



INVESTMENT QUORUM

GOLD STANDARD AWARD WINNER FOR INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVICE

“Ahead of the curve”

With RDR on the horizon, advisers need to be well on the way with positioning services to comply with the FSA’s proposals designed to introduce greater trust, engagement and value across the industry and to consumers. For boutique financial and investment advisory wealth manager, Investment Quorum, such attributes have formed the backbone of its offering for many years and puts them ahead of the curve in terms of establishing a modern advice structure. Chief Executive Officer, Lee Robertson applies a forward thinking approach that allows the firm to concentrate on clients’ needs, which is a major factor towards why the firm has won a Gold Standard Award for a fifth time in a row.

In assessing Investment Quorum’s entry, judges noted a high focus on education both in terms of the qualifications held by personnel, but also through the firm’s commitment to ensuring customers fully grasp the products and services used, underpinned by experience gained in developing a highly regarded discretionary portfolio management service. There was little doubt from the entry that this experience enables Investment Quorum to explain investment issues in a clear and thorough way to customers, which enhances their overall understanding.

Risk communications is highlighted as an important part of the client discovery process. Judges were pleased to see such a strong emphasis on risk and that it is regularly reviewed in a meaningful way. Investment Quorum also understands that outsourcing has to be of top quality, particularly if it is an important part of a service offering. In terms of functions Investment Quorum outsources, all companies selected are carefully researched and annually reviewed to assess service and continuing suitability. While this approach may initially take more time to research and set up, it pays dividends in the long run as it allows the firm to concentrate on clients, rather than fire-fighting poor quality outsourcing relationships.

Client surveys and feedback is taken extremely seriously and is recognised by Investors In Customers (IIC), which is an independent assessment and award recognising excellence in the field of customer service and customer relationship. It is clear from this and from staff involvement that excellent service is an integral part of Investment Quorum’s offering. Judges were impressed with the firm’s annual adviser summit that not only highlights areas for employees to focus on for the forthcoming business year, but practical application of decision making is demonstrated to show how choices can be made more

effective so as to benefit clients and improve services. Treating Customers Fairly (TCF) is articulated clearly and, more importantly, outlined in practical terms what implementation of a TCF policy means for different areas of the business.

Finally, it's corporate social responsibility agenda punches above its weight with a high focus on community involvement and in its support of a wide range of charities. It speaks volumes about Investment Quorum's approach to business in that it does not wait to take its lead from more powerful sectors of financial services, but sets its own agenda. Investment Quorum sets an excellent example of how financial services and society can work together at all levels.

About the Gold Standard Awards

Now in their ninth year, the awards are dedicated to identifying firms in the financial services sector that can demonstrate a strong structure and are committed to excellent standards of service. The Gold Standard Awards are one of the toughest Awards to achieve. As well as taking into account financial strength, the awards assess areas such as trust, fair value, service as well as capability to conduct business. They are designed to identify companies that not only have strong structures and procedures in place, but are going above and beyond standard business practices to restore faith in the financial services sector generally.

The financial services landscape in the UK will change dramatically in the coming years. Not only structurally, but also morally as we witness a growing shift towards more corporate responsibility. There will be a greater emphasis and requirement for financial services companies to ensure that products and services are appropriate for the target market. Increased standards of professionalism will be at the very heart of the financial services sector in the future. The Awards recognise the efforts of those companies who are taking these changes on board.

Entrants are assessed on a wide range of factors including staff training and development, staff retention, transparency of fees and costs, as well as solid evidence of how embedded Treating Customers Fairly (TCF) is in every day practice. This type of analysis gives a much clearer picture of how serious a firm is about providing good service over the long term.

The baseline for all responses and evidence supplied is judged on standard requirements to conduct business. However, only those companies that can clearly demonstrate they go above and beyond standard requirements are considered for a Gold Standard Award. Key to this is the quality of evidence provided to back up all answers.

www.goldstandardawards.com

Pull out quote below:

"Investment Quorum has a first class structure that allows the firm to focus on adding value to clients. Well executed processes that are clearly articulated. Judges liked the modern thinking behind many of the strategies. Great supporters of their local community. A highly professional firm that thinks on its feet" Judges' Comments.