“I didn’t even know this world existed,” says Scott Ewing, financial advisor and vice president at Regions Investment Solutions, located at Regions Bank in Nashville, TN, as he describes an eye-opening transition. Eight months ago, Scott moved his advisory practice from a bank-owned broker-dealer to Regions, which runs its investment program through Cetera® Financial Institutions.

“The first word that comes to mind is ‘empowering,’” he says. “People want to see you succeed, and they remove barriers to help you do that. They’re there for you.” With Regions and Cetera, Scott found a world where clients come first and growth potential is unlimited.

Having spent 15 years in the retail banking industry, he had become accustomed to the tenor and pace of that environment. When he sold annuities, he knew transmitting them through the carrier could take over a week. He would have to call clients into his office twice, maybe three times to complete a single transaction. The banks’ primary focus was deposits and loans. That’s just how things were. “What I knew was always working for a bank,” Scott says. “I’d heard stories,” but he had never seriously investigated the possibility of working with an independent broker-dealer—until opportunity found him.

A friend alerted him to an opening at Regions in a part of Nashville where Scott cut his teeth early in his career, and he jumped at the chance to return to his old stomping grounds. He soon found Regions and Cetera offered a level of growth potential and support he’d never experienced during his years in retail banking, where he often faced limitations on process, product, and opportunity. “From the moment I got my training materials, my response was, ‘Wow. I’m used to these types of roadblocks, and you’re telling me they don’t exist?’”

Since that first day eight months ago, Scott’s enthusiasm has only grown. As he’s learned more about his new environment, he’s found more ways in which Cetera and Regions set him up for success in unprecedented ways. He’s been particularly impressed with their ease of doing business, technology, and culture of service.
Ease of Doing Business

Because Cetera is self-clearing, many common transactions are smoother for Scott than they were in retail banking. For example, the annuities that once required a week to process can now be completed in 24 to 48 hours.

“Cetera and Regions want to move business along to help you be successful,” says Scott. In retail banking, the necessary checks and balances could sometimes frustrate clients, leading some advisors to avoid certain transactions altogether. As a self-clearing independent broker-dealer, Cetera still has processes and controls in place, but they’re more nimble.

“They’re still watching, still monitoring,” says Scott, “but you don’t have to write a dissertation about why you’re moving from a 401(k) to an IRA. They just want to know if it makes sense for the client. If it’s appropriate for the client and you can document it, there’s not a lot of pushback from Cetera. They truly remove roadblocks.”

Technology

In addition to streamlined supervisory processes, technology has made a significant impact on Scott’s efficiency and capacity for growth. He particularly enjoys Connect2Clients®, Pentameter®, and RightBRIDGE.

Connect2Clients is a marketing portal that allows you, with the click of a button, to send targeted email campaigns, greeting cards, newsletters and more to select clients or client groups—all customized with your clients’ information.

“It’s amazing being able to target-market clients and to reach out at push of a button. It’s one of the coolest systems I’ve seen. To be constantly in communication with clients with small touches—to me, that’s fantastic,” says Scott.

Pentameter is Cetera’s award-winning practice management platform, and Scott has found its metrics invaluable. “I love that you can see, ‘here’s my revenue, here’s where I started, and here are some opportunities for efficiency.’”

RightBRIDGE is a suggestion engine that delves into your client data to generate five “Opportunities of the Day,” each with an explanation that helps you frame a conversation. It gives you everything you need to pick up a phone and make a call.

“Being able to access these tools as my client base builds up helps me be more efficient,” he says. “They help us assist our clients and are invaluable sales resources.”
Culture of Service

Scott has been most impressed with the culture and commitment to service he’s found at both Cetera and Regions. While in previous environments he’s encountered people who simply didn’t have answers, he knows that when he calls the Resource Center at Cetera, he’ll get a real human who will provide the information he needs.

“When I call, they usually have an answer, but if they don’t, they don’t push me off the line. They put me on hold and get me an expert with the correct answer right away. And they do it with such a wonderful attitude—an attitude to help and serve.”

Within Regions, too, Scott has been impressed with people’s commitment to helping each other succeed. “At Regions, everyone is excited to be there and do their job,” he says. “They want you to be successful, and they do a wonderful job of helping us achieve our goals.” Scott feels certain he’s made the right choice in his transition. “It feels like home,” he says. “I’ve made friends with people I’ve only known eight months, and it feels like eight years.” Equally happy are Scott’s clients. Since he’s made the transition, his referral business is booming, and Scott has time to focus on his future of continued growth with Regions and Cetera.

“My goal is to be one of the top advisors in Nashville within one to three years,” he says. “I plan to serve clients, serve Regions, and grow my career along the way. Then I’ll ride off into the sunset.”

To learn more about opportunities to move from the retail banking space to a partnership with Cetera Financial Institutions, contact us at 800.245.0467, extension 65014.

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