"EACH CLIENT IS DIFFERENT AND HAS A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE.

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Roughly at the halfway point of his ongoing transition to fee-based business, Quatrale explains how he handles the client conversation: "I describe to the client two ways [transactional or fee-based] to build a portfolio. It becomes quite obvious to them that the fee-based approach, which is generally a brokerage account with the ability to build a portfolio with many different investment options, is the right way to go; it's the right way to be able to monitor a program, to monitor their needs, to generate their income, to do everything that they need and to do everything I need as a practitioner behind the scenes. That conversation is quite simple. It's not necessarily a short conversation, but it is quite simple in the approach and most clients have happily made the transition."

Admittedly, the succession planning question rarely comes up in Quatrale's client conversations, although he is always prepared to answer. He is on the cusp of signing AP's succession planning documents with the knowledge that moving forward, if changes or customization is needed, it can be easily effected. At the very least, Quatrale has taken the steps necessary to protect his practice and preserve it for his family, as well as his clients. In fact, he fervently recommends similar planning to his clients.

Quatrale also relies heavily on AP's compliance department for continued updates on changing regulations from the Department of Labor (DOL). "The support is so helpful, and the thinking behind what we're doing is provided as well at AP, so it helps me fill in some gaps with regard to thinking about why and what I'm doing, and getting a view of the final picture of what that might look like. Of course, it's nice to have investment professionals that are a couple of innings ahead of me here, to be able to talk to and pick their brains a little bit about what it might look like down the road," intones Quatrale.

Quick on the heels of the succession planning discussion, the conversation shifts to business retention. Quatrale sees an obvious benefit in participation and active involvement in social media in that as his client population ages, conversations are taking place with their children, and even grandchildren in some instances. A large part of how the next generation wants to communicate on matters of finance is through social media engagement. Quatrale acknowledges the importance of social media and is excited to refine his image and put himself out there in a thoughtful way by integrating social media as a means to add value to his practice.

The name of the game for Quatrale has been and continues to be running his practice as efficiently as possible to provide excellent customer service to his clients. An efficiently run practice will afford him the opportunity to spend more time with family, doing the things they enjoy most. His four children range in age from 26 down to 13, with about four years between each of them. It's a 'good' kind of busy, Quatrale says of spending time with his wife, Susan, supporting their four children in the activities they have enjoyed over the years—whether it was watching their son row on his high school crew team, daughter Emily play high school and college softball games, daughter Wendy sailing, and daughter Sarah's dance recitals—it's clear that Quatrale loves his life and is immersed in it from every possible perspective. He gives little thought to retiring and wholeheartedly chooses to continue running his practice for many years to come. However, all things in life have a way of intertwining and, when the time is right, Quatrale looks forward to a slower, more measured pace that includes long walks by the ocean, visits with his children and travel with his wife.

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EFFICIENCY AND SUPPORT

KEYS TO SUCCESS ... IN BUSINESS AND LIFE.

No stranger to hard work and perseverance, American Portfolios (AP) affiliated investment professional Brian Quatrale jumped in to financial services immediately following his graduation from New York University in 1986 to join Robert W. Baird & Co. Says Quatrale, "There are two types of advisors: those who came from other careers and became financial advisors, and then there are people like me that have not known anything else." Likely due more to fate than a conscious decision, Quatrale loves what he does and has no regrets. He is quick to credit his parents for instilling in him a strong work ethic. Typical of many suburban families of the time, his father left for work early in the morning, not returning until well past dinner time while his mother stayed home to raise six children. When the children were old enough, she would head out later in the day to her "second job" outside of the home. Lessons learned early gave Quatrale the often elusive x-factor, allowing him to be successful in both life and his career.

FEATURE

Raised on Long Island, Quatrale moved back to his roots and networking base to continue growing his practice, which evolved primarily from life insurance into financial and investment planning, managing high net worth individuals and 401(k)s. The lion's share of Quatrale's clients have the desire to manage their money in ways that align their values with those of their investment professional. He brings clarity to complicated financial issues by being able to relate to clients from any walk of life in ways that are meaningful to them. "Each client is different and has a unique perspective. Knowing how to relate to a sophisticated software engineer who asks great questions, as well as to the novice investor just dipping in their big toe so that both have what they need to make good decisions, is a huge value add."

Quatrale thrives on the long-term relationships he has built over the years with his clients, many of whom have become longtime friends. As a result, a conversation could begin with issues facing the family and circle back around to how those issues impact financial decision making. The benefit in having these long-standing relationships and being connected to his clients on a deeply personal level is the trust.

Several years ago, Quatrale was interested in establishing himself as an independent financial professional with a broker/dealer (B/D) and tapped into his network of business colleagues to seek their input on which B/D to choose. What he found was that AP would always find its way into the conversation and standout as the B/D of choice. With the decision made, Quatrale began the transition process with AP. "The decision was kind of easy for me," Quatrale said. "Once I started asking more detailed questions about the firm and met with the 'face of AP' [CEO, CIO and President] Lon Dolber and [President of Sales and New Business Development] Tim O'Grady, I knew I had found the right place." Quatrale credits several internal AP staff members in making his transition nearly seamless … with Business Services Leader Jake Owens topping the list. Quatrale was quick to add that whomever he spoke with during this period was a standout in terms of customer service. AP was a great fit for him and his practice because, as a sole practitioner without support staff, AP became his back office. It made no difference who Quatrale spoke with at the firm, he had a comfort level as if they were members of his staff who were there when he needed them to fill in the gaps.

The robust technology systems that AP provides and the ability to move in the direction of a paperless process resonates with Quatrale. In an ever-evolving world, he sees the challenge with technology in making it relatable to the client interaction. Quatrale believes that AP's core technologies are key in helping modernize his practice and its efficiencies, while at the same time making it appear seamless to his clients. For Quatrale, it's all about providing a window for his clients to clearly see the information they choose in a concise and consumable way.

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