

## THE FORMATION AND HISTORY OF PARADIGM NORTON

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Paradigm Norton has its roots in two organisations. Norton Partners was founded in 1980 by David Norton (1951 - 2005). In the ensuing years David, ably supported by Lin Ashurst (Financial Planning) and Steve Griffiths (Tax and Estates), gathered around him a strong team of professionally qualified financial planners and accountants and together they built a business which gained a reputation for providing excellent client service, incorporating imaginative, bespoke solutions.

Paradigm Capital Management was founded by Barry Horner in 2001, again with the aim of providing a service to those clients who were seeking individual attention and were keen to embrace the fee only concept which was a key element of the Paradigm offering from day one.

The two firms shared much in common in terms of values, and were also both Bristol based. When David Norton became ill in 2004, therefore, the subsequent formation of Paradigm Norton Financial Planning was a logical step. In April 2005 the Paradigm team moved from their offices in Queen Charlotte St to join their new-found colleagues who had out of town office space at The Granary, in Tickenham, near Clevedon, and the new firm was born. William Pratt, who had been part of the Paradigm start up team in 2001, became a director of the new firm to join Barry as co-founder of the newly merged business. Earlier, in 2002, the clients of Ronald Blue London had been purchased by Paradigm, at which point Richard Child, now a Director of Paradigm Norton, joined the team. Paradigm Norton Financial Planning therefore began life with a strong team serving an excellent client base, split mainly between Bristol and London.

Since 2005 the firm has gone from strength to strength. Much energy was devoted initially to ensuring the success of the merger. Integration teams were formed to ensure that each discipline within the firm took the best elements from their respective Norton and Paradigm roots. Team days were organised off-site and regular team meetings were established to ensure that everyone was kept completely up to date with developments.

Having outgrown the Granary, but wanting to retain the benefits of an "edge of city" location, new premises were sought. In 2007 Paradigm House was purchased and the team moved to its present home, which is 4 miles south west of Bristol City Centre, close enough to the business hub whilst remaining convenient for motorways, the rail network and Bristol Airport.

Paradigm Norton has gained a strong profile within its profession and amongst its client community. This has been due to a dual focus on its two main resources: its staff and its clients. Personal development amongst the staff team has been encouraged at all levels,

evidence of which is the pursuit and achievement of professional qualifications throughout the team, not just by those who are client facing. Clients who have chosen Paradigm Norton have often done so because of this high level of competence: hence the importance of continuing to invest in building the knowledge base and experience which provide the platform from which those clients are served. A Client Board has been formed which meets twice yearly. This affords a cross-section of clients the opportunity to feed back and comment concerning a wide variety of issues from service levels to development plans.

As Paradigm Norton's progress has been recognised within the world of financial planning, professional awards have followed. These are made for excellence in certain fields. A highlight has been the Citywire South-West Award, which Paradigm Norton received in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011, thus becoming the only firm in the UK to win this major award with such consistency. Please refer to the Paradigm Norton website [www.paradigmnorton.co.uk](http://www.paradigmnorton.co.uk) for an up to date list of Paradigm Norton's awards.

Having been encouraged by the effectiveness of the integration teams, the "Team" idea has been retained and is now applied within individual disciplines. It is the work carried out by the Investment Committee which paved the way for the Money Management Award for Best Investment Adviser in 2009. Similarly the Money Management Award for Best Retirement Planner obtained in 2010 reflects the work of our Retirement Planning Committee. Pioneering work in the field of providing Giving and Philanthropy advice to clients springs from the foundational work carried out by the Giving and Philanthropy Team. Similarly teams have been formed to manage important areas such as Best Practice and Finance.

Paradigm Norton's external profile has also steadily risen due to involvement with the development of our profession. In 2006, Barry Horner joined the Board of the Institute of Financial Planning, and in 2008-10 followed David Norton (1996-1998) by being elected to serve as president of the Institute. This was a great honour for our practice and an excellent opportunity for Barry to advance the causes which were of most importance to him, such as the growth in professionalism within financial planning, exemplified by the increasing levels of qualification which are being achieved, and the improved perception of financial planning by third parties such as members of co-professional bodies in law and accountancy.

At an early stage Paradigm Norton recognised the importance of strategic partnerships, where the expertise of qualified and experienced specialists could be harnessed to enhance the performance of the firm and its offering to clients. Hence the principle of outsourcing has been keenly embraced: This has involved:

- building productive and mutually beneficial relationships with firms of solicitors, thereby enhancing the service offered by each firm to their respective clients.

- negotiating favourable terms on behalf of their clients with providers of services, such as mortgage and general insurance advice, in which Paradigm Norton does not possess the requisite level of expertise.
- working with innovators in specialist areas such as wrap provision to ensure that the firm's clients are best served.
- employing the services of compliance, IT and HR specialists where the firm's capacity and/or expertise are limited.

Paradigm Norton's clients are encouraged to consider including giving and philanthropy as part of their financial planning. The Paradigm Norton Trust was formed in 2006 to enable the firm to model this approach itself. A proportion of the firm's profits are allocated to the trust each year, and members of the staff team, serving by rotation alongside the trustees, have responsibility for suggesting causes to support. Site visits have been organised to some of the Bristol charities that have been supported, and representatives of international charities that have been funded have made presentations at Paradigm House.

A significant development in 2009, saw Macquarie Bank take a minority stake in Paradigm Norton. As well as providing the financial underpinning to strengthen the firm in anticipation of legislation scheduled for 2012, which relates to financial resources requirements, this step also forms a springboard for growth. The PN Board has reached the conclusion that there are opportunities to grow the firm via acquisition without compromising the "boutique" sense of exclusivity and quality which is so valued by the firm's clients.

An expansion programme has therefore begun, headed by Matt Fowler, Operations Manager, who was recruited from KPMG in 2009. Each potential opportunity is being scrutinised with care, and the first acquisition under this initiative was of Torquay based David Jones Financial Planning (DJFP) in 2010. It was recognised that DJFP had much in common with Paradigm Norton, thus making the bringing together of our two organisations a logical step that was in the interests of both parties and their respective clients.

The Directors' desire to take action to ensure the future sustainability of the organisation is also demonstrated by their preparedness to extend ownership of the business. An Enterprise Management Incentive [EMI] scheme is now in place which is available to Senior Financial Planners by invitation, thus providing an incentive for those members of the team who are at the heart of client relationships to commit themselves to the firm long-term, whilst continuing to contribute to its success.

This is the story of Paradigm Norton Financial Planning so far. There will, no doubt, be many more chapters to be written. Whatever the twists and turns these contain, the aim is that the firm will continue to extend its scope and field of influence, with increasing numbers of clients being in receipt of a service which has a positive impact upon the way in which they conduct their lives.