Rhonda Ducote
President & Principal

apriem ADVISORS

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Helping Clients Achieve Their Financial Dreams While Developing People and Diverse Teams

Rhonda Ducote is a financial advisor with 22 years of expertise who works at Apriem Advisors in Irvine, California. Ducote is authorized to work in California and Texas and possesses the Series 63 and Series 65 licenses necessary to be both a securities agent and an investment adviser representative.

Below are highlights of the interview:

Describe your background and what did you do before joining Apriem Advisors?

I started my career in finance at Fidelity Investments in 1993 and was there for seven and a half years. I started as a customer service representative and was promoted several times before getting my license and eventually becoming a financial representative. My passion in this business is working directly with clients and helping them achieve financial success.

Tell us more about Apriem Advisors.

Apriem Advisors is a Southern California-based Registered Investment Advisor offering discretionary wealth management services to clients all over the United States.

True to our Latin-based namesake, “apprime” (meaning: exceedingly, above all, to the highest degree), Apriem strives to provide our clients with the highest degree of service while handling all facets of their finances, enabling them to experience financial security and peace of mind. Our team is dedicated to engaging clients and developing real, personal relationships with them. Knowing clients’ needs and goals gives purpose and individualizes each financial plan. We prioritize keeping a staff-to-client ratio low to keep service of high quality.

Who is your target audience? How do you create services that align with what they’re looking for?

We are experts in multi-generational family wealth management. Studies show that 90% of wealth is lost by the third generation. Our goal is not just to grow and protect client assets, but also to make sure that the next generation is equipped to preserve the legacy for generations to come. We work with clients and their families to get a complete overview of their financial picture through a comprehensive financial plan, which includes retirement, estate, education, tax, and risk management planning.

Only then can we develop an investment strategy and wealth management approach that is specifically suited to our clients' needs. Our customized asset allocation mixes are tailored to the specific needs of each client. We use fundamental research, technical analysis, and our proprietary quantitative rules-based selection approach to identify companies with strong market leadership and those that have demonstrated consistent operating performance and earnings growth. We look for investment in (a) high-quality growing businesses, which have consistently exhibited superior operating performance and revenue growth; and (b) high-quality mature businesses, which have consistently exhibited superior operating performance and dividend growth. We regularly and systematically guide clients through all aspects of their finances as well as offer financial literacy meetings with their children and grandchildren.

We also offer investment management to endowments for free until they have grown to $1 million or more. We offer a concierge level of service, making ourselves available to our clients to answer any questions and help solve any problems, no matter how big or small.

We specialize in multi-generational families. Aside from that, our service offerings reflect our passion to help the underserved and 3 underrepresented sectors of society: women, blue-collar workers in the industrial space, and beginning investors.

Women of Wisdom (WOW) was launched to encourage, educate, and empower women investors; Industrial Services focuses on managing assets for workers who spend their lives in refineries, plants, and shipyards; and for beginning investors we have Apriem Charitable Services to help charities start their endowment with pro bono investment management services until the endowment has grown to $1 million or more and Retirement Services to help small businesses start retirement plans for their staff.

What are the major changes happening in client behaviour and market operation since pandemic?

The pandemic took an emotional toll on our clients as we were not able to see them face to-face. It took a few months to help our clients get up to speed by transitioning to Zoom for our meetings. Our disaster recovery plan has been in place and regularly tested for situations just like this. Needless to say, we were more than ready for a pandemic, and we made sure our clients knew that we were ready, and it made them feel more comfortable that it was business as usual. We were proactive and made positive business initiatives such as sending bi-weekly email updates, more calls, and virtual meetings – to remind clients to focus on their long-term financial plans. Starting in May 2022, we are back in the office on a hybrid schedule (three in-office and two remote).

This has really helped to boost employee morale and keep our time efficient and productivity levels high. Clients have grown comfortable and even take advantage of the options of in-person and zoom appointments. As a result, we have been able to meet with more clients in a more efficient manner.

What gets you up in the morning? What are your responsibilities as the President and Principal of the company?

I have an amazing staff, and our clients are incredible. I look forward to coming to the office and seeing everyone. When you love what you do for a living, it is hard to call it work. Making a difference in people's lives is very rewarding. I feel like we do that with our employees and clients. We have four departments at Apriem, Client Services, Financial Planning, Wealth Management, and our Investment Team. My primary duties as President and CEO are to make sure all departments are doing their jobs to the best of their ability and to make sure our clients have the best client experience and achieve their goals. I also make sure we are financially sustainable as a company to ensure our employees are secure in their roles and have a career path within Apriem. I also make sure we are all compliant with SEC guidelines and following all the rules.

Kindly describe how you will specifically know what success looks like for you.

Success for me is seeing our staff and clients fulfil their goals and dreams and seeing Apriem continue in perpetuity long after I am gone.

What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

Never be afraid to take chances and use your voice. Do not be afraid to make mistakes but learn from them to keep moving the ball forward for all women.

What are your future plans to sustain your and the company's success?

I want to continue forward in our growth by hiring the right people, never taking short cuts, and always doing what is in the best interest of our clients We will continue to be adaptive to change and technology and listen to suggestions to have the greatest impact. We will strive to retain our talent and keep them happy so they like coming to work. Lastly, we will remain thankful and humble about where we came from and know how blessed we are to be entrusted with our clients' livelihoods.

Website: www.apriem.com

SUCCESS PITCHERS

CERTIFICATE

2022

Rhonda Ducote

is recognized by

Success Pitchers magazine in

The 10 Most Admired WOMEN LEADERS in Business, 2022

An annual listing of ***"The 10 Most Admired Women Leaders in Business 2022"***, who drive forward a more effective and sophisticated way to perform high-quality business practices with exemplary ideas while delivering best in industry business processes.

Gavin Smith

Editor-in-Chief