

Pelling and Purves build team ... courtesy of Clydesdale

By **Ian Fraser**

A NEW firm of Independent Financial Advisers, which has already opened offices in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, has lured 15 people from Clydesdale Bank and is aiming for UK-wide coverage within five years.

The firm, Principal & Prosper, has been founded by Stuart Pelling, formerly of credit card marketing business Fender Sturrock and of the Clydesdale and Chris Purves, also formerly of the Clydesdale.

Altogether nine financial services professionals have

already moved across from Clydesdale with a further six expected to join from the National Australia Group subsidiary within months.

Clydesdale formerly had 26 IFAs across Scotland but Purves said this has now fallen to 10 or 12.

Pelling said: "At Principal & Prosper we intend to marry new channels – including direct sales, affinity partnerships and community programmes – with IT and a strong service ethos.

"Once we have perfected what we have got here, we will replicate it across the UK. The

opportunities are virtually limitless."

Pelling added: "IFAs are very set in their ways in the UK. I am not aware of any firms of IFAs that are actively looking forward at how to change the industry, or how to change lead generation."

The new firm intends to build its client base through exclusive partnership solicitors, discretionary stockbrokers, tax advisers and affinity deals with, for example, breast cancer charities.

Purves added: "Most IFAs have failed to invest in their IT



Stuart Pelling: service the key to growth in IFA sector

They have tended to be volume-driven."

Purves – who worked at Clydesdale Bank for five and half years before which he was

at actuarial consultants Watson Wyatt and Antony Gibbs – suggested Clydesdale Bank insurance brokers had changed its spots in the last couple of years making it more difficult for IFAs there to properly service their clients. A merger between the "tied sales" and IFA sides of the business is said not to have helped.

Other senior signings from Clydesdale include Steven Haldane, former area manager of Clydesdale's central team and Dennis Moore, business development manager of CBIB

and an expert on cross-selling. Pelling said cross-selling would be "one of the most important parts of the jigsaw".

Other senior hirings include marketing manager Alasdair MacNabb, formerly of Saatchi & Saatchi and HBOS subsidiary Intelligent Finance. P&P has selected the Royal Bank of Scotland as its bankers.

Purves added: "Unlike IFA firms that are owned by insurers and building societies, we can look people in the eye and say we are independent."

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A large team of highly qualified IFA's leaving the Clydesdale Bank en masse to set-up a new firm was 'big' news. It was bound to attract the attention of recognised financial journalists.