

Once you <u>acquire</u> and <u>onboard</u> a new client, it's time to deliver an initial financial plan. While every financial professional has their own way of approaching this, these two workflows can be used as a starting point.

Build a simple, goals-based plan first, or click here if you're ready to skip to a **complex plan**.

### Workflow 1: Preparing a Simple, Goals-based Plan

If your client has straightforward needs and is focused on achieving a specific financial goal—such as retirement, which we'll focus on here—this workflow is an ideal place to start.



Start by asking some high-level questions.

#### **TIPS**

For a retirement plan, ask: What's your income?
 What percentage are you contributing to your 401(k)? What's the employer match?

#### **TIPS**

 Include your client's retirement age (otherwise assume age 65), current retirement assets and savings, and salary to estimate social security benefits and ideal retirement income.



## **Step 2:** Conduct an Assessment

To evaluate whether your client is on track or falling short of their retirement goals, use financial planning software to build a simple financial plan using key data points.





## **Step 3:** Discuss Your Assessment

Sit down with your client and have a candid conversation about your findings.

#### **TIPS**

- Dig deeper into what they want their retirement to look like, which will help guide their plan.
- If they're not meeting their retirement goals, discuss saving more, spending less, or retiring later.

### **TIPS**

- This may include how much they can spend, when they can retire, and when to start taking social security.
- Encourage clients to track their progress by using a <u>client portal</u>.



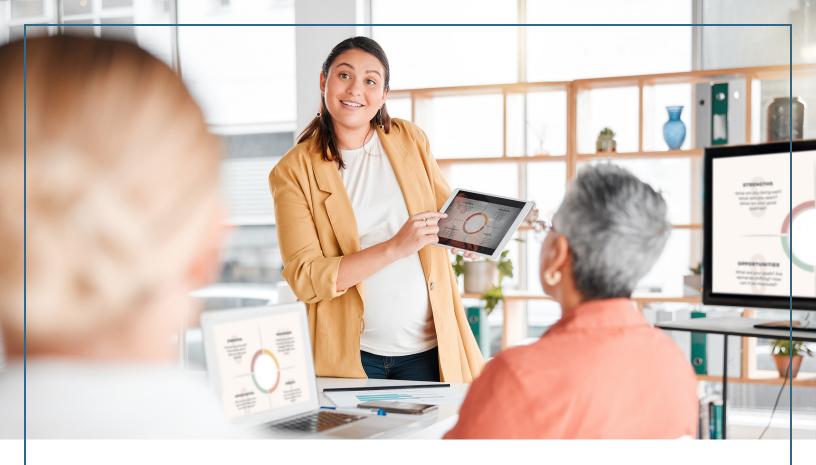
### **Step 4:** Build a Simple Financial Plan

Develop a simple financial plan your client can commit to.



### Remember: A Simple Plan Is a Plan, Not the Plan

A simple plan will evolve over time as your client's needs become more complex. As you continue your relationship, work together to evaluate goals and determine what to accomplish next.



### **Workflow 2: Preparing a Complex Plan**

Use this workflow for clients looking for a financial plan that encompasses all of their lifestyle, retirement, and legacy goals. This plan can include cash flow analysis, retirement planning, risk management, tax planning, and/or estate planning.



## Step 1: Understand Your Client's Needs and Goals

You won't be able to address all of your client's needs at once, so start with their big goals.

#### **TIPS**

- Ask <u>open-ended questions</u> to help you understand their finances, goals, and values.
- Zero in on their most important goals to determine plan priorities.

### **TIPS**

- Start with two or three key recommendations (or "easy wins") that will have the most impact.
- As your client achieves these wins, slowly introduce more recommendations.



## **Step 2:** Prepare an Initial Plan and Recommendations

Using your client's onboarding data and the understanding you've gained of their goals and values, prepare the initial plan.





# **Step 3:** Present Initial Plan and Recommendations to Client

Effective plan presentation is crucial to ensuring client engagement throughout your planning process. Remember that this isn't just a presentation—it's also a conversation.

#### **TIPS**

- Connect the plan and your recommendations to your original discussions by addressing your client's "why."
- Use a client portal to get your client involved.
  Try interactive scenario planning and discuss various scenarios together.
- Summarize the full conversation and leave your client with a few action items to complete.

#### **TIPS**

- For example, if your initial plan focused on retirement planning, your next step may be to discuss estate planning.
- Construct a <u>client service calendar</u> to help keep you and your client organized.



## **Step 4:** Continue to Build the Plan Incrementally

Increase the complexity of their plan over time until it encompasses all of their goals and needs.



### Keep Your Client Engaged in Planning

Keeping your client engaged in their financial planning journey is critical to their success. Maintain client engagement over time by <u>motivating them to follow through</u> on the recommendations you've given.

To learn more about enhancing planning efficiency at your firm, visit <u>emoneyadvisor.com</u>.

