



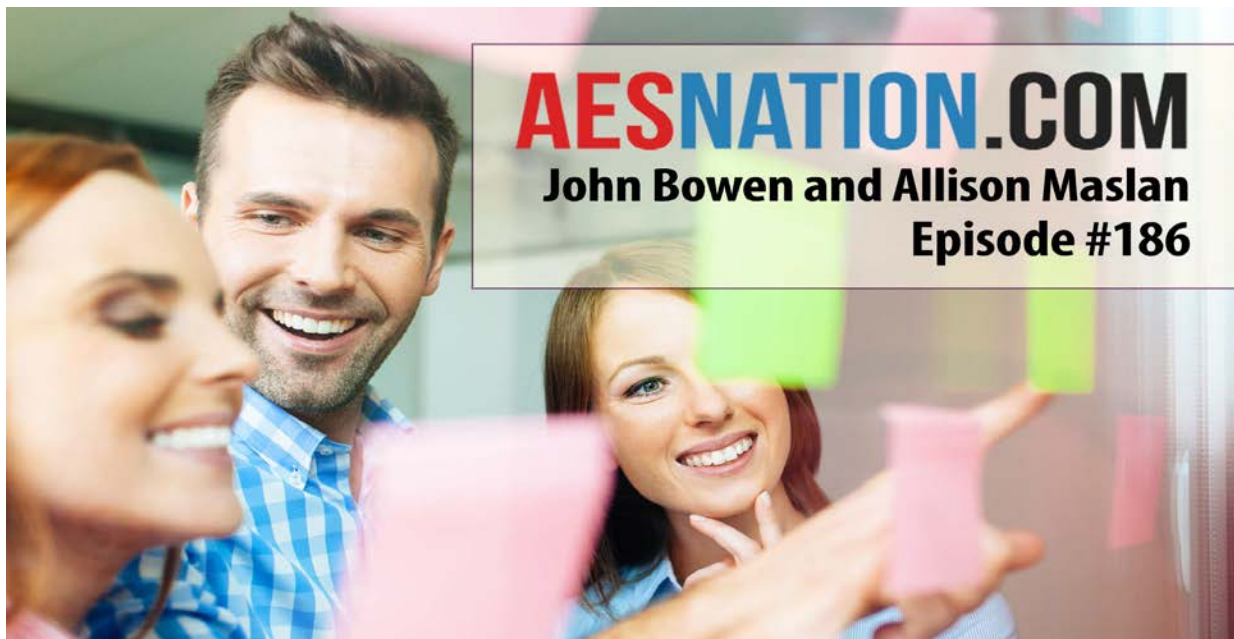
AESNATION.COM

ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAST

EPIISODE
186

Allison Maslan

Show Notes at: <http://www.aesnation.com/186>



Dear Fellow Entrepreneur,

We are thrilled that you have joined us here at AES Nation, where we're dedicated to accelerating entrepreneurial success—your success.

We hope you find this transcript to be a valuable supplement to the podcast and encourage you to share it with like-minded entrepreneurs in your network.

In addition to our five-times-a-week interviews with leading entrepreneurs, keep in mind that we have plenty of other resources to help put your success on the fast track:

- Our **monthly live, interactive webinars** co-hosted with Dan Sullivan of Strategic Coach feature today's top entrepreneurs. These are world-changing entrepreneurs who have the insight to help transform your business.
- Our **virtual conferences** showcase business leaders and experts in elevating your success and your life. These one-day online events give you access to the in-depth presentations and interaction that you'd get at a live conference from the comfort of your office or home.
- The **AESNation.com weekly newsletter** will always keep you on top of the latest interviews and events. [Sign up here.](#)

Thanks for being part of the AES Nation community. We'll see you online.

Best of success,



John Bowen
Co-founder, AES Nation

John Bowen: Well, as always, we all want to make a big impact, but today we're going to have something little bit special. I've got a remarkable entrepreneur who really has made a huge impact since she was 19 and just the different businesses she's done, but most importantly helping fellow entrepreneurs like yourself really make a difference and scale up. I mean, I love what she works on, multiplying your revenue. That just brings joy to me. Creating more freedom and giving your business really the true fulfillment that we're all looking to do. She stunned us. I mean, one of the things ... it's we always like to be acknowledged by our fellow entrepreneurs. She's been acknowledged by Self-Made Magazine as one of the top woman entrepreneurs who inspires. I met her at Joe Polish's mastermind group. I can tell you that it wasn't just woman that were inspired, everybody was inspired. You will meet her in a second. Stay tuned and you're going to see how you can scale your business up, accelerate your success even more. I'm John Bowen, CEO of AES Nation and we are off.

Allison, I am so excited to have you here. I mean, everybody, when we were at Joe's group, they're surrounding you and you were providing a lot of inspiration and insights through all the ... that really, what you've done is, well, Allison, coaching and mentoring you've done. So, I really feel privileged to have you with our audience today.

Allison Maslan: Thanks, John. That's sweet of you. I'm excited to be here.

John: Well, let's go in. I mean, you've been a best-selling author. You got a new book just around the corner that we can't talk about yet, but I'm excited to read it. We're going to really focus in on scaling now because you helped so many entrepreneurs do that. I had a chance to look at your website. I saw all the testimonials of all the people doing that. Before we go into kind of the lessons you've learned in your own businesses and helping others, I'd love to get the backstory of how did you get here? I always kind of start off, at five, did you imagine yourself as an entrepreneur doing all this? You may have. Your dad was a very successful entrepreneur.

Allison: I don't really think that I have any clue at five, but I do feel that I was definitely blessed to be born in a very entrepreneurial family. As you mentioned, with my dad, he was my biggest mentor in my life, and he built the largest chain of women's clothing stores that were privately owned in the United States from 1955 to the early '80s. So, quite a great run there. I have all these memories of kind of hanging on his coattails, going from store to store and seeing him just go in and love what he did. He had such a passion for his work. I just thought, "I want to do this." I didn't quite know what it was, but at the essence that I got from my dad really was if you want something, go create it yourself. So, at age 19, I started my first business when I was in college and it was just to make a few extra bucks and doing greeting cards and poems for people and I was making some extra cash.

Then, people just started asking me, "I don't need a poem, Allison, but do you brochures? Do you buy radio? Do you do television?" I would just kind of hear my dad's voice in my ear and he would say, "If someone asked you to do something even if you don't know how to do it, just say yes and figure it out." We've all been in that position before.

John Bowen: If they're willing to write a check for you, then definitely that's something to at least consider.

Allison: Yes, definitely. It has been worthwhile, of course, but that's really how it took off. I had no idea what I was doing, but it was kind of trial by fire, and that's how I got into the entrepreneurial game.

John: How did you move from kind of the agency type business if I read correctly to kind of what you're doing now?

Allison: So, in that, I built a full-service advertising and PR firm. It's called the Barali Group, based in San Diego. Clients were Ben & Jerry's, Supercuts. It was a crazy time. I was making a lot of money. The business grew very fast. I was young and just somewhat clueless as far as business went. What happened was I ended up really hitting a wall.

John: I was a lot smarter when I was younger.

Allison: Really?

John: Well, I don't know if this was the case for you, Allison, but I was very confident and young. I had a bunch of success early on, too. Then, kind of suddenly, everything hit, and you learn that there's a couple of things you didn't do in building the foundation, but some great lessons learned.

Allison: I'm so grateful for that time now. It wasn't planned this way, but my first business was a marketing company. So, I was able to apply those skills. Marketing is everything in business. I was building business flying by the seat of my pants. There's only so many hours in the day. I just really fell apart. I ended up having a terrible car accident. It was just a big wake-up call for me. It was a miracle that I survived. My daughter was young then. I walked away from everything. It was pretty abrupt, kind of shocked a lot of people. I said, "I'm going to do this over and I'm going to build it on my terms. I've got to get the systems and the processes and the strategies and really treat this like a solid business." So, that really changed everything for me.

John: That's great. I mean, so often, all of us kind of wish that we could do it over along the way. This is one of the things that experience and having challenges along the way, and then, really, having the privilege as you do of coaching so many successful entrepreneurs on

scaling up. It just really makes a difference. That's why I wanted you join us. One of the things, Allison, I'd love to hear ... I was going over kind of the way you organize your thoughts. One of the things in helping business owners you're really big on is this clarity of vision. Maybe I am sure that everyone whether they are watching this podcast or listening to it, we all ... I'm working on scaling up our business now. There's so many opportunities to not do it right. I mean, what would be some of the guidance that you would share?

Allison: Well, I think kind of like what I did earlier, you jump into business for one reason, but you grow a business for another reason. So, often times the business owners get stuck still working the business the way they did when they started. What has to happen to really scale up, John, is that you have to have a clear vision of where you're headed, which sounds so basic and we all know that. But how many business owners really take the time to step away from their business and create a clear, strategic vision? That is the deeper why, what this is all about, what kind of team do you want to create? What are the revenue streams and how are they impacting people? Where do you want to be in the next three to five years for leveraging your company? And just really breaking it down.

Not only does that help you know where you're going and remind you when you have those stressful times, but also that's how you're going to attract high level people in your team. It's how you're going to motivate your team. It makes your clients feel like that they're part of some bigger mission. So, I think that is the first place to start. I don't know necessarily we know those things in the early years in business, but as we get in further then we say, "Where do I really want to take this company?"

John: Well, Allison, one of the things that I find as we're starting a business is it's not that hard to have the vision when there's nothing there. So you put together a little abbreviated business plan of what you're going to do, but what I find is we start having success, usually we're good at something. I'll use Michael Gerber's E-Myth here. We're good technician at whatever we do. I grew up on the financial services side. It sounds I'm the marketing agency type. Everybody's got something they were good at, and we kind of run with that business often times. Then we reach that inability to go much further on ourselves, or maybe we have some breakthrough success, which can even be more dangerous. What happens is as we have more success, more opportunities, and we start doing a lot of everything, the vision gets really cloudy not only for ourselves, but for those around us.

You talked about stepping away. How do we do that? Because, I mean, we're so busy doing it, doing it, doing it type thing that getting that clarity is just critical so we can ... We all know we should focus, focus, focus, but if we're not clear what we're focusing on, it gets difficult.

Allison: Right. There's more distraction now than ever. I'll just give you an example. One of my clients ... Actually, a couple own this construction company. They build these big

refrigeration ... big refrigerators that go into Whole Foods. So, they're major projects. They've been in business for 10 years when they came to work with me. They were just doing a lot of everything. They were caught working in the business. They were thinking very small. Their revenue had kind of capped out at a certain level and just wasn't growing. When I was able to work with them and my team and get them to step away from it through our mentoring, through our events, and things like that, we began to put the infrastructure in place. They are now in the level of CEO working on the business. They have more of a senior team and project managers, but the big shift that happened was that they began to see themselves as leaders. They began to go after bigger deals.

Instead of going after the hundred thousand-dollar jobs, they're going after the million dollar jobs and up. They're being seen now within their industry as one of the bigger players. It's just there's such a shift that has to happen. I think it's really mental is the first thing that has to happen. When you have that vision and then all of a sudden you see the possibility like, "Wait a minute. I really could build a business like that," and then things begin to follow suit. You can't do it in the weeds of your business. You can't do it 30 minutes over lunch or a meeting in the evening. You really have to take the time away and that's the fear that business owners have is stepping away. If you can take those two, three days even, that will just really change the course of your company.

John: Well, I find, Allison, that what happens is if you're this good technician, you can build a business. It depends how hard you work, what niche it is. You can kind of muscle it to somewhere between a million and five million of revenue. I mean, that's a nice business. You can have a nice livelihood, but at the same time that's not scaling. That's not really a business, you're thinking small. One of the biggest things is, as you said, is getting that clarity of vision, that focus, the one thing that we're going to do really well and being able to step up. Another thing I love that you talk about is this whole concept of ... because once we start scaling up, we can't do everything on our own. I mean, we have to have other people. I love this concept that you have of hiring forward. Tell me a little bit about that.

Allison: Well, most business owners or companies will begin to hire when they have maxed their bandwidth like, "I'm so overwhelmed," or, "People are making mistakes and things are falling through the cracks."

John: Usually a little late they're doing it, too. That's a last, last minute type thing.

Allison: Exactly. Then what happens is you're desperate when you hire and you don't take the time to really find the right people and regret it later. So, hiring forward, what that means is to think, "Where do I want this division of my company to go? What is a revenue stream that we really want to take off? Or is there another level of care we want for our customers so that we can increase our retention?" Even though we don't necessarily have the business

there yet, we hire the person and we put them there. What that does is it's like watering a flower. It grows and it blossoms. So, you're hiring forward. You're putting there with the intention that that is going to grow and that's been really successful for my company and also for our clients.

John: I have tried it both ways where, you, it's crisis mode. I had business in the investment world growing it 70% a year and we were just constantly doing it. I had such a good COO, but we were having a hard time hiring forward. That just created this whole problem. We hit the pause button for a while on the growth and then restarted it. We ended up going full cycle and it was really my most successful firm by doing that. Today, I am a big believer. I don't use the term hiring for it. I will use it now though, because I love it.

Allison: Go ahead. It's yours.

John: Well, I'll give attribution to Allison, but the part that I really like is I can just think of all ... I've brought in the last 90 days about 10 people. We didn't really need any single one, but we are scaling up, and I wanted them. I think the analogy of the flower going ... We're just really starting to hit that curve. They're all at the various levels, but they're really hitting their stride and they understand the business. They're going to be able to contribute versus putting them in the middle of the fire and hoping they survive along the way.

Allison: Right. We've all done that. I'm not saying that that doesn't still happen, because the growth can catch up with you all of the sudden. I think that's really more preparing for growth and planning to scale.

John: Well, one of the things that I want to talk you about because as we're talking about scaling up, and I think this is a big one. So many of us really struggle with this is our role as an entrepreneur. I mean, we're going and we're thinking, "I'm the boss. I've got to make this all happen." You have this whole concept of being a leader, not a boss. There's a pretty big distinction you make. So, why don't you share that with us because I think that is one that is one that's so often, particularly when we're overwhelmed, we miss out on.

Allison: Well, what I know for sure is what motivates and inspires me is when I see a leader that is empowering others instead of telling them what to do. I mean, we all know that, that idea of you can take a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. You sure could inspire them to gallop if they saw the big field in front of them. So, I know that's how I like to be and around people like that as well. I've really had to work on that. I don't know if it's necessarily natural. I remember the shift for me when there was a time in my company, I remember looking out at my employees thinking, "I have no idea what they're doing and they have no idea what I'm doing." We're operating in our own silos. When I finally let them into my brain

and the vision of the company and how important their role is in the growth of the company, it's as if everybody then can come together and build this vision together.

That's not from a boss giving orders. That's from a leader that inspires and empowers and that can also include stretching people to do things that they don't think that they're capable of. I've definitely done a lot of that. I mean, I want to see my team members, my employees grow as human beings as individuals, not just within my company.

John: Well, one of the things that it's such a freeing thing for entrepreneurs. I mean, to me, it's amazing because I was kind of more the boss, my early years. I'm telling people what to do and I'd like to say I was reasonably intelligent and knew what they should do, but the answer was I'm not sure I was either type thing. Then, when you give them that vision, you help provide it, you enroll them in the vision, and then really unleash them. And particularly, if you've hired Ford, boy, they come up with so many different ways. I mean, just today, I made some really surprises in my businesses of some new things that my team has come up with. That's so freeing, I mean, because we're under so much pressure as entrepreneurs and we want to take everything on our own. You know what? Stop it. I mean, it's amazing when you unleash that power.

Allison: Well, you're keeping your business small if you're doing that. I've definitely been guilty of that many, many times because we worry. It's our baby and we don't want the mistakes to happen, but if you think about it with your own children, if you are micromanaging your children, they will never spread their wings to fly. They will never have the ability or the privilege to see what they're capable of.

John: That's great. We are kids hanging out together in business as well. One of the things I want to do ... We were talking about how we're just so focused on just doing it and the day-to-day and getting everything done, hitting the numbers, delivering these world-class experience to our clients because capitalism does work. The more value we deliver to the right people, the more successful the team is. One of the things that you do and you lead great events doing this and certainly on the coaching side is telling people to step away from their business. Tell me a little bit of how you frame and think through that stepping away and why it's so productive.

Allison: Well, when you are within your business. I mean, just in the last hour, let's say at my company, I was doing like three things at once: Handling phone calls, emails, having a meeting with somebody over here. We're natural at doing that. That's not where the big leaps happen. The big leaps happen when you literally are away from your company and this is what we do with the entrepreneurs that we work with. We have events that we lead throughout the year, but you're in a creative bubble. You're there for two, three days, and then the idea start happening like after day one, after day two, and you begin to see your business in a

whole new way. So, the things that frustrate you, the things that are keeping you small, are challenging you, you're able to see that more 30,000-foot view and go, "Now I get what I can do. All I got to do is move this over here," or, "I didn't even think about this whole other revenue stream. We're missing thousands of dollars over here."

It's also a way to get re-engaged with your own vision and re-inspired. That's important, and of course, connect with other business owners that get you. I mean, you know that. That's super important.

John: This is something that ... you know what I love, Allison, is you walk the talk too because ... I mean, we met a mastermind group that where fellow CEOs coming together and we're going outside of our industries and we're bringing back to ... I just had my mastermind group of financial top world-class wealth managers, 230 at a meeting in San Francisco for three days and it was just phenomenal. By getting together in a group like that, just the synergies and hearing from their peers what's working and what's not, it's just so powerful. As you said, the phone is ringing. The people ... You got a line outside your office. It doesn't happen that way unless you get out.

Allison: You need to be able to think. Then there's also, too, is there's something magical that happens. If you and I are talking and we're brainstorming on your business for instance, because I'm not emotionally connected and I'm an observer, I'm able to see the big picture where you're not because you're so in it. I might say, "Hey, John, did you think of this?" Or you might say, "I heard you say that," and that sparked a whole new idea for me.

John: I'm a big believer. I didn't mention this to you, Allison, but I spend over a hundred thousand a year going to these type of events like yours. The reason what I do that for is not because I don't have anything else to do in life. It's I just find it every time I do that I'm getting better clarity, kind of the getting clear on the vision, what I want to build businesses that are going to support the quality of life for all the stakeholders. So, my [inaudible 00:24:26] interest myself, but my teammates, and obviously, the clients, strategic partners and that type. It's only by going now that I see it, because we all know that we have to continue to grow. It's either grow or die kind of thing. Days of just being level and hanging in there. It's pretty ugly. One of the thoughts I wanted to ask you about, because you and I both talk about influencers. How do our fellow entrepreneurs use their relationships with influencers and like yourself and others?

Allison: Well, I think it all comes down to relationships. When you meet somebody for the first time whether they are somebody influential or not, you're not going to come up to them and say, "Hey, will you do this for me?" You might, but-

John: Actually, I would say a lot of times I've had somebody come up and say that, though.

Allison: Right, and you're a little turned off.

John: Well, it's very seldom do I do it too, which would be the other side of it.

Allison: So, it's about making friendships and that's the fun part anyway. It takes a while to kind of nurture those relationships and offering support. I always come in mind with, "How can I support you? What can I do for you?" I believe in karma as well. Just really putting myself in the right places, investing in my business, in myself has opened so many doors for me. Just the people I've been able to meet and the introductions that I've had, whether that's helped with book publishing or being in Entrepreneur magazine or getting people on my stage that I really admire as well is all from that idea of building relationships and giving, but putting yourself strategically in the right places.

John: I call it strategic stumbling that we're being thoughtful in the direction we're going. We can't plan out everything in life, but as we do that, these opportunities present themselves. When you share your vision with not only your teammates but others, these influencers, and you're looking to help them first into the extent you can create value, often times there's an ongoing conversation that there's some synergies. If there's not, often times they can point you in a direction to a resource, a partner that can change your life. I mean, for most of us, one strategic partner could change your business life. I mean, I've gone the extreme, Allison. I had a good friend. He ran into somebody that was looking to acquire a business. He was Canadian in the States and they had the eight largest, financial service firm. I had a really fast-growing one. He says, "Let me go ahead and set you up with a call with John." He did.

The guy bought us for many millions of dollars. Actually, Steve charged him a \$150,000 for the phone call. He said, "Can I get a little finder's fee if the deal closes?" He says, "What do you want?" He says, "A hundred and fifty." Then he literally just handed him the phone. So, there's value created everywhere by doing this stuff here.

Allison: Right, exactly, because what happens is you build a trust and you get to that level. You really want to help other people and give back and it does. I know. I've had introductions like that that have transformed my company. So, if people are questioning, "Should I take the time to step away? Should I invest and do that?" Well, unless you want to have your business take 10 times longer to grow and struggle a lot more, if that's what you want to do, well, then don't do that.

John: Let's go to the next segment. I want to go to resources because I am sure everyone is really thinking there's some huge opportunities here that they can turn to. Allison, I'm going to put up your website for those who are on the video podcast. If you're on the audio version, remember, you can always go to AES Nation. I'll point to it above my head here.

AESNation.com. I have the transcription and there's so many great points, but you get tons of resources. I mean, you have a very thoughtful and well-done website. So, tell us a little bit about it.

Allison: Thank you. Well, you've got my website address there, AllisonMaslan.com. Let's see. We have an online television show that we run every Wednesday at four o'clock Pacific. You can get it right there. On my website, you'll see. We also stream live onto Facebook. We have incredible guests. We'll have to have you on my show, John, on there.

John: I was watching videos and you do it first class here too.

Allison: Thank you. We built a really cool studio at the office. In fact, we're going to be shooting later today. I've been on Forbes, in Success, in Entrepreneurs. I've got a lot of articles of mine that are there as well. Then there's also talks about our mastermind, which is Pinnacle Global Network, so you can get all the information there. We work with business owners all over the country.

John: The other thing I want you mentioned to me before we turned on the camera. I'm going to put it up on the screen because I thought this was ... I mean, I think the events are great, a great way to just to get know Allison beyond the podcast. Tell us a little bit about the CEO Business Growth Kit. I've got that on my mind as well.

Allison: We work with business owners on two levels whether they are at the building phase or in the growth phase. I'm guessing the people watching this are really in that scale, growth phase. So, I'm going give you a free training. You can get it right from my website there. It's a five-video training where I really break out my ... I call it the SCALEit Method, which is strategic vision, cashflow, alliance of the team, leadership, and execution. Basically, your whole blueprint is scale. I've got charts. I'm super visual. That's my gift for you.

John: I really appreciate it, Allison. Let me go into the last ... I want to just share the key takeaways that I have. I'd recommend really that you go and execute. Now, you can always go to AES Nation, get the transcript. There have been a lot of little subtle things. These are things that many of us as entrepreneurs know, but quite honestly, Allison, we're not doing them. I mean, getting clarity on vision is just so important and particularly as you have more and more success, it's harder and harder focusing on kind of working always toward that vision and building that business and support the quality of life that you want for all stakeholders, your clients, your customers, the teammates. Allison talked about systems and process and rebuilding, but none of this works unless you get clear where you're going.

Also, a term that I'm going to repurpose and I'll give attribution to Allison, too, is I love this hiring forward. Nothing great is ever created without someone else helping you. That's so

important and it's hiring before you need them and cultivating them and having the team cultivate them so they're really part. Be a leader, not a boss. Boy, this is a hard learned one for all of us. If you're still in that command and control mode, you got so much freedom if you follow Allison's advice and stepping away from the business. A great place to do it is with Allison. I mean, Allison, this is the first time we met, but I got to tell you, so, all the fellow entrepreneurs around you and that knew you and they were looking for advice and had been to events. Really, in the end, it's all about relationships. This is the only way we can really make a difference.

So, Allison, I want to thank you again for being a guest and sharing your insights and really making a difference for everyone out there. Let's go out and make that difference. Your clients, all those future clients and customers are counting on you. Don't let them down. Execute, execute, execute.

A Second Opinion on Your Finances

A Complimentary Service from Financial Advisor Select for the Members of AES Nation

Dear Fellow Entrepreneur,

Like many members of AESNation, I'm a serial entrepreneur. In addition to co-founding AESNation, I'm the founder and CEO of Financial Advisor Select, a firm dedicated to helping successful people make informed financial decisions by introducing them to top financial advisors.

If you're like many successful entrepreneurs, you and your family already have a relationship with a financial advisor. You may even work with several financial advisors. If you are completely satisfied with these relationships and confident that your finances are on track toward helping you achieve all that is most important to you, we congratulate you.

However, you may not be entirely satisfied. You may be wondering if there's a financial advisor who is better-suited to address your family's very specific financial challenges. If so, you are not alone. In today's uncertain economic climate, many successful entrepreneurs are wondering if they have the right financial advisor.

To help you find out if you are currently being served well, Financial Advisor Select is offering a complimentary second-opinion service to all qualified members of AES Nation. Simply [contact us](#) to schedule an exploratory call with one of our personal financial concierges. We will introduce you to a financial advisor who we believe has the ability to address your particular needs. The financial advisor will then meet with you and provide you with a second opinion on your finances. There is absolutely no cost or obligation to you.

[Find out more about how Financial Advisor Select can help you and your family.](#)

Why do we offer this service? Because at Financial Advisor Select, we have just one purpose: to help successful individuals and families achieve financial peace of mind by connecting them to top financial advisors in their communities. We look forward to assisting you.

Best of success,



John Bowen
Founder and CEO
Financial Advisor Select