



Support for a Specialized Client Practice

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Community

Cris Caruso has been a financial advisor for over 15 years, but it wasn't until September 2022 that she launched her own firm, Savoire Financial, with Wealthcare's support. After working with a national firm over the span of 18 years in both client services and asset management, Cris became motivated to go independent to truly narrow her focus and expertise in a meaningful practice dedicated to women and the LGBTQIA+ community.

"Women who are my clients are often single – divorced or widowed," Cris explained. "Or they may be married and are the financial decision-makers in their house. But your typical male advisor doesn't relate to them or talk to them. Even if the woman is the decision maker, they still talk to the male partner."

Savoire Financial does comprehensive, "surround sound" planning that entails deep dives into their clients' finances. This helps clients feel comfortable and confident in their money decisions with peace of mind around the impact of their significant life events. Pairing this with her background in hospitality, Cris delivers high-touch service and touch to her clients.

The Decision to Go Independent with Wealthcare

During her corporate career, Cris was "allowed" to focus on her ideal client base of underserved communities in financial planning. But she was one lone voice in a team of advisors. "While I had this focus in my part of the practice, I didn't feel it was having the same impact of being able to create a brand with this message and focus," she explained. And that's how Savoire Financial was born.

As an independent IAR, however, Cris still needed an affiliate partner. "When I was shopping for where I was going to land, even to get into the front door, those folks had to show a commitment to holding a space for women," said Cris. She found this with the entire Wealthcare

team, who demonstrated a commitment to inclusion and providing support for both women and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Her voice continues to be heard while making Wealthcare more accessible and inviting to all. Since launching her practice and partnering with Wealthcare, Cris has played an integral role in helping the firm elevate its brand with recommendations and changes to marketing material that make the collateral more inclusive and appealing to women and people who identify as LGBTQIA+ . With her contributions, Wealthcare's marketing materials now include more images of women and people of color, resulting in content that is more inclusive and less gendered.

Continued Growth with a Niche Client Strategy

After Cris made the decision to start her own firm, 75% of her clients decided to move with her to Savoire Financial. "It was a big, scary, bold ask but very satisfying," she shared. Since then, the practice has continued to grow through client referrals alone. The steady stream of prospects from her network are well-qualified since existing clients only tend to recommend those with shared values. And while Cris jokingly wonders what would happen if she did any marketing, she is preparing for growth. "Currently, I have a part-time assistant, and I am working on bringing somebody else on before the end of the year as full-time."

Starting her own firm with Wealthcare's partnership has certainly required bold action, but the impact it's had on Cris's life is clear. "I had to gather myself to quit and talk to clients, but it allowed me to double down on who I am as an advisor and a person."

"Starting my own firm is a huge career highlight. It's been hard but satisfying and rewarding."

— Cris Caruso