

Callahan Financial Planning highlights decision-making tools for clientele

by Richard D. Brown

In its eight-year history, Omaha-based Callahan Financial Planning has grown with a somewhat unconventional approach with its clients and how their needs are addressed. First, the five-person firm operates as a fee-only/fiduciary-only financial adviser. Secondly, the firm seeks to build its client relationships with a software-based holistic approach that poses questions via scenarios often directed up to 20 years into the future.

President and Chief Investment Officer William A. Callahan, a Council Bluffs area native who has an undergraduate degree in business with an emphasis on banking and finance from University of Nebraska at Omaha as well as an MBA from Creighton University, said the business that bears his

Callahan Financial Planning

Phone: 402-341-2000

Address: 3157 Farnam St., Suite 7111, Omaha, NE 68131

Service: Fee-only financial planning

Founded: 2010

Employees: 5

One-year goal: Enhance income tax planning.

Industry outlook: Growth opportunities present themselves as for firms offering fee-only, fiduciary-only financial advisers.

Website: <https://callahanplanning.com>

name has grown to serve about 130 families and overall 274 persons.

Callahan Financial Planning, which three years ago swapped space with its neighbor — Boomer 1490 Radio — is a growing operation that now utilizes 1,550 square feet.

About 90 percent of the practice is focused on service to personal clients.

Callahan said a one-year goal for Callahan Financial Planning, which is owned by Callahan, Senior Financial Planner Reuben J. Brauer, and Financial Planner Allison N. Cerven, in addition to 15 passive shareholders, is to enhance the firm’s tax-planning services.

“We want to go into even more detailed planning for retirees and with scenarios and strategic planning looking at the advantages or disadvantages of selling or not selling stocks, pension collaboration, and the cli-



From left, Senior Financial Planner Reuben Brauer, Financial Planner Allison Cerven, and President/CIO William Callahan ... Using a holistic approach to address financial needs of clients.

ent’s overall investment portfolio,” Callahan said. “We introduce a loop of decision-making and help the client see how things line up with wants.”

Callahan said new software being used collects all disparate data together — an enhancement of the salesforce platform that’s been available for at least four years.

Another tool is the Bloomberg Bureau of National Affairs income tax planner with scenarios that can factor in the tax laws of individual states and how they might impact the client in 20 years.

Brauer, an Omaha native and finance graduate of UNO who is now working on an MBA at Creighton, cites the thoroughness of the planning process as being important in the success and growth of Callahan Financial Planning. He said an in-house study done on capital markets over the past three years has produced research that pinpoints, with greater accuracy, what a client can expect from an investment.

“For example, an average investor should expect an annual return of 5.5 percent instead of the rule of thumb that places it in the 8 to 10 percent range,” he said. “There’s not a wide variance among participants. The premium for owners of non-treasury bonds

claim Social Security or a pension and safely retire. Cerven has worked with spouses who, for example, envision similar standards of living after retirement, but could be impacted by differing retirement ages and locations. In one case, one spouse wanted to retire immediately and move nearer to family, whereas the other wanted to continue working as long as their health held up and planned to remain in the long-time family home.

Cerven relies on “collaborative discussions” focused on how each spouse envisions retirement.

Cerven said her financial therapy skills have also been put to use in scenarios when clients pose concerns about an appropriate investment allocation and sustainable withdrawal rate. While they can have similar investment timelines in mind, different tolerances for risk and varying levels of comfort with their present withdrawals can emerge.

“One spouse might be concerned with the risk of the portfolio today and desire to maintain the principal of the portfolio (only withdrawing earnings), while the second spouse may prefer to continue pursuing more risk and pushing withdrawals higher for a greater standard of living,” she said.

Cerven said she and her colleagues view such work as being at the crossroads of evidence-based research and solution-focused therapy techniques.

Callahan, 34, heads one of only five fee-based firms in the Omaha area that are members of the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors, an organization created in 1983 to expand the use of fee-only financial advisers by individual consumers.

As Callahan Financial Planning continues to grow, Callahan doesn’t rule out opening a branch in another moderate-size city in a contiguous state. Such a decision is a year or two away, he said.

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