



Customer Profile

Heron Financial Group | Wealth Advisors, a New York-based registered investment advisory firm (RIA), caters to client families with \$1-10 million in investable assets. Heron doubled assets over the last two years by effectively utilizing social media including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to enhance a targeted marketing effort. Heron President David Edwards expects assets under management to grow to \$250 million by year end 2015.

Regulatory Landscape

Heron Financial falls under the regulatory watch of the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC). Firms must retain and review their business records—including electronic communications like email and social media—in accordance with the U.S. Investment Advisers Act of 1940.



The Force Multiplier: Heron Financial Grows Business with Social Media

Effective Social Media Strategy Yields Real Results

Heron Financial Founder and President David Edwards says social media is the “force multiplier” for firms like his that seek growth. He considers it critical to success at Heron, and uses his social channels to support his overall marketing strategy. For example, he generated 50 customer leads from a 15-minute appearance on Bloomberg Radio’s The Hays Advantage. During the show he discussed a portfolio stress-test application that’s popular among investors called HiddenLevers. The application is available on the Heron Financial website, and host Kathleen Hays tweeted about Edwards’ appearance on the show, reaching thousands of followers. Edwards then re-tweeted with a link to his website, and shared the information through other social media, too.

Marketing and Compliance: Working Together

Heron Financial wanted its wealth advisors to reach out to clients through email and social media, but needed a technology solution to help meet SEC recordkeeping and supervision requirements for electronic communications.

The firm sought a comprehensive archiving solution that would allow it to capture, search, supervise and produce email and social media content effectively. Heron needed to minimize the cost and the time required to keep its compliance efforts on track.

“When we spend money, it’s in the service of our existing client base or to pursue new clients. Needless infrastructure is not part of our business model,” said Edwards.

Smarsh fit the bill. Shortly after provisioning Smarsh for email archiving services in 2010, Heron started archiving social media with Smarsh, as well.

“I run a lean, client-focused organization, so I rely on technology,” said Edwards. “We have a one-person compliance department, and I wanted a solution that would limit her time spent on supervision to no more than an hour each week.”

Edwards and his advisors now use social media the way they want, on the devices they prefer, and Smarsh archives all of the information. When Heron needs to produce data for the SEC or an internal audit, it can quickly search and produce any content required.

After Edwards appeared on her show, Kathleen Hays tweeted about the Heron Financial HiddenLevers application. The promotion helped Heron generate 50 customer leads.



“We use social media to paint a picture of our client experience for people who are not yet our clients.”

David Edwards
Founder and President, Heron Financial



Building Relationships from the Start: Heron's Approach to Social Media

"I want to know my clients before I ever meet them," said Edwards.

Social media is a two-way street. Edwards expects his potential clients to check him out, and he does the same. "Potential clients appreciate it when I educate myself about their business and personal information they make public," said Edwards. "I want to know as much as I can about a person before I call them."

Intelligent Archiving with Less Effort

Today's SEC audits require more sophisticated preparation from registered investment advisories (RIAs). When it comes to requests for electronic communications, auditors expect firms to respond rapidly.

"The SEC expects to see an organized presentation of information," said Edwards. "Firms like ours need outside help to do it."

Smarsh provides Heron Financial with easy-to-use tools for searching and producing email and social media, allowing Edwards' staff to more easily compile data.

Said Edwards, "We now have an intelligent compliance and archiving solution. I believe the Smarsh solution is best suited to help me find a needle in a haystack should the SEC ask me to do so."

"We generate a high volume of social media activity. Smarsh offered us a tool that made a vast field of data easily searchable."

David Edwards
Founder and President, Heron Financial

Edwards' Tips for Social Media Success

- ✓ Make sure you're on the top 4: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube
- ✓ Never write something you wouldn't want to appear on the front page of The Wall Street Journal
- ✓ Dedicate at least 30–60 minutes per week posting content on various platforms
- ✓ Use social media as the force multiplier, a way to accelerate your overall marketing strategy
- ✓ Ability to archive multiple types of content on one platform



Smarsh delivers cloud-based archiving solutions for the information-driven enterprise. Its centralized platform provides a unified compliance and eDiscovery workflow across the entire range of digital communications, including email, public and enterprise social media, websites, instant messaging and mobile messaging. Founded in 2001, Smarsh helps more than 20,000 organizations meet regulatory compliance, eDiscovery and record retention requirements.

