



---

Industry White Paper Series

# Shareholders Service Group

*A Case Study in How a Leading Custodian Adds Value to Their  
Advisor Clients through Investment Policy Statements*

## **Background**

**A**s part of our commitment to providing tools, information and best practices to help financial advisors succeed, we are pleased to present the following case study that illustrates how Shareholders Service Group (SSG), an innovative custodian for independent Registered Investment Advisors, has enhanced their service offering to provide access for their 450 affiliated advisors to Investment Policy Statements (IPS) and the technology platform of IPS AdvisorPro®.

We invite you to learn more how your firm can benefit from the use of IPSs and the advanced technology of IPS AdvisorPro® at [www.IPSAdvisorPro.com](http://www.IPSAdvisorPro.com).

## **Introduction**

***“We look to partner with the leading applications that advisors use so that we can leverage our industry positioning to provide added value benefits to our advisor clients.”***

**S**hareholders Service Group was founded in 2002 by a small, core group of industry veterans who had pioneered the custody business for independent RIAs in the early '90's at the custodian formerly known as Jack White. Jack White merged with Waterhouse Securities to broaden their service offering and this unique combination was then acquired by TD Bank of Canada, which ultimately merged with Ameritrade to become one of the industry's leading custodians.

Based on the very successful approach of truly understanding the needs of independent advisors, the management team at SSG, led by President and CEO Peter Mangan, broke away from the TD combination to build a truly independent platform whose sole focus was to serve independent RIAs.

From these humble beginnings, SSG has quickly grown to become a major player in the fast growing RIA custody business. “We set out at SSG to be a pure-play custodian,” noted Peter. “Our philosophy and approach is all about serving the needs of the independent advisor and we look to partner with the leading applications that advisors use so that we can leverage our industry positioning to provide added value benefits to our advisor clients.”

## **Value Added Approach**

***“In order for us to be of the highest value to them, we needed to expand our service and technology offering beyond just asset custody and brokerage.”***

**P**eter and his team knew from decades of working with independent advisors that their needs were unique. “For independent advisors, their approach to service and managing client’s financial and investment plans is a truly customized process. In order for us to be of the highest value to them, we needed to expand our service and technology offering beyond just asset custody and brokerage.”

As part of this strategy, SSG continually scours the industry in search of the best providers of technology and business solutions to enhance their platform.

“When it came down to deciding what we should offer in the way of investment and financial planning tools, we knew that Investment Policy Statements were a very high priority,” commented Mangan. “In terms of client communications, IPSs are the foundation for how advisors should be working with their clients.”

“The IPS is first a matter of prudence, to clearly document the investment plan, approach, asset allocation, basically the why’s and how’s of implementing recommendations. Secondly, as advisors grow, they need to adopt technology and workflow processes to streamline these types of activities. Lastly, as the issue of fiduciary responsibility continues to become more and more important and with the increasingly complex compliance and regulatory environment, we just don’t see how advisors can operate without them.”

Based on this criteria, SSG conducted a very detailed due diligence of industry solutions and selected IPS AdvisorPro® as their preferred choice. “We examined a number of different options, but none of them were as elegant and simple as IPS AdvisorPro®,” remarked Peter. “We were very aware of the intellectual property and design by experienced, practicing financial advisors that went into the development of IPS AdvisorPro®. That, combined with its online technology platform, ease of use, and price point made it a very easy decision.”

## **The Benefits of Group Purchasing**

***“This very simple step we are taking pays off in many ways. Not only are we cementing loyalty with our existing clients, but we are also providing them with tools to help them grow faster.”***

In order to streamline access to IPS AdvisorPro® for its advisor clients and to encourage them to take advantage of this value added service offering, SSG provides a central billing facility that they manage.

“We wanted to make it very easy for our advisor clients to access the tool and to provide them with a substantial discount and an enhanced service experience,” stated Mangan. “This very simple step we are taking pays off in many ways. Not only are we cementing loyalty with our existing clients, but we are also providing them with tools to help them grow faster. This “double dip” effect of offering IPS AdvisorPro® is helping us to gather more assets and ultimately pays for itself many times over.”

“Additionally, having such a compelling tool like IPS AdvisorPro® as part of our service offering is a very powerful marketing tool,” continued Peter. “It is definitely a differentiating feature and allows us to go out to the marketplace with a compelling marketing message. We see a very big opportunity to capitalize on the trend for advisors affiliated with the major Wall Street firms to go independent. These advisors typically have a comprehensive set of investment planning tools that they are used to and by us partnering with IPS AdvisorPro® makes the switch that much easier.”

## **Conclusion**

***“Advisors are on the precipice of an amazing growth period and in order for them to continue to be successful, we believe that they need to embrace technology, enhance their service offering and continue to be client-focused.”***

The importance of advisors working with IPSs is very clear to SSG. “In today’s volatile markets, independent, objective advice is needed now more than ever,” concluded Peter. “Advisors are on the precipice of an amazing growth period and in order for them to continue to be successful, we believe that they need to embrace technology, enhance their service offering and continue to be client-focused. We will continue to seek out solutions that best enable our advisor clients to accomplish these goals and are very excited to be working with IPS AdvisorPro® as it is an excellent example of how we deliver on our promise to best serve our clients.”

## **About IPS AdvisorPro®**

Created by financial advisors for financial advisors, IPS AdvisorPro® is designed to work with all types of wealth management professionals and their practices. IPS AdvisorPro® offers a flexible solution to creating and managing Investment Policy Statements that are easy to use through an encrypted, secure web-based environment. With over 1,000 users and 10,000 IPSs created, IPS AdvisorPro® is the industry's leading technology solution. IPS AdvisorPro® was named in 2006 by Morningstar as the "Software of the Year." For more information, please visit [www.IPSAdvisorPro.com](http://www.IPSAdvisorPro.com)

**IPS** AdvisorPro™

9130 South Dadeland Boulevard  
Suite 1625  
Miami, Florida 33156

[www.IPSAdvisorPro.com](http://www.IPSAdvisorPro.com)