

Mike BUSCH

By Carolyn Tillery
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Mike Busch's professional life is quite literally an extension of his education at Texas A&M University.



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Vogel Financial Advisors LLC
Dallas
Mike Busch '88
President
Industry: Registered investment advisor
Growth rate: 92.55%
Year founded: 2000

Busch's successful career-track started at A&M

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ike Busch, who graduated from A&M in 1988 with a degree in accounting, is a certified public accountant and a certified financial planner.

"I knew I wanted to do something in the financial arena," he says. "It wasn't until my sophomore year that decided I would go the accounting route. Being a CPA has provided a good background for me."

His company, Vogel Financial Advisors LLC, which offers a range of comprehensive estate planning options, opened in May 2000.

Vogel started his career in 1988 with Philip Vogel Accounting. The two companies now share overhead, as well as a few clients.

Texas A&M's co-op program, which allowed Busch to alternate school with working at a job, gave him a boost toward building a successful career.

Employers interested in hiring students as interns or on a temporary basis contacted the school, which in turn determined the best match for student and employer.

"I had to put myself through school, so I really needed that help," Busch says. "In my junior year I began alternating semesters and work with Northern Telecom.

"In the end, the program connects you with real world experience. You get paid and end up with course credits. I was able to graduate with the knowledge of what that real world experience was."

Today, Busch has three full-time employees and \$100 million in assets under management.

"We have the luxury of not being real

human-capital intensive," he said. "As I add clients, I don't have to add personnel."

Busch said affiliation with his alma mater has been an asset.

"There's that Aggie connection," he says. "Even with clients who don't have that connection, there's an element of respect. They seem favorably inclined when they see that (Texas A&M) ring. There seems to be a sense of values or ethics associated with it and I'm very proud of that."

Client Lisa Newman has been represented by Busch's firm almost since its beginning.

"He's one of the hardest working people I know," she says. "He has been my financial planner since 2001. I'm an attorney and estate planner and I think he does such a wonderful job that I refer my clients to him."

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Although Busch runs the company, he has five partners who came with him from the accounting firm — Buddy Raden, Howard Dreyer, Ron Fiedelman, Doug Koval and Mark Kaman.

Vogel Financial Advisors, Busch says, has chalked up an average annual growth rate of about 90 percent over the life of the company.

The company's growth strategy has been to spread the word as much as possible through contacts.

"The affiliation with the accounting company helped greatly," Busch said. "The contacts the accounting firm had in the community were a great asset. We're all referral. We did no cold calling and no advertising. We were offering new services through the accounting firm."

Another reason for his firm's success, he says, is that the company, is a "one-stop

shop" for clients. They can visit with their investment adviser and their tax adviser without having to leave the office.

"We serve as the quarterback for their financial team," he says. "We're in there with their attorney, accountant and insurance services. We provide an overall game plan so everyone is on the same page."

Busch says the public is educated about what they want and don't want when planning their financial futures.

"I think people are tired of pitchmen for financial products," he says. "I think that has really distinguished us. They also want someone with the right educational background, not someone who was selling cars last year and is selling financial products this year."

He expects continued growth for Vogel Financial Advisors over the next five years.

"There has been a shift in how we get our clients," he says. "We probably saturated the existing client base through the accounting firm. Greater than 50 percent of our clients now come through referrals of our clients. That has really shifted."

Busch is aware that many people don't think accounting or estate management are exciting professions, but he doesn't share that belief.

"We avoid burnout by the fact that we really enjoy our clients," he says. "We realize the importance and the difference we're making in people's lives."

In addition to running his company, Busch, who is married with two children, also is chairman of the alumni association of Trinity Christian Academy in Addison, a Dallas suburb. The family enjoys camping and just spending time together.

"While I was growing the business that first few years, I didn't have a lot of time on

the weekends to spend with them," Busch says, "so we're making up for that now."

And, as far as his college alma mater, there's no need to wonder which team his household roots for during football season.

"My sister is also an Aggie and so is my brother-in-law, Matt Darwin, who played football for the Philadelphia Eagles." ■

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