

Built for Time

The Value of the Independent Trustee Model

October 2026



INTRODUCTION

The financial world tends to measure success by size and scale. Trusts operate on a different horizon. They are built for time, often carrying a family’s intentions, assets, and relationships across decades and generations.

Trusts are also built around the fundamental human idea of trust itself. In its simplest sense, trust describes how we rely on one another over time. It is created through relationships, tested through decisions, and ultimately validated through experience. All of that applies when choosing a trustee.

As financial companies grow, consolidate, and change ownership, they can begin to operate on a time shaped by quarterly earnings targets, annual reporting cycles, growth objectives, and other shorter-term measures of performance. Even privately held companies may be built around an eventual acquisition, recapitalization, or other exit.

Families have a different horizon, where time is measured in decades and generations.

Northwest Trustee & Management Services was built for that horizon. Since the late 1980s, we have focused on professional trust and estate administration and on building a company capable of serving families not just at the moment a trust is created, but throughout the life of the trust.

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In brief

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Independent by design.
We administer the trust. The advisor the family already trusts manages the investments.

2

Built for complexity.
Every trust is personal, so our service model follows the trust.

3

Built for generations.
Majority family-owned and Certified Evergreen®, with nearly four decades of perspective.

WRITTEN FOR

Estate planning attorneys, financial advisors, accountants, and the families they serve

01 Independent by design

Trust administration is not an ancillary part of the business.
It is our business, and that focus matters.

Being a professional trustee provides continuity, experience, and institutional permanence. Being an independent trustee means something more. We focus on trust administration while working alongside the financial advisor the client already knows and trusts. We do not manage the trust's investment assets, allowing our fiduciary administration to remain separate. That distinction is central to our model.

Our independent structure allows each professional around the family to concentrate on what they do best. The financial advisor manages the investments. The attorney provides legal advice. The independent trustee administers the trust, carrying out its terms, serving its beneficiaries, and addressing fiduciary decisions that arise along the way. Each has a distinct responsibility, and by having experts work together without conflicts of interest, the trust and its beneficiaries are better served.

With this separation of duties, trust-administration decisions are not driven by a desire for assets under management, so families can trust our decisions. Our growth doesn't depend on replacing a family's financial advisor or moving the family's portfolio to our investment platform.

WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE AN INDEPENDENT TRUSTEE

Fiduciary objectivity

Decisions rest on the trust's terms and fiduciary duty, not on growing assets under management.

Family conflict

We can say "no" when we need to, without asking one relative to refuse another.

Continuity across generations

Institutional continuity, long after the original documents are signed.

Regulatory compliance

Professional administration under state regulatory oversight.

Independence also offers families an objective third party to make decisions that are difficult when a family member is serving as trustee. Family relationships, competing interests, and personal history can complicate questions involving distributions, beneficiary needs, trust property, and competing priorities.

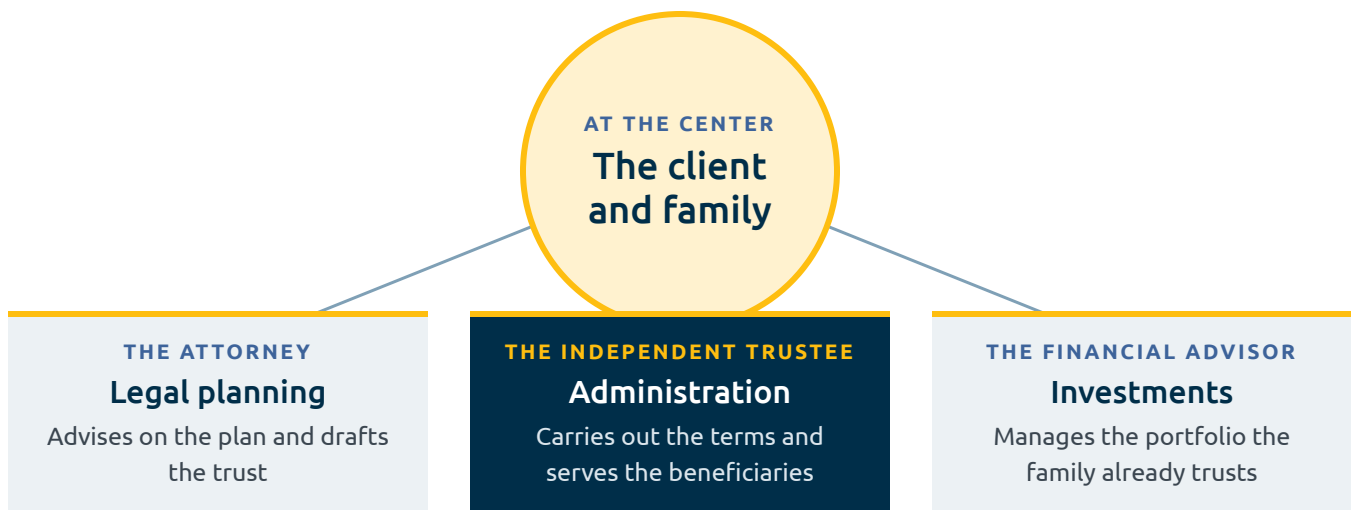
At times, being trustee means saying “no.” A distribution request may not be consistent with the terms or purposes of the trust, even when the beneficiary strongly wants it. When a sibling, child, parent, or other relative serves as trustee, that decision can strain a relationship far beyond the trust itself. A professional trustee can make that decision through the lens of its fiduciary responsibilities rather than asking one family member to make it about another.

Independence also matters over time.

Individual trustees age, their circumstances change, and eventually someone else must take their place. A corporate trustee provides institutional continuity, allowing the trust to continue to be administered with the same purpose long after the original documents are signed.

That kind of work does not always fit neatly into a standardized service model.

THREE PROFESSIONALS, EACH IN THEIR OWN LANE



“When each professional—the attorney, the financial advisor, and the trustee—serves in their own lane of expertise, the ultimate winner is the client.”

GREG BOWMAN • CEO, NORTHWEST TRUSTEE

02 A business that is inherently personal

There is an old saying in the trust business: “If you’ve read one trust, you’ve read one trust.”

There is truth behind the expression. Trusts are not one-size-fits-all arrangements. There are different types of trusts, different drafting styles, different state laws, different assets, different families, and very different reasons why people create them in the first place.

Every trust reflects the intentions of a particular person and the circumstances of a particular family.

One family may be concerned with protecting a vulnerable beneficiary. Another may be planning for multiple generations. Others may be addressing taxes, preserving a family business, protecting assets, encouraging particular behavior, providing for education, or balancing very different needs among beneficiaries.

And then there are the assets themselves. Commercial real estate, operating businesses, closely held LLC interests, promissory notes, life insurance, art, collectibles, and other nontraditional assets can require a very different level of attention.

WHAT MAKES EVERY TRUST UNIQUE

Trust type

Revocable, irrevocable, special needs, or dynasty, each with its own duties.

Drafting style

Every attorney drafts differently, so each document is read on its own terms.

State law

Administration follows the rules of the state that governs the trust.

Grantor intent

Protecting, providing, preserving, or passing on: every decision serves the goal.

Assets

Real estate, businesses, notes, art, and collectibles each need their own care.

We have administered trusts holding commercial real estate and operating businesses. We have worked with trusts holding loans made by the trustor that later became difficult for the family to manage. We have encountered collections of classic cars and business arrangements that were built more on handshakes than formal paperwork. This is often where a hands-on trustee matters most.

Our fee structure reflects that philosophy—combining a base administrative fee with hourly fees when additional services are needed. As a trust becomes more complex, we can provide more attention. If assets are later sold and the administration becomes simpler, our fees can adjust with it.

The objective is not to force every trust into the same service model. It is to allow the service model to follow the trust.

HOW THE FEE STRUCTURE WORKS

EVERY TRUST

Base administrative fee

The foundation of every trust we administer.

+

ONLY WHEN NEEDED

Hourly fees

When additional services are needed, as a trust becomes more complex.

As a trust simplifies, fees can adjust with it. The service model follows the trust.

03 Nearly four decades of perspective

Northwest Trustee was founded in the late 1980s, when families looking for professional trust administration generally had far fewer choices. They might name a family member, or they might turn to a large bank or national trust company.

Our founder came from a large, bank-owned trust company. He believed there was room for a different model, one where he could deliver professional fiduciary administration with the accessibility, flexibility, and personal attention of a much smaller organization.

Nearly four decades later, that idea still shapes the company.

As Northwest Trustee grew, the business and its approach passed to another generation of the family. Today, we remain majority family-owned, allowing us to make decisions with a longer horizon in mind and to invest in the company with future generations of clients, employees, and professional partners in view.

That does not mean remaining small for the sake of being small. It means growing without losing the characteristics that made the model valuable in the first place: independence, accessibility, fiduciary focus, and the ability to give complicated situations individual attention.

The structure also allows decisions to remain closer to the people doing the work. We can evaluate a prospective appointment based on the trust, the family, the assets, and whether we believe we can serve them well, rather than simply asking whether the relationship fits neatly into a broader banking or investment-management strategy.

04 We measure time in generations

Our majority family ownership is more than part of our history. It affects how we think about the future.

The families we serve measure time in generations, and increasingly, so do we.

Our commitment to remaining majority family-owned and independent is reflected in the company's governing structure and purpose. That purpose includes commitments not only to clients and employees, but also to the communities in which we operate, including our commitment to donate 1% of gross revenue to charity.

The family has also invested in an executive leadership team charged with growing the company while preserving its founding values, mission, vision, and long-term purpose.

1%

of gross revenue
donated to charity

CHARITABLE PARTNER

This past year, Northwest Trustee funded five full-ride scholarships for students at the University of Nairobi, in partnership with Spur Afrika, a locally led nonprofit that helps vulnerable youth in Kenya’s informal settlements—like the Kibera slums—to break the cycle of poverty through educational sponsorships, career mentoring, and health care services.

05 A Certified Evergreen® company

In September 2026, Northwest Trustee received the Certified Evergreen® designation from the Tugboat Institute®. The institute independently investigates, assesses, and only confers its Certified Evergreen status on private, purpose-driven companies, based on their long-term health, values, and practice.

Northwest Trustee exceeded several of the Institute’s key benchmarks, receiving high marks for its purpose, its mission-driven perseverance, and its ability to remain independent through earnings-funded growth.

For the attorneys, financial advisors, accountants, and other professionals who introduce families to Northwest Trustee, the significance is straightforward: we are building the company with the intention that the trustee you recommend today will still be here to serve the family decades from now.

THE EVERGREEN 7PS® AT NORTHWEST TRUSTEE



Purpose	Employees know why Northwest Trustee exists, and it shapes how they make decisions.
People First	Low turnover, so the people who know a family’s trust stay with it.
Profit	Strong, steady earnings that let Northwest Trustee invest for the long term.
Pragmatic Innovation	Testing new ideas in small, practical ways before expanding on them.

Perseverance	Growth is funded through earnings, not outside capital.
Private	Majority family-owned, with a plan for governance across generations.
Paced Growth	Growing by adding roles and expertise, including in Seattle.

Trust is created through relationships, tested through decisions, and ultimately validated through experience.

BUILT FOR GENERATIONS



1989

Founded in Spokane,
Washington



2016

Chartered by the
Washington State
Department of Financial
Institutions



2026

Certified Evergreen® by
Tugboat Institute®

06 Trust is proven over time

Trust is a word with more than one meaning.
For us, those meanings belong together.

A trust document can establish duties, powers, rights, and responsibilities. But fulfilling its purpose ultimately depends on people and institutions carrying those responsibilities forward over time, often generations. That is what Northwest Trustee was built to do.

Independent in our fiduciary role. Collaborative with the advisors our clients already trust. Majority family-owned. Focused on trust administration. And backed by nearly four decades devoted to the work.

We can't know exactly what a family, its assets, or the world around it will look like fifty years from now. Neither could the people who established many of the trusts we administer today.

But that is the point of a trust. It's built to carry something important forward.

Trusts are built for time. So are we.

About Northwest Trustee

We hold the trust and never manage the money. Majority family-owned, built for time rather than scale, with the deep bench of expertise and experience to help clients navigate complex situations.

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