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Bank, Specialty Lender & Asset Manager - Hires and Fires

California i-bank to launch coverage of specialty finance, banks

EXCLUSIVE

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By [Mindi Westhoff](#)

California-based boutique investment bank [C.K. Cooper & Co. Inc.](#) recently hired former [Roth Capital Partners LLC](#) associate Isabel Sterk to provide analyst coverage of specialty finance and community banks, and the company plans to expand its financial services coverage in the future.

President and CEO Alexander Montano told SNL Financial that C.K. Cooper, whose research team has focused primarily on the health care and energy sectors, has entered the financial services space as a response to the dynamic marketplace and industry changes of the last several quarters.

"We feel that, in that disruption, you're going to have new leadership emerge, and we think that we as a firm, with our background and our core philosophy, we're going to be able to identify some of those leaders coming out which are probably going to outperform their peers," Montano said.

Montano added that the company has been interviewing to potentially bring a team to C.K. Cooper to form an investment banking group focused on the financial services space. Along with tentative plans to initiate research coverage on clean-tech alternative energy and possibly aerospace defense, Montano added that the company is "open-minded" about expanding coverage of the financial services space beyond Sterk's coverage.

"We believe that if we get enough initial traction, we could probably build it out further, and I could see us going more into asset managers, insurance and broker/dealers as well," he said.

Sterk told SNL Financial that her main focus will be on specialty finance with coverage of community banks coming later, as the latter is still being discussed at the company. While at Roth, Sterk covered, as an associate, pawn and payday lenders and subprime mortgage lenders, but she said her coverage at C.K. Cooper will start off more narrow and broaden "over the next few months."

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