

Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso  
and Chuck Vickery



# NEW PLANNER PODCAST



NEW PLANNER  
RECRUITING



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Caleb Brown**

**[New Planner Podcast](#) with Caleb Brown**

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Welcome to the *New Planner Podcast*, where it's all about helping you successfully enter the financial planning profession and accelerate your financial planning career.

This podcast will help you understand the profession, become familiar with the various career paths available to you, and avoid the mistakes that limit your success.

Join your host, Caleb Brown, to explore the human side of creating a successful planning career through interviews, personal experience, and insights from the trenches.

Let's get started.

Caleb Brown: Welcome to the 135th episode of the New Planner Podcast, this is Caleb Brown, your host. My guests today are Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery with Elevate Wealth Advisory in Athens, Georgia.

Deanne starts us off by discussing how she got her start in financial planning, including how she was introduced to Chuck, why she took the position when she had other offers that were more financially lucrative to start off, what her role entailed and how she began adding value and carving her own career path.

Chuck shares the landscape of his business before hiring Deanne. While he thought she'd be a good fit, even though she kept refusing to only be a sales assistant, how Deanne earned the trust and the trust of his clients, and why he entered into a

**[New Planner Podcast](#) with Caleb Brown**

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

buy-sale agreement with Deanne after she had only been in the business a few years.

Listen to the end too where they share their challenges, but also the successes of their successful partnership, including the economics of how Deanne purchased the business from Chuck, what Chuck thought when Deanne wanted to rebrand the business and remove his name, how Deanne has grown her skillset and grown the business, and what their future goals are.

If you have dreams and desires of buying out your firm's founder, then this episode is for you.

Hi Deanne, hi Chuck, welcome to the New Planner Podcast.

Deanne Rosso: Hey, Caleb, good to be here today.

Chuck Vickery: It is good to be here.

Caleb Brown: Thank you guys for joining me and we were just talking earlier off camera that Deanne has been giving this talk about her succession plan and her career to my UGA class for a number of years, and now, we're glad to have you part of the conversation, Chuck.

So, really, if you would just start us off on what your business looked like way back in the day before you hired Deanne.

Chuck Vickery: Well, we were with a broker dealer who put a big emphasis on financial planning, so mostly mutual funds, some life insurance, and life was good. It was so good, I needed some help, and I hired a lady and unfortunately, while she was a great employee, she ended up being more of an operations person than a sales assistant.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

So, when I hired Deanne, I made sure that I kept her on the sales assistant side and not on the operations side. And she just refused to be a sales assistant.

About a year later, she said, "I've got to get my Series 7." And I said, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" She said, "Buy me the book." And about four weeks later, she passed the Series 7. The next year she said, "I want to be a CFP." And I said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" "Buy me the book," and six months later she'd passed a CFP exam.

But what she did for me was free up a lot of time, and our assets increased substantially because I wasn't having to do every single little bit and piece. So, when I go to meetings now, people ask me, "Where can I get a Deanne?"

And I tell them, "You got to kiss a lot of frogs," And you do but it's our temperament just seemed to enmesh, and we just had a very good and still do have a very good working relationship.

Caleb Brown: A lot of things there that I want to go back to. But the size of your business, I mean, how many clients did you have at that point and when were you starting to feel the pressure like, "Hey, I can't do everything for all these people?"

Chuck Vickery: I had no idea how many clients were had, and I think we were probably 50 or 60 million dollars in assets under management. And Deanne and I went through some training programs together to come up with processes for onboarding clients, and for servicing existing clients.

And then we made a philosophical change in our investment approach and all of those are things ... next thing I knew we were — it took a few years but then we went north of \$200 million.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: Something you said earlier, can you just maybe in your mind, what's the difference between a sales assistant and operations?

Chuck Vickery: Operation person has the paperwork filled out and sends that in, they may even have receptionist-type duties. It's all admin. It's not giving advice to clients but change of address or change of bank, something like that.

Caleb Brown: Well, the service-type stuff, account. Deanne, let's come to you. I mean, how did you even get connected with Chuck?

Deanne Rosso: Good question, friend of a friend of a friend. My senior year at Georgia, I had done two or three different internships. So, it started with internships and that's always a piece of advice that I give to students, is definitely do your internships because that's where you make so many connections.

And so, it was really through — I had done an internship with a mortgage lender in Athens, and it was a connection that came through a realtor that that mortgage lender knew, so it wasn't anyone that I knew. But someone said, "Hey, I heard that Vickery Financial has an opening for an executive assistant."

And the gentleman that I'd interned with, he said he had mentioned me because we had a good working relationship in the internship and thought I might be a good fit. So, that's how I met Chuck.

Caleb Brown: So, financial planning wasn't even really on your radar, I guess, is what I heard. Is that right?

Deanne Rosso: It was not on my radar at all. I wasn't intending to go into this field or down this path. I thought that I would go into

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

housing in the form of mortgage or at the time, I was working as a bookkeeper or manufactured housing retail center.

So, I thought I may go into manufactured housing field in some way, shape, form, or fashion. I even applied to law school thinking I might be a real estate attorney, so it really wasn't on my radar.

But that summer when I did my internships, and my parents were very clear that I needed to become employed and off their payroll. So, I definitely started interviewing around and that's when I met Chuck was when I went to interview. I was really, really intrigued by a financial advisory practice and what they did.

And so, that's when I met Chuck. I really interviewed more out of curiosity than anything, and here I am.

Caleb Brown: If you remember, I mean, what did that interview process entail and why did you end up accepting his offer?

Deanne Rosso: I remember very well, and it was actually more like a conversation like we're having right now than an interview. I was very nervous, of course, because I was doing first-round interviews at several different places, and I had really no idea. I had taken one financial planning class at UGA, so I really knew nothing about financial planning or advising.

But I knew that when Chuck and I met and we had this conversation, we kind of hit it off as friends right off the bat. I really enjoyed the conversation with him, and I really was very intrigued again, by what it was that he did and how it was that he helped clients grow and manage their wealth. And so, that's why I continued the conversation.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

I had offers elsewhere, I did get the offer with a mortgage lender, and I had a couple of other offers that were actually more financially lucrative, Chuck.

Caleb Brown: Here we go.

Chuck Vickery: Yeah, but I didn't cover those.

Deanne Rosso: Chuck did not cover those. I felt in my gut like this was a career path and not just a job. And that's what Chuck was really offering to me, was let me teach you about this industry. And that's why I accepted the role with Chuck, and he stayed true to his word. He did, he taught me about this industry.

Caleb Brown: And Chuck, I just want to go back to you for a minute. What did you see in Deanne that made you want to hire her? I mean, you were talking to probably other candidates, I mean, why choose her?

Chuck Vickery: Well, she had a degree in Consumer Economics, I thought that would be that official. And she was very impressive in the interview, and I just thought we'd work well. So, I made her the offer.

Caleb Brown: And at this point, you were just trying to find some help. You were not saying like, "Hey, I really got to lay the groundwork for a successor here."

Chuck Vickery: No, no, no, I was looking for an employee, not a successor.

Caleb Brown: Deanne, I want to come back to you for a moment too, because earlier Chuck had said like if I got it right, four weeks to pass a Series 7, you got the books and you passed.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Deanne Rosso: He embellished a bit. He also I think downplayed his role a little bit. Chuck was always so encouraging with — the more I wanted to learn about the industry, the more opportunity he offered.

I think that's another key that I always share with young advisors and/or students is be inquisitive and invest in yourself as far as your education goes because ... and employers love it. The more that you want to learn and the more that you want to help and are eager to help, first of all the better you're going to better yourself in your career.

But also, I think the more your employer sees you as what is your next path? Not every employer offers a career path. So, take the bull by the horn so to speak and direct where you want that to go. If you see opportunity in your business, bring that up to your employer and take that. That's I think how Chuck and I worked so well together.

I remember the early days of us going through stacks of things on his desk and here, do this and do this, and call these people. And most of the time I had no idea what he was talking about, but I just faked it until I made it. I mean, fake it until you make it.

And I was really just taking his direction and following his lead, and then he would say things like, "Hey, if you wanted to get the Series 7, that's probably the next step in becoming an advisor."

And so, I did, and I think he did embellish on the timeframe a little bit. I think it was a little bit longer than that. But he gave me the opportunity and he even would say things. He said buy me the books but he didn't even buy me the books. He said, "I'll pay you back if you pass."



## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: There you go.

Deanne Rosso: And he did. Yeah, that's how we did it. I remember that distinctly. So, that's how we did it. And he just always gave me the opportunity to just spread my wings and do what I needed to do to advance my career and he let that happen. And so, that was really cool.

Caleb Brown: And when was this, when did you officially start?

Deanne Rosso: I started in 2005, in August of '05. I actually got my CFP in 2008 or '09. I think 2009 was when I actually got the — I took it in '08 and was awarded in '09 or maybe a couple years after that, because of the experience requirement when you actually get it, I'm thinking about when I took the test.

So, there was some time lapse in there, it wasn't just six or eight weeks.

Caleb Brown: And let's explore that. I mean, you signed up to be the executive assistant and then here you are three years later or approximately, you've got the CFP.

So, you're working with Chuck and just what clicked for you said, "Yeah, I don't want to do the executive assistant thing, I want to be an advisor, I want to do what Chuck's doing." When did that happen?

Deanne Rosso: I don't have a moment or an exact timeframe when that happened, but I will say that just that first year, and Chuck always said the first year is learning the lingo, and getting the language down. He's so right because in the advisory business we talk in acronyms just like in many other businesses.

So, it takes a good year before you get your feet up under you and you really learn what everybody's talking about, so there

**[New Planner Podcast](#) with Caleb Brown**

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

was that. But I think what made me want to be an advisor and really stay was getting to know our clients and working alongside Chuck to serve them.

So, seeing these people come in the door every day that had just made smart decisions with their money and were making wise choices under Chuck's guidance and leadership. And I wanted to know how to do that for myself.

And so, I was learning as much about how to manage my own finances as I was learning how to help others manage theirs. And I think that that's why I decided that this was the career path I really wanted to pursue.

And not only that, but I mean, I'm in it, I was in the office every day, I'm learning the language. The first thing that I did was I took the registered paraplanner course at the time with College for Financial Planning which I think is called something different now, but it was just your basics in financial planning. And after taking that, it was like, "Why not do the next thing?"

So, get licensed and be able to sit in front of the clients and be able to actually serve them in that way and then do the next thing. But I think just seeing the impact that what we do has on people and their families and what I really wanted for myself and what I wanted to see for my own future family, I think that's really why I decided to continue on with this as my career.

Caleb Brown: Yeah, the FPQP, Financial Paraplanner Qualified Professional, something like that is what they changed it to. So, Chuck, when did you realize like you're working with Deanne for a while, "Like she's doing well, she could really be an advisor." I mean, when did that sink in? I mean, do you remember that moment?

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Chuck Vickery: Yeah, told her my feelings a little bit. We had a client coming in and Deanne said, “I think I can meet with these people.” Well, I said, “Well, you want me to sit in with you?” And she said, “No, I don't need you.”

Deanne Rosso: I don't remember saying it like that.

Chuck Vickery: Well, probably, wasn't exactly that way, but then over the next six, eight years, “Hey, you want me to send it with you?” “I'm good I've got it.”

Between the industry education and between the client education — and what I mean by client education is when you talk to a lot of people in the discovery process, you find that some are ultra successful, and some should be ultra successful and don't have a proverbial thought.

And so, a lot of what we have learned and how we do things has come from our clients teaching us about human nature and how things work.

So, we went from being a broker dealer firm to an RIA 10 years ago, and we did it because I felt such a strong urge for the fiduciary requirement, and I wanted that. That's a long answer.

Caleb Brown: Let's go back to the broker dealer. I mean, because people call me on the recruiting business all the time. We start talking about that and they're like, “Yeah, we want to go to RIA, but we don't want to lose all this revenue that's coming in from all these ...” I mean, there's a financial implication here as well, and a lot of people just can't get over that hump.

So, when did you start thinking like, “Hey, Deanne could really be my partner one day?” Do you remember when you had that thought?

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Chuck Vickery: I had it a lot sooner than I expressed it because a lady that she replaced had her first child and did not come back to work. And so, I knew that Deanne had a bright future, I just wasn't sure how she was going to feel after she had her first job.

And once she came back to work after that first job, we got pretty busy after that making her a partner and an owner in the firm.

Deanne Rosso: And I think what's really cool about that is that we both learned I think through that process that you can be a man or a woman and you can have children, you can be flexible in this career.

And it's one of the things that I've enjoyed now being a mom of three, and I became a mom before I became Chuck's partner, and I became partner, I became a mom again, I became a mom again. And now, I own the business. And so, you can be flexible enough to run a business and a family or a household.

And I think Chuck showing me the ropes in the business and teaching me how to do it and how you could, you can't do it all. That's not what I'm saying, but you can balance it. And I think that's a really cool thing that both of us have seen in going through this process.

Caleb Brown: That's a point that is not emphasized enough. And I think we have a lot of especially women drop out of the profession or don't consider it because they feel like they don't have what you just said. So, that's amazing, thanks for sharing that.

So, maybe Deanne, just from your perspective. So, you're working with Chuck, I mean, you are helping him grow the

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

business, you're coming up with all these processes, you're over here meeting with clients by yourself.

I mean, when did you start thinking about like, "Man, I'd like to be here long term and maybe become Chuck's partner, and then what we're getting to eventually buy him out and own the business?"

Deanne Rosso: I mean, while I didn't know that financial planning was going to be my path, I did kind of always know that I wanted to be in business or a be a business owner, or in business for myself.

And so, as Chuck just kept giving me opportunity, and he would say things like, "Well, someday I'm probably going to retire or I think about taking on a partner, but I'm not going to do it unless they're licensed," so, got my licenses. And then he'd say, "Well someday this'll happen but I really don't want to do it unless they're a CFP." So, got my CFP.

Caleb Brown: Hint, hint, right?

Deanne Rosso: So, the hint, hint, nudge, nudge. And then I think that's when it became really real like, "Oh, okay, this could happen and at some point, this is what he wants."

Besides the fact that I was starting to work with Chuck's clients independently and earn clients on my own, and I could see how it could be a very good transition plan if that's what Chuck wanted in the future.

And I think one thing to note is, again, Chuck and I have just always had such a good relationship. Of course, in our business we have core values, one of those is trust. And there's

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

just always been this significant amount of trust from me to Chuck and Chuck to me and just what we do.

I mean, what we do with clients every day, that's just a core value in our firm, trust is at the highest level. And so, I never questioned when Chuck would say things. I mean, we didn't have written agreements or something for a long time, but Chuck would say, "I want you to think about me and my succession plan." That was my hint to think, like, my mind needs to start thinking that way.

Caleb Brown: And just so we understand the order, so again, you started in 2005, and then got the CFP 8.9 timeframe. And I think you've mentioned you had a child, became a mom, and then the ownership. Well, approximately when was that?

Deanne Rosso: So, I think the way that we did it, Chuck, was first we had a buy-sell agreement.

Chuck Vickery: Yeah, so 2009, she'd been here four years and at that time, at a client meeting, I introduced her as my successor, then something unforeseen happened to me.

Deanne Rosso: And then after that, 2014 was when Chuck offered me partnership and then 2018, was when he sold the remainder of his shares to me.

And so yeah, there were children that happened in between that. Like my last child was born 2019, so I had two boys, and then became an owner of a firm, and then had another boy.

But yeah, so I had children in between the different segments, I guess I'd never thought about it that way. But yeah, buy-sell, child, partnership, child, partnership child. Well, we're done now, we're done.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: Okay, got it. So, well Chuck, how are you feeling about all the — I mean like the first buy and maybe just walk us through sort of how you were feeling and then also the economics if you would. Like how much you sold and how it felt to part with some of the stuff that you built.

Chuck Vickery: We worked with FP Transitions, and I went to a class they put on and I said, “Well, I've messed up, I waited too late,” because they were talking about over 10 years. And at that time, I was 60 or maybe 62 or 63, and I knew I didn't have 10 years to get everything started and then have another 10 years to wrap it up, because they were starting all their stuff at 50 and 55.

So, what we did was Deanne bought 20% of the practice and your question was how were you feeling? It was an adjustment, a big one for me, maybe not for Deanne but for me that caused — when you got 100% ownership and you want to buy something, you go buy it. If you want to spend money on this, you going to spend money on it.

And I didn't feel like I could do that without saying, “Deanne, I'd like to do this, what do you think?” And she always says, “That's what you want to do, do it. You have the power to do it,” but I didn't want to do it just because I wanted to do it, and I wanted her to buy head on.

So, we did that and then four years later, we talked, and she decided to buy the rest of the firm. So, it worked out well.

Caleb Brown: And thanks for sharing that especially on the emotional side. I mean, I think it just goes back to the trust. I mean, she could have tried to block you but you could have still done it, but you had a good relationship.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Deanne, I mean, without prying too much, I mean, I guess the burning question for the audience, like where did you come up with the money to buy 20% of probably a pretty highly valued asset, very profitable. I mean, how did you structure that?

Deanne Rosso: So, we did work with FP Transitions to value the business. So, we had a good business valuation on hand, and we worked with them with options for that, you know, what are all the options available?

The first partnership tranche was owner-finance. Chuck financed that for me, and then I would pay him back with profits. So, whatever my partnership share was, that went back to Chuck to pay for the note for that 20% share.

Then when I bought the remainder of Chuck's shares, it was a split, it was part owner-finance, and part-bank finance. And that bank financing was a specialty lender because in our business, we're advice-driven, we're service industry, so there's not a ton of assets backing that, it's a cash flow lending. So, you got to find the lender that'll lend to you.

But we had good financials, I kept my personal finances in good order, although, you know, no, did I have enough to back? Personally, that purchase, no, but that's kind of the business that those type banks are used to dealing in. So, yeah, so half owner-financed and half bank-financed is how we did the purchase.

Caleb Brown: And talk to us about just your progression. I mean, here you are starting as an executive assistant a couple years out of college or whatever, and you worked your way up to gaining Chuck's trust and meeting with clients — I mean, just how are you feeling during that time and your confidence and your



## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

experience and developing the skills that you needed to be an eventual owner?

Deanne Rosso: I mean, such a wide range of emotions. On one hand of course there's all the good things, the excitement of accomplishing these benchmarks and doing these things that you really never thought that you would do. And so, that was just the pride in that.

But the excitement of what could lay ahead in the future and like eagerness to really to take the bull by the horns and move ahead and move the firm forward. I will say one of the things that Chuck — we have these little phrases in our office that we call Chuckisms but what they really are, are just things that Chuck says that have built the foundation for the culture of what the firm is. And one of those is lifelong learning.

They're phrases that whether or not he made them up, we don't know, but he says them a lot. So, lifelong learning is one of our core values in our firm but it's one of the things that he's always taught us to do. And so, it was just something that I was just naturally on board with too.

And so, it's building on all that to build the skills to become a CEO. Over time, I've done a lot of volunteer work. Another kind of tip that I always give to students and/or young planners is volunteer and serve on boards because you'll get a lot of leadership experience.

I learned a lot about how to run a business in some of my volunteer board opportunities. And so, that gives you good off-the-job learning experience that you can apply those skills back to your job.

## Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery

So, emotionally, I was excited, I was eager, I was ready to go, wanted to do some strategic planning. We got the ball rolling on that a few months after ... we had actually done that Chuck and I as we were partners.

But that was one of the first things that I did, was go back to that strategic plan after I became CEO because I wanted everybody to start getting back on the ... make sure everybody was on the same page that we were already on. And for them to know that this wasn't fruit basket turnover and nothing crazy was going to change.

And we can talk with Chuck later about did anything crazy change. But then, there was also from an emotional standpoint, I mean there was intimidation and fear a little bit. It's taking a risk, it's really stepping out there that can be uncomfortable.

I was and am younger than a lot of the people in our office. And there's that aspect of it, managing people that are older than you and are more experienced than you. So, I've had to learn how to adapt to that over time. So, wide range of emotion.

And then I think it was weird at first not between you and I, Chuck, not between Chuck and I, but just it was the role reversal. It was weird, it was very weird.

Caleb Brown: Now, you're bossing him around.

Chuck Vickery: I became ... we just flip flopped roles.

Caleb Brown: Well, I do want to come back to that, but you said something earlier, I was like, I mean, yours truly needs some help with this and a lot of our other listeners, but what are your tips for managing older people and more experienced people than yourself? What have you learned over the years?

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Deanne Rosso: I think one of the biggest lessons I've learned is that while some of those folks in your office may be more experienced at some things, at their job, at advising clients, at doing excellent operations work, that they're not the ones running the business on the day-to-day and sometimes they have no idea what goes into running the business.

And I learned that my skillset was very different, different in the way of I had been trained to run the business. And so, when you start being questioned maybe by your team members or your employees, and you feel a little intimidated by that, you have to remember — at least, I had to train myself to know that they may be a great advisor, but they don't know how to run this business like I do.

And so, I've had to work on strategies to again, get everybody on the same page or explain why it is that we're going down the path that we're going. Because some things do change.

I mean, not everything is the same, from one owner to the next, or just from one phase of the business to the next. And we're just entering a different phase of our business.

So, I think I've really just had to remember that as experienced as some of the employees have, my skillset's different and my experience is different, and we can all work together to move the business forward.

Caleb Brown: And there was also, if I remember correctly, there was a rebrand in here. I mean, it was Vickery Financial Services. So, maybe this is Chuck Smiling: Vickery Financial Services and now Elevate. So, whoever wants to take that one to, start us off but talk to us about the rebrand.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Deanne Rosso: Well, I'll start it off by saying that there was a time a few years ago when we were meeting with a client together and we talked with her about, I think it was me becoming partner.

And the first thing she said was, "Oh, are you going to change the name?" And Chuck said, "Oh, heck no." He was so emphatic about it that I was like, "Oh no, nope, we are not changing the name," and that was when I was partnered.

And one thing we both knew from business valuation, from FP Transitions, from the things that they say when you're building a business, is, "A name is nice in your business name, but a name doesn't necessarily add value to your business per se." Now, it can in your community, and in our community, it's been a very valuable name.

But thinking about the business going forward and thinking about wanting a name that engaged all of our team, that's really why I made the decision to change the name.

And it was with a lot of intimidation that I approached Chuck about it several years later and was like, "Hey, let's go to lunch." And he's like, "You never ask me to go to lunch unless you want something, so what do you want?"

And I said, "Oh, well, I'm thinking about changing the name," and he was like, "Oh, that's awesome." So, he was so, so supportive. But I'll let Chuck talk about what his experience has been with the name change.

Chuck Vickery: It's been fine. When I started the firm, little middle of 40 years ago, the attorney said, "What do you want to call it?" And we were incorporated, I said, "Vickery Financial Service." And I said, if it's available, we'll do that.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Later, I wished I had used anything other than that simply because it sounded like it was just me and we started having other advisors. So, I was very supportive of the name change. And the joke around here is that I've changed my name from Chuck Vickery to Chuck Elevate.

But Elevate Wealth Advisory is the name of the firm now. And it's a good name and it just says, "Hey, it's not just Chuck Vickery or Deanne Rosso or Clarke Holt, or David Jenkins, or Rob Fezekas, or some or other people. We got a lot of people here and we're doing it as a team."

Deanne Rosso: The brand aspect of it, Chuck Vickery had built up the Vickery Financial brand that was long standing 40 years in our community. So, our clients really rallied around the new name.

But most of the comments that I got were when I would tell someone about my name change, they'd say, "Well, is Chuck okay with that?" Or one client really just kind of let me have it and said, "I don't know why you want to change the name, this brand is long-standing in this community, and I think it's just awful that you all are changing the name."

And I said, "Well, I'm really sorry to hear that but we'll try to do our best to live up to the brand that Chuck set." And I think that that is the intent on our firm overall, is no matter the change of ownership, no matter the change of name or the change of brand, it's to continue that legacy and to continue the foundation that Chuck started, that hasn't changed.

And so, now it's just building up Elevate to be the same brand that has the same essence in our community.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: And Chuck, maybe, just talk to us about your role and what you're doing. I mean, you're there and working. I mean, tell us how that's going and what you're doing?

Chuck Vickery: Well, I was working three days a week and I felt like that was too much. So, now, I'm down to two days a week and that's not quite enough. So, I work Mondays and Tuesdays and then I slipped in Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning to do a little paperwork when nobody's looking.

We just had some out-of-town clients, some were relatives of mine, some were from my hometown of Hartwell. And they became clients because I went and called all them in their home and most clients come to the office but these folks didn't. So, I started working with them and then Deanne asked me if I would service a few other clients.

So, on Mondays and Tuesdays, I've been client meetings and I'll slip in for a couple hours and just did the paperwork later in the week. But she's very good about letting me take off whenever I want to do so.

Caleb Brown: Got a good boss there, huh?

Chuck Vickery: Yeah, good boss, a lot of flexibility. I play golf four days a week and if I didn't work, I'd be playing six days a week and golf would not be a hobby, it'd be a job.

Caleb Brown: And maybe just the question for both of you, has there been any pushback on maybe even some of the legacy clients? Someone like, "Well, no, I really want to talk to Chuck. Man's great and these other people are great, but Chuck's my guy." I mean, how have you all handled that?

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Chuck Vickery: The pushback that clients stuffed in me when I told them that I was retired, and we had a lot of advisors in the firm. Well, “I want Deanne, I want Deanne to be my advisor.

Caleb Brown: Okay, there we go.

Chuck Vickery: So, that's where ...

Caleb Brown: Like she's running the firm, now you're going to have to go to someone else. Is that kind of what happened?

Chuck Vickery: No, our client retention is very high. Well, it has after years and years and we lose an occasional client, and we lost an occasional client with a name change or ownership gain, but very low.

Deanne Rosso: I think it just goes to the fact that we spent a lot of time transitioning. I mean, I've been working with the client since before I was partner, since before I was owner.

And so, they knew me, they knew us together, they know me as an individual advisor. But then also, just the way that Chuck always lifted me up to the client, presented me as a leader, presented me as an expert, helped me succeed.

So, that's what I would say to employers, to senior advisors who are looking to transition to a younger team member or just another team member in general. Chuck did such a great job of just always introducing me in the way that presented it to the client as this is the expert.

And I mean, even saying things like, “She knows more than me, she's more knowledgeable than me.” So, that always meant a lot to me,, but I think it always helped the client feel comfortable that they were getting at least as good a service no matter whether it was Chuck or I on the seat.

**[New Planner Podcast](#) with Caleb Brown**

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: That's great, I mean, these are all good problems to have that you're having to deal with. And it seems like you guys have really navigated them well, it's this really cool story.

Going forward, I mean, what's the future? What's the vision, Deanne maybe start with you — where are you trying to go with this?

Deanne Rosso: I mean, fortunately we're growing, we've got a great team. We continue to focus on, like I mentioned earlier that lifelong learning, our standard of excellence. I mean, we continue to focus on our core values. We continue to add new team members when needed.

Our rebrand actually went really well, we've done a lot more work in regards to our marketing and the education that we're putting out there. I would say what makes our firm unique is that everything we do usually has some type of educational spin to it.

So, we like to educate, we like to deliver that education to our clients, we like to deliver that education to the public, we like to teach classes, we like to do webinars. We like to put a lot of information out there and we really like to focus on the things that our clients really need us to focus on for them.

And so, the future is just continue to do more of the same, if you will. How many families can we help be successful and learn to make smart decisions with their money which is the legacy that Chuck started.

So, yeah, the future is just continue to expand Elevate to serve really as many families as want to with us.



## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Caleb Brown: And just to the audience, I mean, how many approximately client-families do you have right now and team members?

Deanne Rosso: We have 11 total team members. Some advisors, some support team, some marketing, and we have probably roughly about 5 to 600 families that we serve. So, we're a mid-size team with a lot of clients but that's not a bad thing.

I think that what we do lends itself to being able to serve a significant amount of families but at the same time, we're adding to our team, we're expanding, we're growing. So, they're going really great the last few years.

Caleb Brown: That's excellent and Chuck, I mean, any thoughts from you on — I mean, you built this thing, and you did what I think most entrepreneurs want to do. They want to create a long-lasting legacy, you've done that. I mean, is there anything out there that you're like, "Man, I wish the firm would do this, or if Deanne did this, it would be great." Anything like that out there?

Chuck Vickery: Oh, she's made several changes, a couple of them I questioned silently and they have turned out to be great, so I'm just here to support her.

And the big question clients asked me was, "How much longer you going to work?" And I tell them, "I don't know but there're other good people here, so somebody will take care of it." I'm almost 76, so it's nice to have a place to get away every once in a while basically on rainy days.

Deanne Rosso: Well, I think Chuck and I's situation is unique in that he didn't want to just walk away, and I'm so grateful for that. The fact that I get to continue to work with Chuck, the fact that Chuck will do anything I ask him to do and I'm so grateful to

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

have him because he just understands what needs to be done. He's the only other person around here that understands how to run a business.

And so, I do still pick his brain on almost every major decision that we make around here. It's so great to have him as a sounding board, and it's so great to have him just to do some little things I need sometimes too. So, I'm really, really grateful for the continued relationship that we have, and I won't let him fully retire either. So, he's here to stay.

Caleb Brown: As we close down here, I mean, just any thoughts or maybe Deanne, we'll start with you just for — well, I mean we have firm owners that listen to this but that's not really who it's for. It's for the new planners that are trying to get in the business.

But any thoughts for either the new planners and/or you've given us several throughout the time. But any closing thoughts for any of the new planners trying to get into the business or any of the firm owners out there that are trying to run their business?

Deanne Rosso: One thing I'll say is when I started working with Chuck, as much as he was looking for a “sales assistant” or someone that had a little more extensive knowledge or would do a little more extensive work than just operations or admin, a lot of what I did at the beginning was admin, it really was.

And/or whatever it was that Chuck needed support with, just threw my hat in the ring and do it. And I think that that helped me so much in this career path, I was just learning really how to do everything.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

When Chuck started the firm, it was just him and then it may have been him and a support person. So, he knew how to do everything, and it has helped me so much to know how to do everything in the firm as well as work on the firm.

So, that's a piece of advice that I would give, is don't hesitate to take an operations role. Don't hesitate to take an administrative role if it gets you in the door and it helps you learn how the advisory firm functions.

In our firm, the way that our career path would work is you can succeed no matter which point of entry you take. You can switch over from a service or an operation side over to an advice side. I mean, that's exactly what I did.

And so, I would not shy away from taking an operations role. You really learn the meat and the bones of the business. And then the last little piece of advice I would say is I think just in life in general is know yourself, and just know what your skillset is, know what you have to offer.

I'm an assessment junkie, I do tons of assessments. I like to know what my color is and what's my number and what's my DISC and what's my Myers-Briggs and all those things.

But when you know what you're naturally strong at, you know first of all what to focus on that you're not good at and/or how to lean into your strengths and then how to utilize the folks you have around you to pick up your slack.

So, I have lots of little tidbits like that but those are kind of the two that I think are really important.

Caleb Brown: Chuck, what about you? Any final words of wisdom you want to share?

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

Chuck Vickery: Well, it's awfully hard, never right out of college and getting into this business independently, primarily because very few of your peers have very like mind. And unfortunately, we make money by dealing with other people that have money.

So, I would suggest looking for an older person that's been successful and go to work for them, and let them teach you what's going on and how to do it. Because again, as an older advisor, when I do go to the nationwide meetings, the questions I get are, "How did you sell your business and how'd you find your buyer and how did you do this?"

And so, there are a lot of people out there that have not done succession planning that would like to, they just don't have anybody to do it with. In fact, what made ours go so easy is I felt very comfortable that our clients were going to be in good hands when I stepped away.

Caleb Brown: Got it, yeah, absolutely. I mean, at the end of the day, it's all about the clients. This has been great guys, love the success story, awesome. Thanks again for spending the time with us. Anything else you'd like to share before we close out?

Deanne Rosso: I think just to dovetail what Chuck was just saying, it is hard to enter this business independently. I'm so fortunate that that wasn't my path, that I didn't have to do that.

I think more and more that doesn't have to be your path. I really think there are so many advisors that are looking to exit or are going to be exiting. And so, I really think getting in with a firm again, maybe in an operations role, maybe in an admin role, whatever kind of role that that is where you can learn about that business, there's a ton of opportunity.

## **Ep #135: Sales Assistant to CEO with Deanne Rosso and Chuck Vickery**

But I'll also say just be flexible because some of these advisors are not used to working. They're not used to maybe all the new technology or they're not used to working with younger people — so don't expect there to be this cut and dry career path for you.

Go in ready to work and ready to cut your own path, and ready to have tough conversations or there's just a lot of opportunity I think if you're willing to put in the time and the effort. And yeah, I think that's what I'll leave you with.

Caleb Brown: Guys, thanks so much for coming on the show.

Deanne Rosso: Thank you Caleb.

Chuck Vickery: Nice talking to you.

Thanks for joining us for this episode of the New Planner Podcast. If you are ready to discover the top career paths for financial planners and see which track is best for you, we created a free guide to help you.

Grab your copy of the Financial Planner Career Roadmap at [newplannerrecruiting.com/roadmap](http://newplannerrecruiting.com/roadmap).

There, you'll also find more tools and resources all created to help you build a successful financial planning career.

Tune back in next week for another episode, and until then, we are here to help you succeed.