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Six reasons to consider independence

Why advisors who want more are leaving large firms

by [Randy Bradshaw](#), Partner, [&Partners](#)

As America celebrates 250 years of independence, I've been reflecting on independence of all stripes — including how independence from Great Britain wasn't our founders' original goal. It was a means to an end.

Our country's founders thought of themselves as British. What they sought was fairness, representation, and alignment — to have their voices heard in decisions that shaped their future. But after years of asking to be acknowledged, they realized their interests would never truly be represented by people whose incentives were different from their own.

Independence wasn't the original objective. But it became the only path.

I can't help but see parallels between this piece of our country's history and the choice many financial advisors face today.

In my role at &Partners, I help advisors make the leap from being a cog in a large firm's machine to having a seat at our table. What I hear from these advisors again and again is that they don't join large firms to leave. They leave large firms because they want more. They want a voice in decisions that will shape their future. They want representation of their interests and alignment with their values and incentives.

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They don't seek independence at first. But it becomes the best path.

For many advisors I work with, the move to independence is what I like to call their phoenix moment: a chance to rebrand, to rebuild, and to serve clients the way they want to. The details may vary, but the underlying motivation is the same: They want to own their future.

Below you'll find six great reasons, straight from our advisors themselves, explaining why they made the move to independence.

1. Ownership

When you own your business, there's no ceiling on your success. Compensation and bonuses are great, but they're not the same as building something that's yours. And when the business is yours, so is the freedom to run it the way your clients need — not the way a formula somewhere else decided it should run. When you and your team are fully invested in the work, your clients feel it too.

“Being at a firm that's partner-owned, where everyone has equity — we're all fully aligned to do what's best for the client, what's best for the practice, what's best for the firm. So, we're all really rowing in the same direction.”

— [Ellen Marsteller](#), Partner and Managing Director, NewPoint Capital | &Partners

“We have total control over staffing and salaries and office environment. And as any advisor knows, when your people are happy, they are more inclined to make your clients feel completely satisfied.”

— [Cristina Capone](#), Managing Director and Wealth Advisor, Capone | &Partners

2. Culture

In our industry, it's easy to accept the devil you know. We convince ourselves the culture we're part of is as good as it gets. But when you're the one shaping it, you discover something different: The best culture isn't one you inherit — it's one you help create.

Independence puts you in charge of how you spend your workdays, from your office environment to how you reward your team. When you have a seat at the table, you build the practice you've always wanted to run — on your terms, with your people, your way.

“When you get gifted and talented people that have the same focus, that find things that they enjoy — that they get to do together — it creates a culture of camaraderie. It creates a culture of wanting to be a part of something.”

— [Jim Hill](#), Cofounder and Managing Director, Indigo Advisors | &Partners

“The culture that we've built here is so vastly different from anything else I've seen in the industry. It really is a rising tide that I find is lifting all boats.”

— [Clem Gover](#), Founder and Managing Director, Marne Wealth Management | &Partners

3. Efficiency

Forget being a cog in someone else's machine. Large firms can be comfortable, but they can also be inefficient — and their goals aren't always aligned with yours. Cumbersome processes. A lack of personal connection. Decisions made by people who've never met your clients. Independence means reclaiming control of your time and running your practice in a way that best serves the client in front of you.

"Give us the freedom to really run the business the way that we want to."

— [Karen Shane](#), Managing Director, Guident Wealth | &Partners

"My business has become much less reactive. I spend a very large portion of my day intentionally determining and executing on how I want to drive my business forward — instead of responding to priorities set by someone else who's very far removed from my clients."

— [Cristina Capone](#), Managing Director and Wealth Advisor, Capone | &Partners

4. Technology

Technology should make work easier and faster. But many large wirehouses are locked into outdated legacy systems that do the opposite. Independence gives you a chance to be smart and nimble about technology, choosing the best tools for the job and updating them when something better comes along. At the end of the day, the real value of a financial advisor comes from the personal relationship — the technology is just what frees you up to be fully present in it.

"At our previous firm, it might have taken a half a day or even a full day just to get a wire sent out for a client. Here, I can send a wire while I'm still on the phone with the client. I can process it while we're having the same conversation and say, 'By the way, I sent that wire — should be there.'"

— [Brian Cain](#), Cofounder, Viribus Wealth Management | &Partners

5. Client relationships

Serving clients deeply is about real connection. Large firms may limit your ability to integrate tax planning, estate planning, and other holistic strategies under one roof. But helping clients reach their goals starts with truly understanding them. Independence allows you time to connect and the flexibility to build a strategy around the client instead of a product menu. Plus, at &Partners, you're doing it with access to institutional-grade talent and expertise that you can bring in exactly when a client needs it.

"It was so rewarding to me and to my team to see firsthand just how meaningfully we were integrated into our clients' lives [after moving to &Partners]. It's allowing us to really deepen our client engagement and move into conversations or topics in a way that we really never had the tools or the resources to assist us in before."

— [Clem Gover](#), Founder and Managing Director, Marne Wealth Management | &Partners



6. Legacy

Leaving a large firm is not a small thing. It's real work — long nights, hard conversations, moments of doubt. But advisors who've made the move say it's worth it — 60 to 90 hard days set against the next 20 to 30 years or longer. Independence means the business you build is actually yours to pass on — to a partner, a protégé, even your own kid — on your terms, not a firm's succession formula. That's the real prize: a business and a brand that can outlast any one career.

"Moving firms is not easy, no matter what kind of a transition it is. But when you really consider where [you've] landed — this is a 'rest of your career' type of situation, in charge of your own destiny."

— [Pamela Wise](#), Managing Director, Wise | &Partners

Just the beginning

For the founders of our country — and the advisors I work with regularly — independence became necessary when alignment wasn't possible. But our country's founders didn't see independence as the end goal; they used it as a new beginning. At &Partners, we also see independence as a first step in the right direction. It's a starting place for a true partnership and a chance to build something better, together.

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About &Partners

&Partners is a rapidly growing, advisor-owned wealth management firm built for advisors seeking greater ownership, flexibility, and community. Founded by former Wells Fargo leaders and based in Nashville, Tennessee, and St. Louis, Missouri, the firm offers a hybrid model that combines competitive payouts with equity participation, institutional support, and access to a collaborative peer network. &Partners provides a platform for advisors to build lasting businesses on their terms without sacrificing service, scale, or culture. To learn more, visit andpartners.com.