

The Great Divergence in Wealth Management

How AI, Data, and Infrastructure Are Splitting the RIA Industry

Featuring Recent Announcements From:

The logo for Savvy, featuring the word "Savvy" in a black serif font on a light yellow rectangular background.The logo for RFG Advisory, featuring a blue circular icon with a stylized 'G' followed by "RFG" in a bold blue sans-serif font and "ADVISORY" in a smaller grey sans-serif font, all on a white rectangular background.The logo for SIGNATURE FD, featuring the word "SIGNATURE" in a black sans-serif font and "FD" in a blue sans-serif font, both on a white rectangular background.The logo for altruist, featuring the word "altruist" in a white lowercase sans-serif font on a dark green rectangular background.

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Executive Summary

The wealth management industry is not gradually evolving. It is splitting.

A small but growing group of firms are fundamentally redesigning how their businesses operate by unifying data, integrating systems, and embedding AI into workflows.

These firms are compressing hours of work into minutes, expanding capacity without adding headcount, and delivering a client experience that compounds over time.

At the same time, most firms continue operating within their established service models that feature fragmented technology stacks, manual processes, and disconnected data.

These advisors are working just as hard, if not harder, but seeing diminishing returns on effort as clients expect more services at current fee levels. This divergence is no longer theoretical. It is happening and accelerating. The firms pulling ahead are not simply adopting AI. They are redesigning how their business operates.

Four recent announcements from Altruist, Savvy Wealth, RFG Advisory and Signature FD spotlight key early adopters.

"The advantage here is structural, not cosmetic."

Ritik Malhotra - Savvy Wealth

The Current Environment: A System Under Strain

For the past 15 years, RIAs have built their technology stacks one solution at a time:

CRM for client management
Financial planning software
Portfolio management
Billing and Reporting
Compliance
Document storage
Communication platforms

“Disconnected systems and fragmented data quietly drain time and energy.”

Jordan Hutchison, RFG Advisory

Each solved a specific problem. Collectively, they created a larger one.

This is not a technology problem. It is an operating system problem.

The result is a fragmented environment where:

- Advisors toggle between 5–10 systems daily
- Data is duplicated, inconsistent, or inaccessible
- Client insights require manual assembly
- Operational complexity limits scalability

This is the baseline most firms are still operating within.

“pull up the portfolio in one system, check the financial plan in another, dig through meeting notes... cross-reference the tax return... 45 minutes of assembly before you can even start thinking.”

Ritik Malhotra, Savvy Wealth

The Divergence: Two Paths Emerging

Path 1: The Emerging Leaders

Are choosing to BUILD, REBUILD, or RENT an AI-native platform.

Firms on this side are:

- Compressing meeting prep from hours to minutes
- Increasing client capacity without adding staff
- Identifying opportunities using all client data in real-time
- Delivering a differentiated, scalable experience

They are not simply using AI.

They have embedded it into their workflows to leverage it.

Path 2: The Stalled Majority

Firms on this side are:

- Maintaining legacy workflows
- Operating across disconnected systems
- Experimenting with AI tools in isolation
- Still debating the addition of a notetaker
- Experiencing isolated, non-scalable efficiency gains

They are adopting technology but not transforming how they operate or the level of service they deliver.

"The divergence is already happening. The question is which side you're on."

Ritik Malhotra, Savvy Wealth

Four AI and Data Announcements Shaping the RIA Landscape

The logo for Savvy, featuring the word "Savvy" in a black, serif font on a white rectangular background.

April 16th
Savvy Intelligence + Agents

What is it?
Proprietary Unified Database
for Client Information
Single Screen View
AI Agents that Automate
Workflows

The logo for RFG Advisory, featuring a blue circular icon with a white 'G' inside, followed by the text "RFG" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font and "ADVISORY" in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font, all on a white rectangular background.

March 11th
ClickONE Command Center

What is it?
Unified Database Built with
MileMarker and Zocks
Single View for Data/ Operations
AI Intelligence for Queries
All Applications Connected

The logo for SIGNATURE FD, featuring the word "SIGNATURE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font and "FD" in a blue, sans-serif font, all on a white rectangular background.

April 22nd
Unified Data and AI Intelligence

What is it?
MileMarker - Core Data Platform
Verapath - AI Agents
Snowflake - Data Cloud
Centralized, Secure Data Lake
Query Firm Data, Generate
Insights, Automate Workflows
Trained on Sig FD's Philosophy

The logo for altruist, featuring the word "altruist" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a dark green rectangular background.

February 10th
Hazel

What is it?
AI Tax Planning Agent
Altruist Unified Data Across
Custodian and Tech with Hazel
(November)
Custom Personal Indexing
(March 18th)
Automation of Workflows

Savvy

Build It

What they're doing:

Built a fully integrated, AI-native wealth management platform from the ground up.

How they're doing it:

- Single unified system across the advisor and client experience
- Centralized data architecture from day one
- AI embedded directly into workflows, not layered on top
- No reliance on legacy systems or third-party integrations

Impact:

- Massive time compression (hours → minutes)
- Higher advisor capacity without adding headcount
- Sets the benchmark for what an "AI-native RIA" looks like
- Raises client expectations for speed and personalization

Result:

Savvy exemplifies a competitive playbook for firms focused on hyper growth and disruption.

"Most companies are now scrambling to bolt AI onto fragmented systems. We just had to plug it in."

Numbers:

AUM 2022 - \$0 March 2026 - \$5B

CAGR: 1 yr 213% 3 yr 252%

Source: RIA Pulse

What they're doing:

Creating a unified operating environment across fragmented advisor systems with data, AI intelligence, and integrations.

How they're doing it:

- Building a centralized "Command Center" across applications
- Unifying client, portfolio, planning, and operational data
- Enabling natural language access to firm-wide intelligence
- Delivering insights directly within advisor workflows
- MileMarker and Zocks (AI intelligence) technology partners

Impact:

- Eliminates "swivel chair" workflows
- Reduces time spent navigating systems
- Surfaces insights instantly across the business
- Improves advisor efficiency and focus

Result:

RFG is not replacing systems. They are connecting their tech stack into a single, intelligent operating layer.

"From the agony of the swivel chair to the joy of a true command center."

Numbers:

AUM 2022 \$2B March 2026 - \$7B

CAGR: 1 yr 33% 3 yr 31%

Source: RIA Pulse

What they're doing:

Transforming an existing RIA by building a centralized data and AI layer across systems.

How they're doing it:

- Aggregating data across CRM, planning, portfolio, and operations
- Building a secure, unified data environment
- Connecting AI directly to firm-specific data and workflows
- Training AI agents on firm processes and philosophy
- MileMarker, Snowflake, Claude, and Verapath partners

Impact:

- Eliminates manual data gathering across systems
- Enables real-time analysis and insights
- Standardizes outputs across advisors
- Improves scalability without replacing core systems

Result:

Signature FD represents a practical and measured path for established firms:

Rebuild the operating system without starting over.

"We're working on getting our AI connected to our data... to transform the way our processes work."

Numbers:

AUM 2022 \$6B March 2026 - \$10B

CAGR: 1 yr 16% 3 yr 12%

Source: RIA Pulse



Rent It

What they're doing:

Providing a modern, vertically integrated platform that replaces fragmented infrastructure.

How they're doing it:

- Integrated platform combining custody + portfolio management + workflows + AI
- API-first architecture enabling automation and connectivity
- Centralized data model across all client and portfolio activity
- Embedding AI intelligence (Hazel) with quarterly agent releases across workflows for the advisor and client lifecycle

Impact:

- Reduces reliance on multiple vendors
- Automates workflows across planning, operations, and service
- Enables real-time insights and execution
- Compresses cost and time across the advisory process
- Altruist had the highest user rating of all custodians in the 2026 T3 survey

Result:

AI-forward custodian that brings account opening, trading, portfolio management, billing, and reporting together in one place.

Numbers: Serving over 6,000 advisors

The Six Themes Defining the Shift

1. The Industry Is Splitting

The gap is compounding, not incremental.

2. Fragmentation Is the Core Problem

Too many systems. Not enough integration.

3. Data Is the New Infrastructure

No firm can skip this step.

4. AI Is an Output Layer

AI doesn't fix broken systems.
It amplifies them.

5. Capacity Is the Real KPI

Time is the constraint.
Firms that unlock it win.

6. Firms Must Choose a Path

- Rebuild the process and infrastructure
- Rent one already built (Altruist)
- Join an RIA that has built their own

Not choosing = falling behind.

Conclusion: The Window Is Narrowing

The firms pulling ahead are not doing radically different things. They are doing foundational things earlier and more intentionally.

They are:

- Structuring data
- Simplifying and standardizing processes
- Designing workflows
- Then applying AI

The result is not incremental improvement.

It is exponential advantage.

The gap is not forming.

It is compounding.

Most firms are not evaluating options or paths.

They are operating in fragmented systems hoping AI will fix it.

The divergence is already underway.

Which side are you on?

"Every quarter that passes, the distance... gets harder to close."
Ritik Malhotra, Savvy Wealth



Mike Casciano

Mike Casciano has spent over two decades in the financial industry. First as an advisor then with BlackRock and Principal AM. He held various roles as a wholesaler, portfolio consultant, sales strategist, model strategist, custom index development, and technology partnerships.

EVO was launched in September of 2023 out of necessity. Wealth managers lacked the educational resources and capacity to evaluate and adopt new technology and processes. Mike helps RIAs develop a plan for selecting and implementing emerging technologies across the stack. He specializes in three key opportunities for ROI: the portfolio management process, growth strategies, and data infrastructure.

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