

# Puget Sound area financial advisers receive rankings

## Winner's Circle produces its first 'Top 30' list of professionals from securities firms, banks

By **STEVEN GOLDSMITH**  
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Florida publishing and consulting firm The Winner's Circle LLC — perhaps best known for its Top 100 financial advisers list in *Barron's* magazine — has compiled its first ranking of wealth advisers in the Puget Sound area.

Winner's Circle said it began with more than 8,000 nominations of financial advisers nationwide from securities firms, banks, independent firms and more. The nominees from King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties then were evaluated

through the Winner's Circle's proprietary, weighted formula to come up with what firm rates as the area's top 30 performers.

R.J. Shook, Winner's Circle founder and president, said the focus of the evaluation is customer satisfaction.

His team vetted each registered adviser, Shook said, through dozens of quantitative and qualitative criteria, including assets managed, revenues, experience levels, compliance records and background checks, discussions with management and more. Because client portfolios

vary and are typically unaudited, portfolio performance is not a criterion.

Shook said the company's process creates the most thorough and objective such ranking available.

"It's all in the numbers," he said.

The Winner's Circle accepts no payments from wealth advisers or news media, Shook said, and makes its money by selling its research and books.

Shook himself spent two decades as a financial adviser at Prudential-Bache Securities, and says in his biography that he embarked on the research out of frus-

tration that it was difficult to identify the top advisers from whom he could learn best practices.

In addition to *Barron's*, the company's rankings have been published in several other business weeklies owned by American City Business Journals, parent company of the *Puget Sound Business Journal*.

The adviser ranked as No. 1 on Shook's Puget Sound area list, Phil Scott of Merrill Lynch & Co. in Bellevue, is also on the national *Barron's* list, Shook said.

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### A WEALTH OF ADVISERS

Florida publishing firm The Winner's Circle collected information on wealth advisers in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties and used its weighted formula to rank the people it considers the area's top 30 performers.

Rank	Name	Firm	City	Typical net worth of client	Branch's total assets
1	Phil Scott	Merrill Lynch & Co.	Bellevue	\$10M	\$2.1B
2	Robert Lesko	Morgan Stanley	Seattle	\$40M+	\$3.9B
3	Michael Ernst	Smith Barney	Bellevue	\$3M-\$20M	\$1.12B
4	Stephen Kutz	JPMorgan Private Bank	Seattle	\$25M-250M+	\$3.25B
5	James Ferguson	Smith Barney	Seattle	\$10M-\$25M	\$1.2B
6	Michael Hershey	Bear, Stearns & Co.	Bellevue	\$15M-\$25M	\$670M
7	Wayne Hampson	Merrill Lynch & Co.	Seattle	\$2.5M	\$950M
8	Dean Braun	Smith Barney	Seattle	\$20M-\$100M	\$1.94B
9	Robert Nelson	Smith Barney	Seattle	\$20M-\$100M	\$1.94B
10	Dan Evans	Wachovia Securities	Seattle	\$10M-\$25M	\$350M
11	Kathleen Weber	Smith Barney	Bellevue	\$1M-10M	\$275M
12	Scott Wigren	Alden Capital Management, LLC	Bellevue	\$1M-\$2M	\$210M
13	Michael Matthews	UBS Financial Services	Bellevue	\$2.5M-\$12M	\$425M
14	Sam Maxwell	RBC Dain Rauscher	Seattle	\$3M-\$5M	\$210M
15	Alan Lubner	Smith Barney	Bellevue	\$5M-\$10M+	\$369M
16	Dale Miller	UBS Financial Services	Bellevue	\$15M	\$598M
17	Steve Charlston	RBC Dain Rauscher	Kirkland	\$1M+	\$398M
18	Eric Brewe	RBC Dain Rauscher	Kirkland	\$1M+	\$398M
19	Scott Balsam	UBS Financial Services	Seattle	\$2M+	\$325M
20	Patrick Elliott	RBC Dain Rauscher	Bainbridge Island	\$3M-\$10M	\$400M
21	Robert Johnson	Smith Barney	Seattle	\$7.5M	\$385M
22	Nina Abelman	Merrill Lynch & Co.	Bellevue	\$5M	\$275M
23	Gregory George	UBS Financial Services	Seattle	\$3M-\$10M	\$325M
24	Erin Scannell	Johnson, Scannell, & Associates	Bellevue	\$2.5M-\$10M	\$400M
25	John Champion Sr.	Morgan Stanley	Bellevue	\$3M-\$5M	\$380M
26	Ira Hershkowitz	Merrill Lynch & Co.	Seattle	\$2.5M	\$400M
27	George Pierce	George R. Pierce & Associates, LLC	Seattle	\$1.6M	\$300M
28	Madelyn Lindsay	Morgan Stanley	Seattle	\$3M	\$430M
29	Byron Piro	Smith Barney	Bellevue	\$5M	\$210M
30	Craig Foreman	Merrill Lynch & Co.	Bellevue	\$3M	\$350M

Source: R. J. Shook and The Winner's Circle LLC