



CLARUS WEALTH

CLEAR CONFIDENT THINKING



Your Ultimate Guide to  
Finding the Right Financial  
Adviser for You



## Some Pro- Tips To Finding The Right Financial Adviser

When you're searching for a financial adviser, there are three main issues to overcome.

- Working out who's good.
- Finding a firm (or adviser) that is knowledgeable about your specific issues
- Dealing with points 1 and 2 effectively and efficiently.

The following pages outline some tips as well as some suggested questions you can ask when evaluating which financial adviser you would like to proceed in working with.

**Don't forget to use the Adviser Scorecard to keep track of your thoughts.**



## 1. Build A Shortlist of Potential Firms

The aim of this first-level research is not to select a firm, but simply to create a shorter list of 'possibles' for you to dig into more deeply.

The two important qualifications to look for are Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Chartered Financial Planner and some of the advisers you meet here will hold both of them.

If you reach out to any of these firms (do that only after you've completed a few more research steps), you can ask whether they work with people like you.

There are great firms that are not Chartered Financial Planning Firms

So, after completing your research, if you do find a firm you love that isn't Chartered it doesn't mean you have to cross them off your list.

## 2. What Not To Do

There's one thing to avoid in your initial search - Google.

Whilst good firms do appear on Google, the big brands and "all too sharp" Search Engine Optimisation savvy marketers have hijacked the major search terms. If you need to test our assertion, try a quick Google search now using whatever search terms you think best... it'll be like trying to find a needle in a haystack to identify anyone good.

Google is a really challenging place to start your search and is more likely to overwhelm and confuse you.

## 3. Ask Around (Friends, Family, Colleagues)

We know this is far from bulletproof, but friends, family and colleagues are definitely worth asking.

It's unlikely you can rely on the firms recommended without further research, but it might get some trusted firms on your shortlist that would have been difficult to find or identify any other way.



## 4. Now It's Time To Google

Having created your shortlist now it's time to put Google to work.

Google each firm and take a look at their website. The aim of the initial website search is to rule firms "in" or "out" based on what you find there.

Some of this might be gut feel and that's ok for now. As you look at each site, ask yourself:

- What's your first impression?
- Do they mention who they specialise in, or work best with?
- Have they won any awards?

As we mentioned earlier, this isn't always a solid metric but it can certainly play a part in this initial screening phase.

- What can you learn about the team? Are they well qualified?

Also as mentioned earlier, the two important qualifications to look for are Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Chartered Financial Planner. On their own qualifications are not reliable as a selection metric either, but if you're loving other aspects of the firm, then a well-qualified team is definitely more supporting evidence.

- Do they provide services that you think you might require?
- Are there any helpful videos or blogs that you can take a look at to get a better "feel" for the firm and the people in it, who you may be dealing with?

Personally, we believe this kind of material is really valuable. Reading or viewing it can let you ascertain a lot more information in your evaluation process:

- Do they communicate in your language?
- Is it free of jargon?
- Are they exploring issues where you think to yourself "That's me?"

**As a result of your Googling and considering some of these questions, you'd expect to refine your possible firms to a much tighter selection.**



## 6. Reach Out For An Initial Call

If you've narrowed your search down to say 2 or 3 likely candidates, it's time to reach out and have an initial call or Zoom conversation.

Do that in whatever way works best for you - e.g. drop them an email or give them a call.

And although you're reaching out, this is still part of your initial evaluation and selection process. You've not yet decided to work with any of these firms.

Be aware that they'll probably want to set up an initial telephone call or Zoom chat with you. It's much easier than writing long emails back and forth.

This initial enquiry process is also full of useful information for you:

- How responsive was the firm?
- Were they polite and professional?
- Was it easy to set up an initial call?
- On the call, did they ask you any interesting questions that got you thinking differently about your situation?
- On the call were they able to impart any snippets of insight or knowledge that showed you "they know their stuff"?
- On the call did they answer your questions and address any concerns that you raised?
- On the call did you get the impression that they could do the job?



## 7/ Reflect - What Have You Learned?

By now you've accumulated a lot of information, formally and intuitively. Take a few moments to consider what you've learned.

- How was your experience so far?
- Who stacked up well? Why?
- Who was not quite as you'd hoped? Why?



## 8/ The Next Step - Formal Initial Meeting/Discovery Call

It's important to remember that in most cases your next step will be to agree to a more formal initial meeting with any prospective firm. For most firms, this meeting will be at no cost to you, although you will be giving up your time (around an hour or so).

Typically it's held face-to-face in the offices of the firm or via a video call (like Zoom).

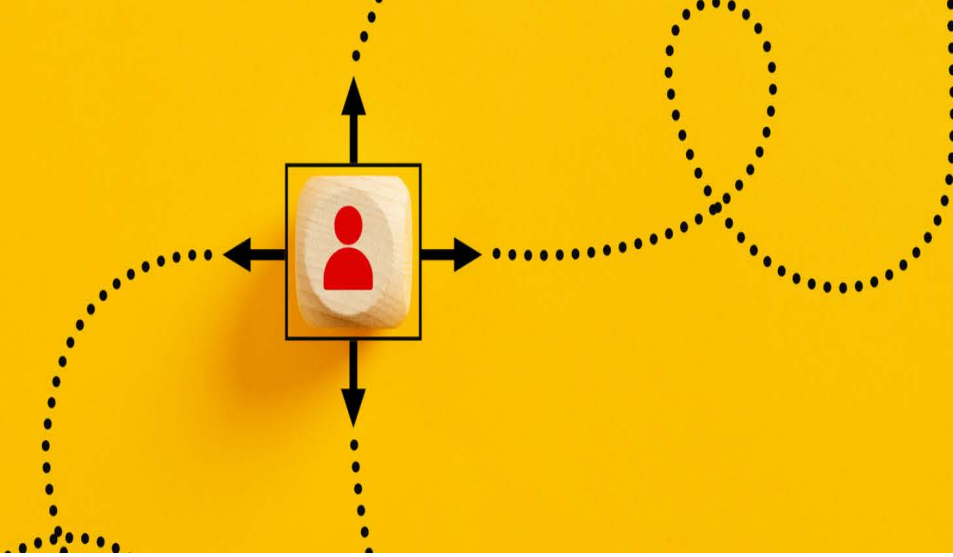
Go ahead and book a formal initial meeting with firms that you feel comfortable with.

At the end of that initial meeting, you will typically be asked whether you'd like to engage the firm to obtain some advice for a fee. The fees should be totally transparent and understandable.

You'll be under no obligation or pressure to make a decision on engaging at the immediate conclusion of the initial meeting (although if you're happy to make that commitment, then go right ahead). If you need more time to decide or wish to have an initial meeting with any other firms on your shortlist, do so.

So even the initial meeting can be considered the next phase of your research.

Choosing the right adviser is an important decision so you want to get it right. However, meeting lots of advisers can be really time consuming and you may not want to spend that much time. It's ok to go with someone you like straight away. choosing the right adviser has a lot to do with finding the right 'fit'.



## 9/ Make A Decision

Having attended the first meeting(s) and done your research, you're now in a position to decide whom you want to engage and obtain some initial advice from.

Yes, there'll be a cost and you should be prepared to pay reasonable professional fees for a good quality adviser.

After you've seen how they will work you can decide if you want to take things any further and implement any recommendations made.

If things have gone well and you're happy with the advice, then you may well decide to go ahead with the recommendations made and become an ongoing client.

Becoming a client means you will have regular review meetings (usually annually) to make any tweaks or changes to your plan and to ensure everything is on track as you work toward your goals.





## 10/ Final Thoughts

We created this guide to help people like you feel more certain as you search for a great financial adviser.

As you work through your research process we hope we'll make it onto your shortlist of possible advice firms and then it's up to us to earn the right to take things further.

We also understand that choosing an adviser is about 'fit', so if for any reason you choose another financial adviser to work with, we wish you all the best.



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