



EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

Outgrowing the Employee Model: How an ex-Merrill Advisor Found Autonomy and Abundance in Independence

A conversation with Louis Diamond and Jerry Davidse, CEO of Presilium Private Wealth.

Mindy Diamond:

Welcome to the latest episode of our podcast series for financial advisors. Today's episode is, Outgrowing the Employee Model, How an ex-Merrill Advisor Found Autonomy and Abundance in Independence. It's a conversation with Jerry Davidse, CEO of Presilium Private Wealth. I'm Mindy Diamond, and this is Mindy Diamond on Independence.

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Doing what's best for clients, it's a driving force behind many advisors transitions, and certainly for good reason because the net result of changing firms or models based on the ability to better serve clients is continued growth. Yet many employee advisors feel hindered by what they can do for clients, particularly when it comes to having the freedom to market and share their unique voice, or even just to communicate without ensuring the message was approved by a higher authority. Take Jerry Davidse for example. He started out in wealth management at Morgan Stanley, leaving shortly after the Smith Barney merger to join Merrill in 2011. Over the years at Merrill, Jerry met his now business partner, Brook Hart, and together they built the business from \$70 million under management to over \$300 million based primarily on executives and founders of biotech and pharma companies. As a young team, they were starting to feel like they had outgrown Merrill, and were limited in their ability to provide what they felt could be an exceptional experience for their clients.

Plus, the firm placed restrictions on how they communicated with clients, requiring that all content be reviewed by compliance, a process that took time making the messages obsolete or watered down and ineffective. In conducting due diligence, Jerry and Brook realized that they could remove the limitations and offer their clients the best of everything, including timely and creative communications by building their own independent firm. So, in April of '22, they launched Presilium Private Wealth with the support of Dynasty Financial Partners and Fidelity Investments as their custodian.

And within the first six weeks of their transition, they had moved 90% of their clients' assets, and a 100% as of this recording. Jerry is a smart, optimistic guy who had a vision and knew there could be a better way. In this episode, Jerry shares his journey with my partner Louis Diamond. Jerry discusses what he liked most about his experience at Merrill, as well as the limitations. He offers key advice around conducting due diligence and the transition process. Plus he discusses his choice to build Presilium with Dynasty, their influx of referrals and how his business life has really changed in less than a year. It's a great story, so let's get to it.

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A conversation with Louis Diamond and Jerry Davidse, CEO of Presilium Private Wealth.

Louis Diamond:

Jerry, thanks so much for joining us today.

Jerry Davidse:

Louis, thank you for inviting me on your podcast. I've listened to every episode and learned so much from all the other exceptional advisors that you've previously interviewed.

Louis Diamond:

Now you're just flattering us. That's not why we had you on. So let's jump right in. Why don't you start off, tell us about yourself, and your path to becoming an advisor in the first place.

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, thanks, Louis. I was interested in investing from a young age, and always enjoyed reading about the market and how families could grow their wealth through planning and investing. My parents were small business owners, and I loved the idea of being an entrepreneur and working with my own clients. I started at Morgan Stanley a few weeks after graduation from Villanova at 21 years old. And from day one, I was really focused on being an exceptional advisor. I was at Morgan Stanley for 10 years before moving to Merrill Lynch in 2011, and I then spent a little bit more than 10 years there before founding Presilium Private Wealth on April 1st, 2022 with my team.

Louis Diamond:

Very good. Why'd you move from Morgan Stanley to Merrill Lynch back in 2011, and back when you made that jump, was independence on your radar screen at all?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, thanks, Louis. At the time, I loved working at Morgan Stanley, but they had recently gone through a merger with Smith Barney and replaced all of our local management with the Smith Barney management instead. And I really didn't agree with the way that they wanted to run the office going forward, and I felt like they had completely changed the culture. So for the first time ever, I began to look at other firms and I loved the manager at the local Merrill Lynch office, and it was an easy decision to go there. I did not look at independence then because I felt like I wasn't quite ready to make that leap to start my own company. That was something I was aware of, but I also knew it was too big a leap at the time to take.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah. And when you moved the business from Morgan to Merrill in 2011, what did the business look like then?

Jerry Davidse:

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Yeah, it was much smaller than today. At the time, I had about \$70 million dollars at Morgan Stanley and was able to transition all of that to Merrill Lynch.

Louis Diamond:

So aside from the fact that the ecosystem and the infrastructure around the independent movement wasn't nearly there, you also just didn't have the scale in your view to go out on your own?

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely. And at the time I was only 30 years old. I felt like I needed more experience before doing what we just did this year.

Louis Diamond:

Absolutely. So then why don't we fast forward to either today or when you're at Merrill, whichever you prefer, and just give us some perspective on the business that you built, how much in assets, what was the makeup of the team, et cetera?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, it's very different today. When we left Merrill Lynch on April 1st, we had about \$300 million, and today exactly seven months later, and despite the market being down 15%, we now manage more than \$320 million at Presilium.

Louis Diamond:

Wow. It's amazing. Congratulations.

Jerry Davidse:

Thank you very much. We had a great transition, and as part of that, our clients were just so excited about our move that we gathered just a ton of additional assets and referrals, much more than we would've ever anticipated.

Louis Diamond:

Amazing. Well, we'll come back to that because I want to learn more about that, about how you grew the business via the referrals after the transition. But let's talk more about the core business to give us more perspective. So I know the president of your RIA and longtime partner, Brook Hart, is someone that you feel strongly about and is instrumental in the practice. How did you initially link up with Brook?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, Brook is really the perfect partner. I met Brook at Merrill Lynch five years ago. Our complex in the Philadelphia area. Probably had more than a hundred new hires during my 10 years there. And Brook was by far the best I'd ever seen. He is extremely honest, hardworking, and the most loyal person you'll



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ever meet, and he was someone that I could trust to always do the right thing for our clients. He's a Yale graduate, cares deeply about our clients, and our practice immediately became better when Brook joined our team. He's also a good friend of mine and I feel very blessed to work with him every day. We often start our day at 6:00 AM in the gym and then don't finish at Presilium until five or 6:00 PM each night.

Louis Diamond:

That's a lot of time together and you're lucky because a lot of advisors struggle to find that partner, certainly a friend, to help them go and grow the business, especially looking for a very strong next generation partner and advisor. So it seems like you're both lucky and the business is better because you're together.

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely.

Louis Diamond:

Let's talk about the age dynamic. You're barely over 40 years old, I believe Brook is even younger. Can you talk about how you built up such a successful practice in rapid time?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, our entire team is really young. I'm the oldest on the team at 42, and then Brook is 35, and Jackie and Kelly are similar ages. And from day one, I just thought about what I would want as a client. My practice was always built around long-term financial planning, and then I've always used simple, easy to understand investment strategies and fortunately, many families found that to be really attractive to what they were previously doing.

Louis Diamond:

Very interesting. And what do you think was the catalyst for your growth early on? So everyone, it's hard to start in the business as anyone listening knows, but what got the snowball rolling down the hill? Obviously, \$70 million in 10 or 11 years before you moved to Merrill is quite good, but getting from \$70 to \$300 before the move, what was the major catalyst or reasons you think that happened?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, at some point, I began to focus on more of a local niche market, specifically pharma and biotech executives in the Philadelphia area. And once I began doing that, our business grew much faster than ever before.

Louis Diamond:

How come?

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Jerry Davidse:

Well, by specializing in learning everything about the retirement plans, pensions, stock options, not only was it easier to attract new clients when I would meet with them, but it was also easier to get a lot of additional referrals when they sent their colleagues to our group as someone who was a real expert in the decisions that they make from day-to-day.

Louis Diamond:

That makes sense. We hear that from a lot of advisors on this show and otherwise who focus on a niche and talking about how they can really grow that niche market. So is most of your business focused on these pharmaceutical executives?

Jerry Davidse:

It is, yeah. Most of our core business are or were pharma and biotech executives. More recently, over the past few years, we've also been working with a number of founders of companies in the life science space. So a lot of our clients that were formally executives at Big Pharma went on to found their own biotech company and then we began to specialize in helping them to build those companies and then ultimately sell their companies.

Louis Diamond:

Very interesting. And when you're at Merrill or Morgan Stanley, did having the platform, so both firms have large stock plan businesses and 401(k) advisory shops, et cetera, did those aspects of the platform help with targeting these clients and make those clients feel comfortable? Or was it much more just about your financial planning process and your own process?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, it was much more about our team's process. I really didn't interact with the stock plan or retirement plan side at Merrill or Morgan Stanley. It was really that our team had generated a really good reputation in the pharma and biotech industry.

Louis Diamond:

Perfect. And that's a perfect segue into the next question. So when you and I first met, I think it was a random cold call, even the dreaded cold call, I remember you telling me about your business and I commented that your business could be the most portable business I've ever seen from a wirehouse advisor. And I said that kind of jokingly, but you had no structured products, you didn't really do securities back lending or LMAs, you ran your own models, you didn't use firm models, no alternatives or a very little amount, no trust business, no trusted IRAs. The list goes on and on. And it was also clear that everything you were doing was in the best interest of the client, it wasn't because you were just



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doing this selfishly. Can you just share why you built the business that way and did you do this on purpose?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, absolutely. I am really proud of the fact that I always thought of my clients first and only made recommendations that I thought would truly help them reach their goals. And the firms that I worked for created many products over the years and strongly encouraged me to sell them to clients. But they tended to be very complex and I felt they just didn't make sense for our clients. And it just happened that these products are often difficult for clients to transfer when they're ready to change firms.

Louis Diamond:

I love it. Yeah, I mean, that seems to have worked out. And would you recommend this approach to someone who's building a business today to focus on simplicity rather than complexity?

Jerry Davidse:

Yes. Whenever I talk with a new advisor, I always start with this. I have seen countless advisors over the years recommend something to clients that they might not fully understand, but the firm is strongly encouraging and I always felt like that was a huge mistake. I always found it's much easier to take a client's complex financial situation and work to make it simpler, not more complex.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah. And do you think though it makes it harder to stand out? So I would think a lot of advisors probably gravitate toward more complex alternatives and structure notes in lending because they believe the competitive advantage of the firms they work for are those things, especially relative to more retail mom & pop shops, do you think there is some benefit in being more complex as a way to differentiate?

Jerry Davidse:

There might be for some clients Louis, but for our clients who already had really complex lives, very complex jobs, they were all very intelligent people, when it came to planning and investments, they really wanted something simple. And I think that actually helped us stand out more than had we offered them something more complex.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah, I get it. There's probably no right answer for everyone, but for the clients that you got to know, that just seemed to work and we'll get to it. But I think it also had the really, really nice benefit of making your transition easier, but there was less complexity in the move, which is going to serve you really well going forward and also just maps your business really well to the business model that you selected. So let's talk a little bit about payout. Obviously, it's a critical component of how any advisor,



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especially one who works for a broker dealer, analyzes his or her compensation. At Merrill, I would assume your grid rate was well into the forties given the size of your team. But I recall you saying early on that you actually thought it was something like 35 to 37%. Can you explain why you think this is and how you figured that out?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, thanks, Louis. I always spent a relatively large percentage of my income on client events, small gifts, and continuing education for myself and my team. We would easily spend more than \$50,000 per year on trying to make our client experience even better, and consequently lowered my net income into the high 30 percents. And I was always comfortable making less than many of my peers if it meant that our clients were really happy and consequently introducing us to our colleagues who would become our future clients.

Louis Diamond:

Very interesting. Yeah. So you were reinvesting in your business similar to how any business owner would think about it.

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely.

Louis Diamond:

And how did it even go about figuring out what your true payout was? What was the formula you used?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, Merrill Lynch had a dashboard that showed our total revenue and then the actual amount that was paid out. So even though my headline payout might have been 45% before deferred compensation net of everything, it was often in the high 30 percents.

Louis Diamond:

That makes sense. And then you're deducting, I assume you bonused out of your own pocket and like you said, that the client events and various marketing initiatives.

Jerry Davidse:

Yep, absolutely.

Louis Diamond:

You and I had spoken for a number of years before you opted to conduct due diligence. I remember you were always curious about what was going on, wanted to just keep your finger on the pulse and never really thought you'd be one who retired from Merrill, but you're also in the camp of not looking to do



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anything unless the firm did something to impact your clients. Can we talk a little bit about the evolution of your thinking from taking my call every so often, being passively interested with what was going on, to being ready to put the effort in to actually explore options?

Jerry Davidse:

We were initially very happy at Merrill Lynch, but then two things happened. Our team was evolving and growing, and at the same time, Merrill was becoming more and more restrictive each year. And we felt that we had evolved to the point that we had just outgrown what we could do at Merrill. I feel that our clients are really special people that are like family to us, and I always wanted to give them an exceptional experience, and Merrill Lynch was just making that impossible. Also, I have two young children. Jake is now eight and Emma is six. And I really didn't want to take time away from them while they were so young and while we were serving our clients at Merrill and then having to use early mornings, nights, weekends, building Presilium. However, after I realized all the ways that we could serve our clients better by building our own firm, I knew I had to do it as soon as possible.

Louis Diamond:

Very, very interesting. And I think that makes sense. The advisors always say there's never a perfect time to consider a change. Kids are young, kids are going to college, there's always an excuse, maybe not an excuse, but there's a rationalization for why it's not the right time. So it seems like you had that, but it was also layered in the fact that you probably weren't that unhappy and you also hadn't seen the light, that there was a better way to service clients. Can we just back up though and talk a little bit about what were some of the ways that you thought you were outgrowing Merrill and you mentioned the firm was getting more restrictive? How so?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, our biggest frustrations were always in our ability to communicate and interact with clients. We have really deep relationships with them and we always wanted to communicate with them in the ways that were most comfortable to them. We wanted the ability to produce our own video and social media so that we can get our message to all our clients instantly rather than trying to reach them all by phone. Many of our clients are really busy and would rather watch one of our videos or listen to a podcast after hours than take a call in the middle of their workday. And this was just impossible at Merrill Lynch. We weren't allowed to produce our own video content in any way. And in fact, it was even difficult to send emails to more than 10 clients. Everything had to be approved by their massive compliance department, and the end result was often something watered down that we felt was just not as good as the real message that we wanted to get to our clients.

Louis Diamond:

That makes sense. It's frustrating. You know there's better ways to communicate, to do it efficiently and to meet your clients where you are and you were not able to do that. Was there anything from a client

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service standpoint that you felt you were limited in, whether it was platform or just doing what you thought your clients needed?

Jerry Davidse:

I thought that everything that we had access to at Merrill Lynch was good while I was there, until I saw how much more we could do once we were outside of Merrill. I feel like now that we have our own RIA, we really have the best of everything and the planning software, the performance reporting, the ability to rebalance accounts, everything is so much more advanced than we had access to there. And it just makes not only our job so much easier every day, but the client experience so much better every day.

Louis Diamond:

Absolutely. Yeah. So let's talk about your due diligence plan. Were you only interested in independence or did W2 options ever come across your radar screen?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, we really only considered creating our own firm. While we felt like other large firms had items that we might want to bring to our clients, we really knew the only way that we could bring them the best of everything was to build the firm ourselves. That was specifically built with them in mind. We knew it would be a lot of work, but after we saw how special it could be, we knew we had to do it.

Louis Diamond:

So it was independence or bust, which happens. Some teams are just, if they're going to leave, they know what they want and they're very clearheaded about it. While others want to take a more scattershot approach, look at multiple things and back into the ideal model for them. But it certainly limits some of the work and I think it helps to set the direction when you have such high conviction early on. And I remember Brook, I'd written it down on a sheet of paper on my desk when he said it because I thought it was a really, really interesting comment and I just liked the way he boiled it down. But he said that he was drawn to the creativity, autonomy, and vision of independence. What was it that you were drawn to and would you agree with those three words, creativity, autonomy, and vision?

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely. And that describes exactly what we're able to do now. I love being able to sit down with my team in the morning, come up with a topic or idea that we think is important for clients to know that day, be able to put together a video, email it to everyone, put it on social media, YouTube, and immediately have our message out there. I love the creativity and freedom to be able to do that. It just makes a huge difference.

Louis Diamond:



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Perfect. Thanks for sharing that. And ultimately, like we talked about, you knew what you're looking for as far as having your own RIA, didn't want W2 options, didn't want to join a platform. You were very much just, I wanted to do this and I want to have as much control as possible. So you decided to contract with Dynasty Financial Partners and Fidelity Investments as your custodian, why these picks?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, we wanted the best for our clients. And after carefully researching all the options with your help Louis, it became an easy decision to choose Dynasty and Fidelity. Dynasty had already helped around 50 successful teams from large wirehouses to form their own RIA. And we wanted this process to be as smooth as possible for clients. They also immediately gave our team of four the depth of a much larger firm. When we joined Dynasty, they already had more than 70 specialists in a variety of areas that were important to us and our clients, including investment strategy, CRM, technology, planning, finance, all the things we would need to run our own company.

Dynasty also had an amazing process for the transition that has been really successful. We went through a 293 point checklist with them that ensure that we were ready from day one to serve our clients. And finally, even though we were launching our own RIA, we also wanted to be part of a community. I now regularly talk with many of the other CEOs in the Dynasty network about best practices and ways that we can do things even better, and I find a lot of value in that.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah, sounds like it was a perfect match. And how about Fidelity? What was the draw to them?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, after careful research, they were also an easy decision for us. We wanted a home for our clients that was secure, easy for them to access, and constantly innovating. We felt like Fidelity is an industry leader and we're really impressed with their platform. They hold more than \$10 trillion in assets for 40 million investors all over the world, and we wanted that big platform in scale and they're also a leader in cybersecurity and we wanted our clients to feel really secure with where their investments were being held. The final thing is we also like that they were family owned rather than a public company. To us, it felt like they really focused on what is the best interest for clients in the long term rather than having to worry about quarterly or short-term results.

Louis Diamond:

Right. That's perfect. Another clearheaded decision, and I think you hit on a couple of the real differentiators because advisors often struggle to choose custodians because they're all quite good and they all can do the core work exceptionally well. So it's finding to you and your business what's most important with their value proposition and then customizing that to what clients ultimately find



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important. So it seems like you did just that. So let's talk about the launch of Presilium. First off, what does Presilium mean, and what's your value proposition to clients today?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, our branding was really important to us. We wanted to make sure we got that right and we wanted a name that was unique but includes some of our core values. We spent a lot of time thinking about what we wanted our new company to stand for and ultimately the name. We also had a lot of fun with it and went through many, many rounds as a team working on the team name. And then our logo. Presilium takes three letters from Prescience, Resilience, and Equilibrium to form a brand new name. And our defining statement is we make our clients complex financial situations simple so that they can spend time focusing on what is most important to them.

Louis Diamond:

Love that very clear value proposition. And it's very interesting to see how these brands get created. As more and more people go independent, there's not as many names available, so you oftentimes got to create your own word. Maybe one day it'll be in Webster's - Presilium.

Jerry Davidse:

I bet it will.

Louis Diamond:

There we go. So you hit on this a little bit earlier, but your transition was in April 2022. So at the time of this recording, it's seven months. How did the transition go and what was the client response?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, we had an amazing client response right from the start. We had 90% of our client assets committed in the first six weeks, and now of course, are more than 100% of assets. Despite the market being down significantly since our launch, our clients have always trusted us to do everything in their absolute best interest. And this is just another step in that process. We felt really prepared with Dynasty's help. And the hardest thing about the transition was actually how fast the paperwork came back. I think we processed and scanned more than 15,000 pages of new account and transfer forms in those first six weeks.

Louis Diamond:

Oh my goodness.

Jerry Davidse:



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We were in the office seven days a week, often 14 or more hours per day the first six weeks. But I loved it. It allowed our team to become even closer than ever before. And of course, we felt incredibly grateful to our clients for their support and their trust.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah, I think you had a high class problem, too much paperwork coming in, too many clients, you wanted to come along in a short period of time. Were there any clients that didn't come or that were apprehensive?

Jerry Davidse:

Not really. All of the clients that we wanted to come to our new firm came almost immediately. They really trusted us, like they've trusted us with all of their other big important decisions. And it was relatively smooth and easy. You just don't know until you do it what the response is going to be. But right from day one, we had such an encouraging and supportive client base that it really made it much easier for us.

Louis Diamond:

Every advisor hopes they have a transition as successful as yours. Like you said, it's still a ton of work and even when it's successful, you're burning it on both ends and it's a sprint. If you had to boil down, let's say three things that you think you did right in your transition, and it could be just in the planning, it could be building a business in a certain way, what are those things? Because I think many advisors listening would love to replicate your strategy.

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely. And before we made that transition, I listened to a number of your podcasts over and over again with previous people who had formed their own RIA looking for tips too. So for us, the first and most important thing was the checklist that Dynasty took us through. We felt totally prepared on day one, and once we began the process of creating Presilium, we couldn't wait to share it with clients. So that was the most important thing, was all of the prep work we did in the six to eight months leading up to our launch date. The second thing was we had a really experienced team on the ground with us in our new Presilium office on day one, and they were really able to help us navigate any issues that came up, making sure that the paperwork went out smoothly and then came back smoothly.

We really didn't have any hiccups during that process, everything went perfectly smooth. And then I guess the third thing was myself and our whole team were really optimistic about it. We really weren't that apprehensive about the transition. We were more excited to be able to talk with clients about it for the first time and show them this amazing thing that we had created for them.

Louis Diamond:



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Yeah, I want to talk about that optimistic point of view or your overall mindset because it was pretty remarkable to just talk with you as you were going through the work of building the firm, even in the day or two leading up to the transition, and I think it was like the Friday after you transitioned, you reached out and said, hey, everything's going great. And I mean it's rare. Usually it's a mix of stress, nerves, anxiety, dread and doom, even though most of that is only for a short period of time once you make the leap. So I agree with you. I think your optimistic point of view and just the benefits you saw in transitioning was really your guiding light. So it's hard to transfer a mindset to someone, but can you try to talk a little bit about why you felt that way and any tips for someone to approach it in the same way?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, I mean what made it easy for myself and for my team is we just had no doubt that this was the absolute best thing for our clients and for us. And we knew it'd be a lot of hard work up front, but the result would be so special, one, five, 10, 50 years out that we couldn't wait to get started. In fact, throughout our entire process with Dynasty to build Presilium, Brook and I were constantly pushing everyone to move through the checklist as quickly as possible. We can bring this to our clients, we're always very open with clients and the hardest part about this was keeping it a secret from them. It was such a relief to get to April 1st and then be able to tell everyone.

Louis Diamond:

I love that. Yeah, it's the conviction that you're doing this not just for you but for the clients, and I think that conviction shines through. You're putting in hard work, you're taking a leap of faith, but if you're doing it for the right reasons, good things typically happen. That seems to be your mindset, which I love. Earlier in the recording you talked about that even with the market going down and not cooperating and a transition, you're \$20 million in assets, so \$300 million when you transitioned \$320 million now as we're recording in November 2022, you mentioned that, which is remarkable, but you mentioned that you've gotten more referrals. So I'm curious just if you can talk about what has led to that growth and about the referrals. How have they come to be and why wouldn't you have gotten those referrals before?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, I think for the first time, clients felt like we had built something, especially for them, and they felt so good about it that they wanted their family, their colleagues, their friends to be part of it too. So really right from day one. The other challenge was all of the referral meetings that we were taking, at the same time we were working on transitioning our clients.

Louis Diamond:

Another high class problem.

Jerry Davidse:



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A conversation with Louis Diamond and Jerry Davidse, CEO of Presilium Private Wealth.

Absolutely. And I think they could hear the excitement in our voice and they just got it right from day one and the referrals just poured in. In fact, the first week we opened a new \$4 million dollar account from a relationship that had never had an account here, we had never talked to before about making an investment. And then here in the first week, they were one of Presilium first clients.

Louis Diamond:

Absolutely incredible. And when you were thinking about going independent, had you planned on this or expected it?

Jerry Davidse:

No, I never imagined that that was an added benefit that we did not plan for.

Louis Diamond:

That's amazing. So now that you're seven months into running your own RIA as the CEO and Brook as the president, what do you think are the best parts of being independent?

Jerry Davidse:

Knowing that we now have complete control over the experience that we deliver to clients. Not only is it amazing today, but we know that we now have the flexibility to evolve and innovate and make it even better as the world changes going forward. Just having the ability to meet as a team, come up with ideas for our clients, and then immediately be able to implement them rather than taking weeks to get approval from management that doesn't know or understand our clients is enormous.

Louis Diamond:

That's terrific. And anyone listening, I would encourage you to follow Jerry on LinkedIn or follow his YouTube channel because I follow a lot of his content and he's putting out videos like he said, and I mean, let's talk about that. So your digital marketing and your content creation, how much work is that and what results have you seen from putting in the investment of doing that?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, it is a lot of work as you know Louis from doing this podcast, but I absolutely love it. There were so many things that come up during the week or the month that I would love to talk with every single client about, but I just don't have the ability to reach them before having our own firm and being able to use social media. Now, if there's something that's going on with the market or with tax or estate planning, and I think it's important for clients to know it, we can create the video, immediately get it out to the world, and we have had a tremendous response from clients. Our videos have gotten thousands of views, but even more importantly, it comes up in client conversations all the time. They saw the video on market volatility or on time in the market versus market timing or bull and bear markets, and it just leads to much deeper conversations than we were able to have before.



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Louis Diamond:

I would say you definitely made me feel a little bit better back in the dark days of 2022, just reading your content saying stay in there, this is a cycle and everything's going to get better. So you helped me to sleep better at night, which I appreciate. So I would assume your clients did too. How about something, we talked about a lot of the positives. What has been less than ideal? Something either you didn't expect or something that's just not quite as good as what you had at Merrill?

Jerry Davidse:

Something that I didn't quite understand before we did this, I thought it would be some additional work, but it is absolutely a huge amount of work, but it's way more fun and rewarding. The benefit to having our own company is all of the new and innovative ways that we can help our clients, but with that comes the time and responsibility to make sure that we carefully research all of the options and then implement them in the best way possible. That being said, we enjoy the work so much more, but it's definitely more volume than it was before.

Louis Diamond:

Yeah, I'm not going to quote Spiderman, but I think you just hit on it. But I get that you're doing a lot of work. It's not for everyone, and this is one of the reasons why, aside from the upfront monetization, it's the amount of work and the fact that you're doing the work, someone has to do it. It's either you're passing the buck to a firm or a platform or you're taking it on yourself. So, I mean, it seems like advice would potentially be only do this if you're really excited about it, don't just do it because you think everyone else is doing it or because you think it's a good idea. Do it because you want to do it and do it because you have a vision that you believe in and that you want to execute and you're willing to put in the hard work to make it happen. Would you agree?

Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely. And then the hard work doesn't seem quite so hard.

Louis Diamond:

There we go. Just two more questions for you. What's a big strategic item that you're thinking about as CEO of Presilium?

Jerry Davidse:

We really want our clients to get the best possible results while also experiencing the highest level of service period. So we're constantly thinking about ways that we can build on what we're doing right now and make it even better. Our team focuses on getting a little bit better each week and then building on all that we've learned from all our prior experiences. We especially want to get even better at creating video and social media that allows us to communicate quickly, clearly, concisely to all our clients and



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feel that's a huge opportunity for future potential clients to learn about our process and how it can also help them.

The other thing is we're also focused on hiring talented individuals to join us here. We not only had our clients come over quickly, but we talked about the large number of referrals that we also received right from the start. And our clients are continuing to share videos and social media and we're getting more and more inbound calls. So right now we're focused on hiring at least two more individuals, but I think that's going to grow to a much larger number over the next 12 months.

Louis Diamond:

The roles you're hiring for, they're servicing advisors or it's another type of role?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah. Servicing advisors. So special individuals that have the ability to talk with our clients and get our message out to them in those day-to-day conversations we have.

Louis Diamond:

I like it. Out of curiosity, what's the difference in hiring a new team member? Or trying to hire a new team member now versus at Merrill. Because there at least you had an HR department and there was pools of people to pull on and training programs. You don't really have that as an independent, so how do you think about it?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, I like it even more on this side because we have a much larger pool to pull from. So we've posted the job on a few of the large job websites and received hundreds of applications from qualified people. So compared to when we're at Merrill, I think we have a lot more qualified applicants that are from even more diverse backgrounds. So we're really going to be able to find the right people for our team and our culture.

Louis Diamond:

That's great. So, again, putting in the hard work, but more choice and more options will ultimately lead to a better hire and someone who can take the firm to the next level.

Jerry Davidse:

We also already moved to a larger office than our initial starting office, so we're eager to find the right people and begin to fill it up.

Louis Diamond:

There we go. And then next stop is an even larger office.



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Jerry Davidse:

Absolutely.

Louis Diamond:

So last question. I know since you're a listener of this podcast, you've heard me ask it before of really any guest that we have on, but what would be a piece of advice to those thinking about change? And you've given a lot of wisdom, so feel free to recycle about anything else you can think of?

Jerry Davidse:

Yeah, I would tell everyone that you owe it to yourself and especially to your clients, to investigate all of the available options. If you feel like you can serve clients better in a different structure, then you should absolutely do it. We are now able to give our clients the best of everything at Presilium Private Wealth, and I'm so grateful to have this opportunity.

Louis Diamond:

That was amazing, perfect end to a really, really compelling episode. And I heard it, I felt it, your enthusiasm and optimism, but also just the realistic aspects of putting in the hard work. And if you do things the right way and you focus on the clients that good things happen. So thank you so much, Jerry, for talking with us and it's only been seven months, so really excited to see what this business looks like in a year, two years, and five years, and we'll make sure to have you back on.

Jerry Davidse:

Thank you so much, Louis.

Mindy Diamond:

Jerry's desire to have complete control over the client experience gave them the ability to focus their exploration on options that would allow them to achieve that goal. Yet it was gaining the flexibility to evolve and innovate and make things even better as the world changes. As Jerry put it, that was the real bonus. I thank you for listening and I encourage you to visit our website, diamond-consultants.com, and click on the tools and resources link for valuable content. You'll also find a link to subscribe for regular updates to the series. And if you're not a recipient of our weekly email perspectives for advisors, click on the articles link to browse recent topics. These written pieces are an ideal way of staying informed about what's going on in the wealth management space without expending the energy that full on exploration requires. You can feel free to email or call me if you have specific questions.

I can be reached at 973-476-8578, which is my cell, or my email mdiamond@diamond-consultants.com. Please note that all requests are handled with complete discretion and confidentiality. And keep in mind that our services are available without cost to the advisor. You can see our website for more information. And again, if you enjoyed this episode, please feel free to share it with a colleague who



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