



## Rising Above

**S**omeone once remarked to me, “If you do something long enough, you are bound to get good at it.” While this may be applicable to many professions, it is certainly true for financial services professionals.

In particular, practitioners who develop and manage client wealth evolved through experiences that cumulatively shape their judgment and support their confidence with respect to giving advice. While this group seems to prosper and build new clients naturally, the process of developing new relationships remains a continual challenge for most advisors.

What is it that allows some advisors to rise to the top of our profession in both client satisfaction and production? The art of practice management is often defined by the effectiveness of one’s organization, personnel and methodology. I would also suggest that professional success stems from the pursuit of one’s interests. This is especially true in the pursuit of ultra-wealthy clients.

Our interests define us, both professionally and personally. A passion for the arts, fine food and wine, sports, literature, technology, gardening, architecture or travel characterizes our lifestyle. Do we actively share these interest with our associates and clients? Those who integrate their recreational self

and professional persona open doors to new client opportunities.

Here are some examples of lifestyle integration that can support your practice and help attract high-net-worth client relationships:

### Community Service

There is no shortage of board work to give back to our communities, organizations and causes that interest us. Birds of a feather flock together. Although board work is viewed as altruistic, networking and referrals come from being visible and active. We are not who we appear to be, but who we are. Community service builds visibility and lends credibility to the advisor who participates out of passion.

### Social Interests

It’s not necessary to become a fixture on the fund-raising circuit, but we can get involved to the extent we are able. Many nonprofit organizations function through social fund-raising. I have met many successful people seated around a dinner table for eight or ten. Although it’s a place for light social conversation, the opportunity to connect and develop a friendship may be enhanced. Someone attending a local hospital ball once remarked to me that there was probably more

business conducted during that cocktail hour than during all the previous year’s committee meetings combined.

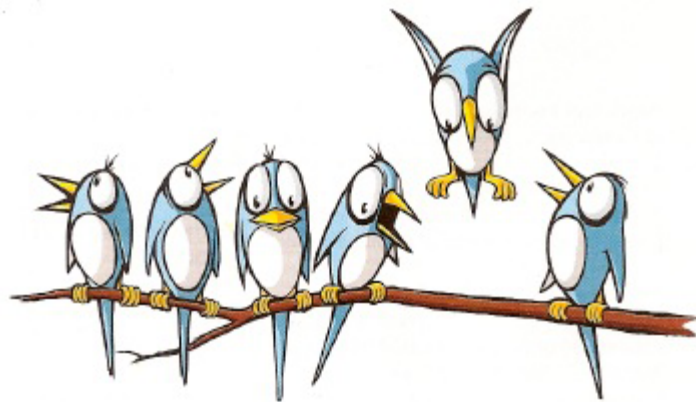
### Sports

I am a runner. I started late, at age 50. Although runners differ with respect to their style and goals. The one thing they all share is the joy of finishing. I have renewable fitness goals for every event I enter, and I share that excitement with my clients.

Successful people identify with positive thinking and enthusiasm for achieving goals. I believe sharing my passion for running creates a positive impression that helps attract and support client relationships.

Successful people identify with positive thinking and enthusiasm for achieving goals. I believe sharing my passion for running creates a positive impression that helps attract and support client relationships.

Sporting events are another great relationship opportunity I share season tickets for our city’s professional baseball team. I invite prospects and referral sources to the games so we can share a common interest in a relaxed environment for two or three hours. Golf is perhaps the best example of networking in a recreational setting, as long as you don’t embarrass yourself too badly.



Attracting high-net-worth clients becomes easier when you integrate your personal and professional pursuits.

## Travel

Travel is perhaps the greatest elixir. It's a wonderful opportunity to build new personal relationships. People are relaxed and open to a sense of wonderment on vacation. When we were children, travel provided us with the excitement of exploring something new.

That wonder continues for most adults in travel. Sharing new experience with someone builds a common bond. I am not suggesting that we should go on a cruise vacation and plan to sit with a group of like-minded folks at dinner every night. But travel does afford the opportunity to discover people with common interests. My wife and I stayed at a resort in Africa where dinner was served in a common area for guests. Our group included a photographer from National Geographic, a couple off to explore Mount Kilimanjaro and another couple who had established

to accompany the wine. Periodically, I invite someone as my guest, which has been a positive bonding experience.

## Art

What are you doing for the first week in December? The art world converges in Miami for Art Basel. This is an annual gathering for dealers and collectors to attend multiple venues for exhibits of crafts, contemporary art, oil paintings, photography and avant-garde art. One year it was reported that more private aircraft arrived in Miami for Art Basel than for the Super Bowl. While viewing or owning great art does not automatically connect you with the affluent collector, sharing the experience may help you converse the next time the subject comes up. There are multiple venues on the calendar, such as SOFA in Chicago. There are numerous craft shows in various cities around the country where you might discover

For many, a garden is more than a hobby; it's an accomplishment. The most beautiful outdoor spaces I have enjoyed require an immense amount of work and the gardener is usually thrilled to share it with you.

In summation, the high-net-worth advisor is a whole person. We are in a trust and relationship business. Whom we meet and how we gain their trust is a reflection of our collective life experience, passions and involvement in their circle. Our ability to relate conversation to their values, aspirations, fears, priorities and investment needs is a direct result of quality time.

One final thought. You cannot complete a marathon without training. Long distance running requires a combination of nutrition, hydration, physical strength, mental determination and preparation. Building an advisory practice that focuses on high-net-worth clients is a function of knowledge, experience, organizations and the ability to share the vision of who we are and where we are going. Who we are and whom we relate to is a function of our whole persona. We can attain the confidence of high-net-worth individuals if we have our own foundation of success.

As with running marathons, success with this type of client does not come quickly. It is the result of time and experience committed. As we enjoy our interests, we can remain open to the possibilities of reaching for more than we had ever dreamed possible. It is our hopes and dreams realized that makes everything possible.

*\*Reprinted with permission of Financial Advisor\**

Whom we meet and how we gain their trust is a reflection of our collective life experience, passions and involvement in their circle.

a national foundation.

The Ultimate travel bonus is not the pictures we take. The experience is part of our collective cultural language. The more we explore and learn, the greater the opportunity we have to understand the issues we face as a global society.

## Fine Food and Wine

Social experiences are always enhanced by good food and wine. While having a custom-built wine cellar can impress dinner guests, a simple wine refrigerator is sufficient. An alternative is a local wine storage facility. I found one that conducts periodic wine tastings for the clientele who rent space. Each client opens a bottle from storage and shares with the group. These are themed evenings pre-2000 California Cabernets, Port, Italian reds, French whites, etc. Participants also bring food

someone who has an appreciation for art.

## Hobbies

You've no doubt heard the maximum that those with the most toys win. Cars, boats and planes are all an expression of our passionate self. I drive an antique Cadillac, but anything restored and older than 35 years will resonate with someone from the Beatles generation.

There are clubs for owners and collectors of all types. Antique cars, yacht clubs, pilot associations, book clubs and gardening clubs all provide a venue for people to connect and share their hobbies. A word on gardening:

---

Steven Leshner, ChFC, MBA, AIF, AEP, is a registered representative with and securities offered through LPL financial, member FINRA, SIPC. He is the founder of Commonwealth Investment Management Group, LLC, a financial planning firm located in Jenkiontown, PA. Contact Steve at [www.cimglpl.com](http://www.cimglpl.com).