

# Changing Broker/Dealers is the best decision we've made in the last ten years.



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Selecting a new Broker/Dealer can be one of the most important decisions financial advisors make in their career. That one decision impacts themselves, their staff and their clients. It can either improve or impede their success, and either enhance or detract from their ease of doing business. It is the business equivalent of getting married and should not be entered into lightly.

Changing Broker/Dealers is not something you want to do frequently; you need to investigate thoroughly to be sure your firm and the potential Broker/Dealer are a good match. In the past, you might justify staying with your Broker/Dealer simply because you had a good relationship with one or two key people. Now, the reality is that your relationship with the Broker/Dealer is *bigger* and *more important* than ever before.

## When we began our search for a new Broker/Dealer we examined these issues:

- How could the Broker/Dealer help us grow our business? Are resources available to acquire other practices or recruit additional reps?
- Do they focus on only one revenue stream such as fees vs. commissions or commissions vs. fees, or do they let the advisor decide what is best for their clients and their firm?
- How do they use technology to enhance workflow, decrease labor and shipping costs and increase documentation capabilities? Are they always behind the technology curve or leading the industry?
- What type of training will they provide to my staff? What help can I get to ensure that I am running an efficient and effective shop? What duties can they teach my staff to do that will free up my time?
- Do they support the types of services and products I offer my clients? Do they recognize that every office is different, or do they have a cookie cutter approach to handling their reps?
- What practice management and marketing support will they provide?

It was shocking to me to see all of the services we could have been receiving if we had made the decision to change Broker/Dealers years ago.

## Too Big/Too Small

- Size matters. Too small of a firm cannot support the technology needed to ease work flow, and often ends up with too few employees to meet the needs of the reps. "Too small" is also a problem if your Broker/Dealer gets taken over or sold off to an undesirable firm. "Too big" is a problem when *you* are no longer big enough to warrant the special attention you need and desire. If you are accustomed to attending top producer conferences, would you still be among their group of reps in the new firm? If the firm is too big it can lose the personal relationships that are so valuable when special circumstances arise.

## Who owns whom?

- Frightening phrases like "Too Big to fail" are now floated around on the news. So who owns the Broker/Dealer? What business structure exists to protect you from some distantly related firm dragging down your Broker/Dealer? How are they capitalized? Are they seeking a bailout? These vital issues must be addressed. If you are not certain of the financial strength of the Broker/Dealer, you could find yourself making yet another Broker/Dealer change all too soon.

In retrospect, I wish I would have made the decision to change Broker/Dealer long ago. Misplaced loyalties and a few friendships kept me locked in place and not wanting to recognize that stagnation had become the new business model; the promise of change had taken the place of actual change. I have learned that being an Independent financial advisor doesn't have to mean that you are all alone.

While it is never easy to make big changes, changing Broker/Dealers is the best decision we have made in the last 10 years. We are now energized and ready to face whatever comes our way.

You can decide to do nothing – that would be easier in the short run; or you can decide to take your firm to the next level. With help from Securities America's Transition Team you could be in a completely new place with a completely new team of people eager to help you grow your business. Where do you want to be this time next year? Or the year after? As for me, I am now with a firm that supports my goals and dreams, and I am never looking back.



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