

Case Study

How Sharon Killion Reaches Clients with Complex Finances by Simplifying the Financial Picture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A financial professional for close to two decades, Sharon Killion has spent most of her time assisting educators with their 403(b) accounts and pensions. Recently, she has begun to shift her business focus to a wider range of investors approaching retirement. In the move to a new market and a move up to working with clients with higher net worth, Sharon looked to Asset-Map to give her the tools and confidence necessary to succeed in the next stage.

“

Asset-Map has given me the confidence I need to pursue higher net-worth opportunities and provide the comprehensive advice those clients are looking for in an Advisor.

”



FROM THE US TO SOUTH AFRICA AND BACK

Sharon Killion took a slight detour away from finance for a few years. After nine years as a financial professional, she sold her 403(b) business and moved to South Africa, living in a house overlooking the Indian Ocean for almost seven years.

But not even daily sightings of vervet monkeys, whales and dolphins from her back porch could keep Sharon away for too long. In 2010 she moved back stateside and started building her practice again from scratch. Because of her own background in education, Sharon again dove into the 403(b) business to give pension advice and help other educators manage their financial future.

A NEW TYPE OF CHALLENGE

Though she still enjoyed working with educators, Sharon also craved a new challenge. She began to transition her firm, SKS Retirement Solutions, to go outside the education system and work with more retirees. In this new focus, the individuals often average more than \$500,000 in investable assets, which is higher than her educator clients.

As with anyone looking to pivot their business focus, Sharon wanted to feel confident in her new direction of giving more comprehensive financial guidance to individuals from a different background than herself. More than her own confidence, Sharon wanted to ensure that her clients could feel confident in her and the advice she provided.

To acquire that confidence, Sharon wanted to find a financial planning solution she could use to easily present her recommendations in a visual way that her clients would easily grasp.

PEER ADVICE

Sharon's Broker/Dealer, United Planners, offers Asset-Map as a technology solution to all of its Advisors. While she was aware of the platform and used it in a limited capacity, she didn't utilize it in her everyday planning at first.

Instead, Sharon tried another financial planning platform. Unfortunately, the results weren't what she hoped for. Instead of setting up clients with plans, she spent hours each week with the Vendor's training team—and then had difficulty reproducing the complex actions required to create comprehensive plans for the higher-net-worth individuals she was beginning to serve.

It was at a United Planners' conference where she asked other attendees what they were using that Sharon began to understand how Asset-Map could help her quickly and easily get financial plans in front of her clients, without requiring her to go through endless hours of training.

PROVIDING CLARITY THROUGH SIMPLICITY

Sharon found that Asset-Map was so intuitive that she began to use it immediately, a far cry from her previous experience. She now uses Asset-Maps in every client meeting to help clients quickly understand how their investments and other financial decisions tie together.

As a former teacher, Sharon says that she knows people need to see things visually to learn well. Her father, an experienced Advisor himself, also taught her that the best way to engage clients is to keep advice simple and relevant to the moment.

Now, instead of presenting a client with a complex online portal or a 100-page financial report, Sharon sits down with them and reviews a single-page plan. No one gets overwhelmed, and everyone gets clarity.

REAL HELP, REAL RESULTS

Often the best way to illustrate the impact of technology can be to tell a story of it in use.

Sharon worked with a couple who were both approaching retirement, but on a different timeline from one another. By using a Target-Map, her favorite tool in Asset-Map, and the cash flow analysis tool, Sharon was able to show them that if the older partner retired too soon, the couple's money would run out while his partner was still in his early 70s. Best of all, the conversation was done with a clear visual, so there was no confusion.

As a result, she was able to show concrete evidence to back up her advice—giving herself and her clients more confidence in their financial future.

