

A Different Path – Trading Desk to Family Office

David Shaw

Increasingly sophisticated clients present different challenges to financial advisors. Read how David Shaw, CFP® uses LOGICLY to manage wealth and uncover investment ideas for clients of a family office.

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Streamline process of comparing mutual funds and ETFs

David Shaw is a Financial Consultant at Blueprint Wealth Solutions. The 35-year-old CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER (CFP®) arrived at the Athens, Ga. family office almost five years ago by way of an atypical route. Instead of the usual route — acquiring the CFP certification while working in a customer-facing role at a wirehouse or discount brokerage for his first few years — Shaw threw elbows on the trading desk for a Wall Street firm, where he executed blocks of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), while also designing algorithms to access liquidity through dark pools.

As part of the initiation, he was dropped in front of six computer screens. “We had two for Bloomberg, and four for trading execution,” Shaw said. “We traded institutional-sized ETF orders on behalf of RIAs, pensions, insurance companies, anywhere there was large ETF execution needed.”

Later, outside of trading hours, he had a hand in building the firm’s proprietary trading execution software. While originally designed for in-house execution, Shaw later adapted the technology so the firm’s clients — pensions, endowments, RIAs, and family offices — could use a version tailored to their needs.



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After seven years on Wall Street, Shaw relocated to the South, ultimately choosing Georgia over North Carolina and Tennessee to raise his new family, and joined Blueprint Wealth Solutions, a family office in Athens, Ga. While some of Shaw's work at Blueprint resembles the work he did on Wall Street, he's no longer looking at bid-ask screens to make hair-trigger trades. Shaw and a partner build investment models, where they are essentially an investment policy team of two. "The third partner certainly has an opinion, and we respect it," Shaw says. "But ultimately it's the two of us who need to agree."

Watch lists are still a part of his day. "That's one place where LOGICLY has come into play. We already had watchlists on another platform, but LOGICLY gives us another lens to view them through," Shaw says. "And LOGICLY has been able to integrate and adapt different functionalities necessary for what we do regularly in our family office."

"Not to say we don't have institutional-sized money, but we weren't operating like an institutional firm," Shaw says. "And that's where the CFP® came into play." And as he spends more time at Blueprint, he begins to see where "the information that you studied really comes into practice."



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At Blueprint, Shaw helps to manage more than a dozen qualified and non-qualified portfolios for High Net Worth and Ultra-High Net Worth clients. "When I was trading, you used to look at the market like it was an animal," Shaw says, referring to one difference between trading and financial planning. "There are fundamentals coming through the pipe throughout the day, but trading is technical."

Another difference is delegating. “Scalability was hammered into my head when I was in New York. Everything’s about efficiency, scalability, and staying in your lane.” At Blueprint, “we build the framework for the models, then allocate to fund managers by sector,” he says. Some assets, like municipal bonds, are for now best left to institutions.

Shaw also knows that sophisticated clients, like those Blueprint serves, are savvier than ever when it comes to investment products and strategies. ESG, or “Environmental, Social, and Governance” products have risen dramatically in favor in recent years, attracting the attention of investors. Commenting on this trend, Shaw says “I use LOGICLY to look behind the marketing jargon to see what’s really happening with the fund. When it comes to ESG, I tend to play the Devil’s advocate in investment meetings. If a firm gets a particular ESG score, I’ll point out if they’re doing business in a potentially questionable location.” For clients that ask about ESG, Shaw offers his opinion that while “it’s a new, subjective score, some companies deserve their score.”

Shaw added, “On the fixed income side, it’s almost all mutual funds, because of active management and the transparency differences between mutual funds and ETFs. For equities, we look at both active and passive, and on the passive side they’re going to be ETFs. You look at cost, performance and how each ETF straddles the benchmark.” Shaw occasionally considers active ETFs if the performance is there.

“LOGICLY comes into play when you’re looking at the whole picture. If you want to compare different products in the mutual fund or ETF space, that’s LOGICLY. Everything you need for rebalancing, upside/downside capture, Sharpe ratio, alpha, it’s all right there. There’s more functionality in LOGICLY than other tools, and it’s built exactly for what we do. Now that I’m in the family office’s shoes, I need this more than something like a Bloomberg terminal. I built my own system. I can appreciate that LOGICLY is willing to make changes and learn, grow, and adapt to what the retail side needs, like screening mutual funds alongside ETFs. In retail, every move you make has got to be perfect, because there are real human beings at the end of that decision.”



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