charles SCHWAB
ADVISOR SERVICES

ADVISOR CASE STUDY: M.J. Nodilo Pathlight Investors

In 2009, M.J. Nodilo left a wirehouse firm and founded Pathlight Investors, a fee-based firm based in Phoenix, Arizona. After an initial conversation with his Schwab Advisor Services business development officer, Nodilo spent nearly a year and a half investigating the independent RIA model, "considering it carefully, to get to the point where we felt comfortable." During that time Nodilo considered several custodians, ultimately choosing Schwab to support his independent practice.

What made you choose Schwab as a custodian?

"The consultative approach that Schwab and our BDO Sean took was extremely helpful and definitely made our planning process go more smoothly.

One thing that really stood out compared to our discussions with IBDs and other custodians was that Schwab was so responsive. It wasn't difficult to get an answer to a question or talk to someone who was an expert in an area we needed to learn more about.

Schwab has a lot of tenured employees and really understands this business. Virtually everyone seemed to have 10-plus years at Schwab and often 20 years, which was different from a lot of other groups we met with. The fact that you could ask a question and Schwab knew the answer—that was really comforting to us."

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—M.J. Nodilo, Pathlight Investors

Once you made the decision, how long did it take to launch your firm?

"After several months of preparation and consultation, we committed to Schwab and the actual transition process took about three months."

> "It's a big advantage that Schwab has done so many transitions, because there are so many moving parts and so many possible outcomes."
>
> —M.J. Nodilo, Pathlight Investors

What did you like about working with Schwab for your move?

"Schwab's approach was refreshing and different. They made a great effort to find out what was important to us instead of trying to sell us a platform. The answers were specific and tailored to what we were looking for. That really stood out for us. And our BDO played a central role in getting us the right answers to the questions we had."

How did Schwab help you address specific challenges?

"When issues arose, our BDO made a great effort to do what he could to find a resolution. I think it's a big advantage that Schwab has done so many transitions, because there are so many moving parts and so many possible outcomes. Schwab has seen a lot more of the issues arise, so it's easier to solve and find solutions when they've seen them before. That experience is a big thing."

What did you appreciate most about Schwab during this experience?

"I really appreciated Schwab's responsiveness. They had the ability to connect us with the people who could take the time to hear our questions. Sometimes it was someone inside Schwab; sometimes it was a third-party vendor; sometimes it was an advisor that Schwab had helped transition in the past. Having all those resources available to us was really helpful."

Now that you're an RIA supported by Schwab, what stands out the most?

"The difference between being the client of a custodian and being an employee at a wirehouse is like night and day. If you work for a firm with 10,000 advisors, you can feel like the company doesn't pay attention to you and what you need. But when you're a client, they're in business to serve you."

HOW SCHWAB HELPED M.J.
Consultative approach to smooth the process
Prompt response from experienced team
Expert answers to specific questions
Tenured team that really knows the business
Access to helpful resources
Dedicated BDO central to the entire process
Personalized approach to every situation

For more information about Schwab Advisor Services, contact your Schwab business development officer or call 877-707-1959.