

Five to Watch



By design, the 2015 edition of the IA 25—this year, the IA 35—is meant to take the long view, specifically looking at the people who have influenced the industry in its first 35 years. We would be remiss, however, not to honor those visionaries and business builders who are influential now, will be over the next year and may well be for the next 35 years. One editor made a strong argument, for instance, in favor of Michael Kitces, the polymath of financial planning, as being someone who is already among the most influential people in and around the industry; similar arguments could be made for all this year's honorees.

Take Laurie Belew, who in addition to her day job as a planner at FJY Financial (that's Fox, Joss and Yankee) and chair of the firm's investment committee, is also the 2015 president of the FPA's NexGen community. Using their own experiences, she literally wrote the paper with two colleagues on how to implement an internship program at a planning firm (called "Implementing Internships").

Through his writings and speeches, and the generosity of his online time, Kitces has become the instigator of so many interesting and important discussion threads online and off that his influence is only matched by the number of his frequent flier miles.

Wade Pfau has been on the IA 25 list before for his ground-breaking—and conventional-wisdom-challenging—work on retirement planning. Like the other mem-

bers of the Five to Watch, social media is where many followers first met Pfau: His Retirement Research blog—WPfau.BlogSpot.com—is a must-visit for planners interested in the best ways to save for, and withdraw from, a retirement portfolio.

Cam Marston is one of the funniest speakers you'll ever hear, but his humor is an entrée into some of the hard facts and insights into how the generations differ in expectations and behavior. If you doubt you could learn any more about Gen X or Gen Y or millennials or boomers as clients, you're mistaken, but if you hold a position of authority at a planning firm or a partner to advisors and you have anything to do with hiring young people, you must listen to Marston.

If most advisors have finally realized that they should be active on social media—or at least their firm should be—one of the people you can thank is Clara Shih, the founder and CEO of Hearsay Social (and a board member at Starbucks at age 29, taking the place of her now mentor, Sheryl Sandberg). Shih and Hearsay developed the means by which large companies—customers include Raymond James, HD Vest and Vanguard, to name but a few—could use social media for business purposes, and do it in a way that keeps the compliance people happy, no mean feat in itself.

It will be interesting to see in which directions these young visionaries lead the industry next.—JG