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The Mass Affluent Opportunity: Why 2026 Is Your Year to Act



If you're leading wealth management at a bank or credit union, you've likely noticed something striking. The best growth opportunity isn't out in the market —it's already banking with you.

The mass affluent segment (households with \$100,000 to \$1 million in investable assets and incomes between \$75,000 and \$250,000) represents over \$42 trillion of U.S. wealth. Yet many institutions continue to underserve this segment, leaving the door open for fintechs and digital platforms to capture relationships that should be theirs.

Why This Matters Now

Several forces are converging to make 2026 a pivotal year for mass affluent strategy.

Millennial wealth inheritance is accelerating. Dual-income professionals are hitting peak earning years. Small business owners are accumulating significant assets. Meanwhile, your competitors—particularly digital-first platforms—are aggressively targeting younger mass affluent clients with robo-advisors and seamless digital experiences.

The stakes are clear: clients you lose today won't just take their current assets elsewhere. You'll lose the primary relationship as they grow into high-net-worth status.

The Economics Have Changed

Here's what's different from five years ago: technology has fundamentally changed the profitability equation. What once required high-touch, expensive service models can now be delivered profitably at scale through hybrid approaches that blend human advisors with digital tools.

For banks, this translates to deeper deposit relationships, lower attrition, and stronger loyalty as clients progress toward high-net-worth levels. For credit unions, it aligns perfectly with your mission to serve “everyday millionaires” while driving meaningful non-interest income growth.

Building Your Approach

Start with segmentation. The first step isn't marketing—it's data. Identify the mass affluent clients already in your base, then segment them by life stage and behavior. Are they accumulators just starting their wealth journey? Peak-career professionals juggling multiple priorities? Pre-retirees focused on preservation? Prioritizing high-engagement, high-potential households delivers faster returns and sharper insights.

Design for scale. The winning service model combines human expertise with digital efficiency. Think team-based advisory support, tiered service levels, and technology that actually works—robust CRM systems, sophisticated planning software, and client portals that clients want to use. This isn't about replacing advisors; it's about amplifying their impact.

Expand beyond investments. Investment management and retirement planning remain foundational, but differentiation comes from comprehensive financial wellness. This includes an area many institutions overlook: protection planning.

The Insurance Integration Advantage

Mass affluent households often have significant gaps in life, accident, and critical illness coverage. These aren't ancillary products—they're essential components of any wealth-building strategy.

For your institution, insurance integration delivers multiple benefits. It diversifies revenue. It deepens relationships by addressing real needs. It improves retention dramatically—multi-product clients engage more and stay longer. And it creates natural opportunities for referrals and cross-selling as you uncover additional planning needs.

Proof Points That Matter

KeyBank's Key Private Client Program targeted mass affluent clients with \$250,000 to \$2 million in investable net worth. The results? They onboarded 24,000 households and added \$2 billion in assets—triple their initial projections. They achieved this by expanding their branch advisor network and offering services previously reserved for ultra-wealthy clients.

BlueShore Financial, a Canadian credit union, took a different approach. They rebranded entirely and redesigned their branches to deliver a premium, concierge-style experience specifically for mass affluent and emerging wealthy clients. The transformation positioned them as a distinctive alternative to large banks and drove sustained growth in both assets and membership.

Both examples share common threads: targeted segmentation, hybrid service delivery, and holistic offerings that include protection products.

Your Next Steps

The competitive window is open, but it's narrowing. Fintechs aren't slowing down, and traditional competitors are waking up to this opportunity.



Start by assessing your current mass affluent penetration. What percentage of these households do you already serve? How deep are those relationships? Then review your insurance integration capabilities—or lack thereof. Finally, develop a business case that leadership can approve.

Institutions that launch pilots now will be positioned to scale significantly throughout 2026 and beyond. The question isn't whether to pursue the mass affluent opportunity. It's whether you'll lead in your market or watch others capture relationships that could have been yours.

This isn't about chasing a new segment. It's about scaling excellence you already deliver—extending comprehensive solutions, including essential protection, to clients who are actively building wealth and looking for guidance they can trust.



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