

Joe Templin



Switching Gears to Help Others

This engineer became an advisor to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Families of engineers usually breed physics majors and math geeks, not financial advisors. Joe Templin, MBA, ME, CFP, CLU, ChFC, CAP, was reminded of this when he landed an internship with Northwestern Mutual in the mid 1990s. When he called his mom to tell her he was accepting the position, she cried.

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It's not difficult to understand his mom's reaction. Templin had started college at 13 and had spent years studying to be an engineer. At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), he earned bachelor's degrees in applied physics and communications. His academic background encompasses applied physics, nuclear engineering, communications, literature and applied finance. With this background, he had wanted to be a physics professor and build weapons for the government—which he did, but only briefly.

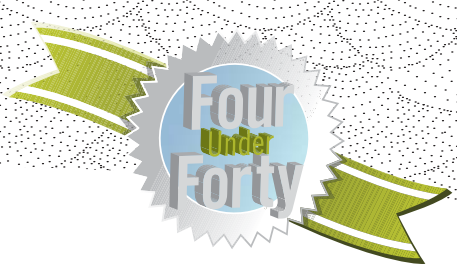
From engineer to advisor

But a few weeks before his graduation from RPI, Templin's life changed when his godfather died unexpectedly and left a will that was 20 years old. He had almost no financial planning in place and after years of legal battles and family feuds, the family farm was sold. Templin grew up fishing and exploring on that farm, and it was supposed to be part of his inheritance. His mother and godmother, who are sisters, now refuse to speak to each other, and a development has been built over the farm.

This series of events inspired Templin to make the shift from engineering to financial advising and insurance. "That's why I do what I do, so that doesn't happen," he says.

So he served as an intern while earning his master's degrees in engineering physics and finance. He continued at Northwestern Mutual as an insurance





representative after he completed his internship. When he started working full time, he decided to work for, and attained the Top 10 Gish Award, which is presented yearly to the top 10 former interns. The job offered him the three I's:

and international championships. He mostly practices classic Tae Kwon Do. "We still actually punch people," he jokes.

One of the biggest lessons Templin has taken from Tae Kwon Do and implemented in his career is the need to practice. In fact, he once had a master who said that "you have to do a technique 1,000 times before you understand it, and you have to do it 10,000 times to master it." For Templin, this applies to tasks like fact-finding and talking to his clients.

This discipline and perseverance also come in handy when 90 percent of clients reject what is being offered. It is helpful because, "it's not a normal mindset to get punched nine times in a row," he says.

This mindset is what has propelled Templin to the top of the industry. He works solely on referrals and writes books and articles regularly. He also helped develop the Nuller-Templin simplification ratio to prove that cash-value life insurance is the most efficient wealth-accumulation tool.

Thanks to Templin's success in insurance and financial planning, his family might be more accepting of his career. When he won the Four Under Forty Award, he asked his mom if she still thought he should go back to engineering. Her response? "No comment."

Away from the office, Templin is a huge Yankees fan and a Chapter Advisor for PI Kappa Phi at RPI. He is also past president of the Alpha Tau Foundation, vice president of RPI's Class of 1994 and a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Albany German American Club. He is married to Ambre, and they have three children. □

income, independence and impact.

However, he decided he could make a bigger impact on his own, and he left to create Unique Minds Consulting Group, LLC. As the "head geek," he can impact several hundred insurance representatives. If each representative affects 30 to 40 families, he can change the lives of thousands of people. That's not even considering his books and articles, which reach thousands more.

Today, Templin works with mostly technological and intellectual clients, true to his engineering roots. "Nobody else wanted to deal with them because they speak geek," he jokes.

The path to fame and fortune

Templin's journey to the ranks of the Four Under Forty hasn't been a cakewalk, though. There wasn't a lot of emotional support from his family when he first decided to go into insurance and advising. So when he needed some motivation to continue in his chosen field, he reminded himself of his family's experience with his godfather's estate.

To stay on track, Templin also focuses on specific goals. His first clear goal as a professional was to earn the Gish Award at Northwestern Mutual, and his 2011 goal is to sell 200,000 copies of his book, *Financial Mistakes of New College Grads*, by the end of the year. He writes his goals in a book and describes them in detail. That way, he can look back at them for motivation and remember how he felt once he achieved them.

This focus is partly a product of Templin's involvement for 25 years in the martial arts, for which he has won several national

Photography by Jeram Photography

