

PBS Ep 117 Client Services Transcript Audio

Patti Brennan: Hi, everybody. Welcome to "The Patti Brennan Show." Whether you have \$20 or 20 million, this show is for those of you who want to protect, grow, and use your assets to live your very best lives.

As we were thinking about our podcast today, I was reminded about a wonderful book published by Peter Pauper Press. Try that one for size. The name of the book is called "I'm Dead, Now What?"

Here's the deal. This is a great book because it's got tons of lists and blank pages that you can fill in that would help your loved ones understand where everything is located. Usernames, passwords, etc.

One of the benefits that we have here at Key Financial is an incredible Key Client Services team. This team is made up of people whose job it is, is to serve as a concierge to make sure some of the things that we're going to be talking about today, don't happen to our clients.

I thought it would be fun to share some of the stories, some of the things that we've encountered over the many years that we've been doing this. The mistakes, the problems, the delays, and the cost that was involved in having affairs that weren't quite organized.

Usernames and passwords that nobody knew, and the implications that it had on the people that were left behind.

Joining me today are three amazing people who are part of this great Key Client Services team, we call them KCSs. I really refer to them as the concierge team. Welcome, Amanda Cannon, Stacy Franz, and Kelsey Miller. Thank you all for joining me on this show.

We're going to have some fun. We're going to talk about some of the things that we've encountered over time. Before we get too far along, let's give some examples of the list. We've created a three-page list that we're going to post it on our website. Feel free to go on keyfinancialinc.com and download this three-page document.

It'll give you everything you need to think about when it comes to keeping things all in one place and making sure that people aren't searching and finding things a year after the fact. OK?

In the meantime, we're just going to share with you some of the stories and the implications of not doing some of the things that we're talking about today, I can tell you right off the top of my head, we had a client who lived down south and she had a stroke. That's one of those things that just happens to happen.

By the way, if you're listening to this, and you happen to be a young person, a young family, or in your 50s, and still working, these things can happen to anybody, and they have. Please tune in and download that document because this stuff is important.

Again, getting back to that woman, she had a stroke, she'd lost all her memory, both short- and long-term memory. As it turned out, her daughter called us because fortunately, our name was on the refrigerator.

She called my office, and she explained what happened, and explained that she couldn't get into her mother's computer, and did we know her mom's password. It was months and months before our client got some of her memory back so that her daughter could get into the computer.

I'm not telling you to write it down. You can do whatever you want, but these are examples of things that have happened.

Patti: Another example of usernames and passwords might be your home security system. I can tell you that the Brennan's have a home security system, and it's one of these things that it's not a sound, it's a person's voice, and it's a man's voice. Let me tell you, this thing is scary.

In the middle of the night if it goes off, it'll say, "Burglary, burglary, leave immediately," scare the living daylights out of you. You can't sleep through it. To turn the damn thing off, when we get that phone call from the security company, we have to give them our password.

Can you imagine if the security system is going off, and you fall, and you've lost consciousness, and somebody comes in and this thing is screaming at everybody? Not fun, right? Usernames and passwords, really important. Keep them in a secure place and tell somebody where they are.

I'm going to hand it over to our concierge team. Amanda let's talk about an example of somebody that did it right.

Amanda Cannon: I just had one recently. She recently passed away and was very, very explicit in terms of what her wishes were, how she was to be disposed of, for lack of a better term.

Amanda: She's not very close with her family. They've got some differing views on many things. There's also some distance, literally and figuratively, between them. She didn't see them very often. She was by herself probably 90 percent of the time. She was entertained by any phone conversations that she could have.

We were on the phone at least once a week, whether she was calling me and giving me check-ins from where she was or if I was calling her to make sure she was OK. I got to know her pretty well, got to know what these wishes were. When she passed, it was like, "OK, we have our marching orders."

It was great because while she was socially isolated, at least in the typical sense because she didn't have a lot of that family around, she was able to put her wishes down and explain those to the people that she was relatively close to.

Patti: Amanda, what I thought was so cool about this relationship that you had with this client and that we have with most of our clients is how intimate it became over time to the point where she was very explicit in terms of how to take care of her pet, what she wanted to have happen after she died.

Now you are the proud owner of this wonderful...

Amanda: pet.

Patti: Yes.

Amanda: When she had to put her last animal down, she was accepting of that fact and realized that she wasn't going to get another one of those, but after about a month, she was like, "I was sick of not having something else in the house that was breathing."

She went and got this other smaller creature and had asked me at some point if she were to die, would I take over ownership of said pet? I thought there was not a chance that she would not outlive this animal. Even still, I'm totally fine with taking care of this creature.

Yes, I am now the inherited owner of this animal.

Patti: Wonderful. Equally as important, she had the peace of mind knowing that you would take over and take care of this creature that she loved and what got her through that last year of life. That's important.

One of the things that we often see is that people lose control of their ability to talk. It's important that the people who are the caregivers understand, how do you want to be cared for? What's important to you? Do you have any special aches and pains that we otherwise wouldn't know about? Things of that nature.

It's neat when you have a relationship with someone to be able to share that with. If not, put it down somewhere. Write it down.

Stacy let's talk about the situation that you and I had about two years ago. It had to do with that one particular client who was ill, had received a diagnosis. We knew about the diagnosis, had been a client for many, many years. We had done the estate plan, reviewed all the titling. The beneficiary designations were perfect. Everything was right on, jointly held property, etc.

Towards the end of his life, towards the very end, he had a reprieve and got a car. We knew about the car, etc. Sure enough, a couple of months later, he passed. When the family called, what was the question that was asked?

Stacy Franz: They wondered if there was anything that had to go through probate at that time. There wasn't because everything that had been in joint name or, there was a beneficiary attached to it, so no issue at that point that we knew of.

Patti: Then, she asked the magic question, "What about the car?" We said, "OK, typically, you can go to an auto tag place and just change the ownership."

In this case, we discovered that our client didn't buy the car, he "got" a car, however, it was a leased vehicle, and it was only in his name. Why don't you share what happened once we learned that?

Stacy: Once we learned that, it was quite a lengthy process, unfortunately, for the client. To start out with, we then had to go through probate, specifically for the car.

Patti: Stacy, why don't we explain what that was like? Probate sounds like this awful, nasty process. In fact, it was something that you and I were able to go to the courthouse with our client. Probate itself is not a terrible process. Yes, she had to write a check.

I don't know about you, Stacy, but for me, I think the hardest part about it was the anxiety, the stress, the phone calls, talking to the car company, the dealership, and then the leasing company, and the amount of time it took just to get everything done.

Stacy: Well, the client too. Several phone calls back and forth to the lease company and several different people that she had to speak with, and they transfer her from one to another. It was never the right person. She would get different information about what had to be done.

It was months of process, unfortunately.

Patti: It's what I refer to being clicked around. There's nothing worse than being clicked around. So unnecessary. It's one of those lessons that we all learned in that process. If you have a leased vehicle, if it's something that somebody else is going to take over, just keep that in mind that it is a process.

If it's something that somebody is going to turn in the lease and turn in the car upon your passing, not a big deal. Once and done. It's just that if somebody else's wants to take over the lease as they did in this particular case, that's where the hassle factor came in.

Patti: Kelsey, your turn. Why don't you step up to the mic? This feels like a variety show. We've got a variety of different stories. Let's talk a little bit about beneficiary designations.

Patti: Let's tell the story of the situation with the life insurance policy with that client that we didn't even know that he had it. Then, he died, and we discovered that the beneficiary designation was not really what he had intended. Who was the beneficiary?

Kelsey: The beneficiary was a trust that he had underneath his will, that he had done when his kids were younger. At the time he passed away, they were adults.

Patti: He had redone his will like two or three times since that original document, which by the way, we never, ever found. It was just referenced in the beneficiary designation.

What happened when we called the insurance company?

Kelsey: It took a lot of work. We had to call the 1800 number, and they didn't want to pay out the proceeds to the wife as the beneficiary. They wanted it to pay to a trust that didn't even exist at the time.

Patti: How in the world did that ever get resolved because, ultimately, that's what he would have wanted, but you can't have something paid to something that doesn't exist. Yet, these insurance companies love those 800 numbers. Don't you guys love these 800 numbers?

Kelsey: Yes.

Patti: Oh, my goodness. This insurance company were like, "We're not going to pay it. The beneficiary is a trust. Give us the trust, and we'll pay it."

Kelsey: Exactly.

Patti: This literally took over a year, didn't it?

Kelsey: Yeah. It was a very long process to get it paid out.

Patti: And we did. Thanks to you. You're like a dog on a bone when it comes to your client.

Kelsey: [laughs]

Patti: That money was hers. It was intended for her. It's going to be paid and it was.

In hindsight, it's unfortunate because a, we didn't know about the insurance policy. His wife knew about it. It was one of these things in a filing cabinet and he mentioned it to her. "If something happens, this is where you go."

Nobody had double-checked the beneficiary designation or remembered that it had been made payable to a minor's trust. I think of another incident that we had with another client. Again, it's another one of these insurance policies. It's like a skeleton in the closet.

In this case, the husband had basically gotten his life insurance policy as part of a loan, so the bank made him get an insurance policy such that if he died, the proceeds would be used to pay off the loan. It was a collateralized policy from 35 years ago.

Sure enough, we didn't know about it. Fast forward to 2020, and he passes away. We discovered this insurance policy, and we looked at the ownership, and it's a bank that had been bought three times over.

The bank itself didn't even exist. The insurance company said, "Hey, sorry. We're not paying it out. He wasn't the owner. His wife is not the beneficiary. It's the bank." We went to the new owner of the bank and said, "Hey, there's this insurance policy that the bank from, 35 years ago, owned. You now own it."

They said, "We don't have a record of it." It was, again, another one of these situations that was literally days, months, and almost a year of trying to get this new bank to sign off on this assignment form. As it turned out, Kelsey, you know better than anybody, the bank refused categorically to sign the form. Wouldn't sign it.

We wondered, "How in the world are we going to deal with this...This poor woman. She's entitled to these proceeds." Finally, after some real tug of war, we got them to write a letter to the insurance company releasing the policy, and only then did the insurance company pay out that life insurance benefit to our client's wife.

Again, skeletons in the closet, beneficiary designations, it could be insurance, it could be IRAs. It's the titling of your assets. It's what you want to have happen, where you want to be buried, what do you want to be buried in.

Things of that nature, those are the questions that people are going to ask. They're important because we all want to do the right thing, certainly the people that are left behind.

By the way, this is not only upon a person's death. It's if someone gets sick. How do you want to be cared for? How do you feel about long-term care? Do you want to be cared for at home, assisted living, etc.?

What about cognitive decline? We get that an awful lot. Does that run in someone's family? If it does, we've got a yellow flag in our systems to be aware of that, because a lot of things can happen in a small amount of time when someone is just beginning to get fuzzy, but they have the ability to do major damage.

Wow, have we seen that recently with the amount of fraud that is occurring both online, in emails, and even over the phone. Dating services are ripe with fraud. We've had a couple of clients who have been victims of that, so be very careful.

Again, you think it's common sense, but as we all age, those synapses aren't quite firing off the way they used to. We know those people. We know our clients. You guys certainly talk to them every single day.

It's amazing to me how often you'll come to me and say, "Patti, I don't know what's going on, but it's just not feeling right to me."

Stacy, you came into my office yesterday with exactly that statement. That gives us the ability to act, to protect, and that's important.

As you think about these things, number one, you could go out and get the book "I'm Dead. Now What?" Or you could simply go to our website at keyfinancialinc.com, download that three-page document that we've put together, and begin the process of organizing your affairs.

Talk to your advisor. What things should you be thinking about as you move forward in that next season of life?

Thank you, ladies, so much for joining me today. This was so much fun. I wish they could see the other part of this, when we were laughing our heads off.

[laughter]

Patti: I appreciate your time. Most of all, thank you so much for everything that you do for our clients and for me. I could not do this without you. You're amazing.

Stacy: Thank you.

Kelsey: Thank you.

[laughter]

Patti: Thank you. Thank you for joining me today and every month as we air these podcasts. If you have any questions or have a subject that you'd like us to talk about, go onto our website at keyfinancialinc.com. Let us know what you think.

Feel free to call us if you have a question about this or any topic that might be on your mind. I am Patti Brennan. We are Key Financial Wealth Management with wisdom and care. Have a great day.