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## **SEI Report: Investors Directly Equate Objectivity to the Quality of Their Wealth Management Relationships**

### **Wealth Managers Strive to Be More Client-Centric, Struggle to Achieve It**

OAKS, PA -- (MARKET WIRE) -- 05/05/11 -- According to research released today by SEI (NASDAQ: SEIC), both wealth managers and investors agree that objectivity -- focusing on clients' needs first -- is the key to establishing wealth management as a relationship-oriented business. However, the research shows that wealth managers struggle to demonstrate objectivity in the delivery of their services. The new global report, *Objectivity and the Client Experience*, examines clients' expectations about objectivity and how wealth managers deliver and incorporate objectivity into their investment processes, product selection, and client relationships.

The research reveals that both investors and wealth managers agree objectivity is more important than the investment management process or the delivery of products and services. When asked how they define the term, both groups ranked wealth managers' "understanding the situation and needs" of their clients as the top definition, chosen by 39 percent of investors and 31 percent of wealth managers. This was the most frequent response for both groups, with other answers fragmented around various investment-related practices, such as having an unbiased investment process and delivering appropriate solutions.

"Although independence has been an industry buzzword for some time now, objectivity is emerging as an equally important topic. Whereas independence is more closely related to ownership and conflicts of interest, objectivity is associated with advice, which is at the heart of what wealth managers provide to their clients," said Jim Morris, Senior Vice President for SEI's [Global Wealth Services](#). "By being more client-centric and placing clients' goals and objectives at the forefront of the investment process, wealth managers will not only survive in this industry, but thrive in the face of growing competition and industry challenges."

For investors, a client-centric approach is often the difference between a positive and a negative experience with a wealth manager. However, wealth managers have yet to successfully find a way to demonstrate objectivity in the delivery of their services and, consequently, have yet to satisfy this client expectation. When asked how they would deliver objectivity in their wealth management offering, responses shifted away from client-focused

strategies and back to the comfort zone of services and product selection, activities which have no true bearing on investors' definition of objectivity. Only three North American firms surveyed mentioned in-depth investor risk profiling as a strategy to delivering objectivity, a strategy commonly acknowledged as essential in ensuring that investors' needs are understood.

Objectivity and the Client Experience is the third paper in a series of five topic of interest papers exploring the changing relationships between wealth managers and clients. The findings are the result of in-depth interviews comparing the views of 250 private clients and wealth management providers, including banks, independent trust companies, and investment advisors. For a full version of the report, published by SEI in collaboration with Scorpio Partnership, please visit [www.seic.com/ObjectivityUS](http://www.seic.com/ObjectivityUS).

#### *About SEI's Global Wealth Services*

SEI's Global Wealth Services is an outsourcing solution for wealth managers encompassing [wealth processing services](#) and [wealth management programs](#), coupled with [business process expertise](#). The integrated offering aims to provide wealth management organizations the infrastructure, operations and administrative support necessary to capitalize on their strategic objectives in a constantly shifting market.

#### *About SEI*

SEI (NASDAQ: SEIC) is a leading global provider of investment processing, fund processing, and investment management business outsourcing solutions that help corporations, financial institutions, financial advisors, and ultra-high-net-worth families create and manage wealth. As of March 31, 2011, through its subsidiaries and partnerships in which the company has a significant interest, SEI manages or administers \$429 billion in mutual fund and pooled assets or separately managed assets, including \$179 billion in assets under management and \$250 billion in client assets under administration. For more information, visit [www.seic.com](http://www.seic.com).

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