



## Mark Simmons

### The “aha” moment

Mark Simmons was enjoying professional success working for major investment firms. He liked engaging clients on a face-to-face level, but found that wasn't always possible in such a fast-paced environment. He also felt that, at times, sales goals conflicted with what he thought was best for the investor. Inspired by his desire to help people—as well as by the birth of his first son—he struck out on his own and founded Simmons Asset Management in 2010.

### R&D

Simmons was keenly aware that his line of work appeared “scarred” to a public jaded from years of national scandals and economic turbulence. Believing that this perception arose from only a handful of unscrupulous investors, he set out to be a positive face in the industry. He sought to combine the familiarity of a neighborhood business with the resources and expertise of a major firm. Additionally, he felt an obligation to educate the public on the workings of the market. Simmons spent a year crafting a business plan with personal attention as the emphasis rather than sales goals and quotas.

### Hitting the market

Rather than start anew, Simmons retained several of his clients from his previous firm. In lieu of advertising and cold-calling, he has made his name through referrals and networking. By using modest facilities, he has been able to keep costs down. He began disseminating a free print newsletter and keeping a website where he compiles financial news and offers his personal insights on market trends. He maintains a reassuring tone throughout his work because he believes that attitude is key to weathering long-term market fluctuations. The newsletter and site are free to anyone, keeping in tune with Simmons' goal of helping the community. He says his firm is his way of returning the investment that Baton Rouge has made in him.

### Simmons says:

“Nothing brings a smile to my face like knowing that people feel secure. It brings a lot of joy. ... At the end of the day, I want to help people. I truly believe that if I help people, then I will be successful.”

Text by Ian McGibboney • Photography by Brian Baiamonte

**POSITION:** President

**COMPANY:** Simmons Asset Management

**WHAT THEY DO:** Financial services and market analysis

**REVENUE:** Less than \$1 million

**NEXT GOAL:** “To practice what I preach: to be consistent, disciplined, and to keep plugging away.”