

Your Money Matters

TIMELY ADVICE FOR CLIENTS OF GOLD KEY FINANCIAL

Find the advisor you deserve

Take a walk down Main Street and ask someone to describe for you a financial advisor. They'll tell you it's a man in a white dress shirt with a power tie and a blue suit. It's a well dressed woman carrying a briefcase and a cellular phone. It's someone that works at the local bank branch that can help arrange a mortgage. It's a person who sells mutual funds and insurance. In response to the question, you may receive no answer better than a blank stare and a shrug of the shoulders.

There is a committed, caring and highly qualified financial advisor out there for you. You may have found her already, and if so, you're in good hands. If you're still looking, here's what you should expect from that person you need to hire. Great advisors, and the one which you deserve, are set apart by the following traits:

They take a sincere interest in your well being. The financial advice giving practitioner's most fundamental role is to assist you in the realization of your life's hopes and dreams. All those things that matter most to you. Those people and those plans near and dear to your heart. Too often, our industry looks inward and focuses on purely academic issues. The answer to life's challenges won't be found on a chart of stock market returns dating back to the days of the buggy whip. Your

advisor should truly want to learn about the places in your heart, not just places on some chart.

They take the time to listen. Imagine for a moment if you stepped into the doctor's office and the first words out of his mouth were something other than, "Tell me, what seems to be the matter?" Instead, he launched into a sales pitch about the latest cholesterol lowering drug which you should start taking in addition to your Centrum one-a-days. Proper advice, be it medical or financial, cannot be dispensed without a fundamental understanding of the problem to be solved. And as a client, it's your issue you're hiring us to address. It's our responsibility to listen and understand.

They are knowledgeable in their chosen field. Do you remember when Michael Jordan went to play for the Chicago White Sox in 1994? He traded his Air Jordans in for a pair of baseball cleats, demonstrating to himself and the rest of us, that at the top of every human endeavor, man can be truly excellent at only one thing. If your financial needs are relatively straightforward, working with one trusted advisor is ideal. As your situation grows in complexity, your advisor may need to resemble a general contractor who then brings in specialists in the fields of wills and trusts, insurance, investments, tax planning and so forth.

They are a resource. An experienced financial advisor has been the architect of many a family's financial plan. Over the course of their career, they've seen, and are likely still involved with the successes, the works in progress, and the still a long way to go of countless families. Time and again they've been called on to find effective solutions to someone's unique dilemma. Hiring the right advisor brings a storehouse of life situations upon which you can draw.

They freely admit when they are wrong. I once heard an industry veteran, standing in front of 1000 of his peers, state that as a professional financial advisor, he is wrong as much as one third of the time. He tells every new client, "In our work together, I'm not right all the time. If I give you three ideas, two of them are going to work out and one of them isn't. That's about my average." When things don't work out exactly as planned, expect

to be kept informed. As the facts of the situation become apparent, your advisor should be there to offer alternative solutions and keep your plans on track.

They instill confidence in the future. The excellent advisor provides direction where confusion once reigned, confidence in place of uncertainty, and capability to take action instead of inertia. You'll have the resources to deal with whatever surprise awaits you around the next corner of life.

Excellent advisors exist in all shapes and sizes, in companies big and small, from Main Street to B Street. The value to your family of finding the right advisor - in mistakes not made, sleep not lost, incremental return, a sense of control over your present and confidence in the future - far exceeds the cost of hiring this valuable person onto your team.

- June 18, 2005