

## ELITE ADVISORY TEAMS

# LAWTON PARTNERS



**Location:** Winnipeg, Manitoba; Regina and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

**Year established:** 1974

**Employees:** 56

**Target clients:** Business owners/professionals and retirees

As of 2016, there were more than 1.14 million small businesses in Canada, according to Industry Canada. With such a large portion of the population owning or working for one of these businesses, it's an area that can't be ignored by advisors. Lawton Partners has recognized this and is aiming to provide solutions to those individuals.

Lawton Partners traces its roots back to 1974, when it was founded primarily as a planning firm – something that was unique at the time, says Jamie Townsend, Lawton Partners' wealth manager.

"Back then, most firms were focused on investing," he explains. "Now we pride ourselves on being on the cutting edge of planning, especially when it comes to tax rule changes for our business-owner clients."

It's that focus on small business owners and retirees that has become the primary vision for Lawton Partners.

"On the small business side, someone

has worked incredibly hard at their craft," Townsend says. "We have done the exact same things and know what they are going through. Whether it's growing the business or dealing with challenges, we have been in those shoes. When it comes to retired clients, it follows the same idea. We take the responsibility very seriously of managing someone's money and being transparent. People who have their life savings and need to live off of that tend to gravitate to what we do."



**"If you are a successful business owner, you are busy; you are focused on your craft. But how do you make sure that the investment and insurance components, along with the tax plan, are in place? Our challenge is putting all of those pieces of the puzzle together"**

**Jamie Townsend, Lawton Partners**

To help those clients with their planning, Lawton Partners has turned to technology to enhance its processes. "There is so much data out there – everything from tax returns to insurance statements to investments," Townsend says, "but what we do is

combine all data points efficiently so we can be proactive in making decisions."

That comes in handy when the firm is dealing with a small business. "If we look forward 12 months from now, for a business owner, given all the rules that are changing in regards to tax, we need to be proactive in managing how that person is taking income or what they need to have happen on investments," Townsend says. "We are not accountants, but we need to have conversations with accountants so we can plan for that individual going forward."

Lawton Partners' projections use consolidated data to build a living model of an individual's business, giving advisors the opportunity to test ideas ahead of time and help individuals run their businesses more efficiently.

"If you are a successful business owner, you are busy; you are focused on your craft," Townsend says. "But how do you make sure that the investment and insurance components, along with the tax plan, are in place? Our challenge is putting all of those pieces of the puzzle together."

For Lawton Partners, recognizing that their clients have worked hard for their money, and taking seriously the responsibility of managing those assets, have been key to success. The firm tries to help its clients by simplifying the complicated issues around

---

---

wealth management. To do that, Lawton Partners advisors make their relationships with clients a top priority.

“We have had people working with us for 30 years,” Townsend says. “Our clients enjoy knowing who we are, and we have intimate relationships with them. We are very grateful for the relationships we have. The number-one thing is continuing to focus on clients. If we can add value, simplify their lives, be there in the moments that are hard and celebrate success, this firm will continue to thrive for another 100 years.”

**WPC: What’s the biggest benefit to being an independent firm?**

**Jamie Townsend:** The biggest benefit is you can plot your own course and make this what clients value most, not what is dictated by a parent company. That idea allows us to take a long-term approach. If we look five, 10 or 15 years out and determine what our clients need, we can build towards that.

One thing our firm has embraced is the concept of a team. The most successful planners are not on their own; they are in teams, and that idea is perfectly married here. Our teams have different skill sets, which allow us to accomplish things you can’t do on your own. Every advisor at our firm has a CFP, but we also have individuals with MBAs, CFAs and even two chartered business evaluators to help clients evaluate their businesses.