

By Matthew D. Edward, *The Suit Magazine*

TAKING MONEY OFF “THE STREET” WISCONSIN WEALTH MANAGERS BUILD TRUE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

Middle America’s unease with Wall Street fat cats and seemingly unpunishable big banks leaves many asking the question – whom can I trust to invest and protect my money?



The answer, for many, is Heck Capital Advisors, a suburban Wisconsin firm that holds “small-town values” near and dear.

“The biggest key is that we’re not affiliated with any bank or brokerage firm or custodian or mutual fund,” said Kenneth Heck, CFO and senior director of portfolio management for Heck Capital Advisors. “The investment we select for clients is what we believe is the best for them. It’s not because we’re getting a kick-back from the firm.”

The firm – a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) descended from the firm founded by Kenneth’s father, Robert Heck – provides portfolio management services and financial guidance tailored to investors’ goals. The firm provides three types of portfolio management: asset allocation, equity and fixed income securities, and indexing. The firm works with each client to match their goals and needs to an appropriate strategy.

Robert Heck began his financial career on Wall Street in 1958, starting as an analyst and eventually building up a client base across 30 states. In 1990, Robert Heck was joined by his son Kenneth and David in 1992 and they formed the Heck Group in 1993. At that time, the Heck Group was tied to a Wall Street company. The Hecks, however, developed a distaste for how Wall Street conducted itself and

decided in 2007 to found Heck Capital Advisors as an independent firm.

Heck Capital Advisors serves clients across the country, but that service remains influenced by the small-community Wisconsin values the Hecks grew up with. The firm’s employees dedicate considerable time to community involvement projects such as serving on the board of a local hospital, the school committee and the municipal airport.

The market moves at such a fast pace now that investors often want both up-to-the-minute information at the same time as simplification.

“They want somebody to put it all together, and that’s what we’re trying to do for them,” Heck said in a recent interview with *The Suit Magazine*.

“We’re looking for clients who really want that long-term guidance,” he added. “Trust and communication is one of the cornerstones of our firm and of our success.”

Heck Capital Advisors recently launched a service called CapitalCENTRAL@24/7 that allows clients on-demand access to their financial information. “But that doesn’t mean the human advisor is out of the picture,” Heck said, adding that a client-advisor relationship is more essential now than ever as information overload presents the need for hands-on advising.

“I don’t think you’ll ever get away from a true advisor. You can place things online as much as you want, but unless people understand it ... you won’t be able to make

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the right decision at the right time," Heck added.

Heck Capital Advisors prides itself on giving clients that personal touch; it's something they've done from the beginning. The industry, however, has only recently moved away from the old-school "alpha approach" to investing.

The financial industry is in the midst of a paradigm shift, Heck noted, on a par with the previous sea change from commission- to fee-based payment structures.

"Now you're seeing the shift from true investment to true relationship," Heck said.

Their "true relationship" approach quickly collected accolades from financial publications. Heck Capital Advisors was rated in the top 100 U.S. independent advisory firms by Financial Advisors Magazine from 2009-2013, and was rated by Financial Planning Magazine from 2014-2016 as a top 100 RIA firm and among the top 50 Fastest Growing Firms in its class in 2015. Forbes also listed the firm among its top 50 wealth managers for April, 2013. Advisor One included Heck Capital Advisors on its 2012 list of the top 100 U.S. independent advisory wealth management firms and WealthManagement.com recognized Heck Capital Advisors as a Top 100 Retail RIA from 2014-2016. Additionally, in 2012, Robert Heck was also lauded by Conquest Press as one of America's top advisors.

Breaking away from Wall Street in 2007 proved prescient. As the financial collapse shook world markets, Heck Capital Advisors' clients proved well-positioned to weather the effects. The firm acted defensively to stave off the worst of the crisis as well. Heck told Financial Advisor Magazine in 2009 that the firm's strong bond portfolio helped it survive, and even thrive, during the crisis.

"The key is don't panic – remember what the money is there for," Heck said at the time.

Strong relationships with clients also paid off during the financial crisis of 2008 as the firm made adjustments while put-



ting investors' needs front and center. Heck Capital Advisors eschews cookie-cutter approaches, and instead seeks a deep understanding of each client's needs. Heck said the firm also acts as a fiduciary for clients.

"You can have two clients who look very similar, but their needs and wants are different. What is the best strategy for them?" Heck asked. That is why they prefer to start with a financial plan.

That high-touch personal care might be a different paradigm than what investors find on Wall Street, but in suburbia, it's just called "normal."

"Years ago it was alpha, it was investment, it was strictly based on those types of things – it's not anymore," Heck emphasized. "Now the relationship, guidance and simplification is key: What does that client truly need? What is that client truly investing for?"

833 E. Michigan Street Suite 1460
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414.509.6630

15 E. Anderson Street PO Box 738
Rhineland, WI 54501
715.361.1500
www.heckcapital.com