

interchange

Talking with David Jeter, CFP®, Senior VP

What type of advisor fits at Allegheny?

There's no single answer, but the advisor that thrives is typically planning oriented and offers comprehensive financial advice and service to clients. Yet that advisor does not try to be a jack of all trades; he or she understands the benefits of collaboration and leverage—with the firm and colleagues. Also, that advisor is usually professionally credentialed and continually looking for opportunities to stay current with the profession and the industry.

Why does Allegheny fit well with that type of advisor?

Allegheny, which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, was founded by two practitioners who continue to practice today. As a result, the firm has always been keenly sensitive to—indeed, primarily focused on—the needs of advisors and their clients. The firm sees itself as a partner with the advisor, providing resources to help build or run a practice, not as a place to start and end the day with transaction processing. Broadly speaking, those resources are intellectual, technological, and operational. We develop them based on advisor needs. What's more, each advisor determines how or when to use the resources. In any case, advisors know they are there.

Can you give an example?

Take technology. Many of our advisors are veterans with more than 20 years of experience. Twenty years ago the technology, including the software for planning, analysis and research, was rudimentary compared to today. So how do those advisors stay on top of the changes? The greatest demand on their time is dealing with clients, not shopping for software or hardware. That's where Allegheny comes in. We are able to put specialists on that job and, just as important, make sure the advisors know their

options, understand the fit, and have the training and support necessary to make the technology improve their practice.

Or take intellectual resources. Many of our advisors have a background in one particular discipline, such as money management or tax planning. Instead of having to master every aspect of financial planning, they can draw on the professional teams around them to assure high-quality advice to their clients. Depending on the client, they might for example call on the investment research team, the financial planning group, or the insurance team for help.

So there are teams that help drive the advisor's business?

That's how we are organized and how we operate, in interactive advisor-support teams. If you visit our main office, you'll see a layout that reflects that. It's organized by specialty, but it's an open environment, both physically and in mindset. Access by advisors and by other teams is the priority.

What do you see on the horizon for Allegheny and its advisors?

Many people lament the current state of the financial-advice profession, whether because of rising competition, market volatility, rising costs or regulatory matters. We take a different approach: not trying to stop change, but being on top of it. Put the client first and most problems solve themselves. Advisors are our clients. At the end of the day it is the advisors' practice, but no one said they had to do it alone. They need us to make sound decisions to meet the demands of competition, markets, costs, and regulation. So our horizon is a continual upgrade of how and what we provide to advisors; so they can keep providing exceptional advice to their clients.