
RetirePreneur: Ron Mastrogiovanni

By Jenna Gottlieb Thu, May 22, 2014

Mastrogiovanni is a founder of HeathView Services, Inc., a Massachusetts-based firm that provides software tools to help plan for healthcare costs in retirement.

What I do: Our software focuses on healthcare costs in retirement. One product, our HealthWealthLink calculator, integrates variables such as age, gender, lifestyle, and health issues like high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer, to project individualized healthcare costs. Financial service professionals can then use the reports to help clients create savings plans to meet their future healthcare obligations.

<p>RetirePreneur: Ron Mastrogiovanni Company: HealthView Services, Inc. Location: Danvers, Mass. Founded: 2008 Niche: Software</p>

On the income side, we concentrate on Social Security optimization and working in retirement. Some 70% of Baby Boomers plan to work in retirement. Many feel they're too young to retire. Others may need to pay for healthcare. Most have no idea how these elements will impact their overall bottom line. We help retirees claim Social Security at the optimal time and reveal how annual income can affect Medicare premiums—two factors that, if properly planned for, can save clients tens of thousands of dollars throughout retirement.

Where I came from: The bulk of my career has been spent in financial services. I was one of the founders of FundQuest, which started in the 1990s. We were in the fee-based business, and back then, it wasn't about fees; it was about commissions. We believed the industry was destined to move toward a more fee-based environment, and investors would find this approach more acceptable than traditional commissions. We were early in that business model, but eventually it became popular, and BNP Paribas acquired FundQuest in 2005.

Who my clients are: We work with financial service companies, including banks, insurers, broker/dealers, and 401(k) record keepers that need to help clients save for healthcare, whether it's through capital market products, annuities, life insurance, or long-term care insurance. For retirees, future healthcare costs are projected to be equal to the cost of housing, food and transportation combined.

When we started this company, we expected our clients to be mass-market consumers between ages 55 and 70. But a Merrill Lynch survey showed that 80% of affluent Americans cite healthcare as a major concern. We found no real difference between high net worth investors, the affluent, or mass-market individuals. Our original target was Baby Boomers, but studies show that 70% of Gen X and Gen Y also consider healthcare an important issue. Simply put, rising healthcare costs affect everyone. However, if we

shift to an advisor's viewpoint, focusing on the more affluent clients certainly becomes important. If you can save your client \$100,000 or more in healthcare costs, that's good for business.

Why people hire me: The company was founded on this basic premise: "Wouldn't it be valuable to address Americans' most important retirement issue—healthcare costs—and complete the transaction in one single meeting?" Our methodology concentrates on four key domains: healthcare, long-term care, working in retirement, and Social Security. Our objective is to complement the traditional financial planning process as a standalone service or as an integrated application. We have not positioned ourselves to compete with the firms concentrating on comprehensive planning.

What drives me: I started out in large companies and quickly became bored. I interviewed with a small start-up and loved the pace. Most start-ups don't know what they want to be when they grow up. They're constantly changing—processing feedback from the market, seeing what works and what doesn't work, evolving in different directions. I find that challenging and exciting.

How will I handle my own health care expenses in retirement: I hope that all of my research will at least enable me to afford my own healthcare when I retire. I have tried to remain diversified in capital market products as well as insurance so that I can control my Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI). This is just one of the many strategies clients can employ to ensure their Medicare premiums won't go through the roof, and that's what I do.

My retirement philosophy: I don't like the word "retirement." Some dictionaries define retirement as the withdrawal from an active working life, which to me is quite negative. I think "free-styling" is a better term. I like to think of Dennis Hopper in the old Ameriprise ads. He said, "This generation isn't going to bingo night," and "Dreams don't retire." For my retirement, I'd like to be just as productive as when I held a full-time job. My other goal is to never go to a nursing home. I want to save enough so that I can be in my own home as long as possible and retain control of my life. Independence is very important to me.

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