



NEWS

For immediate release

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Middle-Income Not Always Well-Served by Investment Community

Flat Fee Portfolios and Garrett Planning Network Bring Affordable, Professional Solutions to the “Average” Investor

PARSIPPANY, NJ – November 9, 2011-- According to Mark Cortazzo, CFP[®], founder and Senior Partner of MACRO Consulting Group and creator of [Flat Fee Portfolios](#), and Sheryl Garrett, CFP[®], AIF[®], founder of the [Garrett Planning Network](#), the needs of middle-income investors are not being met by the financial advisory and investment community – and they are both working to do something about it.

“The investor with less than \$400,000 is often turned away by financial advisors with higher minimum account requirements,” said Cortazzo in a recent interview. “And those who can find an advisor are often paying a fee equivalent to 2% of their assets under management. By the time the underlying fund expenses are factored in, many of these investors aren’t realizing much of a return on their investments. I established Flat Fee Portfolios to give the underserved middle market investor access to professional asset management on an affordable, flat-rate basis.”

Garrett, who is known as a vocal advocate for financial education, explains the challenge many people face as the complexity of their financial situation expands:

“The percentage of assets-under-management – or AUM – fee structure is used by many financial advisors. While the assets-under-management fee structure may be a reasonable option for some people, it is not necessarily the best option for everyone. The AUM scenario works best for those seeking the convenience of working with a professional investment advisor who manages their complete – and often complex – financial advisory needs on a continual and ongoing basis. Many investors may, however, be better off working with a professional investment management solution under a more personally tailored and cost effective model.”

According to Marie Swift, a long-time industry consultant and columnist for *Financial Planning* magazine, Flat Fee Portfolios is a low-cost, high quality portfolio management service. For periodic financial planning and advice, the Garrett Planning Network (Garrett) of fee-only, hourly financial advisors is an excellent solution. “Both Flat Fee Portfolios and the Garrett Planning Network are dedicated to meeting the needs of the middle-market consumer,” Swift said.

“The do-it-yourself investor could be making huge mistakes,” said Garrett. “Also, the unsuspecting might be working with a financial advisor and getting some good advice, but could be paying way more than they should. Investors could be misled by sales reps to purchase products that are not appropriate for their personal situation. The reality is that most people can benefit from professional help and advice, but middle-income investors are often not the target market for wealth managers and financial advisors, who typically have high minimums and bigger fees than most people can justify or afford,” Garrett said.

Cortazzo and key staff members introduced the Flat Fee Portfolio management concept to Garrett Planning Network members at the 11th annual Garrett Planning Network Retreat which was held in Denver, Colorado on October 27-30, 2011. Further as a show of their mutual philosophies and corresponding business missions, Flat Fee Portfolios conducted an educational webinar for members of the Garrett Planning Network.

PURE FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICES

Founded by Sheryl Garrett, CFP[®], AIF[®], in 2000, the Garrett Planning Network is an international network of independent professionals who primarily offer financial planning and advice on an hourly-as-needed or per-project basis. No commissions or third-party compensation is allowed.

Members of the Garrett Planning Network can help clients in a variety of ways, including:

- Financial planning on a one-time, periodic or ongoing basis
- Financial checkups including second opinions
- Assistance with plan implementation or a step-by-step plan of action for clients to implement on their own
- Recommendations for college funding
- Insurance recommendations including life, disability and long term care
- Analysis and recommendations for managing cash flow and debt reduction

Garrett Planning Network members are dedicated to providing access to quality advice for clients regardless of income, the amount of an investment, or whether the advice is a one-time consultation or part of an ongoing service plan.

Clients are billed in simple-to-understand hourly rates. Billing is based on the time spent with a client or working on his or her project. Garrett advisors also may offer their services on a retainer basis. In some cases, advisor’s fees may be tax deductible, too.

With this kind of a fee structure, no matter their income or net worth, clients of Garrett members pay only for the time the advisor works with them or for them. That means no hidden fees, no income or account minimums, no long-term contract requirements, and no commissions.

FLAT-FEE ASSET MANAGEMENT

To better serve the investors with assets below the \$1 million required for top investment advisors, Mark Cortazzo, CFP[®], developed Flat Fee Portfolios to ensure that investors have access to high quality, low cost investment management services. The service is offered by Cortazzo's SEC-Registered Investment Advisory firm, MACRO Consulting Group. The Flat Fee Portfolios asset management team works with any size investment account for a low fee of \$199* per month that does not fluctuate based on value. An investor with an account less than \$250,000 pays only \$129* per month.

An investor with a \$200,000 portfolio to manage would do the math like this:

Flat Fee Portfolios:

- Professional asset management and a range of portfolio models from which to choose
\$129/mo x 12 months = \$1,548/year

Traditional Investment Advisor:

- With annual AUM fee of 1.0 percent: \$2,000/year
- With annual AUM fee of 1.5 percent: \$3,000/year
- With annual AUM fee of 2.0 percent: \$4,000/year

Savings if used Flat Fee Portfolios versus Traditional Investment Advisor:
\$452 - \$2452 per year!

Assuming a 10-year horizon, a 6% return and comparable expenses of the underlying funds, an investor with \$200,000 who uses Flat Fee Portfolios instead of a traditional advisor with a 1.5% AUM fee will save over \$22,000 in fees. Due to the effects of compounding the investor will have a \$28,000 increase in overall account value.

“This annual savings could be used to work with a member of the Garrett Planning Network,” Swift said. “The Garrett Member could provide additional guidance and advice on every other aspect of the investor’s life – from “should I refinance my house” to “how can I send my child to college” to “will I ever be able to retire and not worry about outliving my money.”

“The low-cost investing discipline of the Flat Fee Portfolios program is designed to be transparent, simple and fair. Through the use of low-cost mutual funds and exchange traded funds, state-of-the-art technology and a highly-efficient process, we are able to manage portfolios of **any size for one flat fee** and pass the savings on to the investor,” said Cortazzo. “With Flat Fee Portfolios, we’re changing the way investors can gain access to the investments and professional management they desire by offering a full suite of investment options, but a pricing structure that makes sense for the average investor. If individuals ask us for personal financial planning and advice, we will be referring them to a member of the Garrett Planning Network – there are over 300 Garrett Members nationwide and we really believe in what they are

doing.”

About Sheryl Garrett

Sheryl Garrett, CFP[®], AIF[®] founder of The Garrett Planning Network, Inc., has been dubbed “The All-American Planner,” possibly because of her zealous mission to “help make competent, objective financial advice accessible to all people.” Her fresh approach as a financial advisor working with clients on an hourly, as-needed, fee-only basis has evolved into an international network of likeminded financial advisors, the Garrett Planning Network.

Garrett has also been honored to work with the House Subcommittee on Financial Services regarding predatory lending regulation, financial literacy and Social Security reform. She also works as a consultant and expert witness in lawsuits against financial advisors who rendered questionable or inappropriate financial advice.

She has authored, coauthored, or served as a technical editor on over a dozen books and several magazine columns. These books include *Garrett’s Guide to Financial Planning* (National Underwriter 2002, 2007), *Just Give Me the Answer\$* (Dearborn Trade 2004), *Money Without Matrimony* (Kaplan Publishing 2006), *Personal Finance Workbook for Dummies*[®] (Wiley 2007, 2012), *A Family’s Guide to the Military For Dummies*[®] (Wiley 2008), and *Investing in an Uncertain Economy For Dummies*[®] (Wiley 2008).

As vocal advocate for financial education, Garrett is a frequent public speaker and has been frequently interviewed on CNNfn, Bloomberg, ABC World News Now, Fox-TV; NPR’s *All Things Considered* and *Marketplace*; and in *Business Week*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Forbes*, *Kiplinger Personal Finance*, *Money*, *Smart Money*, *MarketWatch*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Glamour*, *Parade*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Garrett has been recognized five times by *Investment Advisor* magazine as “One of the Most Influential People in Financial Planning.”

Visit www.GarrettPlanningNetwork.com to learn more.

About Mark Cortazzo

Mark Cortazzo, CFP[®], is the founder and Senior Partner of MACRO Consulting Group, one of New Jersey's most distinguished financial planning firms. As an independent firm established in 1992, MACRO Consulting Group remains flexible in its offerings of investment products and services. The firm offers customized assistance for retirement and investment planning. With years of collective expertise, the MACRO team specializes in customized estate, retirement and tax planning.

Flat Fee Portfolios, an offering of MACRO Consulting Group, provides investors a diverse range of investment solutions for a flat monthly fee of \$199 (Only \$129 per month for accounts under \$250,000). The program offers investors with high quality investment management solutions across three different investment disciplines.

Cortazzo's recent accomplishments include being named one of "America's Top 100 Independent B/D Advisors" for 2011 by *Registered Rep* magazine, "Advisor of the Year" for 2010 by *Boomer Market Advisor* magazine and being chosen as a *Barron's* "Top 1,000 Advisor in America" for three consecutive years. This year he was chosen as the number one independent advisor for the state of New Jersey according to *Barron's*.

Cortazzo has also been named to several other Top Advisor lists including, *Worth Magazine* choosing him as one of "The 250 Best Financial Advisers in America", being awarded "Super Broker" and one of the "Top 50 Independent Advisors for 2008" by *Registered Rep. Magazine*, being named by *Reuters AdvicePoint* as a "Top Advisor for 2008" in multiple categories, acceptance into the "2003 Hall of Fame" by *Research Magazine*, being chosen as one of New Jersey's "Top Forty Under 40" by *NJ Biz Magazine* and one of "America's Top Financial Advisors" in 2008 by *Fortune Magazine*.

Due to his success, Cortazzo is regularly utilized as a resource for many national publications and periodicals, including *Barron's*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Kiplinger's*, *InvestmentNews*, *Bloomberg Personal Finance* and *The New York Times*. He has made multiple television appearances which include being a FOX Business co-host twice, as well as a repeat guest on CNBC's Business Day programs and Consuelo Mack's "WealthTrack" on PBS.

Visit www.FlatFeePortfolios.com to learn more.

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*Pricing for retail accounts only. Call to discuss pricing for endowments, trusts, and institutional accounts.

Flat Fee Portfolios is a service offering of MACRO Consulting Group, LLC ("MACRO"). MACRO is registered as an investment adviser with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and only transacts business in states where it is properly registered, or is excluded or exempted from registration requirements.