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## For Personalized Support, Financial Advisors Look to One of Their Own

In 2011, just like the year before, Richard Babjak was recognized in *Chicago* magazine as a FIVE STAR Wealth Manager. This puts him in a very select group—less than 2 percent of more than 31,000 wealth managers throughout Greater Chicago.

But Babjak is unique in another respect as well. As president of World Equity Group (WEG), he doesn't just advise his own clients. He and his team also serve the broker-dealer needs of many other financial advisors across the U.S.—as of today, more than 160 and counting.

WEG is an independent advisory firm that manages wealth and mitigates risk for individuals and institutions while offering its independent affiliates a variety of investment products and the freedom to serve clients as they see fit. Built from scratch in 1993 with a staff of two, WEG now employs 21 at its home office and oversees nearly \$2 billion in assets under management.

"Many broker-dealers have disappeared in the wake of recent market turmoil," Babjak says. "But we've had consistent, top-line growth every single year—even in 2008. Our value proposition continues to attract new clients and resonate with advisors who are looking for a home."



### *Where Relationships Are the Difference*

#### **Breaking From the Big-Firm Model**

According to Babjak, WEG's product offerings, responsiveness and strategic support rival those of the nation's largest broker-dealers. But with WEG's relatively small size comes greater freedom for its representatives.

"Many of our competitors reach such a large scale, they must force every advisor into a box," Babjak says. "But no two advisors are alike. As a smaller, more flexible firm, we encourage our reps to run their businesses as they see fit."

Babjak also points to the firm's multiple clearing relationships with industry giants such as Pershing, RBC and TD Ameritrade. WEG's flexible platform gives advisors unfettered access to cutting-edge solutions that are very competitively priced.

"We don't charge affiliation fees," Babjak adds. "Ours is a 'pay for what you use' approach."

#### **Shared Perspective Serves Advisors Well**

The many advantages of partnering with WEG originate with the firm's principals, who actively advise clients on a daily basis. With this ongoing, real-world experience, Babjak and his leadership team understand their representatives' needs and challenges particularly well.

"We see things the way our fellow advisors do," he says. "Every decision we make is in the best interests of both client and advisor. From the rep's perspective, that's a big strength."

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