



FINANCIAL ADVISORS' GUIDE TO **IMPACTFUL** DIGITAL MARKETING



78
PERCENT

of surveyed advisors have reported an increase in inquiries from clients.

Consumers across the world have seen their lives transform into an always-on digital experience that places limitless information right at their fingertips. This heightened accessibility has sparked a whole new desire for more knowledge and more understanding. Luckily for advisors, this consumer desire for more information represents an enormous digital opportunity.

In the financial services world, this transformation has been palpable. One of the key tenants of the Third Wave of financial planning is that investors today seek a whole new level of connection with their finances and with their advisor. And as we have seen a global pandemic introduce abrupt market volatility, the demand for financial advice has reached a new peak.

According to research from a recent CFP Board Pulse Survey, 64 percent of advisors note their clients are experiencing high levels of stress amidst the erratic economic impact of COVID-19. Though these times are trying for many, a silver lining is the raised enthusiasm that investors have placed on receiving sound financial advice. Since the pandemic arrived, 78 percent of surveyed advisors have reported an increase in inquiries from clients, and 34 percent have seen a spike in inquiries from prospective clients.

For financial advisors, the time to double down on firm growth is now. The demand for financial advice has long been reactive to times of unrest, and advisors who make every effort to market their practice in this climate will be better positioned to grow their books of business and share their sound advice to a wider group of people.

This guide offers a set of fundamental digital marketing tips for financial advisors looking to take the next step with their practice. We will explore the three main pillars of a sound digital marketing strategy including your firm's website, social media, and email marketing.

01

WEBSITE:
Digital marketing foundation

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of consumers will research
a company online to
begin their search for
a product or service.

The most important digital marketing tool for financial advisors is their website. Whether you generate a majority of new business from referrals, advertising, or any other medium, your firm's website is the main place where prospective clients will do their homework and window shop on what your firm has to offer.

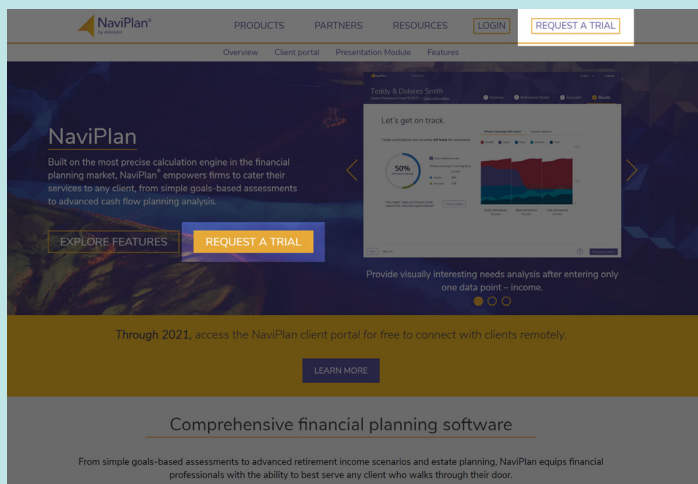
In a 2018 joint study between Salesforce and Publicis.Sapient, it was found that 87 percent of consumers will research a company online to begin their search for a product or service. Additionally, it can take just 50 milliseconds for a website visitor to begin forming their impression of a business based on their website according to [research](#) from Carleton University.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Before all else, you should brainstorm and document the content that will be displayed on the site. Certainly, the core of this content will be your firm's service offerings, but do not stop there. Details such as customer testimonials, example financial scenarios, and showing the personal side of your firm will help offer valuable insight to prospective clients.

EXAMPLE:

Call-to-action elements



Convert interested prospects with easy call-to-action elements on your site. On the [Advicent website](#), we feature a button (request a trial in our case) in the top right corner of every page. Additionally, these can be found in the header of our key product pages.

BUILD IT

Deciding how you want to build your firm's site is the first step in this stage of the process. While most firms will have a variety of independent consultants and design agencies available to take the reins on this project, there are a great number of tools to build the site in-house for what will likely be a huge cost saving.

Platforms such as Wix, Squarespace, and others offer a suite of web-based tools to build your firm's website from the ground up. Additionally, Twenty Over Ten offers a valuable website building platform that was designed specifically for financial professionals.

Using these tools, you will be able to easily manipulate the various sections of your website to your liking. Throughout the process keep the following design considerations in mind:

- Visually engaging designs are meant to propel your website's content to be more impactful to visitors, be careful not to drown out your message with overly fancy or distracting design elements.
- While you will be building your site from a computer, remember that more than half of all web traffic today comes from visitors on mobile devices. Make sure your site is easy to navigate via mobile and your firm's message still shines bright.
- On every page of your site, ensure that it is dead simple for a prospective client to request more information or get in touch with your firm directly. There should not be any guesswork for prospects to take the next step in becoming a client, so have clear contact options in your menu and at key points on different pages.
- When choosing your site's URL, make it simple and representative of your firm. Also, take advantage of your platform's built-in security tools to deliver a secure browsing experience for your clients. Websites that do not offer HTTPS validated by an SSL certificate can be flagged by the user's web browsers. More information can be found [here](#).

“GAIN INSIGHT

into where your customers are coming from, what parts of your site they find most interesting, and how much time they spend interacting with your content.

ANALYZE IT

Once you have your striking new design completed, go ahead and implement analytics tools to help you understand more about your customers. Google Analytics is the leading platform to gain more insight into where your customers are coming from, what parts of your site they find most interesting, and how much time they spend interacting with your content.

If you chose to have a third-party build your site, they will likely have an option available to set this up for you, but there are a ton of great resources to do it yourself. Google offers plenty of documentation on how to install their analytics platform, but it might be more helpful to check out the many beginner's guides available – [such as this one from Moz](#).

The possibilities of Google Analytics are endless and can help you take your website and your practice to an entirely new level.

BE FOUND

One area that will be especially helpful after you have Google Analytics set up is the keyword tools to help make your site stand out from the rest. Search engines such as Google and Bing are complex, but not rocket science. They index and rank websites based on how well the site's content aligns with a specific search from a user. Perfecting your site to ensure you are a top option for prospective clients using a search engine is called SEO, or search engine optimization.

There are many different tactics that can help your firm's website beat out the competition, and Moz also offers a thorough beginner's guide to SEO. Here, you can discover tips on how to find and target the keywords that prospects use when searching for a firm, along with many technical ways to improve the ranking of your site on search engines.

There are many marketing agencies built on providing SEO services, so do not be intimidated by the technical nature of the topic. By following best practices you will be making great strides in improving your firm's site.

PROVIDE VALUE

Aside from the firm-specific information that you will house on your site, placing an emphasis on producing original thought leadership content will do wonders for your site's SEO performance. This content will be perfect to share as you build a following on social media and begin to embark on email marketing.

Thought leadership content can take many forms such as blog posts, downloadable eBooks or case studies, videos, and more. Think of the many different topics you can give insight on such as education planning, steps to take for new parents, or the basics of legacy and estate planning.

The most important thing to remember is that your thought leadership content is there to provide value to your audience. While the ultimate goal is to increase brand awareness and bring paying clients into your firm's book of business, content that gives actual insight to prospects will bring better results. For more inspiration on how to create valuable thought leadership content, check out [this post](#) from industry expert Johnny Sandquist.

Once you have solid content ideas, be sure you are taking steps to generate leads. Downloadable pieces should always be accessed through a form where prospects will give you some information about them in order to access the content. While not all content on your site should require this information, this is a key step to learn more about your prospects and cater your marketing to them in the future.

02

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Direct path for client connection

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83
PERCENT

of advisors report shorter prospect-to-client conversion times thanks to the effort they place on social.

Social media has taken off like a rocket and can be an extremely valuable element of your firm's digital marketing strategy. As of 2019, 72 percent of the U.S. adult population uses some form of social media and adoption has been rising in all age ranges according to Pew Research Center. Younger generations will soon be the core market for financial services as more than \$30 trillion is passed down during the great generational wealth transfer. Still, highly valuable clients found in the older age ranges are also hopping on the social media trend, with nearly 70 percent of adults between the ages of 50 and 64 having one or more social accounts.

With so many potential clients actively using social media, advisors can leverage these platforms as an entirely new way to directly connect with prospects. Need more convincing that social media can be an asset to your firm? Take it from firms who have already begun to embrace social channels. In Putnam Investments' recent Social Advisor Survey, it was found that firms leveraging social media brought in an average of \$1.4 million in additional assets under management (AUM) directly tied to clients found via social media. Further, the survey finds that 83 percent of advisors report shorter prospect-to-client conversion times thanks to the effort they place on social.

EXAMPLE:

Building your profile



Make sure your firm's brand is clear to social media visitors. On the [Advicent profiles](#), we feature the NaviPlan logo, brand imagery, and a clear description to showcase who we are to our audience.

ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND

Just like you did with your website, the first step to taking advantage of social media is choosing which platforms you wish to leverage and then create accounts for your firm. Similar to your website's URL, choose a username that is simple and on-brand. Be sure to complete your profile with a link to that shiny new site, an engaging description of your firm, and visual assets such as your firm's logo.

FIND YOUR VOICE

While traditional client meetings are still king for discussing many of life's big financial decisions, social media can be viewed as an avenue to offer quick, bite-sized pieces of personal financial advice that helps show your value as an advisor.

Whether you plan to share your own content from a blog on your website or give opinions on the ever-evolving financial industry, there is little limit on what your voice can be on social media. You can showcase your commitment to the community by engaging with local volunteer opportunities and you can highlight the personal side of your firm. Whatever direction you decide to take with your social media, be sure the content you are sharing is valuable to the audience, and remains timely.

For advisors worried about setting aside a great deal of time from their busy schedules to manage social media, check out tools that allow you to aggregate your accounts and schedule posts for a future time and date. Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and Buffer are all popular options used in organizations of all sizes, from Fortune 500 brands to your local restaurants.

GET ENGAGED

For many advisors, a primary benefit of social media is the low barrier to entry to connect with their audience on a deeper level. Unlike your firm's website or other one-way marketing tactics, it allows you to instantly join in on conversations, spark action, converse directly with other users.

Building a following on Twitter and an audience on LinkedIn will take some time, so do not get discouraged if progress is slow. Start by putting out a few posts so that when users come across your new social accounts, they know you are active and have valuable information to share. Once you start building up a following and find others who share an interest in your content, remember to continue engaging on a two-way street. By simply giving another user's post a like, you show that you are listening to their perspective and are staying active throughout the day. Take it a step further and bring engaging elements into your posts such as images, video, emojis, polls, and more. The more effort you put into your social media strategy, the more you will get out of it.

TRACK RESULTS

Speaking of results, remember to leverage analytics to gain a solid understanding of how your social media efforts are performing. If you opt to use one of the social media management tools mentioned previously, you should have access to a robust all-in-one analytics dashboard that can provide valuable insights into what content your audience finds most interesting and other useful facts such as the best times during the day to post.

You can still gain access to these analytics without shelling out any extra cost as just about every social media platform will have a native analytics platform available for you.

EMAIL:

Effective when properly executed

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3x
HIGHER

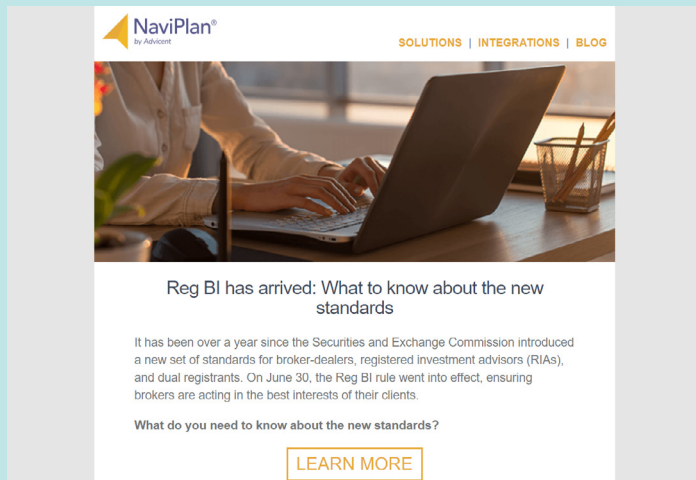
conversion rates on
emails than that of a
social media post.

Though it might be the most frequent marketing tactic we experience today as consumers, email marketing can still be highly effective when executed properly. While your website will often be at the center of your digital marketing strategy and social media can feel like a breeze to set-up and manage, email marketing continues to show tremendous impact. In fact, the conversion rate on an email is more than three times higher than that of a social media post.

The reason for this effectiveness is because emails are often extremely targeted and take advantage of a database of users that have previously interacted with your brand in some fashion. Whether they were downloading a piece of thought leadership content from your website or they filled out a form to inquire about your services, targeted email marketing is a great way to get your brand in front of interested investors.

EXAMPLE:

Curated content



Ensure your email marketing features content that is targeted and valuable to recipients. At Advicent, we cater thought leadership content to give value to prospective advisors and feature these in targeted email tracks to be timely and relevant.

STAND OUT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

Unfortunately, spam email is at an all-time high with 35 percent of brands sending at least three emails to their customers per week according to HubSpot. Today, emails have a very short window to capture the attention of someone scrolling their inbox. Additionally, the right mix of valuable content and timing is what will convince your recipients to avoid hitting unsubscribe. Each message you send to your list of leads should be curated to their tastes and messages should not be sent too frequently.

FIND YOUR TOOL

Much like with your website and social media set-up, there are many tools available to execute a solid email marketing strategy. Popular platforms such as Constant Contact and MailChimp offer a large number of customization options to tailor your message to make the most impact. Additionally, Twenty Over Ten also offers a solution built specifically for financial professionals with its Lead Pilot software.



“GET

ENGAGED

with your audience and
explore fun ways to
interact on each platform.

SUMMARY

Website: Digital marketing foundation

- As the foundation for your digital marketing strategy, ensure your site provides necessary information about your firm in an engaging way.
- Place an emphasis on intuitive design that operates with ease on any device.
- Deliver value to your audience through thought leadership content.
- Track your results and fine-tune your site over time.

Social Media: Direct path to client connection

- Highlight your brand and introduce a personal touch that shows how well-connected clients will feel when working with your firm.
- Get engaged with your audience and explore fun ways to interact on each platform.
- Monitor performance and discover new insights using analytics.

Email: Effective when properly executed

- Understand your audience and tailor messaging to make an impact.
- Avoid too frequent mailings and always deliver value.
- Adopt a tool that allows for deep customization options and audience insights.



There are countless paths to every client goal.

How you get there matters.

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