



Gradient Investments *Employer Sponsored Plans*

Gradient Investments, LLC
*a member of Gradient Financial Group
Shoreview, Minnesota*





Welcome to *Gradient Investments, LLC*

- Investment Approach
- Employer Sponsored Plans
- Open Architecture 401k Platform

Gradient Investments, LLC is an independent, privately-owned registered investment advisor. We are devoted to providing our clients with an exceptional level of service and a relentless commitment to client success.

We serve individuals, employer sponsored pension plans, foundations, endowments and corporations through mutual funds, exchange traded funds (ETF), and separately managed accounts. Whether a client's investment goal is preserving principal, maximizing income or accumulating capital, the portfolios are designed to achieve the client's goals.

INVESTMENT APPROACH

Our disciplined investment approach is shaped by a long-term investment focus, through due diligence, and a belief that broad diversification across and within asset classes is essential for long-term success. Each plan is designed to deliver a broad and diverse selection of low-cost individual funds and professionally managed portfolios to meet your company needs.

Our investment process is client focused. Unlike other investment managers who offer the same portfolios to every potential client, we take a different approach. We do not force plan participants into an arbitrary category. Rather, you and your investment advisor together with Gradient Investments select the funds that are appropriate for your company's unique needs. Our investment process will carefully analyze participants' objectives, risk tolerance and time horizons.

Employer Sponsored Plans

All investors should have a plan, one in which their asset allocations are aligned with the time horizons of their goals. Long-term retirement goals provide greater exposure to the benefits of equity investing.

Our dedication to client service and investment results will provide plan participants with a comprehensive range of quality investment alternatives and counseling designed to help your employees reach their retirement goals.

With Gradient Investments, your plan participants will have world-class investment opportunities packaged in an easy to implement format. Our Open Architecture 401k Platform allows us to select the top ETFs and mutual funds managed by the best fund managers at T. Rowe Price, Vanguard, Fidelity and many others. Participants will not be captive to any fund family and will not be forced to choose from loaded, high-expense funds.

For the one-stop shopper, there is a series of balanced retirement funds that allocate assets for a targeted retirement date. The individual wanting to control their asset allocation decision with limited investment options has access to a core investment list. The sophisticated investor will receive a comprehensive offering of quality funds enabling the participant to build a broadly diversified portfolio among and within various asset classes. For those needing a customized plan, we will build a portfolio tailored to your objectives, risk tolerance and time horizon.

Open Architecture 401k Platform

You, the employer, will always hold a fiduciary relationship with your employees regarding your sponsored 401k plan. The Supreme Court ruled the employer is obligated to act at all times in the best interest of the plan participants. The Supreme Court's provision authorizes recovery for fiduciary breaches that impair the value of plan assets in a participant's individual account.

Transparency is critical within your sponsored plan. Gradient Investments' Open Architecture 401k Platform is your solution for transparency. Our plan offers **NO HIDDEN FEES!**

Gradient Investments 401k:

- Quality, low-cost investment options
- Professionally managed portfolios
- NO hidden fees
- Transparent third-party plan administration

Our concierge service, answered by a qualified live voice, is extended to all plan participants with investment questions. Your employees are our priority!

Working with Gradient Investments gives you more than peace of mind, it gives you a 401k that adheres to today's regulations and one you are proud to sponsor.

Chief Investment Officer



Wayne Schmidt
MBA, CFA®

In October 2008, Wayne Schmidt joined Gradient Investments, LLC and serves as chief investment officer. With 26 years of investment experience, Schmidt brings decades of institutional experience, an in-depth knowledge of the private client market and offers a global investment management perspective.

Schmidt is an invaluable and direct resource for affiliated investment advisors and their clients. He provides vast wisdom, knowledge, experience and tools to help investment advisors grow their practice, while also growing clients' assets.

In a nationwide search that included acquisition considerations, AXA Investment Managers, a subsidiary of the European insurance giant AXA Group, handpicked Schmidt to build their U.S. investment grade fixed income capabilities and to lead a seasoned portfolio team located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

During his tenure at AXA Investment Managers, Schmidt served as senior portfolio manager for the U.S. Investment Grade Fixed Income Team. As the lead portfolio manager, he managed \$9.5 billion of fixed income assets with a variety of mandates ranging from aggregate, corporate and government bond portfolios.

Before joining AXA Investment Managers, Schmidt dedicated over 20 years to Minnesota Life and its \$14 billion investment arm, Advantus Capital Management. As portfolio manager, he managed a variety of high-grade funds as part of Advantus' \$1.8 billion Total Return Product for institutional and retail clients. He also served as the lead portfolio manager of the Advantus Bond Fund and the co-portfolio manager of the Advantus Spectrum Fund.

Schmidt earned his Master of Business Administration in Finance from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Science from Cornell University. He is a Chartered Financial Analyst® and a member of The Chartered Financial Analyst Institute and the Twin Cities Society of Security Analysts.

Schmidt has been quoted on the global economy in numerous nationally and internationally recognized investment publications such as Bloomberg, Pension & Investments, Reuters, The Los Angeles Times, Financial Week (2008 Neal Award Winner), Asia Times, InvestorVillage, Safehaven, SFO, Credit Investment News and RGE Monitor (Nouriel Roubini's Global EconoMonitor). He has also provided market insights on Bloomberg radio and television.



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