

MONEY MATTERS



Buying Into Unbiased Advice

(NAPSA)—When it comes to retirement investing, unbiased information is invaluable. Unfortunately, it can also be difficult to find. Financial planners and brokerage firms don't always offer truly independent advice. Both often are paid incentives by mutual fund companies to sell certain funds, and—compounding what can only be described as inherently biased recommendations—planners, in particular, may profit doubly from prearranged agreements on 12-b1 fees.

Trouble finding trustworthy information may be one reason fewer workers now save for retirement than in the past. According to the Retirement Confidence Survey 2004, which was conducted by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), four in 10 workers aren't currently saving for retirement. Even worse, due to record market downturns, those with investments have seen dramatic decreases in the size of their nest eggs.

"Few Americans prepare adequately for the financial realities of retirement," says Sunil Bhatia, chairman and CEO of LTSave.

Bhatia's company has become popular with investors by providing completely independent investment advice based on an investor's personal goals and preferences. It also gives investors access to financial technologies previously only available to high-net-worth individuals. The company is able to maintain a reputation for independent advice in part because it doesn't sell any financial funds—thereby eliminating an all-too-common source of bias in the industry.

The screenshot shows the LTSave website interface. At the top, it says "LTSave" with the tagline "Advice for Retirement". Below that, it reads "INDEPENDENT, OBJECTIVE, PROBITY." and "SIGN UP NOW" and "LOGIN HERE". The main heading is "Planning a secure retirement". There are three columns of content. The left column is a "RETIREMENT QUICK CHECK" form with fields for Email, Age, Salary, and Marital Status, and a "Go" button. The middle column is titled "HOW THE SERVICE WORKS" and lists three steps: 1. Register for your service, 2. Profile your current situation and retirement goals, and 3. Get your advice, then implement it. The right column is titled "WHAT WE OFFER" and describes the service as high-quality, independent retirement planning. At the bottom, there is a footer with "About LTSave | Terms of Use | Your Privacy | Your Security" and a copyright notice: "All advisory services are delivered by LTSave, Inc., a federally registered investment advisor. Copyright © 2003-2004 LTSave, Inc. All rights reserved." There is also a small circular logo with the letters "T" in the bottom right corner.

Unbiased retirement advice is a valuable commodity.

For an affordable monthly fee, users can log on to LTSave's Web site at www.ltsave.com, develop profiles and enter investment information. The system then performs more than 1,000 calculations using hundreds of different variables (including risk, investment strategies, and demographics). User-specific, unbiased advice about the vast mutual fund marketplace is then offered to help people devise and stick to a retirement plan.

Another reason why the service could be both crucial and timely for investors: A survey by the national research firm Financial Insights found that less than a third of 1,000 employment-age adults had changed the fund selection in their retirement plans in the last 12 months and only a quarter changed what they contributed.

For more information, visit www.ltsave.com.