Custom Models, Your Way, Powered by a Shared CIO

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Key Takeaways

- A Shared CIO approach can give advisors institutional portfolio resources while preserving their investment philosophy, final discretion and client-facing identity.
- Effective customization begins with alignment on objectives, risk, benchmarks and real-world constraints before a portfolio is designed.
- The strongest custom-model relationships combine flexible architecture with a disciplined review process and advisor-branded delivery.

For many advisory firms, portfolio management creates a practical tension. Standardized models can simplify implementation and support scale, yet they may not reflect a firm's investment philosophy, tax realities, legacy holdings or preferred managers. Building every portfolio internally preserves control, but it also demands time, systems and ongoing investment oversight.

A Shared CIO framework is designed to help advisors resolve that tension. It provides access to an institutional investment committee and a collaborative portfolio process while keeping the advisor in the investment seat and accountable for the client relationship.

A Shared CIO Keeps Advisors in the Investment Seat

Shared CIO is not a handoff of investment authority. The advisor remains responsible for the final decision. WisdomTree's investment team works as an extension of the advisor's office, helping evaluate ideas, test trade-offs and construct a portfolio that reflects the firm's objectives and constraints.

That collaboration runs in both directions. An advisor may bring a preferred manager, an asset-class view or a client-specific need to the conversation. The investment committee can then assess whether the idea fits the existing model suite, determine an appropriate allocation, identify funding sources and evaluate the potential effects on portfolio exposures and risk. The process is built around dialogue and informed judgment, not a prepackaged list of holdings.

Customization Begins with Alignment

A sound custom-model process starts before portfolio construction. Advisors and the investment team first align on the investment philosophy, client segmentation, risk and return objectives, implementation requirements and the benchmark that will define success. Those decisions establish the portfolio's risk budget and help ensure that future changes remain connected to the mandate.

The analysis should also begin with the portfolio an advisor already runs. From the top down, that means reviewing asset allocation, regional and style exposures, factor tilts, duration, credit quality and sector exposure. From the bottom up, it means understanding the vehicles used to achieve those exposures, including costs, manager overlap and the role each holding plays in the portfolio.

This work creates a clearer basis for change. It identifies the exposures that should be preserved, the risks that may be unintended and the areas where a different implementation could better serve the agreed objective.

Flexible Architecture Serves Real Client Constraints

Taxes are often the first constraint advisors raise. A firm may have a desired strategic allocation, while clients hold highly appreciated securities across taxable accounts. A custom approach can work around those positions and preserve the intended portfolio exposures, reducing the need for an all-or-nothing transition.

That same flexibility can help advisors create more consistent investment conversations across qualified and taxable accounts. The underlying implementation may differ, but the client experience can remain grounded in a common investment framework and a clear explanation of the drivers of performance.

Open architecture expands the available toolkit. WisdomTree can incorporate its own strategies, separately managed accounts and third-party managers when another capability fits the portfolio better. The objective is a coherent portfolio, with each exposure selected for the role it serves.

Capital-efficient alternatives provide one example. Advisors can evaluate whether an alternative exposure belongs in the portfolio while maintaining their strategic allocations to core equities and fixed income. That approach can reduce the behavioral difficulty of funding alternatives by selling assets that may be performing well, though the allocation still needs to fit the portfolio's overall risk budget.

The Portfolio Must Work for the Advisor and the Client

Portfolio design is only part of the advisor experience. A model also has to fit the firm's technology, trading and reporting workflow. The goal is to support an advisor's existing way of doing business and make implementation as seamless as possible.

Delivery matters as well. Models can be launched and maintained under the firm's name, supported by advisor-branded or co-branded allocation materials, commentary and trade communications. The advisor remains the quarterback of the relationship, equipped to explain how the portfolio is positioned and why decisions are being made.

Portfolio Governance Continues After Launch

A custom model should evolve as an advisory firm grows, client needs shift and markets change. That calls for a regular review cadence, direct access to the investment committee and the ability to discuss performance, positioning and portfolio decisions when conditions warrant it.

The discipline comes from returning to the objective, benchmark and risk framework established at the outset. A review may confirm that the portfolio remains appropriately positioned. When a change is warranted, it should be explained in the context of the mandate and the role it plays in the broader portfolio.

Custom models are an operating decision as much as an investment decision. Advisors need a process that gives them deeper portfolio resources, the flexibility to address real client circumstances and a repeatable way to communicate their investment approach. A Shared CIO partnership is built to support that process while keeping the advisor firmly at the center of it.

Continue the conversation at WisdomTree's 3rd Annual Portfolio Solutions Summit on October 15th. We'll cover how advisors can leverage solutions across the whole portfolio, along with our latest market views and how they are reflected across WisdomTree's model portfolios.

Register here.

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