

# WHY FIRST MERCANTILE ?

## Plan Sponsors

### **AN UNBIASED APPROACH TO INVESTMENT SELECTION**

First Mercantile scans the universe of institutional investment managers to identify potential candidates for inclusion on our investment platform. Our Advisor Review Committee then employs an extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine which managers are suitable for First Mercantile plans. Utilizing Collective Investment Trusts (CITs), First Mercantile provides a vehicle for participants to gain access to institutional money managers regardless of their account size. This independent and objective approach is also applied to mutual funds and ETFs to create a well rounded investment platform with no proprietary funds.

### **MEANINGFUL FIDUCIARY SERVICES**

As the investment fiduciary to the CITs, we afford an extra layer of fiduciary protection. We also understand your fiduciary liability and provide tools to help you meet your fiduciary responsibilities. These services include on demand reporting, scheduled reporting and Deposit Watchdog. Deposit Watchdog is a proprietary tool that allows plan sponsors to monitor the timely submission of employee salary deferrals.

### **MARKET LEADER IN FEE DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY**

The Plan Fees Summary Report clearly identifies the two components of our fee structure: Annual Investment Expense and Plan Servicing Fee. This report is available on demand from the plan sponsor website and can be made available to plan participants if you choose. Your fee information will always be available to you on demand.

### **LEVEL COMPENSATION AND FLEXIBILITY**

First Mercantile and your Investment Consultant receive the same compensation across all the assets of your plan. Our level compensation structure supports your fiduciary responsibilities and your compliance with ERISA. Our flexible fee structure allows us to reduce your fee as assets grow ensuring a competitive solution now and into the future.

### **A RIGOROUS DUE DILIGENCE PROCESS**

As trustee of the CITs, First Mercantile's fiduciary role is of paramount importance. As such, the ongoing due diligence we perform in our opinion is among the most rigorous in the industry. First Mercantile employs various annual, quarterly, monthly and daily monitoring tools to:

- Ensure each CIT complies with its stated objectives
- Evaluate performance beyond mere comparison of trailing returns
- Comprehensively evaluate each investment manager as to the stability of the firm; the quality and depth of its investment personnel; its investment philosophy, process and performance; portfolio and compliance.

### **AN INTEGRATED INVESTMENT AND PLAN DESIGN SOLUTION**

We work with Investment Consultants and Third Party Administrators (TPAs) to create an integrated solution for your plan. Investment Consultants assist with investments at the plan level and for employee education. TPAs offer a local presence focusing on plan design and compliance. Administration is about more than a Form 5500 and compliance testing. A TPA provides valuable support for your overall business needs.

## **MULTIPLE ASSET ALLOCATION OPTIONS**

Streamline employee education and equip your participants for success by offering one of our asset allocation solutions designed to provide a diversified investment platform for plan participants.

- LifeStyle Target Risk or Target Date - Constructed primarily from First Mercantile's institutional money managers, the LifeStyle Funds offer the benefits of institutional investing, diversified investment allocation and ongoing account management.
- Russell LifePoint Risk and Target Date Portfolios - Russell brings their expertise for asset allocation funds to the retirement plan arena through risk and target date funds built from institutional money managers.

## **ROBUST PLAN-LEVEL AND PARTICIPANT-LEVEL REPORTING**

We know your day is spent managing your company. We make it easy for you to manage the company's retirement plan by offering efficient plan management tools for submitting deposits, requesting distributions, tracking participant activity and much more. Participants access [www.yourinvestmentaccount.com](http://www.yourinvestmentaccount.com) for account management solutions such as investment education, online enrollment, deferral changes (optional), loan requests (optional), rate of return estimates, eStatements and much more.

## **A PASSION FOR CLIENT SERVICE**

First Mercantile understands that service is a vital part of the solution we offer. A Dedicated Conversion Coordinator will ease the pressure of the conversion process by managing the tasks for you. Our dedicated Client Representatives and Relationship Managers form a team for reactive and proactive plan management to ensure your questions are answered, information is provided upon request and you are aware of product enhancements. A Participant Call Center is available for participant requests, ensuring those requests are fulfilled while removing this responsibility from your HR or Payroll Departments.

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