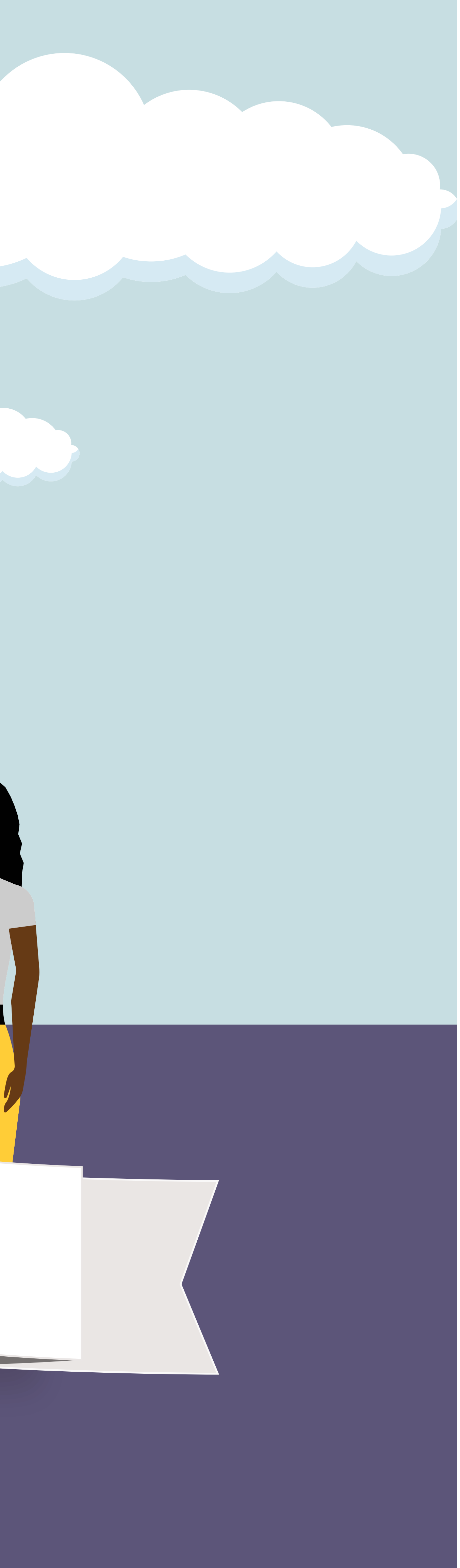
COVER STORY

NAPA TOP WOMEN ADVISORS 2017

CLASS 'ACTS'

BY NEVIN E. ADAMS, JD



We launched the NAPA Top Women Advisors list in 2015 to acknowledge the contributions of what we saw as a growing number of women who were making significant contributions to the retirement industry, as well as bringing excellence to the profession. In this, our third edition of the list, it was striking to see how many have made that list multiple years — and how many are new to these lists.

The competition is tough — this year there were nearly 600 nominations submitted by NAPA Firm Partners — a record. Those nominees were asked to respond to a series of questions, both quantitative and qualitative, about their experience and practice. Those questionnaires were then reviewed on an anonymized basis by a panel of industry expert judges who, over the course of several weeks, selected the women honored in three separate categories:

- Captains: All-stars who happen to be principals, owners or team captains of their organizations.
- All-Stars: Top producers who have their own practice.
- Rising Stars: Top producers who have less than five years of experience with retirement plans as a financial advisor (some have been working with plans longer, but not as a financial advisor).

Alongside the series of questions that focus on quantifiable attributes — things like assets under advisement, plans and participants served, and years of experience in the business — we also ask qualitative questions that help the judges better understand the approach each takes to their practice, their customers and their craft.

Among those open-ended questions this year was the following; “My recommendation to women interested in entering into and/or expanding their retirement plan book of business would be…”

‘Go for It’

Those recommendations, as you might expect, speak to a wide array of experience and expectations. However, you could sum up at least half of the advice received from this year’s Top Women Advisors in just three words: “go for it.”

Beyond that, among those who made this year’s list of NAPA Top Women Advisors, admonitions to “listen,” to “be yourself” and to “find a mentor” were common, as were recommendations to do the right thing, to be willing to work hard, and to develop a deep expertise in this business.

“You can’t just dabble in this line of work, you have to specialize in it,” one Captain explained. “Retirement plans are a complex ‘sell,’” explained another. “The more well-versed you are in ERISA, tax law, plan design, fiduciary issues, investments, employee communications, compliance and psychology, the better you’ll be able to handle all the complexities that come at you in this business.”

“Learn six very important words when you aren’t 100 percent sure of the response to a question: Let me get back to you!” advised one All-Star. “And then make sure you research the question and get back with the correct answer. Both you and your client will learn something.”

“Work for a firm that aligns with what your needs are, and find a strong mentor,” noted another All-Star. “Reach out to other women in the industry, even if they are with competitors, as they have gone through many of the same struggles and are typically willing to share their stories. Lift each other up along the way. Be strong, be confident, be persistent, and never ever give up.”

“Confidence can only go so far,” cautioned one Captain, explaining that, “it will need to be backed by knowledge and innovation. Know more about the intricacies of the compliance and administrative aspects that will set you apart from any other investment advisor. You will be more valued and appreciated by your clients for the ‘other things’ you have to offer, in addition to your investment savvy.”

‘Different’ Perspective

Beyond that, there was a pervasive sense that while for some at least, gender may have been an impediment to getting into this business, for the women on this

INSIDE THE ACCOLADE

The NAPA Top Women Advisors list was created in 2015 to acknowledge the contributions of a growing number of women who are making significant contributions to the retirement industry, as well as bringing excellence to the profession.

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The lists were drawn from nearly 600 nominations submitted by NAPA Firm Partners.

Please Note: There will be a special VIP recognition for the NAPA 2017 Top Women Advisors at the NAPA 401(k) SUMMIT, April 15-17 in Nashville, TN.

year's list, it represents a competitive advantage. "Women offer a unique approach and understanding, and many times the plan sponsor client you are working with is another woman," explained another Captain. It was a theme that turned up repeatedly among responses:

"Providing a female perspective to a variety of situations within the team, organization, and industry is one of the meaningful ways you will contribute as a woman," said one Captain, who went on to challenge others to "…demonstrate this by elevating women around you, sharing your unique perspective, demonstrating work/life balance, representing women in a professional manner, offering your experiences as a mentor, and assisting with career path guidance for other women."

"Don't try to be like one of the guys, be yourself and let your feminine qualities define who you are. I firmly believe that women are hired because we are naturally nurturing and educational. Many of our plan sponsor clients are HR directors or managers who appreciate collaboration and a consultative approach."

"I think there is a unique advantage to being a woman in this business. There is not a high percentage of female advisors."

"This is a great field for women. We are the minority and I feel it provides us an advantage. We do have to work harder to prove ourselves, but once you do, you have clients for life."

"I have found that generally speaking, women tend to be more empathetic and that allows us to be uniquely suited to helping people understand the importance of saving for retirement. It is very rewarding to know your work actually helps people."

"We have a different perspective and viewpoint than many of our male counterparts. Plan sponsors appreciate having a woman's perspective and opinion."

"We bring unique value in this field. It is a field that is built on trust, compassion, empathy, teaching, listening, and making real change in people's lives. Women are uniquely qualified in all of those attributes."

"This may feel like a man's world, but I feel the consultative approach needed to be a really incredible retirement plan adviser is actually best accomplished by a woman."

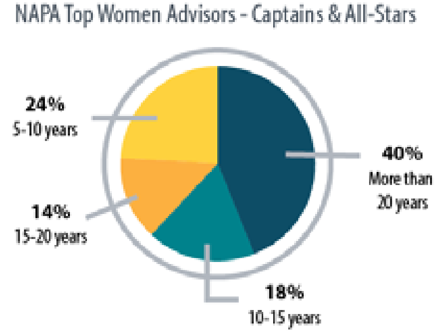
"As women, we are natural listeners. I have won finals presentations by responding when asked, 'What makes you different?' (well, clearly I am a woman, but I don't want to come out and say it) and I respond with: 'I listen.' The power of the pause and ability to listen and identify the needs of your clients is paramount. Hey, it comes natural for us, so why not GO FOR IT?"

"As women we tend to connect with retirement plan committees on more than just the investments but also the reason why the organization is offering the benefit to their employees. I think it is easier for us to get to the heart and soul of the benefit than it is for men. We tend to connect at a different level, which is helpful when you are working with those in HR, and we can speak intelligently about investments which connects well with the C suite."

"This is the best client-focused job in the

TENURE, TRACKED

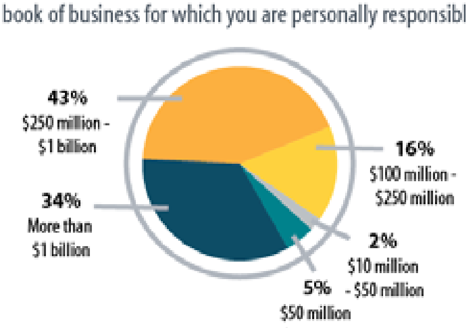
Tenure as a retirement plan advisor for NAPA Top Women Advisors - Captains & All-Stars



Note: Rising Stars have been working as a retirement plan advisor for 5 years or less, though several had been working with retirement plans longer

RESPONSE ABILITIES

Defined contribution (DC)/defined benefit book of business for which you are personally responsible



world, and a woman is perfect for this! Most of my clients are women."

People Passion

Ultimately, of course, there was a compelling sense of the passion for the business of helping others prepare for retirement, and helping those who put the plans in place to do so. "Advising clients is a people business, not a gender business," explained one. "If you are passionate, that will resonate with prospects and clients."

"This role is challenging — the landscape is always changing, sometimes making our job even more challenging, but in the end, if you want to have the ability to touch a large amount of people by making positive impacts in their lives, then this is the career path to follow," counseled another.

"If it was easy, everyone would do it," one Captain noted, going on to note, "It is not easy, and like a home improvement project, it will take longer than you ever imagined, and budgets will be pushed. However, once it is done, you will look back with tremendous satisfaction and pride at a job well done, and a true sense of accomplishment."

"It is rewarding. When people ask what I do and I explain that I help achieve their retirement dreams, they always ask for help. Everyone deserves to have financial success and it is comforting to know that I have helped make their retirement goals come true."

"GO FOR IT. Be confident, be yourself and remain steadfast in your conviction to do the right thing for your clients and staff. And by the way, have fun while you are doing it."

"The number of women who have joined our industry over the years has grown," acknowledged a Captain. "I think having women recognized so that other women can see them as leaders, mentors and/or friends strengthens the development of everyone and provides a strong network of people who can help clients succeed with their retirement needs."

"I am extremely grateful to have happened into this industry. I've never regretted that decision I made so many years ago to try something new, something I knew very little about at the time. I love that, 35 years into my career, I still learn something new nearly every day."

"I feel extremely fortunate to work in this industry, and for my firm. I feel like I get to help people every single day, whether they know it or not. Although it is a very tough business, I love getting up and doing my job."

"I have seen a lot of changes in the industry over the years, but what hasn't changed is my passion for helping people retire with dignity. I am passionate about what I do and receiving such a nomination/award validates the work that I have done over the years for my clients."

"I know we are making a difference in the lives of people, and that is the legacy that I want to leave."

Words that retirement advisors everywhere, and regardless of gender, can embrace.

2017

RISING STARS

ADVISOR	FIRM NAME
Erica Blomgren	CAPTRUST
Cristina Hansen	Pensionmark
Jennifer Hocking	UBS Financial Services
Isabell Lee	Merrill Lynch
Lauren K. Loehning	Baystate Fiduciary Advisors
Connor Morganti	Johnson Morganti
Marcia Quiroz	Merrill Lynch
Ruth Rivera	Bukaty Group Financial Companies
Christel Smit	Morgan Stanley
Leneen Strickfaden	Bukaty Companies Financial Services

2016 TWA 2015 TWA

2017

ALL-STARS

ADVISOR	FIRM NAME
Pam Appell	Plexus Financial Services
Beryl Ball	CAPTRUST
Deanna Bamford	CAPTRUST
Patricia Bills	CAPTRUST Financial Advisors
Kyla Bolger	SageView Advisory Group
Natasha Bonelli	Merrill Lynch
Delphine Boyle	SLW Retirement Plan Advisors
Julie Braun	Morgan Stanley
Pamela Brooks	Oswald Financial, Inc.
Patricia Cage	CBIZ, Inc.
Kerrie Casey	SageView Advisory Group
Michele Casey	Morgan Stanley
Karen Casillas	CAPTRUST
Tina Chambers	SageView Advisory Group
Ann Cheu	SageView Advisory Group
Susan Clausen	CAPTRUST Financial Advisors
Sandra Cunningham	UBS Financial Services Inc
Heather Darcy	CAPTRUST
Kristen Deevy	Strategic Retirement Partners
Jean Duffy	CAPTRUST Financial Advisors
Carmela Elco	Blue Prairie Group
Maressa Etzig	SageView Advisory Group
Elaine Featherstone	SHA Retirement Group
Jennifer San Fillippo	Lakeside Wealth Management
Jessica Fitzgerald	Morgan Stanley

2016 TWA 2015 TWA

2017

ALL-STARS

ADVISOR	FIRM NAME	2016 TWA	2015 TWA
L. Rita Fiumara	UBS Financial Services		✓
Susann Haas	NFP Retirement		
Nikki Hamblin	GRP Financial		
Emily Hing	NFP	✓	
Amber Kendrick	Procyon Partners, LLC	✓	✓
Jamie Kertis	Grinkmeyer Leonard Financial		✓
Marlynn Ma	Merrill Lynch		
Kelly S. Majdan	Strategic Retirement Partners		
Alicia Malcolm	UBS Financial Services		✓
Lily Matias	NFP		
Karie O'Connor	HPL&S Financial Services/First American Bank	✓	✓
Lisa Petronio	Strategic Retirement Partners		
Kimberly Pruitt	NFP	✓	✓
Angie Rosson	Mariner Retirement Advisors	✓	
Shelly Schaefer	SageView Advisory Group	✓	✓
Mandie Scott	intellicents	✓	
Jill Shea	NFP		✓
Courtenay Shipley	Retirement Planology, Inc.		✓
Holly Smith	SLW Retirement Plan Advisors	✓	
Molly Spowal	J.W. Terrill Retirement Services	✓	✓
Marcy Supovitz	Boulay Donnelly & Supovitz Consulting Group, Inc.	✓	✓
Virginia Taylor	Taylor Financial Solution		✓
Larissa Whittle	SageView Advisory Group		
Jenna Witherbee	401(k) Plan Professionals	✓	
Limei Yu	UBS Financial Services		✓

2016 TWA 2015 TWA

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CAPTAINS

ADVISOR	FIRM NAME		
Kristi K. Baker	CSI Advisory Services		
Jessica Ballin	401k Plan Professionals	✓	✓
Pam Basse	NFP	✓	✓
Kathleen Branconier	Fiduciary Retirement Advisory Group	✓	✓
Mary Caballero	Impact Benefits & Retirement	✓	✓
Kelly Carlson	Advizrs, Inc.	✓	✓
Amanda Chan	Kainos Partners, Inc.	✓	✓
Shawna Christiansen	Retirement Benefits Group	✓	
Dianne Clark	Global Retirement Partners, LLC		✓
Brea Dantin	ProCourse Fiduciary Advisors, LLC		
Barbara Delaney	StoneStreet Advisor Group LLC	✓	✓
Dori Drayton	Plante Moran Financial Advisors		
Devyn Duex	CAPTRUST	✓	
Jessica Espinoza	NFP- The Meltzer Group		
Janet Ganong	The Kieckhefer Group	✓	✓
Lisa Garcia	FiduciaryFirst	✓	✓
Mary Addie George	Plan Sponsor Consultants	✓	
Jamie Greenleaf	Cafaro Greenleaf		✓
Deana Harmon	ProCourse Fiduciary Advisors, LLC		✓
Jamie Hayes	FiduciaryFirst	✓	✓
Cynthia Hodges	Achieve Retirement	✓	
Allison Kaylor-Flink	NFP		✓
Kristina Keck	Woodruff Sawyer & Co./Global Retirement Partners	✓	✓
Kathleen Kelly	Compass Financial Partners	✓	✓
Nichole R. Labott	SageView Advisory Group	✓	✓

2016 TWA 2015 TWA

2017

CAPTAINS

ADVISOR	FIRM NAME		
Ellen Lander	Renaissance Benefit Advisors Group, LLC	✓	✓
Shannon Main	Fiduciary Retirement Advisory Group, LLC	✓	✓
Debbie Matustik	Pensionmark Austin	✓	
Dawn McPherson	Mariner Retirement Advisors	✓	✓
Janine Moore	Peak Financial Group, LLC	✓	
Cindy Orr	CBIZ Retirement Services		
Arlene Palabe	Palabe Wealth Management		
Jennifer Pearson	Clearview Advisory		✓
Ann-Marie Sepuka	Raymond James Financial Services		
Susan Shoemaker	Plante Moran Financial Advisors		✓
Heidi Sidley	StoneStreet Equity, LLC	✓	
Kaci Skidgel	Summit Financial Group, Inc.	✓	
Peggy Slaughter	Saling Simms Associates	✓	✓
Keri Spanier	SLW Retirement Plan Advisors		
Stephanie Stano	Western Wealth Benefits		
Lori Stevenson	LPL Financial		✓
Jania Stout	Fiduciary Plan Advisors		✓
Virginia K. Sutton	Johnson & Dugan/GRP		✓
Cindy Tacker	Retirement Plan Analytics		
Brenda Tarjan	SageView Advisory Group		✓
Mary L. Tomanek	Graystone Consulting	✓	✓
Vanessa Watkins	NFP		
Patricia Wenzel	Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith		✓
Allison Winge	Plexus Financial Services		
Tina Wisialowski	Graystone Consulting	✓	✓

2016 TWA 2015 TWA