

# The Commercial Record

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**In Person**

## **Room To Grow**

By Laura Alix

The Commercial Record Staff



**Peter Chieco**

**Senior Vice President, Family Wealth Director, Morgan Stanley**

**Age: 54**

**Experience: 31 years**

Peter Chieco always thought he would follow his father into the restaurant business, but his father had other ideas and encouraged him to pursue a more flexible career. Chieco recalls that the day he passed his Series 7 exam was also the day he met his wife, and he now says his father's advice was some of the best he's ever received. Chieco recently talked with The Commercial Record

about how his field has evolved - and about the work it's allowed him to do with the Cooley's Anemia Foundation.

**Q: Over your 30-plus years in the wealth management business, how has technology changed the game?**

**A:** I would say the technology part for us has just made the things we do much easier and faster. In the beginning, I used to have to write out these tickets and walk them down to buy a stock. Then, they had to put them on their computer and run over and hand it over to someone on the floor. That took maybe five minutes. We can execute and order now in less than a second.

What it really did was shift the focus from doing the transaction to doing planning for your clients. It's not so much that I want to make money on this stock or this bond, but what are my goals? How much am I going to need in retirement when I stop working? And how much do I need to save between now and then to reach those goals? The business really shifted toward planning, and that's where you can add a lot of value.

In that way it's really rewarding. You're focusing on the big picture. Technology has almost allowed it to become a big commodity. The part you have to get right is understanding what the clients' needs are and matching it up to the portfolio.

**Q: With the Baby Boom generation starting to enter retirement over the next several years, what kind of challenges does that present to you?**

**A:** Retirement planning and entering retirement right now, the challenges there have increased as a result of the financial crisis of 2008-09.

The federal government tried to strengthen the economy by lowering interest rates. For retirees, the safe money of money markets, CDs and bonds are at record low interest rates. It's hard for you to earn money in retirement on safe investments. That's been a real challenge for retirees.

Now, more and more are going to be delaying retirement. If you make \$50,000 in income, that's like having more than a million in the bank.

Income when you're working is worth a lot more when interest rates are very low. Individuals who are looking at retirement have to carefully analyze the balance of their portfolio, the returns they can get, and analyze whether it's appropriate for them to retire now.

The low interest rates make it very challenging for retirees right now. That's not likely to change right now. We expect they will go up at some point over the next year but it's going to be a gradual increase.

**Q: Over the years, you've been involved with the Cooley's Anemia Foundation. Can you share a little bit about that - and the exciting news you guys just had?**

**A:** Very shortly after my daughter was diagnosed, I found out about the [Cooley's Anemia Foundation](#), I became involved and within three years, I became their national president ... Even though I'm not the national president anymore, I'm still on the board of directors and involved with the medical information side. We also are a very big fundraiser for the organization, both personally and through a network of family, friends and colleagues.

Morgan Stanley has been not only a good supporter financially but in creating a work environment that encourages volunteerism and philanthropy and doesn't penalize its workers for doing what they want.

The big news occurred this past December when a drug company had been working on a gene therapy trial and they got to report the results at the American Society of Hematology... Their preliminary findings showed that their patients on this therapy at this point do not need a blood transfusion. It is the single biggest development in the history of the disease.

When you see that potential, the main thrust of the foundation now is to make sure every patient that's alive now takes care of themselves and has the best quality of life so they can be cured.

We're really very excited about the future.

- See more at:

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