2018 Fusion Spark Recap

The focus of this year's Spark collaboration was on connecting two opposite ends of the industry, the insurance and securities spaces. With the DOL ruling, a focus on securities based products, and an overall call from advisors for wholistic support from their IMO's, creating a smooth path for agents into the securities space provides a huge value for the agents, the IMO's and corresponding RIA's.

We brought in representatives from half a dozen IMO's as well as solution providers such as RIA's, technology provides, marketing and content curators, and more to help brain storm direct solutions.

Here's what was discovered:

The Problem: Agents who have spent their careers within the insurance space are hesitant to take on securities products and offer those solutions to clients. Why?

Lack of Confidence – agents simply don't feel that they have the knowledge and expertise to present securities solutions to clients. No one wants to be asked a question by a client that they don't know the answer to, and the lack of confidence and experience in that space makes those conversations daunting.

> *How can we help provide the education and process needed to give these agents confidence with in the securities space?*

Licensing – obviously offering holistic financial solutions requires specific licenses, most often the Series 65, and for many advisors who are comfortable with their day-to-day careers don't fancy the idea of studying for another test.

> *How can we help agents obtain the licensing needed in a way that doesn't seem hard/overwhelming?*

Needed IMO Support – the focus on the insurance side of the industry runs deeper than simply the agents. Many IMO's and FMO's in the space don't feel comfortable offering support to their advisors in terms of securities. They are looking for a partner, or a provider to help fill in the support blanks that their agents might need when taking on the new securities frontier. This lack of knowledge/process/support runs down to the agent and contributes to their lack of confidence.

> *How can we help the IMOs and FMOs support their agents and begin to tie the securities world into the support they are already providing?*

Comfort-zone – Many agents have been in the insurance world for decades. It's the world that they know, it's the world that they are comfortable with, and it's the world many would be happy to stay within for the rest of their careers. A big issue keeping agents from moving into the securities space is a lack of understanding of the opportunity that lies outside of their comfort-zone. The need for a motivating impetus or display of what could be is a critical component that is lacking in the minds of many of these agents.

How can we prove to the advisors that the movement into the securities world is a much needed positive one that will be worth their effort?

Added Operational Efforts – adding in the securities side to any business adds in another later of operational tasks and needs that many agents and IMO's are not familiar with or prepared for. Compliance, portfolio management, reporting, auditing, billing, trading… all of these are new tasks that can seem daunting for most agents to take on.

How can we ease the operational load to a level that the agents and IMO's are comfortable with?

The Solutions:

After spending the second day of the event collaborating and brainstorming some viable solutions to those problems and answers to those questions, everyone gathered back together on the final day to discuss possible solutions and create a plan of action for how to make those solutions possible and viable.

Here were some of those solutions.

Process oriented sales training and support

- Working on introducing an institutional platform and agreement with C2P to provide training through CFF certification program (befiduciary.com).

A proven Series 65 training program

- Interviewing several licensing programs to assist institutional partners with this need.
- Also working to bundle licensing, training and getting started program for institutional partners

IMO Partnerships with RIA's and other securities firms

Tech solutions for operations support

- Currently working on the following integrations:
  - Allianz
  - Great American
  - Retirement Analyzer – SSO complete, working on deeper integration to share data
- Advisory World – Building solution to utilize a indexed annuity placeholder for more accurate investment proposals

Educational process for showing the value of securities businesses

- Clearnomics – Integration for SSO complete.