle of negativity that surrounds us. Changing other people's attitudes and actions is out of your control, but you can certainly respond in a more affirmative and confident manner. Always try to take the high road, and do everything in your power to create an environment that breeds encouragement, whether it is at home or at work. But remember, the only attitude that you really have control over is yours! So don't let others bring you down, don't follow the crowd, and don't ask "where did the fun go?" Take control and re-create it. Yes, financial services is a serious industry, but professionalism and fun do not have to be mutually exclusive. Make the best of your time, communicate often and effectively, serve others, and appreciate the small stuff in life. Be sure to celebrate the good fortune that you have, laugh at yourself, deepen the relationships in your life, and BE the difference.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how we can better assist you and your practice, please know that we welcome your input. If you are looking for assistance on a specific project, please feel free to contact us so that we can craft the best solution for you using our own expertise or that of our strategic partners.

Warmest regards,
Krista & Sarah

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