

# The Rise And Rise Of Family Offices: Larger Scale, Sharper Focus, And Talent That Mirrors Family Values

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For ultra-high-net-worth families, discretion is paramount. But behind the veil of secrecy lies a fascinating ecosystem of family offices - the private wealth management firms that cater to the world's wealthiest individuals and families. To understand these emerging trends, 354 single family offices were surveyed from around the world between September and December 2023 for [Deloitte's Family Office Insights Series](#). These

offices oversee an average assets under management (AUM) of US\$2.0 billion, while the associated families have an average wealth of US\$3.8 billion. Collectively, this totals an estimated US\$708 billion in AUM and US\$1.3 trillion in family wealth. This shadowy corner of finance wields enormous influence - yet finding and retaining top talent to run these complex operations remains a unique challenge.

## Trust: The Bedrock of Recruitment

"A Single Family Office (SFO), by definition, involves private individuals who naturally place privacy and confidentiality above any other consideration," says Rajaa Mekouar of [Calista Direct Investors](#). "This means that before hiring any individual, the family behind the SFO will need to trust their staff more comprehensively than a more corporate or institutional employer."

Indeed, trust is the foundation of family office recruitment. With intimate access to family's finances, investments, and personal affairs, employees must clear an exceptionally high bar. "I've come across families who conduct private enquiries on potential hires, and others who ask for a long list of references before proceeding with a job offer," notes Mekouar. "Working for a SFO is like a marriage, which requires a careful 360 consideration."

This painstaking approach stands in stark contrast to the rapid-fire hiring of Wall Street. But in the realm of multigenerational wealth preservation, stability and discretion trump all else. High turnover poses an existential risk that ultra-wealthy families are eager to avoid.

## The Talent Wars

As family offices grow in sophistication, the war for top talent has intensified. No longer content with staid trust and estate planning, today's family offices are diving into direct private equity deals, venture capital, and other complex investments. This evolution has family offices increasingly competing for talent with blue-chip financial firms.



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"In the larger institution-like FO structures, staff is being poached away from PE firms at great cost," explains Mekouar. "The SFO needs to make up for potential foregone carried interest of the new hire who had a senior PE investment position at the PE firm."

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In the U.S., where the family office sector is most mature, compensation packages are inching closer to those of elite investment firms. According to [Deloitte Private's recent report](#), the average family office surveyed manages a significant \$2 billion in assets with just 15 employees - a testament to the calibre of talent required.

But money isn't everything in this rarefied world. "To retain staff, SFOs count primarily on their long-term outlook," notes Mekouar. "They don't hire and fire like an investment bank. They will pamper their staff and partially integrate them into the family fabric. The financial incentives come after."

This holistic approach to retention - blending job security, work-life balance, and a sense of purpose - gives family offices a unique edge in the talent wars. For many finance professionals burned out by the grind of Wall Street or consulting, family offices offer an attractive alternative.

## The Key Players

While family offices prize anonymity, a handful of influential figures are known within industry circles as the preeminent operators in this space. These individuals often hop between multiple family offices over their careers, leveraging their expertise and trusted relationships.

Keith Rook, president of Weiler Arnow Management Co., a single family office in the United States, has been in the family office business for over 35 years. He's witnessed the sector's dramatic evolution firsthand:

"Things are becoming more institutionalised. Family offices are hiring top-quality people. They are really focusing on their team, their investment in technology, and in getting outside consultants and top-quality managers."

On the investment side, few rival the track record of Matt Norman, chief investment officer at Kenjiro Private Office. Norman has helped steer the London-based family office of a third-generation Japanese wealth-holding family towards a globally diversified multi-asset portfolio. His expertise in navigating the transition from local to global investing is highly sought after, particularly among Asian family offices looking to expand their horizons.

Another family office virtuoso is Paulo Bilezikjian, chief investment officer of Analytica Capital, a single family office based in Luxembourg.

Bilezikjian has keen insights into the pitfalls of staffing newly established family offices: "Younger families often staff their family offices primarily on the basis of trust. They bring in someone they have worked with in the past, say, the former chief financial officer of their company that was sold. In these cases, returns are not as strong as they could be due to the lack of



insight and relevant experience of these professionals in investment roles."

## **The Cultural Dimension**

While U.S. family offices increasingly resemble institutional investors, European family offices tend to place greater emphasis on cultural fit and legacy. "In Europe, cultural fit and geographical considerations matter quite a bit and you rarely see SFOs hiring senior staff who do not speak the family's original language," notes Mekouar.

This cultural affinity extends beyond mere linguistics. European family offices often prefer candidates who share the family's values, background, and worldview. "There's a sense that staff should be able to seamlessly integrate into the family's social milieu," explains one family office executive. "They want someone who can discuss art at a gallery opening just as comfortably as they can analyse a balance sheet."

The focus on cultural alignment can sometimes trump raw financial acumen. This emphasis on fit over finance highlights a crucial point: family offices are, at their core, highly personal enterprises. Unlike institutional investors focused solely on returns, family offices must balance financial goals with a family's values, dynastic ambitions, and desire for privacy.

## **The Next Generation**

As wealth transfers to millennials and Gen Z, family offices are evolving to meet the demands of a new generation. This shift is reshaping hiring practices and organisational structures.

According to Deloitte Private's report, a staggering 90% of family offices serve first- (41%), second- (30%), or third- (19%) generation families. This reflects the recent surge in new wealth creation, with 68% of all family offices being established after the millennium.



This generational change is driving demand for expertise in areas like impact investing, cryptocurrency, and digital assets. Family offices are increasingly seeking out candidates with backgrounds in tech and sustainability to complement traditional finance skill sets.

The talent pool itself is changing, with more young professionals viewing family offices as an attractive career path. "We're seeing top MBA graduates choose family offices over traditional finance roles," says one industry insider. "They're drawn to the ability to work on diverse projects and the potential for greater work-life balance."

## **The Future of Family Wealth Management**

It is obvious that family offices, particularly single family offices, are becoming bigger, better, and stronger than ever before. Operating in near-complete privacy, these institutions are attracting top-tier talent from across the financial sector and beyond, skillfully integrating these professionals into the unique fabric of each family's legacy and values.

As Keith Rook, a 35-year veteran of the industry, notes, "Family offices allow you to think in decades, not quarters. That's incredibly rare in today's financial world." This long-term perspective, combined with the intimacy and flexibility of the family office structure, creates a uniquely appealing environment for many of finance's brightest minds.

The evolution of family offices shows no signs of slowing. As wealth becomes increasingly concentrated among a global elite, these institutions will only grow in influence and sophistication. The quiet movers and shakers who staff these operations may shun the spotlight, but their impact on the financial world - and beyond - is profound and far-reaching.

Moreover, as we stand on the brink of a technological renaissance, it will be fascinating to watch how family offices adapt and innovate. Will they embrace artificial intelligence and blockchain technology? How will they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by digital assets and decentralised finance?





In an era of algorithmic trading and short-term thinking, family offices stand as bastions of patient capital and long-term stewardship. As they continue to evolve, attract elite talent, and push the boundaries of wealth management, one thing is certain: in the shadows of the world's wealthiest families, a financial revolution is quietly unfolding.

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