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## *Securities America Advisors Collaborate and Achieve Success*

OMAHA, NEB. – March 1, 2010 — Securities America reports that nearly 50 percent of their producing advisors are benefitting from the experience and expertise of their colleagues through collaborative study groups and LISTSERV activities.

“Our advisors have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in a wide range of issues,” said Paul Lofties, vice president of product distribution/ wealth management. “Providing a systematic way for them to share this information ensures that everyone has access to the breadth and depth of knowledge that resides with our advisor force.”

### **LISTSERV Groups**

AskSamX was introduced in 2007 as a four-part program consisting of a LISTSERV, blog, online rep directory and presentations at Securities America conferences. It is the most popular initiative with as many as 15 online conversations per day on a wide variety of topics, including practice management, planning strategies and product questions. “Although management monitors AskSamX, it’s rare that we need to respond because there are so many advisors addressing the issues and providing valuable feedback,” said Lofties.

Harry G. Smelcer, CLU, CFP®, ChFC, of HGS Financial Services, Inc. in St. Louis, is a long-time user of AskSamX. According to Smelcer, all advisors periodically face situations they haven’t previously encountered and AskSamX provides a simple, effective way of gathering information. “In addition to getting my own questions answered, I often learn about topics that hadn’t even hit my radar screen,” Smelcer said. “In my solo practice I don’t have someone in the next office to bounce ideas off of. AskSamX is like a virtual water cooler, enabling me to connect with knowledgeable colleagues all over the country.”

Building on the success of AskSamX, Securities America introduced BranchXchange and AssistantXpert LISTSERVs in 2009, to provide peer-to-peer communication for both branch managers and professional associates. “BranchXchange came about as a result of our Branch Managers Advisory Council which meets three times per year,” said Senior Vice President and Director of Branch Development Gregg Johnson. “We started a study group for branch managers and created the LISTSERV to make it easier for them to maintain contact and mutual support between meetings, especially on issues related to recruiting and branch development.”

Similarly, AssistantXpert was rolled out in response to suggestions that came out of the company's Sales Assistant Advisory Board initiative. Created twelve years ago to help address the concerns of support staff members, the board has offered over 1,000 suggestions, 80 percent of which have been successfully implemented. One of these suggestions was to create a LISTSERV specifically for associates. Since its inception in November 2009, AssistantXpert has gained over 150 subscribers and is continuing to grow rapidly. "We're extremely pleased with the positive response," said Senior Business Consultant Laurie Burkhard. "We often hear that broker/dealers tend to focus on the needs of the advisor, and sometimes forget about their support staff. We wanted to ensure that associates have access to the support they need to perform at the highest level."

Based on the above successes, Securities America just released TechnologyXchange, a specialized LISTSERV where both advisors and support staff can address and dialog about technology issues. Among the initial users are many who have experienced the benefit of collaboration through their participation in AskSamX.

### **Study Groups and Post-Coaching Support**

While branch managers have access to a study group as part of their Advisory Council meetings, many advisors have also been participating in study groups. The 50-member Advanced Planning Network meets several times per year in conjunction with Securities America conferences. Participants are high producers who have incorporated comprehensive financial planning into their advisory practices. Meetings focus on discussions of individual case studies.

Howard Slater, MBA, CLU, ChFC, CFP®, a partner at Cedarbrook Financial Partners in Cleveland, Ohio, has been a participant in the Advanced Planning Network since its inception. "I so appreciate the opportunity to meet regularly with my peers and share ideas and expertise," said Slater. "I'm always eager to hear what the group members have to say during our meetings, but I also know that I can reach out to them at any time if I want to discuss a particular issue."

Participants in the NextLevel coaching program, designed to help advisors achieve their business development goals, have the opportunity to participate in study groups with their coaching group, after the program has officially ended. Similarly, advisors who participated in affiliated coaching programs such as CEG's and Strategic Coach's business planning programs have created informal study groups with their program colleagues in order to build on the advances they made during the formal program.

According to Lofties, there are plans for other collaborative initiatives, such as an Advisory Board Study Group that will review products and provide feedback on what they're using and what they'd like to see in the marketplace.

This is all good news for advisors considering a move to Securities America. "Although they're seeking independence, when advisors leave an employee or captive broker dealer environment to join Securities America, they may miss the networking and collaboration that came in that closed environment," said Johnson. "LISTSERVs and study groups are an effective way for us to help fill that void."

***About Securities America***

Headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, Securities America, Inc. has more than 1,900 financial professionals nationwide with more than \$42 billion in client assets under their supervision. Securities America Advisors, Inc. is an SEC-Registered Investment Advisory firm with more than \$13 billion in assets under management and administration that offers investment management, financial advice and financial planning through financial advisors. As “your business growth expert,” Securities America’s mission is to foster the success of financial professionals so they can provide quality, objective counsel and services to their clients. Additional information is available at [www.securitiesamerica.com](http://www.securitiesamerica.com).

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