Q&A with Howard Geller
Hudson Peak Group

Principle Series:
Family Office Insights sits down with Howard Geller of Hudson Peak Group, a financial industry veteran, to discuss how he helps investment managers, wealth managers and family offices. Geller focuses on opportunities and solutions that drive organizational improvements and market positioning for an ever-changing industry.

Family Office Insights is a voluntary, “opt-in” collaborative peer-to-peer community of single family offices, qualified investors and institutional investors.

Learn more at: FamilyOfficeInsights.com
Q: What is your background in the financial sector?

A: I’ve been in this industry for over twenty years, across many areas of the investment management business. My background spans performance measurement, portfolio attribution, product analysis and management, competitive analysis, marketing product placement and investment manager due diligence. Essentially, I function as an internal consultant bridging the communication gap between groups to solve problems, implement solutions and take advantage of opportunities.

Q: Who is your ideal client?

A: My ideal client is an organization that needs an unbiased resource to help frame the key issues and find creative solutions. That can mean a lot of things, from mining data to find key pieces of information to developing a set of solutions that is consistent with available resources.

Q: What services do you provide?

A: My clients retain me for a variety of services that include product analysis, project management and strategic planning. I help them define, analyze and resolve their issues, all while looking to take advantage of opportunities in the marketplace. Here’s an example: One client was interested in bringing a new fund to the market. They had an idea of what market the product belonged in, yet they were unaware of the level of acceptance it already had reached. We took a deep look at the product and the sector, and ultimately redefined the product and its positioning.

Q: Why do you see a need in the industry for the type of services you offer?

A: Firms are trying to maximize their internal resources, but in reality, they can’t dedicate enough people to get everything completed in a timely manner. Internal resources are stretched too far and opportunities can easily be missed. By working with an independent such as myself, organizations can get a fresh, unbiased view while avoiding the high costs of staffing up or engaging a large consulting firm. Some companies are not familiar with a segment of the industry and they need a resource to help them navigate through new and unfamiliar channels.

Q: What are your main areas of focus?

A: I focus primarily on manager due diligence; product management-analysis, development and remediation; and assisting investment managers through start-up phases and beyond. Often, I’m called when a group is trying to setup their own shop—I help them understand what they need to do in terms of organization, engaging service providers, marketing and client service. Many of them have a great investment product, but don’t know how to create the business foundation to
support it. I also help them develop business plan materials and performance presentations.

Q: How do you help drive performance for your clients?

A: Every client has a different challenge or opportunity to address, and it often takes a fresh eye to identify it. The first step is to assess where the challenges are— is the product fundamentally competitive, or is there a performance problem? Is the product essentially solid, but lacks a critical mass of investors? Perhaps the offering is in good shape, but the infrastructure to support it is not adequate. Together with my clients, we review which market and factors are relevant, and can then create highly targeted solutions.

For example, a startup family office was interested in possibly buying an investment management firm approached me. We worked together to determine their core motivations and clarify the goals for the office. We looked at a number of questions, such as: Is it for internal management only or would you take external assets? If you bring in external clients, what do they want from this management team? If you are looking for external clients, what is your commitment to building the business—capital and time? What kind of products are you looking for?

Ultimately, the office decided to move forward with internal management only with a focus on private investments. This was a change from their initial thoughts, and better served their needs.

Q: What’s next for you? How do you plan to grow your business?

A: I plan to keep doing what I enjoy—working with investment managers, wealth managers and family offices on a strategic basis. I appreciate the diversity of working with a variety of different organizations, and they benefit from an independent, unbiased perspective.

Howard Geller

Howard A. Geller is a Principal/Consultant at Hudson Peak Group. He is a financial analyst and product management strategist for investment management firms. Geller’s proven track record of leveraging financial analysis drives performance improvements and market positioning for a broad range of financial products. For more information, please email howard@hudson-peak.com.
“Working with family office investors is rapidly becoming a relevant strategy for accessing investment capital from the ultra-wealthy and their investment offices.”

Arthur Andrew Bavelas