

## Greenleaf Trust Brings Client Centric Team Concept To Benefit Its Customers

By BILL PERRY

**KALAMAZOO** — Effective wealth management requires serious teamwork and not every firm considers this important, but for Greenleaf Trust, it's a fundamental principle within their corporate culture. Greenleaf is one of Michigan's few trust-only banks operating statewide and recently moved its officers to a new "client centric team concept" in order to provide the best service possible to clients.

According to Sarah Johansson, VP and director of marketing, Greenleaf Trust's investment research, trust administration and retirement plan teams have many decades of collective experience. Now the firm is moving to bring together the talents of trust administration, portfolio strategy planning and administrative focus as part of an ongoing team to collectively fine tune and meet the wants, needs, and desires of their clients.

"The client centric team includes a wealth management advisor, trust relationship officer and administrative assistant and all are involved in client service opportunities," she said. "This direct focus on servicing the client puts Greenleaf professionals in a solid position to make the decisions that benefit their clients best."

Before this change, Greenleaf's approach was to have a trust relationship and research analyst at every client meeting. The research analyst was responsible for meeting with clients to discuss long-term portfolio strategy, continually monitor and manage the activity of portfolios, as well as conducting the comprehensive due diligence and research to determine the best investments for client portfolios.

Greenleaf's research analysts now focus primarily on pure investment research and the wealth management advisors have assumed the responsibility of portfolio strategy and planning. Under this new structure the duties of each client centric team member are focusing more directly on the value they each bring to the client.

"This approach allows the wealth management advisors to focus exclusively on portfolio management, leaving the research analysts to keep their eyes on the best investment selection. In this mix the research analyst is not directly responsible for client relationship issues," explained Trust Officer, Karen Bouche.

Greenleaf believes that no matter how large their company grows, the client centric team concept brings a chemistry that can be duplicated time and again bringing the best value for both existing and new clients. "We don't want clients to see any fall off in service from one team to the next and we want to allow for additional growth with out compromising service. The goal is always to provide excellent service."

Since wealth can brighten futures, broaden horizons or make someone's world a more comfortable place, Bouche emphasized how Greenleaf offers its clients greater independence and opportunities.

Greenleaf Trust maps out a strategy in one to one consultations to create an investment and financial plan. "Using this flexible document as a road map, we'll



*William D. Johnston, founder, chairman and president of Greenleaf Trust Bank.*

build a customized investment portfolio that is consistent with the client's objectives, and within personal tolerance for volatility and risk," she said. "Of course, tax consequences will be carefully considered in the context of portfolio management decisions. And, we are more than happy to work with a client's tax and legal advisors whenever appropriate."

Johansson emphasized the time spent with clients, getting to know them and becoming familiar with their goals, interests and financial requirements is the most natural place to begin. "After all, we can't really create a portfolio that satisfies your objectives unless we know exactly what those objectives are."

Greenleaf Trust handles many types of accounts, including: investment management accounts, traditional and Roth IRAs, charitable trusts, foundation and endowment accounts, qualified retirement plans, and revocable and irrevocable trusts.