

Client question to CPA: “Who do *you* trust?”

Executive Summary

Over a decade ago, a business owner and former financial services professional hired a CPA as CFO to help run and grow his new enterprise. After several years, the owner sold the business, generating proceeds exceeding \$150 million. Trusting the CPA, the owner sought advice on managing the capital and, most importantly, asked the CPA, “Who do you trust?”

After thoroughly evaluating the CPA firm’s wealth advisory and TriCert’s investment process, the client invested most of the proceeds with TriCert. The client valued the experience of portfolio managers who had navigated multiple market cycles. The investment mandate was clear: keep the approach simple, manage risk, and focus on steady growth. Integrating TriCert’s custom QSect approach with the firm’s accounting and advisory services simplified the client’s financial life and delivered a more valuable asset: time.

Today, the relationship continues to deepen as family members are introduced and onboarded, reinforcing trust, simplicity, and coordinated advice across the CPA firm’s integrated platform.

Client Profile

Client Type	Former entrepreneur, business owner, and financial services professional.
Primary Needs	The client required post-liquidity portfolio management and strategy, consolidated oversight across multiple strategies, forward-looking investment guidance, and coordinated estate and legacy planning.
Relationship Source	Introduced through the CPA relationship; expanded through ongoing CPA advisory involvement before and after liquidity event.

The Challenge

While selling the business, the owner turned to the company’s CFO and asked, “Who do you trust?”—seeking guidance on where to invest the proceeds. Despite a background in financial services, the owner valued the CFO’s perspective, shaped by a strong working relationship built over years of growth.

The CFO, a CPA at a TriCert partner firm, gave a clear and confident answer: he trusted his firm’s integrated wealth advisory offering and TriCert, where his own assets were managed. With more than \$150 million in investable assets available, the client sought a portfolio management solution that balanced simplicity and discipline. Their priorities were clear: a straightforward, tax-efficient approach with a focus on capital preservation and long-term growth, led by seasoned portfolio managers with a proven track record across multiple market cycles.

The Approach

The accounting firm offered a solution in which the CPA remained the central advisory lead, ensuring continuity from transaction support into ongoing wealth strategy. TriCert was introduced as the portfolio management partner, complementing the CPA firm’s coordinated, integrated wealth advisory model.

TriCert’s customized QSect® approach resonated with the client, emphasizing high-quality holdings defined by strong fundamentals, defensible competitive advantages, and a consistent track record of dividend growth, acquired at reasonable valuations. This tailored structure also enabled precise, coordinated capital gain and loss management across the family’s broader enterprise.

Equally important, TriCert’s experienced portfolio managers, with track records across multiple market cycles, provided confidence in disciplined execution. Combined with the client’s trust in their CPA and the CPA’s conviction in the integrated offering, the solution was compelling.

Your Family CIO Team

Joel Baker, CIM, MBA
Chief Investment Strategist

Ali Karimi, CFA®
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About TriCert Investment Counsel

TriCert Investment Counsel was founded over 25 years ago by two visionary accountants who recognized their clients could be better served by providing a sound, disciplined investment management approach alongside the integration of trusted accounting expertise into financial planning and wealth optimization. Today, TriCert proudly manages over \$4 billion in assets on behalf of thousands of clients.

As the lead advisor, the CPA maintains regular, often weekly, contact with the client to manage day-to-day financial matters. TriCert's portfolio management team meets with the client quarterly to review the portfolio, discuss strategy, and address forward-looking priorities. Reporting is both detailed at the strategy level and consolidated across the full portfolio.

Given the scale of assets, distributions are meaningful and require ongoing reinvestment. Discussions with TriCert often focus on how new capital will be invested. The client also participates in select private market opportunities. The portfolio manager does not offer advice on private assets outside of TriCert's offerings; however, they can occasionally provide "questions to ask" for the clients to consider before deciding on an external private investment.

At the same time, the CPA leads estate planning, trust structuring, and tax planning, ensuring all aspects of the client's financial life remain aligned and coordinated.

The Outcome

The integrated approach built a strong, ongoing relationship grounded in trust, clarity, and growth. The investment strategy aligns with the client's objectives, providing the most important benefit of all: peace of mind. And since the client no longer needs to act as the quarterback, coordinating between financial professionals, the solution has provided another valuable asset – more time with his family.

The relationship has grown beyond the original mandate, with family members onboarded, reflecting strong confidence in both the CPA's advisory team and the integrated model.

From a broader perspective, this case reinforces a few key principles:

- When CPAs remain actively involved beyond the transaction, particularly during liquidity events, they are uniquely positioned to guide clients into a more comprehensive, long-term wealth strategy.
- CPAs are trusted advisors to most of their clients. When they demonstrate confidence in their firm's wealth services, clients of all types and sizes are more likely to follow their lead.