

Every Broker-Dealer, Vendor, Sponsor and Wholesaler Wants the Same Thing

By Kevin J. Cullen, Esq.



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I recently resigned all my securities and insurance licenses after nearly 25 years of very intense, profitable and spotless use of them as a number one wholesaler at four different financial product companies.

Eleven years of Strategic Coach participation and Dan Sullivan's provocation have worked to help me identify my unique ability to create and name my own 8-step process, to never rely on selling commodities and to direct my unique ability at a well-defined, limited and receptive group of clients. It is that heretofore undefined and untargeted group of advisors that presents every B/D, RIA, Vendor, Sponsor and Wholesaler with brand new opportunities for a profitable growth spurt.

I was an entrepreneurial coach trapped in a wholesaler's body and always put my unique ability efforts to grow the overall practice of those advisors I called "Extraordinary" ahead of my product sale, which I made secondary.

I thus came to discover and then define a class of financial advisors unlike any previous described demographics. Not 'good reps,' 'producing reps' or 'veteran reps': EXTRAORDINARY ADVISORS! It was sort of like discovering a new species and almost as exciting as discovering a new planet or good local car mechanic.

The narrowness of this species (better said market segment) is attractive because it enables more focused, specialized and successful sales and marketing techniques by everyone who "orbits" these "Extraordinary Advisors" (e.g. B/Ds, Vendors and Wholesalers). The good news, as usual, is: knowing your niche eliminates wasted time and

effort on unprofitable candidates; the bad news: this niche is relatively rare, not always readily visible, and requires an entrepreneurial improvement approach as opposed to our industry's traditional commodity driven approach.

Aren't the most valuable targets always either small or well hidden?

This group of extraordinary advisors is hidden in plain sight. Its distinguishing characteristics are not simply their:

Production...market niche...investment discipline and/or credentials...age...client concentration...geography...Compensation structure...or Channel (Bank, Independent, Wires).

The Extraordinary Advisor is defined attitudinally and by his or her execution, principally on entrepreneurial orientation. The Extraordinary Advisor spends money, time and energy on his/her practice's growth and tools to enable that progress.

He/she is future based not past-based; open to novel approaches, reads a lot, has likely used a coach, operates with a high self-confidence and has been described in every past Dan Sullivan FA column.

The Extraordinary Advisor has beliefs, not just interests; is an emotional adult, not an emotional child.

To the Extraordinary Advisor, it is NEVER about ENTITLEMENT!

Extraordinary Advisors show and use... are willing to display more innovation and are more likely to be holistic in dealing with clients: life planning devotees are much more likely to be Extraordinary Advisors. It should be no surprise that Extraordinary Advisors have tendencies and systems to attract and obtain Extraordinary CLIENTS.

They are distinguished by their capacity and desire for entrepreneurial self-improvement and receptivity toward creative, non-product help in that regard.

Extraordinary Advisors want real independent, ongoing and contextual practice management help. They appreciate working with folks who take seats on their side of the table, not just say that's what they will do while, in fact, they are pounding products or B/D service.

This group of Extraordinary Advisors presents a huge opportunity for those Broker Dealers, Vendors, Sponsors and Wholesalers who are confident enough to target and then adapt their approach to at least include a transmission to the Extraordinary Advisor wavelength. First step: fueling the coachable/self helped entrepreneurial orientation these advisors have adopted as opposed to leading with commodity to the entire universe.

Extraordinary Advisors want their suppliers, B/Ds and Wholesalers to lead with entrepreneurialism and follow later with traditional product, service and other commodities that are woven into the approach.

Once the Broker Dealers who seek to recruit and retain this group, once the Vendors and Sponsors who seek sales from this group, and once the Wholesalers who seek relationships with this group get their brains around this definition, paradigm shifts may happen. Everyone will need to learn how to revise old commoditized approaches in favor of customized,

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Did the Short Selling Ban Do Any Good?

The Securities and Exchange Commission's 14-day ban on short-selling in the shares of 799 financial companies was supposed to end October 2 amid debate over whether the action did any good. Short selling, the practice of selling a security the seller has borrowed but does not own, is a time-honored method of profiting when a stock drops.

The SEC took the action to "protect the integrity and quality of the securities market and strengthen investor confidence." The turmoil in recent weeks has swallowed some of the most storied names on Wall Street – like Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and AIG. Many contend that short-selling played a key role in forcing the collapse of these institutions.

The SEC said it might extend the ban to last for as many as 30 days if it deems necessary.

Critics of the action contend that short selling can make markets more efficient and bring in more capital. Some analysts say the ban could actually distort, rather than stabilize, edgy markets. They say restricting short selling could inflate the value of some stocks, opening the door for a big downward correction later. ***

FPA Prexy 'Very Proud' of Wise Members

In a "Dear Colleague" letter to its members, Financial Planning Association (FPA) President Mark Johannsen, CFP wrote: "... we are experiencing, not just witnessing, incredible change as reports continue to stream out of New York and Washington, D.C. regarding historic disruptions in the financial markets.

"These daily events are raising questions and fears among our clients and the public. . . we have risen to this challenge. Indeed, I have never seen as many financial planning professionals sought out by the general media and quoted as extensively as I have over these past few chaotic weeks. I am very proud of you for sharing your collective wisdom with the public. In talking with many of you, I remain inspired that regardless of the direction the financial markets take us, you are there working tirelessly on behalf of your clients.

"As the current crisis continues to unfold, I believe that we can also benefit by networking with each other. I would encourage you to visit [FPA's Community Building](#) on FPA's website to share some of your recent experiences so that we can learn even more how to better help our clients navigate the financial hazards that still lie ahead." ***

My Current Career is in Health Insurance – Obama or McCain?

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for catastrophic loss and least able to pay for it. That means greater transparency of cost and quality (in claims) and an emphasis on improvements and efficiencies from the medical community.

The reality is that how either plan is designed, executed and funded

will mean all the difference in impact on our industry and on us. Unfortunately, neither plan clearly details two thirds of that equation – the execution and funding elements. As we get closer to the election, seek out more detail in these areas and visit

www.NAHU.org, which provided much of the analysis for this discussion. And, don't forget to vote! ***

Joe Torella is a vp with Savoy Associates, and can be reached at 609-584-8112 x12.

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entrepreneurial-oriented, practice building approach, in order to reach these Extraordinary Advisors.

The response by entrepreneurially thirsty advisors has been amazing and intense to any Wholesaler, Vendor or B/D who offered to be first an entrepreneurial

aide/coach/mentor/resource and product guy second.

The next question is what must those who aspire to be Extraordinary B/Ds, Vendors and/or Wholesalers need to do to seize this hot market. Find out in FA's next Broker Dealer issue. ***

Kevin J. Cullen, Esq. is a former trial lawyer and wholesaler. He is the founder and CEO of the speaking, consulting and mentor/coaching organization, *The Extraordinary Advisor*. He may be reached at 203-256-1527 or www.ExtraordinaryAdvisor.com.