Striving for Continual Improvement

When describing RMB, we continually emphasize our commitment to clients’ best interests. This commitment prompted the founding of our independent firm, and it is the underlying principle that guides everything we do. Similar to how we conduct ongoing evaluation of each client’s wealth management plan, we believe in consistently examining the various operational aspects of our business to ensure they are maximizing our ability to serve our clients’ best interests.

One outcome of this internal due diligence was the January 1, 2011, implementation of a restructured fee schedule for our products and services. By separating the wealth advisory fee and the investment management fee, we were able to reduce potential conflicts of interest, increase transparency, improve our adaptability to the investment landscape, and strengthen the sustainability of our firm. Another good example is the comprehensive technology upgrade we are in the midst of this year. Once complete, we will be able to provide clients with more detailed and timely reports, increased access to their account information via Web-based portals, and a service experience that is simply more sophisticated and efficient.

Almost a year ago, we embarked on another significant endeavor related to our wealth management group’s organizational structure and operational procedures. In many ways, the process has been more of an evolution than a revolution, but we effected meaningful, strategic innovation in several key areas. »
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps the most significant change was our creation of a distinct Business Development group: four individuals whose sole responsibility is to introduce new potential clients to the firm. Until now, our business has grown almost exclusively by word of mouth, or more specifically, based on referrals we’ve received from existing clients. We expect that type of organic growth to continue, as a natural result of the effort our advisors and service teams put into building relationships and providing a high level of client service. To support our advisors in maintaining an unwavering focus on their existing clients, we have shifted the burden of new business development to this new group.

TEAM STRUCTURE

We have organized all of the wealth management employees into distinct vertical teams, each of which is led by a Senior Wealth Manager. The four- to six-person teams are set up to function independently of one another, but the individuals on each team work closely together on a day-to-day basis. Essentially, we have created a mentorship model that encourages collaboration and nurturing of talent, helping us to train and develop future leaders within the firm.

ADVISOR CAPACITY

We have also promoted several employees into advisory roles and reduced the number of clients who are served by any one advisor. This increases our ability to provide all of our clients with personalized service at a level that consistently and appropriately addresses the complexity of their individual circumstances. Each client has a primary point of contact, who is able to draw on the breadth and depth of support offered by the entire team. Furthermore, we are working to consolidate all generations of clients’ families within a single team, which helps us to provide a more holistic perspective to all family members. We are also aggregating groups of clients who are part of a related community (e.g., by geography, employer, occupation, etc.) so that we are efficiently concentrating relevant expertise and specialized knowledge.

BEST PRACTICES

While teams are set up to work independently, we have built a formalized framework of policies and procedures to ensure consistency across all teams. It’s important to emphasize that the consistency we strive for relates to how we manage internal workflows, present information and recommendations, and administer each client’s financial plan. Certainly, we employ common practices when evaluating each client’s unique circumstances, but our advice has always been, and will continue to be, personalized to meet individual needs, goals, and preferences.

SCALABILITY

When combining these fundamental elements of the plan, they effectively comprise a scalable model that will accommodate long-term growth without sacrificing the thoughtful, diligent level of care that has become our trademark. As we’ve said before, we are interested in strategic and prudent growth. We aspire to continually improve while staying true to our principles; we believe it is this rigorous pursuit of excellence that has inspired so many of our clients to introduce us to their friends and family members. We would be remiss if we failed to address how we can accommodate increasing demand.

Implementing our plan for RMB’s wealth management group is a long-term undertaking without a distinct finish line. Our clients have likely noticed some of the changes we’ve been making and will continue to see improvements take shape over the course of the next year and beyond. Undoubtedly, many steps we take may not independently produce a tangible result from a client perspective. But over time, as we persist in raising the bar, we believe our clients will see more and more examples that reinforce our pledge to be rigorous stewards of their financial future and their trust.

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