

CASE STUDY

Roadmap™

Turning a business vision into reality

Company Profile

Bernhardt Wealth Management:

A fee-only wealth management firm with over \$120 million AUM

Need:

Increase AUM by attracting new clients

Solution:

Leverage TD AMERITRADE Institutional and their Roadmap process to formalize a plan and identify tactics to increase client referrals

Results:

Increased their average number of referrals per quarter within a six-month time period and increased assets from both new clients and existing clients

Achieving growth through a client acquisition plan

While the market correction of 2008 has shaken the trust of many Americans, it has also presented an opportunity for independent Registered Investment Advisors (RIAs) to educate investors about the benefits of working with an RIA and to acquire new client relationships.

However, finding the time to develop and implement a client acquisition program can be a challenge given the day-to-day demands of running a business. To be successful, an acquisition program requires a strategy, well-defined goals and an actionable plan.

Bernhardt Wealth Management turned to TD AMERITRADE Institutional for assistance in developing a client acquisition plan with measurable results.

In need of an action plan

In early 2009, Gordon Bernhardt, President and Founder of Bernhardt Wealth Management, determined that it was time to take his business to the next level and increase the firm's assets under management (AUM). "2009 was the first year I really focused on my vision for the company," said Gordon, "and where I wanted to be in 2010 and beyond."

Gordon had tried niche marketing programs in the past, but found that many of his past successes were, as he said, "based more on luck rather than a strategy with measurable results." To meet his longer-term business objectives, he recognized that he needed a more strategic approach.

Setting focused goals

In July 2009, Gordon set a primary objective of increasing his AUM by \$40 million within a year. He knew this was aggressive, but he was committed. To help meet this goal, he worked with his TD AMERITRADE Institutional Solutions Consultant to first review his current business practices and to define his growth strategy. Together, they determined there were three approaches he could take to potentially achieve his AUM goals:

- Increase assets from existing clients
- Acquire new clients
- Acquire another practice

After some analysis, Gordon chose to focus his immediate efforts on acquiring new clients as a means of achieving his goal.



Committed To Your Success.

The Roadmap Process

Roadmap is an innovative online planning tool that helps advisors translate high-level business objectives into action plans. The process generally consists of four steps:

1. A phone interview to understand your firm's goals and challenges.
2. An in-person meeting to discuss one or more key business objectives.
3. Additional discussions to produce specific action items with milestones and metrics.
4. Ongoing follow-up to track goals and tasks.

Benefits of Roadmap

- Addresses the most common issues facing advisors today.
- Utilizes real-life advisor experiences to create a knowledge base for future uses.
- Creates specific recommendations against goals, with actionable takeaways.
- Creates accountability and milestones.
- Brings consistency and sustainability to the process.

Introducing the Roadmap process

To ensure that Gordon stayed focused on his goal, his Solutions Consultant introduced a process called Roadmap, an innovative online planning tool that helps advisors translate their high-level business objectives into action plans. Tapping into Roadmap's extensive knowledge base derived from previous consultations and experiences with other advisors, they came up with recommendations and actionable takeaways based on Gordon's specific needs:

- AUM objectives
- Time frame
- Client acquisition goals

Turning a plan into action

Gordon and his Solutions Consultant discussed the various Roadmap recommendations to determine what was involved with each and what was feasible given Gordon's current workload. Together they selected these five action items to focus on over the next year:

1. Ask for referrals
2. Create an online marketing program
3. Identify new marketing tools
4. Leverage *High Net Worth Insight*, a prospecting tool from Infinata, a third-party provider, to identify potential new prospects
5. Begin a client segmentation program to profile the best clients

For each action item, they determined the specific tasks that needed to be accomplished during the next year to give Gordon a chance of meeting his growth target. They also established quarterly milestones to keep things moving forward.

"Roadmap gave me a great framework to create a realistic client acquisition plan with actionable recommendations. It provided me with the tools I needed to determine what I could realistically implement, what would make the most sense for my firm and what I was most comfortable doing."

Key accomplishments

Despite today's market environment, Bernhardt Wealth Management's AUM is 2.5% greater today than it was at their peak in 2008. And, in the fourth quarter of 2009, they received nearly \$7 million in assets from new and existing clients. Gordon has implemented the first four tasks and plans to conduct a client segmentation program in 2010.

Below are four measures that Gordon took based on his Roadmap recommendation:

1. Ask for referrals

As a result of working through the Roadmap process, Gordon now has a more disciplined approach to asking for referrals. He and his team now always make sure that asking for referrals is on their agenda when meeting with clients or other potential referral sources. While it may sound simple, his referrals have tripled since he implemented this approach. Keep in mind that individual firm results can vary, and building a plan does not guarantee success.

“In 2008 I was averaging about three referrals per quarter,” says Gordon. “In the third quarter of 2009 I was surprised to see that I had nine.”

2. Create an online marketing program

Gordon recently developed a monthly online newsletter that he uses to keep in communication with his clients and prospects about a wide variety of issues. The subject matter varies, but it usually includes relevant timely topics, and he uses the newsletter to provide his thoughts on how various developments might impact his clients.

3. Identify new marketing tools

After going through the Roadmap process, Gordon thought about additional approaches he might use to help him get in front of clients and prospects. One of those was the use of seminars. Gordon and his team hosted their first Webinar in October 2009; through this tactic, they were able to successfully showcase their firm to 30 prospects at once.

4. Leverage an online tool to identify new prospects

High Net Worth Insight from Infinata is an online prospecting tool which provides access to public data, insight and intelligence on thousands of high-net-worth individuals, foundations and endowments, and retirement plans. Gordon is using the tool to uncover the relationships his new referrals may have with other individuals or organizations with which he is connected. He also uses this information when speaking with new clients to see if they can possibly help him get in touch with additional prospects.

Measurement is critical to success

To help keep Gordon on target, his Solutions Consultant provides him with a quarterly report that shows how he is doing against his targets and checks in with him at least quarterly to see if there is anything TD AMERITRADE Institutional can do to help keep things moving along.

Gordon plans to use these reports to create a more well-defined business plan for 2010.

60% of advisors participating in TD AMERITRADE Institutional's Roadmap consulting program report that assets or accounts have increased in the first six months of implementing a plan.

On average, these advisors doubled the number of new accounts or added four times as many assets compared to the six months prior to starting the program.

*Based on Net New Assets (NNA) and new account activity evaluated for advisors with Roadmaps delivered prior to the end of February 2009. New account and NNA performance measured as the six month period prior to and through the month of delivery, and the six months following the month of delivery. Outliers with residual asset balances (<\$1MM) during the analysis period and/or very large changes in asset balances during the time period were removed from the analysis.

Put Roadmap to work for you

“One of the biggest benefits I’ve found in using Roadmap is that I now have a formal plan which outlines the goals I want to achieve with tactics to help me get there.”

As Gordon can attest, Roadmap and your TD AMERITRADE Institutional Solutions Consultant can help take the pain out of creating a well-defined strategic plan with executable action items. The key is to follow and implement the plan, and the Roadmap process helps make that happen through ongoing monitoring and measurement of progress.

“I highly recommend Roadmap. I knew my plan wasn’t going to happen, particularly in the time frame I had set out for myself, if I didn’t do something different.”

Gordon has been looking to add advisors to his firm and feels that all staff will benefit from using Roadmap and having the opportunity to see how they are progressing toward their targets. He adds, “I think staff members are looking to follow someone with a vision, and the Roadmap process helps me to define that vision.”

While Gordon chose to focus on growth through client acquisition as his business objective, Roadmap looks at seven common advisor demands: growth, efficiency, risk management, client service, human capital, practice equity and gaining knowledge. Gordon expects to turn his attention to another area for improvement in 2010 and continue to benefit from this consistent and systematic way of addressing business objectives.

**Are you ready to leverage Roadmap and take your business to the next level?
Contact us to get started now.**

Connect with an Experienced Consultant Today.

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