

# Web-based questionnaire takes holistic approach

*New online program helps advisors explore lifestyle choices with clients rather than looking only at returns.*

by David Edey, Investment Executive, May 2001

If you were to break down what this industry is all about you might say products and advice. The role of an advisor, hopefully, is to get his or her clients to where they want to be at some future date. But do you know where they want to go?

While your clients may achieve economic independence, they may also end up “bankrupt” in other areas of their lives, such as such as relationships or health. How did this happen? Was it the fault of the client, or should the advisor take some responsibility for neglecting to think about lifestyle issues and not just rates of return?

For 29 years David Humes has committed his advisory practice to taking a more holistic approach to planning. With more than \$200 million under administration and more than 700 families as clients, the president of Montreal-based DD Humes Financial Services searched for a more formal way to integrate clients’ lifestyle choices with their financial plans.

Humes drew on the material of lifestyle planner and career transition coach George Beshara, with whom he shares passionate beliefs about lifestyle planning and the benefits to advisors and clients. They formed the North American Lifestyle Planning Corp., aiming to be leaders in lifestyle planning education and integration with financial planning.

Their Enhanced Lifestyle Planner is an Internet generated report that helps individuals and their spouses or partners become more aware of their strengths, skills and what motivates them. It also helps them

make key decisions when planning for the future. Humes firmly believes that client relationships are built on more than just numbers.

What the Enhanced Lifestyle Planner does is focus on the types of things relationships are built on. As an advisor, are you going to speak to clients about their relationships, hobbies and interests, or where they want to live in five, 10 or 15 years? Humes says many clients want to talk about their family as well as a family of funds, and some advisors may lose clients because they have painted themselves in a corner by focusing only on the numbers.

To really understand the passion and beliefs behind the Enhanced Lifestyle Planner, you have to understand the man. I have known Humes for many years and he is, in my opinion, one of the truly great people in this industry. He believes an advisor who focuses on a client’s unique objectives and works toward realizing the goals will face no competition from rivals. While the industry has focused on manufacturing products, advisors have to figure out what will distinguish them from the competition.

“As advisors we have to resign ourselves to the fact that we can’t put any more time into people’s lives. I think through this process we can put a lot more life in their time. Our ability to allow clients to repossess their lives and their time will be much more valuable than just the numbers we can accumulate for them. Many clients

and advisors have swallowed the myth that time is money. I believe that time is much more valuable than money, and if at the end of day I have all the money in the world and no time on my side, what good is it?"

Individuals and their partners can either complete a questionnaire directly online or fill in a paper version. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and participants can elect to receive either individual reports or joint reports for discussion purposes with their partner.

To offer this unique service, advisors must complete a certification program, which is available over the telephone in four one-hour 'tele-classes' or one-on-one. At the completion of the training you will be able to handle sensitive issues when discussing lifestyle choices with your clients and help them make these choices, before they are integrated into the financial plan.

This is important in situations in which spouses have different and contradictory lifestyle choices. You can learn how to present the program in workshops and to corporate clients.

Once you are certified there is also ongoing support for Advisors. The program is approved by the Canadian Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors for Pace and continuing education 4.0 credits. The certification training is included with a minimum purchase of 80 processed questionnaires, which cost \$12 each if you buy between 51 and 150. Certification cost is \$425.

For more information, call (416) 483-8742 or, if you prefer, e-mail [george@lifestyleplanner.com](mailto:george@lifestyleplanner.com). Visit the Web site at [www.lifestyleplanner.com](http://www.lifestyleplanner.com).

The bottom line: if you want to build better relationships with clients, get certified ASAP.

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