



Does Your Legacy Depend on a Hope and a Prayer?

If you are like most business owners, you have a collection of advisors to whom you turn in financial & legal matters. These advisors include a CPA, an Attorney, a Banker, and a Financial Consultant--as well as some family and friends. You have carefully selected these advisors for their competence and trustworthiness. Since your wealth is hard-won and precious, you have a low level of tolerance for poor skills or service.

Each of your advisors is an expert in his or her field, well-educated and current in an area of expertise. Each, over the years, has presented you with an idea which turned into a strategy and a set of goals to maximize your wealth. You feel good about how things have come together.

If this scenario describes you, your legacy may be depending on a hope and a prayer. Here's why:

Any idea a professional financial advisor presents to you is mostly based on that person's specialized view of the world. In other words, a CPA thinks accounting, an insurance professional thinks risk management and a money manager thinks investments. This is a natural function of that person's training, paradigm, and thus, the professional's niche.

Based on an individual niche, each advisor will give you sound, well-intentioned advice. The problem is that you and your family members are not a collection of financial niches; you are individuals each with some unique yet common vision of your ideal future. What's

more, the vision is deeper, richer, and more valuable than financial and legal ideas. Your wealth is also the sum of your history, your identity, your personal values, and your legacy passions.

If your financial picture depends upon a niche approach, your legacy is built on hope rather than your core values. First, you have to hope there are no gaps between the niches on your team. In other words, you have to hope that the pieces fit tightly together like a puzzle, with no gaps to let your wealth trickle through. You also have to hope that one advisor's well-intentioned advice doesn't overlap with or cancel out another's, leaving your wealth exposed and your values unattended.

Second, you have to hope the collection of your advisors' ideas and strategies match your and your family members' dreams, goals, and passions. To get a clearer sense of this, picture the niche approach as an inverted pyramid. The pyramid begins with each advisor's well-intentioned idea of the best approach. Thus, your pyramid begins with the apex at the bottom. Once you accept the advisor's idea, the point widens into a strategy and then into goals. At the top of the pyramid you have the widest part—hope that this approach matches your goals, your partner's goals, and the legacy you want to begin today and live long after you.

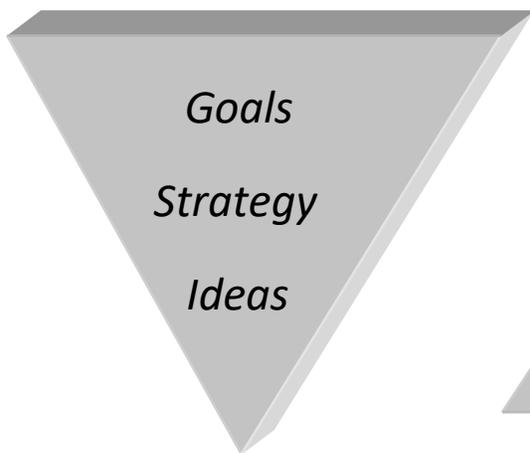
In 2003, after serving business owners for 13 years as a financial professional, it occurred to me that this

pyramid is upside down. Even the best, most well-intentioned advice I had to give my clients wasn't starting in the right place. A client's financial strategy shouldn't begin with my idea (no matter how expert or well-intentioned), but with the set of values and the vision that client has for today, tomorrow, and for future generations.

I began to wonder what would happen if we flipped the pyramid. What would happen if we began with the client's vision and core objectives and allowed our clients' Life & Estate Plan to flow from there? With vision and core values as the base of the pyramid, an

individual or family legacy would no longer depend on hope but on a solid and stable foundation.

After struggling with these reflections, I came to define wealth in terms of intellectual and human wealth—with the subsequent outcome of financial wealth and well-being. This is the foundational belief at Bridgeview Wealth: where our work is to facilitate the discovery of the intersection of clients "values-wealth" and their "financial-wealth." From that point, our work is to develop a coordinated team of advisors who will work collaboratively with those values.



Hope Based



Values and Vision Based

Because we live in a niche-based culture, most of us aren't especially clear about our values or even the true capital in our lives. Our intellectual capital stretches beyond our products and patents into our values, background, and experiences. Our human capital includes the key people who surround us at work and at home. Our ideal vision of the future is another form of wealth because it motivates and drives us in a unique direction.

If you and your family rarely think or talk about wealth in this broader sense, you might begin by watching the film *The Ultimate Gift*, a wonderful and thought-provoking conversation-starter for your family. I was an early investor in this movie because I saw its value as a tool for my clients and their families to catalogue and preserve their history.

The IEE featured *The Ultimate Gift* at the Benedum Center as the kick-off event in 2008. If you missed this event, I'd like to offer a gift to your family that the attendees of the IEE viewing received. It's a deck of cards to facilitate and capture great discussions about values around the dinner table or in other casual settings. Just call us at Bridgeview Wealth at 724-940-6321, and we'll ship this gift to you right away.

Flipping your pyramid from one built on hope to one driven by your vision and goals takes work. You've got to do some soul searching and have in-depth conversations with the important people in your life. You need to struggle with the right kind of questions, some of which should be the tough ones. In the process, you might find you have some disconnects and some disagreements to work through. This work won't

always be comfortable, but it is essential. This is the work that reveals the “why” of your life.

With this knowledge, the “what,” of strategy, and tactics will fall easily into place. Your advisors excel at the “what!” Bridgeview Wealth excels at the “what” and the “why?” by asking the right questions.

About the author. Robb McKinney, CFS, CLTC, CRPC® is Founder and Wealth Manager at Bridgeview Wealth. Robb leads clients through the proprietary *The Ultimate Discovery Process*, which helps clients to clarify core values and passions, and to create and implement a sustainable financial plan. Robb is committed to not only helping each client protect his or her “lifestyle plan,” but also to leverage success for future generations.

Selah

If you appreciate this article and /or would like more information about these views or need to request a deck of capture cards or a DVD of *The Ultimate Gift* movie, please call or email me.



Robb McKinney, CFS, CLTC, CRPC®

Robb@BridgeviewWealth.com

724-940-6321

www.BridgeviewWealth.com



Robb is a two-time recipient of the prestigious 5 Star Wealth Manager award which is based on client satisfaction. Respondents evaluate criteria such as customer service, expertise, value for fee charged and overall satisfaction. The overall evaluation score is based on an average of all respondents and may not be representative of any one client's evaluation.

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