The Capital ESOP Group

Dedicated to advising business owners and entrepreneurs

Through a consultative approach, The Capital ESOP Group specializes in educating entrepreneurs on business succession planning, enabling them to unlock the value created in their privately held businesses in a tax-efficient manner. For 17 years, the team has helped families grow their assets, mitigate taxes, manage liabilities and create estate planning strategies that preserve generational wealth.

"Our process is to educate business owners and their trusted advisors on tax-efficient exit strategies, enabling them to preserve and pass on the wealth they worked hard to create."

– Keith J. Apton

Keith J. Apton, CEPA®
Managing Director–Wealth Management
Certified Exit Planning Advisor®

Keith has over 17 years of experience in the financial services industry, with an extensive background in corporate finance. As the founding partner of The Capital ESOP Group at UBS, Keith leverages the resources and intellectual capital of the firm to assist his clients and their families in creating personalized financial solutions. Prior to joining UBS in 2009, Keith was a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley, where he was an integral member of the team handling all of the firm's ESOP transactions. Keith's process entails a disciplined approach to help small- to middle-market business owners with sell-side advisory solutions and post-sale financial planning to include holistic wealth management and tax and estate planning. Keith is an author and nationally recognized leader on ESOPs and §1042 qualified replacement property rollovers.

In 2014, Keith was given the prestigious opportunity to sit on the UBS Capital Markets Advisory Committee. More recently, he became a Managing Director and member of the UBS Pinnacle Club, which consists of the top 2% of advisors nationally at UBS. As an active member in the ESOP community, Keith's total participation in ESOP transactions has exceeded $2 billion in transaction value across various sectors and industries.

Keith is a member of both the National Center for Employee Ownership and the finance committee for The ESOP Association. He co-authored the book *Selling Your Business to an ESOP,* now in its ninth edition. After becoming a CEPA® himself in 2018, he was asked to teach and became an instructor for the Exit Planning Institute. Additionally, he frequently speaks at national conferences on topics including ESOPs, 1042 rollovers and business succession planning.

Keith's other accomplishments include

– *Forbes* Best-In-State Wealth Advisors in Washington, DC, 2018, 2019
– *Barron's* Top Financial Advisors, 2012 – 2019
– *Financial Times* 400 Top Financial Advisers, 2016 – 2018
– UBS Pinnacle Advisor, 2018, 2019
– UBS Banking Champion, 2011 – 2017
– *Washingtonian* magazine's Washington, DC's Best Financial Advisers: Bank Wealth Advisers, 2016 – 2019
– *On Wall Street's* Top 40 Under 40 Advisors, 2017
– *REP.* magazine's Top 40 Wirehouse Advisors Under 40, 2014, 2015

Keith previously sat on the board of Patriot Farmers of America, a nonprofit teaching entrepreneurship and sustainability to veterans who are seeking a future in farming. Keith graduated from Virginia Tech University, where he earned a B.S. in business administration from the Pamplin College of Business. Outside the office, he enjoys traveling, fly-fishing, reading and spending time at his family farm in Berryville, VA. More than anything, he simply loves being a dad. Keith lives in Washington, DC with his wife, Kathryn, and their daughters, Lyla and Sutton.

Nick J. Francia, CEPA®
Senior Vice President–Wealth Management
Certified Exit Planning Advisor®

Nick joined UBS in 2011. Prior to his tenure at UBS, he worked with high net worth individuals at a hedge fund in Greenwich, CT.

As a partner of The Capital ESOP Group, Nick focuses on educating business owners on tax-efficient exit strategies. He is committed to helping clients recognize their options, understand the pros and cons of each strategy and choose the best succession plan for themselves and their families. Nick also creates tailored cash flow models comparing the taxable sale of privately held businesses and a Section 1042 tax-deferred sale to an ESOP.

With a consultative approach, Nick earns his clients' trust through open, transparent communication and by working with clients' tax and legal advisors to construct an overarching strategy.

In 2019, Nick was promoted to Senior Vice President–Wealth Management. He is frequently asked to speak on a national level regarding Employee Stock Ownership Plans and IRC Section 1042. He is an Associate Member of the Finance Committee for the ESOP Association and a member of the National Center for Employee Ownership. Nick was also appointed Vice President of Business Networking International in DC.

Nick's other accomplishments include

– *Forbes* Next-Gen Best-In-State Wealth Advisors, 2019 (Ranked #1 in Washington, DC)
– *Forbes* Top 250 Next-Generation Wealth Advisors, 2019
– UBS President's Council Advisor, 2019
– *Forbes* America's Top Next-Generation Wealth Advisors, 2018
– UBS Top 35 Under 35 Advisors, 2018

Nick graduated from the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics. He was a dedicated member of the university's baseball team and continues to be an active member of his alma mater's alumni association.

Outside of the office, Nick enjoys spending time with family, reading, fly-fishing and traveling with his wife, Mary Elizabeth. In June of 2019, Nick and Mary Elizabeth welcomed the newest member of their family: their son Sebastian "Baz" Calloway Francia.

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