



Prospect Financial Group Takes Holistic Approach

Prospect Financial Group

Jill Curran, CEO of Prospect Financial Group, LLC in Arlington, VA has a fast growing practice, targeting upscale professionals in the Washington, DC area. Her clients range in age from those in their 30s to some in retirement, but they have a common denominator, assets that are broadly distributed in retirement accounts—IRAs and 403(b), 401(k) and other employer-sponsored accounts.

Curran structures her practice around providing holistic advice, reporting on both managed and held-away assets, and—most importantly—providing accurate performance measurement for all accounts. By capturing the full range of client assets, she is able to assess the track record of all of her clients' investment choices, and help them make informed and thoughtful financial decisions.

"My typical client has \$1.5 million in assets, and a significant portion of those assets are in retirement accounts. Without access to those accounts, I cannot provide good financial advice," says Jill. To access and analyze these accounts, Curran uses the combined power of Morningstar Workstation Office Edition and the data aggregation services of ByAllAccounts.

The Benefits of Morningstar's Workstation Office Edition

Curran is a long-time Morningstar subscriber because as she puts it, "Morningstar is clearly the leader for research for advisors, and has long provided good analytical tools." Initially, Curran subscribed to Morningstar Principia, but switched to Advisor Workstation Office Edition. "They've expanded Office Edition to provide almost everything an advisor needs for investment management into a single product—including research, portfolio analysis, investment policy statements, performance reporting, planning and customer relationship management."

Portfolio accounting software is typically a key product for an advisor's practice and while performance reporting is critical, Curran says there is much more to investment management than providing clients with quarterly or monthly reports. Developing a client's asset allocation, diagnosing a portfolio, researching securities, and rebalancing a portfolio are just as important, and that cannot be done well with just performance reports.

Given the time required to get data into a portfolio system, she wants one product to address all of her investment management needs. "I can't imagine using a system that only calculates portfolio return and asset allocation," says Curran. Nor could she imagine trying to work with a client without understanding the client's entire net worth.

Selecting ByAllAccounts

Using Office Edition's importing tool, Curran pulls in client account cost basis information from her primary custodian, TD Ameritrade. While Office Edition can pull account information from over 30 major sources, similar feeds are not available for the many retirement and brokerage accounts most of her clients use. To fill in the gaps, Curran was entering data manually into Office Edition, but this was time-consuming and reporting was slow because she had to wait for statements to begin data entry. Additionally, manual data entry is more likely to result in mistakes and, as Curran says, "I hate to think of the bad decisions that could be made based on a data entry error."

Curran realized that she needed an automated solution. She first researched a number of account aggregation vendors, including the major players servicing the retail space. Although these options were relatively inexpensive, a careful examination revealed an unacceptable level of data errors.

“Seriously consider ByAllAccounts and Workstation Office Edition if you want a comprehensive solution to manage a client’s entire net worth, rather than competing for a chunk of the pie.” - *Jill Curran*

In mid-2006, Curran began looking at ByAllAccounts. She was immediately impressed by the quality of the data. It was far superior to other offerings she had evaluated and—critically—it was ‘reconciliation-ready.’ ByAllAccounts had an interface (called the Custodial Integrator) which allowed data to be seamlessly fed into Office Edition and reconciled. “With Custodial Integrator I am able to reconcile retirement plan data just as I am able to reconcile custodial data,” notes Curran.

The \$10 Million Prospect

What prompted Curran to search for a data aggregation solution was a prospective client with \$10 million in investible assets: \$1 million managed by a full service broker, \$3.5 million in retirement plans, and \$5.5 million in taxable accounts and rollover IRAs. With this prospective client, she could compete for the \$5.5 million in assets with the hope of pulling in another \$1 million based on successful management of the \$5.5 million. Without an easy way to pull in the \$3.5 million in retirement plans, she would not be able to provide her client with a comprehensive plan. Using ByAllAccounts, however, opened the door to managing and advising on the client’s entire net worth.

In addition to the \$9 million under advisement, Curran now reports on the \$1 million (managed by the full-service broker), helping to ensure that the broker-managed assets are performing well on a risk-adjusted basis. The client’s prior advisor treated the accounts

at the full-service broker as having a fixed asset allocation, in order to make manual data entry manageable. While this approach may have saved time, it did not accurately reflect the client’s portfolio.

Initially, Curran tried to manually enter this data on these accounts, but with nearly 100 securities, it was incredibly time consuming and she worried about doing it accurately. “With ByAllAccounts I am able to reconcile the data in Workstation Office Edition and analyze the asset allocation and performance of the accounts in full detail. I am immediately able to identify drifts in allocation or any issues that might arise,” and, “I’m also able to manage the \$3.5 million in retirement plan assets,” says Curran.

The Benefits of ByAllAccounts and Workstation Office Edition

Using ByAllAccounts and Office Edition, Curran easily produces consolidated account statements across accounts held at a wide range of custodians. Curran says the account statement in Workstation Office Edition is one of the best she has seen. “Morningstar is very good at packaging data in a meaningful way,” and Curran adds, “I find the Portfolio Snapshot reports, Investment Detail pages, and other analytical tools to be much more useful than tons of customizable performance reports. ByAllAccounts and Workstation Office Edition provide an end-to-end, comprehensive solution that allows an advisor to manage an entire practice focused on the client’s entire net worth, regardless of where assets are custodied.”

Practice Management and Marketing

Curran says that “the center of my marketing materials has always been providing comprehensive and objective advice, regardless of where assets are held or who sells a financial product. ByAllAccounts and Morningstar Workstation Office Edition are crucial in helping me to achieve that mission.”

Curran’s final word of advice to her peers is this: “Seriously consider this solution if you would like a comprehensive solution to manage a client’s entire net worth, rather than competing for a chunk of the pie, and if you would like to serve a segment that has a significant portion of their net worth tied up in employer provided plans. There is a big opportunity for advisors who are willing and able to provide the same level of advice on assets held in retirement plans and in state 529 plans as they do to assets held at their custodian. This is the real benefit of ByAllAccounts and Morningstar Workstation Office Edition.”

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