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McKeon Financial focuses on retirement investments

By John Wolcott
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John McKeon sees investments differently than many financial planners because his Marysville business — McKeon Financial — specializes in investors who are retired or nearing retirement.

"I have sold all of the typical investment products, such as passively managed stock & bond mutual funds and the various annuity products, but I hardly use them in my current practice. I spend much of my time with retirees who need significantly less daily volatility, but who also need consistent monthly income as well as growth to help offset inflation," he said.



After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1988 and serving as an officer in the submarine service, McKeon began his financial career as a long-term care insurance agent in 1996.

His outstanding work earned him GE Financial's (now Genworth Financial's) Agent of the Year award for five years in a row in the Northwest and twice qualified for the President's Club, ranking in the top 12 out of some 1,000 agents.

"But among my clients I discovered that hundreds of them had lost significant investment amounts in the 2001-2002 stock market declines. I saw a need to provide them with alternatives," he said.

Today, his independent financial planning & insurance agency offers a variety of alternative investments both inside and outside the stock market.

"Few financial planners between Seattle and Bellingham have access to many of the products and companies we use," he said. "Although past performance is not indicative of future performance, these investments have done well, typically."

His direct participation programs include offerings in commercial real estate, equipment leasing and oil and gas investments, among others that have some degree of separation from the usual stock market fluctuations.

"Their primary disadvantage is that they are not very liquid. They may be suitable for many investors but they're not the best investment for everyone," he said.

Even in his stock and bond market investments, he takes a different approach than many financial planners.

"It's called active, tactical money management," he said. "These investments tend to be more responsive to ever-changing conditions and offer liquidity, and tend to provide less volatility and more steady and consistent growth. Some of these strategies are designed to make money even in a down market."

McKeon meets many clients through his "no obligation" financial seminars that provide plenty of food in a relaxing, low-key, social environment at his North Lakewood offices (1507 172nd St. NE, Ste. 201, Marysville, WA 98271) at the I-5 Smokey Point interchange by the Lakewood Crossing shopping center.

"These sessions are great opportunities to get to know us and to learn about the variety of investments there are available for a variety of needs, including those who have just retired or are about to retire and need different investments than younger people just starting out," he said.

His investment approach is much more similar to the Harvard and Yale Endowment Funds, he said, than to the traditional equity investor, who typically would invest in a passively managed, 60/40 split of stock and bond mutual funds, hoping that the market will only go up.

"What I have attempted to do at McKeon Financial is to diversify my client's portfolios with many of the same types of investments these endowment funds invest in and with similar allocations, utilizing publicly registered companies and investment products that are suitable and available to my clients thru my broker dealer, Independent Financial Group".