

Romano Wealth Management Named to 2015 Financial Times 300 Top Registered Investment Advisers

June 18, 2015 – Romano Wealth Management is pleased to announce that it has been named to the Financial Times 300 Top Registered Investment Advisers, as of June 18, 2015. The list recognizes top independent RIA firms from across the U.S.

This is the second annual FT 300 list, produced independently by the FT in collaboration with Ignites Research, a subsidiary of the FT that provides business intelligence on the investment management industry. More than 2,000 elite RIA firms were invited to apply for consideration, based on their assets under management (AUM). The 630 RIA firms that applied were then graded six criteria: AUM; AUM growth rate; years in existence; advanced industry credentials; online accessibility; and compliance records.

The average FT 300 firm has been in existence for 23 years and manages \$2.6 billion in assets. The 300 top RIAs hail from 34 states and Washington, D.C., and, on average, saw their total AUM rise by 18% in 2014.

The FT 300 is one in series of rankings of top advisers that the FT developed in partnership with Ignites Research: the FT 401 (DC retirement plan advisers); the FT 400 (financial advisers from traditional broker-dealer firms); and the FT 100 (women financial advisers).

Award Methodology & Selection Criteria

Financial Times 300 LIST

Methodology Selection Criteria

In assembling the FT 300 list, we assessed registered investment adviser (RIA) practices from the perspective of current and prospective investors.

The FT's methodology examines the database of RIAs that are registered with the US Securities and Exchange Commission and selects those practices reporting to the SEC that have \$300m or more in assets under management (AUM). This assures a list of companies with established and institutionalized investment processes. The RIA companies have no subjective input.

The FT then invites those qualifying RIA groups, which amount to more than 2,000, to provide further information about their practices.

That is augmented with our research, including data from regulatory filings. Some 650 RIA companies qualified, meaning 48 percent of them made the list.

The formula the FT uses to grade advisers is based on six broad factors and calculates a numeric score for each company. Areas of consideration include AUM, asset growth, the company's years in existence, industry certifications of key employees, SEC compliance record and online accessibility:

- AUM: signals experience in managing money and client trust
- AUM growth rate: growing assets is a proxy for performance, asset retention and ability to generate business
- Company's years in existence: indicates reliability and experience in managing assets
- Compliance record: provides evidence of past client disputes – a string of complaints can signal potential problems
- Industry certifications (such as CFA and CFP): show technical and industry knowledge and a commitment to investment skills
- Online accessibility: this illustrates a commitment to providing investors with easy access and transparent contact information

AUM and asset growth comprised roughly 80 to 85 percent of each adviser's score.

We present the FT 300 as an elite group, not a competitive ranking from 1 to 300. This identifies the industry's best advisers while accounting for the firms' different approaches and varied specializations.

Five Star Award

Determination of Award Winners

Eligibility Criteria – Required

1. Credentialed as an investment advisory representative or a registered investment advisor.
2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years.
3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review.
4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal firm standards.
5. Accepting new clients.

Evaluation Criteria – Considered

6. One-year client retention rate.
7. Five-year client retention rate.
8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered.
9. Number of client households served.
10. Education and professional designations.

Research Disclosures

- Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers.
- The Five Star award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance.
- Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets.
- The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by Five Star Professional or Chicago magazine.
- Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future.
- Five Star Professional is not an advisory firm, and the content of this article should not be considered financial advice. For more information on the Five Star award and the research/selection methodology, go to www.fivestarpromotional.com.
- 5,833 award candidates in the Chicago area were considered for the Five Star Wealth Manager award. 716 (approximately 13 percent of the award candidates) were named 2015 Five Star Wealth Managers.

Regulatory Review

As defined by Five Star Professional, the wealth manager has not:

- Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine.
- Had more than a total of three customer complaints filed against them (settled or pending) with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process.
- Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority.
- Filed for personal bankruptcy.
- Been convicted of a felony.

Five Star Professional conducts a regulatory review of each nominated wealth manager using the Investment Adviser Public Disclosure (IAPD) website. Five Star Professional also uses multiple supporting processes to help ensure that a favorable regulatory and complaint history exists. Data submitted through these processes was applied per the above criteria:

- Each wealth manager who passes the Five Star Professional regulatory review must attest that they meet the definition of favorable regulatory history, based upon the criteria listed above.
- Five Star Professional promotes via local advertising the opportunity for consumers to confidentially submit complaints regarding a wealth manager.
- Five Star Professional contacted approximately 1 in 12 households identified as having a high propensity to use the services of wealth managers in order to provide consumers the opportunity to submit complaints regarding a wealth manager.

For more information on the program, go to www.fivestarpromotional.com/wm_program.