

THE NORTHWESTERN COLUMNS

PUBLISHED WEEKLY EXCLUSIVELY for THE NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL FINANCIAL NETWORK | www.nmfn.com

Three young winners, one office

Mentoring pays off at McTigue

Not one, not two, but three Pacesetter First 40 champions in one office have also hit the Pacesetter Second 60 mark – all within five years of one another.

The McTigue Financial Group in Chicago is proud of this hard-won trifecta and even more proud that the three “horses” in this race are related by more than just their office proximity. They’re linked by a series of recruiting and mentoring relationships that are paying off for all parties involved – the three champions themselves, The McTigue Financial Group and, eventually, the 300 clients who are at the heart of this accomplishment.

Benjamin Voigt, CLU, CFP®, the first horse in this trifecta, first heard of Northwestern Mutual while he was a student at Notre Dame. A cousin in Pittsburgh who was in the insurance business told him what a great career it was, but Voigt went a different direction after graduation. Then, after spending a few years in corporate America, he reconsidered his options and joined Northwestern Mutual in 2001.

Voigt credits his early success to the culture in the office where **Al Granum, CLU**, was once the general agent. “I basically just did what they told me to do and it worked,” Voigt said, speaking of the early days of his training. “I adhered to the one-card system, I worked hard to build a balance of new clients, lives and premium, and I always asked for referrals.”



John McTigue, CLU, managing partner of The McTigue Financial Group, rewards Pacesetter performers with a trip to his personal tailor. Here Representatives **Royce Zimmerman, CPA, MAcc**; **Scott Evans**; and **Benjamin Voigt, CLU, CFP®**, model their sartorial awards and offer a tribute to **Al Granum, CLU**, who was an inspiration to each of them.

Voigt was mentored by **Tom Canale, CLU, CFP®**, who is now a managing director with The McTigue Financial Group. “Tom conducted the Client Builder meetings on Monday morning and held me accountable for numbers and performance,” Voigt said. “I experienced some of the usual challenges in the beginning, the highs and lows that come with rejection. But I got off to a good start, I dealt with whatever came up and I’m seasoned now. That’s what makes it so fun and invigorating.”

Voigt met both Pacesetter goals in 2002, the first representative in the network office to do so. Asked if he had any words of wisdom for a colleague just starting out, he said, “Have a vision and keep it constantly in front of you. That’s working for me.”

Recruiting success story

During a routine review meeting, Voigt had asked a client if she knew anybody smart and entrepreneurial who

CONTINUED »

was looking for something new. At that point she did not, but several months later she came up with a name – **Royce Zimmerman, CPA, MAcc.** Zimmerman, who was working as a CPA in downtown Chicago, had always wanted to run his own business. He made the leap and joined The McTigue Financial Group early in 2005.

Zimmerman credits the mentoring relationship he has with Voigt for much of his success. “He made sure I started off right with the Granum system,” Zimmerman said. “I shot for three meetings a day, I asked for referrals and I maintained high activity.” Even with that level of energy, Zimmerman wrote 21 of his first 40 lives in the last month, a back-load situation he doesn’t recommend to others.

“In the beginning, the size of the challenge was daunting. It seemed like an impossible task, but I just buried my head and kept working,” Zimmerman said. He finally met his Pacesetter First 40, and then they raised the bar. He remembers thinking, “After working so hard for the First 40 and just sneaking by, how will I ever do 50 percent more?”

“Ben was a big help. He runs the Monday morning Client Builder now,

and we still meet once or twice a week. We talk things through, he helps me set goals, and he holds me accountable. It’s all about the numbers.” Zimmerman hit the Pacesetter Second 60 milestone in March of 2006.

Paying it forward

Scott Evans, the newest horse on the trifecta success track, joined Northwestern Mutual in July 2005. A graduate of Indiana University, Evans was looking for a company that would give him three things: a good product to sell, good training and entrepreneurial opportunities. When a family friend introduced him to a recruiter with The McTigue Financial Group, he knew he had found what he was after.

Although he didn’t recruit Evans, Zimmerman specifically requested Evans for the mentor program. The mentoring culture had worked well for him, and Zimmerman was eager to pass it along. As the two began to work together, they reviewed Evans’ language and his method of conducting meetings and they “tweaked a few things.”

“Royce convinced me that I had all the tools I needed to succeed,” Evans said.

It wouldn’t be necessary to reinvent any wheels. “He always told me, ‘You work one day at a time, ask for referrals, make appointments, get your activity points. Then you wake up six months later and you see that it worked.’ He was right. I did what they told me to do and it worked.”

There have been challenges. “I’m good with people,” Evans said. “I think clients trust me and I’m able to create a sense of urgency. I just need to work at finding more prospects.” Even in the face of challenges, Evans hit both Pacesetter milestones this year.

Evans and Zimmerman, who started just six months apart, are now competing for rookie of the year. It’s another milestone, and they consider it “a win-win for both of us.”

Much in common

All three Pacesetter performers spoke of hard work, long days in the office, and personal and family sacrifice now in exchange for rewards down the road. “We turn on the lights in the morning and we turn them off late at night,” one of them said, speaking for all three, “but we do make time for what’s important.”