

Managing Your Business

Managing Your Clients

Managing Wealth

# Nicole Milone's Journey as a Financial Advisor

LPL Advisor Showcase

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Practice Management



When COVID-19 lockdowns began in early 2020, one wealth management firm was already well prepared for the work-from-home transition. With clients in 23 states, remote client arrangements were common for [Money Counts](#), the all-female firm based in Charlotte, NC — including LPL Financial advisor Nicole Milone. “The difficult part was the emotional piece around it for ourselves and our families, and also for our clients,” Nicole said.

That genuine empathy has fueled the career growth for this 20-year industry veteran, who balances many roles in a given workday — advisor, volunteer, mentor, mom, and spouse — with the last two always receiving priority treatment.



## Where Nicole started

Nicole began her career in banking. That's when she sought the financial planning services of Money Counts founder Debbie Peterson. When Nicole had her first daughter, she was able to take an extended leave from her job to take care of her. Nicole attributes that freedom to Debbie's advanced planning. "She helped us to plan for our family and gave us the knowledge as to whether I could stay home with my kids or not. That was important to my husband and me. We wanted to know that I had the option," Nicole said.

With Debbie's financial guidance, Nicole was able to create a plan that was best for her family, while developing a closer relationship with Debbie, who eventually invited her to work for Money Counts. Nicole's introduction was gradual, and she began by taking on project work.

"I took a part-time role understanding how the business worked, installing a new customer relationship management system and the software that we use to put some processes in place so that we could bring on additional advisors," she said.

When Nicole had her second daughter - with Debbie's encouragement - she took a one-year leave from Money Counts to stay home with her daughter. "Debbie has always given us the flexibility in our practice to work when we would like, which is amazing and beautiful," she said.

When she returned to Money Counts, Nicole had a career change of heart. She sought to work on the client-side of her company and became licensed as a financial advisor. Her overarching goal is to help her clients become more financially responsible with their savings goals. "I coach them through cash flow management, that's our focus. How they handle their cash and what to do with it. It's all about education, keeping them informed," she said.

## Female-forward focus

“Money Counts is about empowering women, but also about empowering working moms, home moms, homemakers, and people who are looking to get back into the workforce,” Nicole said.

Everyone at Money Counts achieves a sensible work-life balance. “Because our whole practice is understanding, when it’s time to shut off and spend time with your family, you do,” Nicole said. She takes every Friday afternoon off to spend time with her two girls, which her office supports. “They think it’s a great idea.”

That kind of support is not lost on Nicole or her colleagues. “We have a trust between us. I think that we get that our mom instincts take care of each other and it’ll all work out,” she said.



## Giving back

Community involvement is important to Nicole, who shares her knowledge and expertise with others in her community, educating them about financial literacy. “I go out to schools and I do volunteer work with some of the finance teachers – talking with young individuals about college and what a budget looks like,” she said.

She’s also a board member of the [National Association of Women Business Owners](#), where she helps mentor other women, making sure they’re engaged. “I help women understand that they can run a business, empower them, and give them good financial advice if they want it,” she said.

“Being involved in the community is one of the most important things to me because I feel like you are your community and you want to support your community in any way that you can,” she said.

## LPL’s supporting role

Nicole applauds [LPL’s efforts to establish an inclusive workplace](#), where she is involved with its Women’s Business Forum as a representative and ambassador.

“I help generate momentum around women financial advisors within LPL. I think we have a community of women that we could build, empower, and strengthen each other from an education, from a process, from a customer relationship. I think LPL is really empowering us by building this community to support women,” she said.

For her day-to-day work, Nicole appreciates the efficiencies of LPL's tools, which she has leveraged over the years to help build her practice. Those include [RightCapital](#), [the Thrivalist suite](#), and [The Digital Office](#), among others.

"I've really tried to utilize all the tools that LPL has out there that I'm aware of. I'm sure there's more and more to come. I just love the opportunity to help grow my practice and know that I have a partner within LPL," she said.

## Sharing success

With Money Counts' flexibility and LPL Financial's operational support, Nicole has realized her professional potential, and the success she feels obligated to share with others. "I believe that we have a responsibility to help everyone. And the more we help each other and support and empower each other, the more successful you can be as an individual," she said.

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