

# PI\_EP\_David Kline

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Perfectly Integrated Podcast, hosted by Matt Ackerman, where we show the power of teamwork in wealth management. Now onto the show

[00:00:17] growth. Everyone wants to soar, but finding out how, when, and with. It's difficult. Advisors want their business to grow, and most know they need to partner with a great center of influence to make it happen. Like how can you really make that work? You see, I've learned that most advisors are really scared about that question of growth because most advisors grew up in an environment where growth meant more, more clients, more hours, more work.

[00:00:44] But what if growth really just meant a great partner? It could mean less Well today. Welcome to Perfectly Integrated, and I'm Matt Ackerman, and I'm joined today by two gentlemen that are making great partnership work. David Klein from Integrated [00:01:00] and Mark McGon, the CEO of McGon and Squadron. Gentlemen, welcome.

[00:01:04] Thank you so much for making some time to chat today. Thanks, Matt. Thanks, Matt. Good to be here. David, let's start off really broad. Tell me a little bit about you and your. Yeah. Um, thanks Matt. So I left, uh, Fidelity nine, almost nine years ago. Um, and, and had, uh, zero clients, right? So I, so I left after having 600 clients there ha had zero clients.

[00:01:30] So you talk about growth. Growth was, was big for me. And, and trying to figure out how to grow. And, you know, fortunately nine years later, uh, a lot, you know, thanks to the, the partnership with Mark, you know, our practice has, has really grown. Um, and, you know, we work with. Clients, you know, that are either in retirement or five, eight years from retirement.

[00:01:54] We work with, uh, business owners and just other clients that have high complexity, whether they're paying high [00:02:00] taxes and um, so it's just been, it's been a great ride. And clients really enjoy the fact that Mark and I collaborate, um, that it's not ju they're not just hearing from Mark on, you know, taxes and just hearing from me on investments and they're a state attorney, um, that it's, you know, we help, you know, coordinate everything and, and are working together.

[00:02:22] How about you, Mark? Tell me a little bit about you and the work that you do. Um, CPA for veterinary and dental practices across the us. I was

also starting in 99. Um, I had set up my own firm. I was doing financial planning as well as tax work. Problem was, I experienced a, just a super growth of clients when I merged with another practitioner.

[00:02:48] Didn't have time to do basically anything anymore, . And I think my financial planning part of the business was in a decline because I couldn't devote the time I needed. And [00:03:00] that's, you know, where I came in to integrate David, if growth is scary, starting at zero is even scarier. I think there's so many advisors that get stuck at a firm that isn't right for them because starting over is just frightening.

[00:03:16] Take us into that mindset first and foremost. You know when, when you took this kind of leap of faith to integrate first and foremost when you know the easier move probably would've just been the status quo. Yeah. Um, I had a lot of confidence in the platform with integrated in that they were, you know, that it wasn't just gonna be me hanging a shingle by myself, that there was a big team behind me.

[00:03:39] And, and so the, you know, really used the resources at at, at integrated to. To help me, help me grow. And then early on in that, um, you know, was introduced to Mark, who, who actually knew, you know, our founders and, and folks, uh, I think, you know, Mark went back to the nineties with them. So it was, um, you know, pretty [00:04:00] interesting.

[00:04:00] So it went from, yeah, the first year of course was, was, was very scary with, uh, mortgage and, and, and two kids and, and, you know, no clients to building that up. Um, through different ways with centers of influence and it, you know, it, and it obviously takes time. Um, but it was a great, you know, it's been a great ride and was partnering with Mark always part of the plan from, from, from the beginning.

[00:04:24] So that was something before, Yeah, before. I didn't know Mark before I joined, but that was something that, um, Paul Sae and team talked about. Um, and, and integrated was really, you know, there's other firms that have done it now. I don't, I don't think there's anybody who executes on it, you know, quite as well.

[00:04:40] But Integrated was the first to, to really partner with CPA firms. And Mark can talk about, I'm sure there's a lot of financial advisors that nag CPAs and have nag Mark over the, over the years. But I think, you know, Mark and, and, and other CPA firms are just really like our trademark retirement system and, and, and trust us.

[00:04:59] [00:05:00] So the fact that we have, you know, well over a hundred, you know, licensed business professionals that are a lot of CPA firms, uh, says a lot. And then pretty quickly, you know, integrated and introduced me to Mark and, and just, you know, from personality wise to business wise, you know, we've just been, uh, very fortunate and have, have hit it.

[00:05:19] So Mark, you know, Ray and you know Paul and you know, all the, the powers that be here at Integrated. Talk to me about from that beginning point, you know, of of, of working with integrated, how, like you said, RA was always part of your dna, but how did you know this all come together with working with David too?

[00:05:39] I was always looking for a team that could help me because I was tired of being in an island, uh, by myself, which a lot of CPAs are out there. But he says, Oh, I want to get into wealth management and financial planning, and oh, I have to do it all myself and get all the licenses and then gain the knowledge and the relationships as well.

[00:05:56] Um, and John Pastoria had started working with him years ago  
[00:06:00] in the nineties, and he had always coached me. Mark, you know, we could, we could do so much more for you if you just let us. And I had a bad experience, um, years ago when I kind of part loosely partnered with a group of insurance professionals and really, it, it wasn't about them helping me, it was about me helping them.

[00:06:23] And John said, You know, we're not gonna be like that. And I, you know, fast forward, Five, six years ago or more, my wife said, Look, you have to do something because you're burning the candle at both ends. You know, I think you just, you just need a partner and not, you know, somebody that's looking to grow their business, somebody that's kind of an equal to you.

[00:06:47] And David talks about, Oh, I, you know, started at zero. Well, he ramped up pretty quickly. Has a lot of high powered clients and a lot of high powered value that he provides me. So I don't think it's, you know, me  
[00:07:00] helping him. I think we help each other, which, you know, I can't ask for more than that. It's, it's a true partnership, which you don't see in the industry.

[00:07:08] I have, you know, a lot, as David said, a lot of wealth management firms call me and say, you know, we can work with your clients. And I'm like, You can't beat what I have. Thank you, . Yeah, I would add on to that. Mark. It that I totally agree. I mean, to have the confidence, you know, from my

standpoint for, you know, joint clients, whether it's, it's a, it's a, some tax situation comes up with another client to be able to call you.

[00:07:34] I mean, the fact that we just talk on a regular basis, um, and are able to collaborate and at the end of the day, who wins with that, right? Is our joint. They just, they, they just get better advice from, from the two of us thinking through things together. And it's just been, um, you know, a huge confidence boost, uh, for me and, and most importantly for our clients just to know that we can, you know, we're thinking about it together.

[00:07:59] I mean, I look on [00:08:00] my speed dial on my, right here, on my phone, and you're number one on the speed tile. So that says a lot. I also, you know, have clients that are moving relationships or have a liquidity event, and, you know, ultimately they decide not to work with us on wealth management, financial planning, which is their choice.

[00:08:19] They, they can do that, but it's kind of like a dating app where I get ghosted because the financial planner or wealth management firm that they're using never calls. I never talk to them. They, they won't call me back. I e I've emailed information. That's it, that's, that's the end of it. And I'm, I'm sure the client could be getting so much more value on the planning side.

[00:08:40] And the dis just even strategy in discussing the future never happens for them. So I, I think it's fortunate for our clients that we have, we pretty much talk every week in a, whether it's five minutes, a half an hour, 15 minutes, it, it doesn't matter. It's, it's constant. Right. And our clients just love you know, when I, when I'll [00:09:00] say, You know what, that's a great question.

[00:09:02] Let me call Mark. I want to get his perspective and I'll call you back. Right? And, and it just, it's taking it off their shoulders that they have the complete trust in us and they don't have to get involved. Um, and, and so they love that. They love the, you know, the proactive ideas. You know, where, you know, where Mark will say, or I'll say, You know what, We were talking, we think this is a good year.

[00:09:21] Market's down, your IRAs are down. Uh, you've talked about wanting to leave money to your kids. Let's think about a Roth conversion this year, right? Or Mark and I talked about this idea and it's just, it's fun to see the client's reaction that they just know we're, we're thinking we've got their best interests at heart, and we're, we're thinking of them even having joint meetings on Zoom.

[00:09:41] I mean, it's hard enough to get to the, to somebody's office, whoever that is. I mean, at least we can do that. And we're all on the screen and we're all hearing the same thing and present. Joint plans, not sometimes we talk to, you know, wealth managers and they're like, I wish I had, um, asked you first .

[00:10:00] I'm like, Well, we, we could have simplified this whole process and had a meeting about it first, but before presenting it to the client, I just sent you one of those joint meetings, joint zoom meetings about 20 minutes ago.

[00:10:12] I just accept it, but for you guys, The client that's on a joint meeting, man, do, they must feel like they got a team behind them at that point too, because you're both making the time available to work with them on this issue. Whereas, you know most times to get an answer on something or to do the financial services questions, you get pushed into a portal or a kiosk or something.

[00:10:39] In this day and age when you can have a team of, of financial experts behind you, gosh, that changes the whole convers. It really does, Matt. It, it does. You can just see the comfort of the clients and the feedback that you get, and you're just, you're getting a better solution for them when, you know, Mark and I are going back and forth and, um, you know, [00:11:00] I'll show for instance, here's, you know, year to date, you know, we're doing, we have these conversations right around now.

[00:11:06] Here's, uh, you know, the, the income so far. So far. Here's the investment income. Here's. The capital gains are losses, and, and you know, this year there's a lot of capital losses. What's the impact to the client? What's the impact to their quarterly estimates? You know, and then Mark's jumping in with, you know, with his impact, you know, with how that fits into the rest of their income, picture, ordinary income and everything else.

[00:11:27] So it's just, they're doing it, you know, you're having a live discussion around it. Mark, you used the word before of consolidate, of, of collaboration. You used the word before around getting off that island. It also must help elevate you from just tax preparer to real tax planner when suddenly you can bring so many different solutions to that end client.

[00:11:52] It's hard to be a doer and also a leader or a manager or a consultant. Um, if you're mired down or bogged down [00:12:00] in the details, you may not be looking at the higher level, 30,000 do, or 30,000 what view, because you can't, you don't have the time, you don't have the luxury. I think if you have somebody else working on some of that with.

[00:12:12] It gives you more clarity, it gives you more time to focus. That's what I, I, I'm, I mean, I couldn't, I couldn't operate my practice and that, you know, revenue stream and client satisfaction stream without, you know, David had integrated. You know, and the other thing that's unique a a about Mark and with just in general and in these discussions is he's got a cfp, right?

[00:12:36] So he understands exactly what we're doing and just brings a unique perspective, uh, as well. David, that initial synergy is something that is earned, right? I mean, coming together and working together well is something that over years in time and practice gets easier. But you know, Mark talked about, you know, some of those advisors that ghost you initially too.[00:13:00]

[00:13:00] Talk to me about that and uh, you know, did you guys have some initial growing pains or any initial challenges is as you brought, you know, two great practices together to work together? Yeah, I, I think, you know, it always takes time to build up trust, right? In any relationship. Um, and so I think, um, it definitely, you know, Mark knew integrated partners, knew John Pastori, knew others, so we had some level of trust there.

[00:13:24] But, you know, he and I, you know, didn't know each other. So that, so that took some time. And then there's always the, you know, at the beginning, I remember in the early days of just, you know, of course wanting to impress Mark. So there, there could be a client. That maybe, you know, wasn't the best fit. And I would try and, you know, wanna make it the best fit.

[00:13:41] And, and over time, you know, Mark and I just built up that communication where, you know, he's looking to me to say, no, if this is not the right fit, you know, let's, let's, you know, figure that out together. And, and so, um, yeah, I feel like we've really built up that communication that relat. It was kind of our joint presentation [00:14:00] style.

[00:14:00] Initially. We were kind of working out our relationship with each other and how to present it to clients. And a lot of time it was the wording and and phrasing that maybe we didn't get perfectly. But I mean, over time it's, it's clicked where, you know, it's a natural and I just say, David, you know, here's the client info.

[00:14:19] This is what their goals are, you know, take it from there. And I, you know, have full faith and confidence. , We had some trials and tribulations initially just on, on presenting it to clients and presenting the relationship. And I think over time we've understood it better so the clients now understand it better.

[00:14:40] That's fantastic. It's, it's always interesting to see those kind of turning points in a relationship too. And, and hearing about that is, is, is just so impressive, you know? David, how do you kind of leverage this great relationship to help build on from here? How has it really helped your practice really take off?

[00:14:57] Like you said, maybe from nothing, Mark Mark's saying [00:15:00] it wasn't nothing. You did great relationships from there, but, but how have you enabled it to really take off to be such a thriving practice now? Yeah, it, it has, um, just really helped scale the practice because you get, you know, you're fortunate. You, you deliver good work.

[00:15:16] And, and the clients see the value of what Mark and I do together. And then you get referrals off of that. You know, that's one way it's continued to, to, to build. And then there's you know, there's. Uh, o other clients that, you know, Mark has, is introduced. You know, so what, what what we get into a regular rhythm of meeting on a regular basis and discussing, Okay, here's our joint clients, and then we're always talking about, here's other things going on in the markets, or here's other ideas, um, that I think we should look at.

[00:15:45] And it may spark an idea. Mark May say, Oh, th you know, this client actually, that would be perfect for, Right? And, and so it's just really. To, to grow the practice, but again, most importantly, you know, back to the clients really helped you know, helped them. You both [00:16:00] have this certain degree of humility too, which I think helps a lot when you can put your ego aside and put that client first.

[00:16:06] It really just helps immensely. Mark, what about you? How has it helped you to thrive by having this great partner? Like I said before, when I was doing it all myself, I was stretched too thin and I couldn't effectively do it. And I think integrated just has so many tools that they provide for me as well as for David and everybody else that you know, compliance was huge when I tried to, you know, update my adv on an annual basis and it was, I could spend 40 hours.

[00:16:36] You know, client time, client facing time, and I'd be spending it on administrative work. So I think alleviating myself of the burden of that as well. It just, it adds so much more value. Yes, I'm not a huge fan of required education, but I'd have to do that anyway. and, and then, you know, Matt, not to mention that the partnership [00:17:00] and, and bringing.

[00:17:00] Joint revenue has helped to grow the practice from, you know, I could go out and expand my team to just make the client experience even better,

right? So there, there's just different ways to use that revenue to put it back into the business, to to continue to grow the practice. And, and that's amazing.

[00:17:18] It's all about that client service. It's all about, like we said earlier, giving, making that client feel like they're the center of this relationship and then everything else orbits around it. From service to everything you guys are doing, it's incredible. What's your goal from here? Uh, David, how do you continue this amazing progress?

[00:17:37] How do you continue to, to leverage this relationship to, to, to have growth on both? . Yeah, I, um, so that's a great question and I think it's, when, when I think about that, it's one. Just not to sound like, uh, Bill Bellick or anything, but just continue to do my job, right. Not sit back and just say, Oh look, [00:18:00] we've built this great joint practice and that's it.

[00:18:03] You know, I want to continue to bring the value to Mark and to our joint clients, so it's, you know, This is just an example, but thinking about, oh, okay, there's a vote in a couple weeks, right? Massachusetts, there may be an extra 4% tax on, on people earning more than a million. So Mark and I talking about that, let's prepare for it and say, Okay, of your clients that meet that threshold, you know, who should we be talking to, to either prepare them or what are some strategies that we can do around that?

[00:18:30] So it's not just sitting back, it's just constantly thinking about what are other ways that we can continue to, uh, advance the partnership again for the client's best. Mark the magic word of this entire conversation seems to be proactive. You guys are working together, being proactive, and it's just enabling just growth on both sides.

[00:18:51] Talk to me maybe a little bit about kind of your vision for the future and how that, how you continue to be such a great proactive force for your clients. Uh, [00:19:00] well, as in venture capital speaker, I'd like to 10 x this place . If, if the ability was there, um, , but I'm just happy with the organic growth that we're getting now.

[00:19:11] And I think between current client referrals, um, and, and new clients that are coming on board, whether they're for 401K plans for their, um, you know, practices and hospitals I think that's just, you know, slow and steady is our approach. Um, I don't think either of us could handle double the client base immediately.

[00:19:31] So I'm happy with the slow and steady. Right. And, and to that point, right? I mean, as business partners, it's thinking about how many joint clients roughly do we work on a year? And then from my perspective, what do I have to do with our practice to, to expand so that if Mark comes to me and says, I've got this great new client, we want you to help with that.

[00:19:54] I, I'm not ever in a position to say I can. Right. So what do I need to do inside my [00:20:00] practice that it's always, yeah, let's, let's figure out, you know, how to help, um, and continue to grow. That's incredible. You guys are such a testament to how a great partnership can work, and this has been a great conversation.

[00:20:14] Now, I always like to end my conversations on the podcast with my last questions, always the questions for my 11 year old son, cj I usually, what I do is I walk him through my guests and what we're talking about and we talked a lot about partnership. And the power of partnerships. So he, and then we talked about like what makes a great partner, What were some examples of partnerships and this, and he's really into music right now.

[00:20:38] Um, he's got a little vinyl record collection. So, you know, we started talking about Keith Richard and Mick Jagger. We talked about Len and McCartney. We talked about Elton John and Bernie Toppin. So his question to you guys was what partner? Music or otherwise, if you wanna gimme a be check parels, uh, David, you can, but what would you what's [00:21:00] the best analogy of your partnership your personalities that maybe a famous partnership out there could yield?

[00:21:06] And I'm, you're both gonna get this question, so maybe you have both have the same answer. We'll see. David, what do you think? This should be the toughest question. This is, Yeah. So by the way, he had a birthday recently, so happy birthday to cj. Hey. Oh, thank you my friends. Yes. Yep. So, so there's a few things be before, as I'm thinking of, uh, the, the actual people haven't popped into my head yet.

[00:21:27] I'll, I'll, I'll keep thinking about that. But, but one part of his question is, one, there's gotta be the likability, right? You have to, you have. Like each other. You gotta respect each other and, and wanna work together and, and, and even forget about work. Want to, you know, kind of hang out with a person. I, I think that's a, you know, that's a piece that, to a successful partnership.

[00:21:47] And then there's gotta be trust. And then you mentioned it earlier, Matt. There's, there's, I think there's gotta be, you know, no ego, um, involved

or it works much better when there's, when there's less ego involved. [00:22:00] Um, and, and so, um, I guess in terms of, of partnership, I'm gonna go a little, a little old school with, with people and maybe there's, I'll probably pop into my head later with a, with a better example.

[00:22:12] But, you know, I loved as a big Red Sox fan, I used to love watching Theo Epstein and Terry Francon, just how they communicated. And, you know, Theo bringing in the players and, and Fran Kona putting 'em in, you know, who plays and putting 'em in the right spot. And the way they just joked around and, and had trust.

[00:22:31] But when they were, you know, ready for business, they, they got down to business and they had a lot of success together. So there, there's two that pop into my head. Um, but there's certainly a lot, uh, of others. That's a great one. Mark, what do you think, if you had to associate your partnership with another great partnership in history, who would you go with?

[00:22:48] Since I'm a drummer in an eighties rock band, I would say, Tore and Quest. Love from the roots. Wow. I thought you were gonna go [00:23:00] rush. I really thought Neil Pert was coming outta your mouth. I really have to say that I, I miss Neil Pert, but the, the reason I picked the roots, it's not, you know, very out there.

[00:23:12] It's, you really never see them trying to lead each other. They just know what the other person's gonna do and they do it. So I think that comes from trust. I mean, when John, you know, for 15 years said, Hey, you have to work with, you know, if fp and we have a great team and, and I just never did it. And then once I got serious, he said, Look, I, I, I'm, I'm matching the people up and I, I have like a few people I'd.

[00:23:44] Put you with, because I think you'd fit really well. And then I said, You know what, maybe I'm gonna try this cuz I trust John and you know, he did it and you know, it went from there. So, um, kind of like. Rican Quest. Love . [00:24:00] That's awesome. And John Pastori is a matchmaker who's never gonna ghost you. So no

[00:24:08] Well, gentlemen, this has been a great conversation. I thank you both for making some time and for, and for giving a great answer there at the end of CJ's question. Thank you both so much. Thanks Matt. This is fun. Absolutely awesome, Matt. Mark David, thank you both for a great conversation and thank you to our amazing audience here at Perfectly Integrated.

[00:24:29] This has been another incredible conversation, and thank you for making time for us today for Perfectly Integrated for Integrated Partners. I'm Matt Ackerman. Have a great day.

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