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## O'Malley & Associates

One local financial services firm is successfully using a team approach to rewrite the way corporations approach their financial planning strategies. O'Malley and Associates likens its method to the way a physicians' group works—where each partner has an area of expertise that can be called upon as needed.

The Downers Grove company opened in July 2005 with a group of uniquely-qualified professionals in the areas of financial and business planning, executive compensation, succession planning, wealth preservation, employee benefits, long-term care insurance and more, to companies and individuals.

The firm and its unique model are spearheaded by Michael O'Malley, a financial professional with more than 20 years of management experience in the insurance industry.

"What we do involves much more than moving a client to a financial product or an insurance policy," O'Malley emphasizes. "We work with clients to help them leverage their life's work



O'Malley

to get the most out of all that they have achieved and to lay a sound financial foundation for future success. This is the big picture approach to a higher-level financial strategy."

"Our job is to be a total resource to the client," said Laura Davis, founding principal, who specializes in strategic business planning.

She strives to provide a strategic alliance to each client.

"We want them to know that through our unique team approach we are uniquely positioned to provide unparalleled due diligence," she said. "Once they experience our holistic approach, it does not take long for them to recognize that they can trust our judgment to deliver the best possible planning solution, and expertise, for their business."

Davis focuses on advanced case design for business owners or top management.

"We meet with clients at least once a year but we are willing to meet more frequently as desired. Our job is to deliver the ultimate financial experience."

As she develops an ongoing relationship with a business, the dynamics can change as time goes on.

"At the end of the day, business owners are required to take risks, get good people, keep good people and develop good business practices. We stand with them every step of the way to help them make smart decisions about their business and their money," Davis said.



Most new clients are taken on by referral and each is given a checklist of documents to bring to an initial meeting.

"Our objective is to develop a team relationship that works in the best interest of the client so we become a trusted advisor for their overall planning strategy," said Annette Hammortree, financial planning and investment specialist and a founding principal.

"We work hard to understand who they are and where they are headed," said Hammortree. "We spend a lot of time creating an inventory of needs and goals."

She meets with her clients sometimes three or four times before implementing components of a financial plan.

"We help the client look at everything. We find that most business owners think they have more benefits in their plans than they actually have," said Hammortree. "For instance, their disability insurance program may not be providing all the benefits they expected."

"The only possible way to provide the best strategy for a corporation is through careful analysis of the total insurance/benefits/investment package. And that's what sets us apart from the rest."

"I want people to understand that we take their future as seriously as they do."

O'Malley's growing client roster is attracting businesses large and small, with 80 percent located in the greater Chicago area and 20 percent out of state.

Besides the Downers Grove office, five additional offices have been opened in Illinois and Wisconsin in the last year.

"In just a little over one year we have grown to over \$500 million in assets," noted O'Malley.

"The original goal was to offer a complete range of financial services without being restricted to one provider," said Tim Sullivan, marketing consultant to the company. "The increasing number of large and small clients taking advantage of this comprehensive approach is a testament to the strategy."

"(O'Malley and Associates) feels that all companies have a growing need for financial planning in a number of different areas," he said. "This firm takes a comprehensive approach that companies have not had access to previously."

O'Malley stresses the importance of a total solutions provider.

"Sometimes we will offer solutions that a firm or individual has never heard of or considered," he said. "Things like the buying and selling of insurance policies to maximize a client's potential investment return; automatic enrollment for their 401K plan; life settlement considerations; unique pension plan strategies, and more."

"We are uniquely positioned to 'think outside of the box' for our clients, because, in the end, whatever financial strategy is best for them is also best for us."