

# Tools for legacy planning to help clients — and hold on to their inheritors

Leave a lasting impression by ensuring clients' wishes span the generations

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Advisers looking to retain control of assets as they are passed down to future generations should consider reaching out to clients now to help them plan their legacy.

Working with clients to share values with heirs, as well as instructing those who will be inheriting wealth on how to maintain estates, can ensure the whole family is on the same page when it comes to a client's wishes. It also introduces the adviser to those who will be inheriting the wealth, helping them stem the woeful record of **losing client assets** as wealth is passed between generations.

Advisers at Convergent Wealth Advisors work with clients to create a Letter of Wishes, detailing their ideals and values so heirs have a written record of how they envisioned their wealth being put to work. The firm has developed a **five-step guide**, which includes educating clients' children on financial planning concepts like budgeting and investing, and reminding clients to have conversations about charitable and philanthropic giving with the next generation.

Advisers at Waddell & Reed are using materials from Ivy Funds focused on female clients to help them create a legacy and accomplish what they want with their wealth, said Daralee Barbera, a managing principal with the firm.

They help clients create a personal legacy document, and lead legacy conversations with heirs, to build bridges across any gaps in a family's understanding of wishes.

"Our advisers reach out to multiple generations; we have some families where four generations are clients," said Ms. Barbera, who oversees about 40 advisers.

Within her division, it's rare that they lose assets when someone passes away.

"We work very hard to make sure heirs know who to come to," she said.

Advisers also can help clients preserve a legacy by integrating a video that tells important family stories and includes personal video biographies. Firms like Family Legacy Video specialize in making a Ken Burns-style documentary about one's family that incorporates film, photos and music.

"Legacy projects are often the first time high-net-worth individuals have had the opportunity to pass on the whole story of what they've done, of how the money came to be," said Steve Pender, owner of Family Legacy Video Inc. "Within the stories lie their values, and the video passes those on to the next generation."

In one video he created, an individual described an incredible story of going to the jungles of Peru in the 1940s and building a fortune there before coming back to the U.S. to start a family.

"Family members said they were amazed by the story, having heard bits here and there, but never knowing how it all came to be," Mr. Pender said.

Stories of elders' success and adversity can inspire future generations to feel responsibility in managing the inheritance, and provides reassurance that they can make it through tough times, he said.