Pillar 3: Client Onboarding

Pre-Appointment Process

WHY is this Important?

It takes seconds to form a first impression about someone and those precious seconds can often make or break a new relationship.

Most of us can recall times when a service provider has fallen short of our expectations and ultimately disappointed us. Clearly this is not the path to a steady stream of introductions. And, when it comes to thinking about service providers who have exceeded our expectations, sadly most of us cannot name many.

For those of us fortunate enough to have experienced service euphoria at some point, we often feel compelled to share our story with anyone and everyone who will listen. It's just that we tend to get emotionally charged about good things that happen to us – call it human nature.

In this best practice, you will learn a simple, yet effective, pre-appointment process that will help you carefully manage the first impressions you make with new clients. The power of this process, combined with the strength of a client introduction, means potential new clients may desire to work with you even before they meet you face-to-face.

WHAT You Can Expect from this Best Practice

- Have what you need to initiate your New Client Onboarding process
- Differentiate your branding at the outset of the relationship
- Build trust rapidly with a set of client-focused communications
- Anchor your branding with your Introduction Kit
- Professionally position your people and process
- Create awareness about who you are and what you do

HOW to Get Started

Develop Your Pre-Appointment Process

Review Make a Great First Impression & Differentiate Your Branding to learn more about why the Pre-Appointment Process is important.

1. Print and review the Pre-Appointment Process Graphic.
2. Print, review and customize each step in the Pre-Appointment Process:
    - Step 1 Thank You Card
    - Step 2 Initial Contact Script
    - Step 3 Introduction Kit
    - Step 4 The 1st Appointment Booking Script
    - Step 5 The 1st Appointment Confirmation Note
    - Step 6 The 1st Appointment Confirmation Call
3. Identify who on the team will be responsible for each step in the Pre-Appointment Process.
    - Add this information to your New Client Checklist from the previous best practice.
4. Customize the process provided for each step in the Procedures Manual.

Make a Great First Impression & Differentiate Your Branding

When it comes to potential new clients, the first impression we make is the one that counts. Like everything else in life, if our first impression isn't a good one, it may be the last one. And, if you are like most people, you've had both negative and positive experiences with service providers. You may have even told others about your negative experience – a cautionary tale to others to 'stay away.' Years ago, this might have made for interesting water cooler talk. Now, with the unlimited reach of the internet, it can easily become blogged, tweeted and posted on numerous social media sites. This is our new reality. On the other hand, when your service expectations are exceeded, you are equally excited to share your story with friends and family - in person or online.

You have the opportunity right now to consciously break free from the typical and mediocre approach Financial Professionals follow when they meet someone – which tends to be a probing phone conversation and booking them in for an appointment. Yes, this approach is fine *if* you want to swim in the pool of sameness as everyone else. However, if you want something that sets you apart and provides enhanced branding, you need to do things differently.

By taking the time to allow your prospect to experience a structured, professional and client-focused set of communications leading up to your first meeting, you are in a unique opportunity to build trust. Even better, this type of approach helps identify and attract candidates that are well suited for your services – your ideal clients.

Our simple Pre-Appointment process will help you properly set the stage for the first appointment and create a solid first impression. It demonstrates that you are process-driven, client-focused and successful at what you do (scarcity). And think about this for a moment-if you implement this process as we outline it, you will have made multiple points of meaningful contact with your prospective new client over a 2-week period. In many cases, this will be more than they've heard from their own Advisor over the past year.

The Pre-Appointment Process Graphic

Step 1

- Assistant mails out thank you note for referral.
- Use the *Thank You Card* template.

Step 2

- Advisor calls the prospective client.
- Use the *Initial Contact Script for Advisor.*

Step 3

- Assistant sends the *Introduction Kit*.
- Use FedEx/UPS: follow tracking number and do Step 4 two business days after Kit arrives.

Step 4

- Assistant calls to arrange 1st Appointment.
- Use *1st Appointment Booking Script.*
- Arrange for two weeks out.

Step 5

- Assistant mails the 1st Appointment Confirmation Letter.
- Use *1st Appointment Confirmation Letter.*

Step 6

- Assistant call to confirms 1st Appointment.
- Use *1st Appointment Confirmation Call* script.

Step 1

“Thank You” Card

Send the “Thank You” card within 24-48 hours after receiving the Introduction.

Handwrite the note and use a stunning, memorable card. Refer to sample scripting below.

If appropriate, add a personal note about something that connects your client to the person they’ve introduced (i.e., based on their Client Profile information).

Dear [Client/Center of Influence/Other],

I want to thank you for recently introducing me to [name of individual introduced].

I deeply appreciate your continued trust and confidence.

As always, I look forward to continuing to help those important to you.

Sincerely,

Advisor's Signature

Step 2

Initial Contact Script for Advisor

This script is used as the first point of contact when speaking with prospective new clients. The script is written to reflect the Advisor making an outbound call to a prospective client who has been referred by one of their best clients.

- Hello, may I please speak with [Prospective Client's Name]? Thank you, [Prospective Client's Name]. This is [Advisor] calling from [Firm].
- The reason I'm calling is that [Name of Referrer] told me that you would be interested in finding out more about our services and how we may be able to help you (*make a direct connection to the client who referred them in regard to their relationship or common recreation/interest/association if appropriate – this will help create chemistry*).
- So, I just wanted to take a minute to share with you the process we follow when we meet with someone for the first time.
- The first step is for us to send you our Introduction Kit. It will provide you with important information about who we are and how you might benefit from what we do.
- The second step is for us to call you after you've received the Introduction Kit and had an opportunity to review it to book an introductory meeting.
- The first meeting is approximately 45 minutes long and is an opportunity for us to determine if there is a mutual FIT, which we believe is important. We will use that time to find out what is important to you, and of course, to let you know about who we are and our approach to Financial Planning.
- I want to emphasize that no decisions will be made at this first meeting. We believe the best decisions are made in an unhurried manner, so we feel it is very important for both of us to have a couple of days after this meeting to reflect on what we've heard and learned.
- On the follow up call, we will either mutually agree that there is a FIT and proceed to the next step, OR, one of us will determine that it isn't a good fit and we'll respectfully end the process at that time.
- Does that sound reasonable [Prospective Client Name]?
- Great - can I please have/confirm your mailing address so we can get this Introduction Kit out to you? As I mentioned, you can expect a call from [Assistant] after you receive the *Introduction Kit* to arrange a first meeting.
- Do you have any questions? Thank you for your time [Prospective Client]. I look forward to meeting you.

Introduction Kit

The Introduction Kit is a key part of how you educate your prospects, existing clients and strategic partners. The contents of your Introduction Kit would be the same for each of these target audiences – the only thing that would change is the “Cover Letter” accompanying the kit to ensure it is appropriately referenced and framed.

The Professional Model

Building TRUST

Your Introduction Kit is specifically designed to lay the foundation for demonstrating your:

- Consistency
- Congruency
- Chemistry
- Accountability
- Integrity

It must be consistent with all other marketing materials you have, including your website. Pay careful attention to branding, formatting and language. Everything should look professional and put together.

The core contents of the Introduction Kit were covered in “Client Communication & More” and should be ready to use.

What NOT to Include

Do not include sales material and/or product brochures in your Introduction Kit. If you lead with product or performance, you are following the Sales Model and are on the road to gaining a customer-not a client. If you lead with process and people, you are following the Professional Model and are on the road to attracting a client – who will become an advocate. Avoid the temptation to ‘tuck in’ the readily available product pamphlets – this is a case where *less is more*.

When NOT to Send

We do not recommend sending out an Introduction Kit unless someone has given you expressed permission to do so (i.e., we don’t advise sending this out unsolicited). This information is intended for those who have expressed an interest in knowing more about your practice. In other words, they want to know more about you, your team and your approach.

Step 4

1st Appointment Booking Script

This script is used to book the 1st Appointment with a prospective client. This call should be made two days after the Introduction Kit has been received by a prospective client. The script is written to reflect the Assistant making the call, but it can be easily amended if made by the Advisor.

- May I speak with [Prospective Client's Name] please?
- [Prospective Client's Name]?
- Thank you, [Prospective Client's Name], this is [Assistant] calling from [Advisor]'s office.
- The reason I am calling is to follow up on the *Introduction Kit* we sent you and to book your first appointment with [Advisor].
- First, I'd like to confirm that you have received the Introduction Kit.
  - *If yes* – continue with this script.
  - *If no* – schedule a follow up call in two days.
- Great - this kit provides you with some preliminary information about our practice and approach.
- Next, I'd like to go ahead and set up the first appointment, which will be approximately 45 minutes. As [Advisor] explained, this is an opportunity for both sides to get to know each other.
- I'm looking at the week of the [date]. Are you available at [day] at [time]?

  The 1st Appointment needs to be booked 2 weeks out to ensure we can implement the remaining Pre-Appointment steps, as well as, to set a pattern of reasonable notice for booking future appointments should they become a client and to reinforce scarcity (we don't want to come off as needy and unprofessional).
- Or is there something else that might work better for you that week? If so, we can have a look to see if that will work for us on our end.

  Book their appointment accordingly.
- Thank you for your time [Prospective Client].
- We look forward to meeting you on [date and time].

Step 5

1st Appointment Confirmation Note

Send the 1st Appointment Confirmation the day of or after the 1st Appointment being booked. Modify the parking instructions so they are accurate for your office location.

If you send email confirmations make sure you have the correct email address and use a standard Outlook Template for efficiency and consistency. You can include the map as an attachment.

March 30, 2021

Name
Address
Address

Dear [Prospective New Client],

We enjoyed speaking with you the other day and wish to confirm our upcoming appointment:

Date:
Time:
Address:

As discussed, during this appointment we will have the chance to get to know more about each other.

We are going to share information with you about our practice and approach so you can determine if this is what you are looking for. And, we will be asking you to share information about your financial goals and expectations from an Advisor so we can determine if this is a good fit for our philosophy and approach.

For your convenience, we have enclosed a map showing you where our office is located. Client parking is available at [describe the parking location]. We are happy to provide one hour of complimentary parking.

If you have any questions, we can be reached at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

We look forward to meeting you.

Best Regards,

Advisor's Name
Advisor's Title

Step 6

1st Appointment Confirmation Call

This script is used to confirm the 1st Appointment with a prospective client.

This call should be made two days prior to the scheduled 1st Appointment.

It is recommended the Assistant makes this call.

- [Prospective Client] please?
- Thank you, [Prospective Client], this is [Assistant] calling from [Advisor]'s office.
- I'm calling to confirm your appointment with us at [time], on [date].
- Great.
- Was the map we provided you clear?

  Answer any questions they may have about how to get there.
- Do you have any questions about where to park?

  Answer any questions they may have about where to park.
- Ok then - we look forward to meeting you soon.
- Have a nice day [Prospective Client].

My Action Items & Notes