

UDB Celebrates Two Years And 30% Growth With Ameriprise

By Joyce Blay

FINANCIAL ADVISORS MICHAEL UPTON, JEFF Draughon and Joey Bollinger, leaders of an Alexandria, La.-based practice named UDB Financial, are celebrating a business decision made two years ago.

Formerly partnered with LPL Financial as an independent affiliate, the trio decided to switch to Ameriprise Financial in 2019 as employees, according to a recent news release.

At the time it switched affiliates, UDB Financial—an anagram of the first initial of each of the partners' surnames—reported \$633 million in client assets under management (AUM). Two years later, the Ameriprise practice has grown its AUM 30% to \$833 million.

The decision to join Ameriprise was not a quick or easy one to make. The UDB Financial founders said they conducted extensive due diligence by interviewing many firms before deciding to partner with Ameriprise in 2019. Reflecting on the anniversary of their move, Draughon, Upton and Bollinger attributed their strong growth over the past two years to several factors that Ameriprise brought to the table as a partner.

In the press release, Draughon cited the Ameriprise approach to goal-based planning, which he said made their clients as happy with the change in affiliates as they were.

"Last year I had a client in tears after seeing her financial plan online, which showed her progress and high probability of success," he said. "She was so relieved to know she was going to be okay."

Upton based his satisfaction on the firm's cutting edge technology.

"We moved from independence to a branch model because we were weary from running the business," he said in the news release. "Ameriprise's integrated technology and streamlined processes has made us more efficient and given us more capacity to go deeper with clients."

According to Bollinger, Ameriprise was prepared to meet

"The integrated technology and streamlined processes at Ameriprise have made us more efficient and given us more capacity to go deeper with clients. Our clients' response to our move to Ameriprise has been overwhelmingly positive."



UDB Financial

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the challenges of the unexpected last year, which in turn enabled his practice to continue to grow in spite of them.

"When the pandemic started, Ameriprise already had digital tools—including a mobile app, e-Signature, virtual meeting capabilities, client site with goals online—and business processes in place, so we were able to continue serving clients without disruption from home," he said in the news release.

Draughon said that he and his associates valued integrity above all else, and expected the same in an affiliate. Since joining Ameriprise, he said their new partner has not disappointed them.

"The Ameriprise team has kept their promises, and we couldn't be happier to be here," Draughon said in the news release.

The UDB Financial team also includes financial advisors Sam Marino, Brian Flynn, Stan Bollinger, Crissy Shirley, John Lenahan, and Lori Decker, as well as client service associates Heather Parker, Monica Meche, Martha Bankston, Ann Murray, and Kimberly Braddy.

Founded in 1894, Ameriprise Financial, Inc., is a diversified financial services company and bank holding company incorporated in Delaware and headquartered in Minneapolis, Minn. **FA**

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