

Creating Effective Prospecting Materials

This course is designed to help advisors create effective prospecting materials that highlight the professional nature of their planning and wealth management processes.

By the end of the course, you will have a good idea of which prospecting support materials to create, the best practices to create the materials and when to use them.

Overview:

Imagine you meet a potential ideal client at a social event – you mention what you do and they say, “Sounds interesting! Can you send me more information?” What do you send them?

Every advisor should have a set of materials that support them while prospecting. Prospecting materials aren’t designed to sell anything -- they are informational and persuasive pieces describing the services you, your team, and your firm provide to clients. You will use the prospecting materials to inform prospects, with the goal of *influencing* them to consider working with you on their financial plan. There are two steps in creating effective prospecting materials.

- **Step 1:** Determine the list of materials that you will use at different points while prospecting.
- **Step 2:** Design effective prospecting support materials.

Let’s dive in to the first step and determine what materials you might need for your prospecting process.

Step 1: Create the list of materials that you will use for your specific prospecting opportunities.

Each firm is a little different and will use a slightly different list of prospecting materials (outside of compliance-mandated items.) However, having a core set of pre-produced materials streamlines the prospecting process. When you have a prospecting opportunity, you will just plug into your prospecting system that includes all the materials. See our course on [Converting Prospects to Clients](#) for details about creating a repeatable sales process that inspires prospects to take action.

When someone first hears about your firm, whether through a referral, advertisement, or other marketing, the first thing they will do is look you up online! You need to make sure you have a polished and professional digital presence. It should contain at least the following:

- Firm description
 - Services provided
 - Value proposition
- Advisor biography

- Team member bios
- Community involvement highlights
- Blog with recent posts
- FAQs
- Downloadable resources like fact sheets, free guides, or checklists
- A strong call to action (CTA) with contact form

In addition to your website, you should have printed or electronic materials to use when introducing yourself to COIs, when conducting seminars/educational events, and when networking with potential clients.

After making sure your firm's website is effective, the next thing you will create is your *Prospecting Packet*, which, as the name would indicate, will be sent to prospects upon request or given to prospects at an event. This is your standard set of materials you'll send when someone you meet socially says, "Yes – I'm interested. Can you send me more info?" or a client says, "Hey, I have a colleague who is getting ready to retire and could use your help. Could you send me some information to pass along?"

The *Prospecting Packet* includes:

- **Firm & planning process overview:** The overview should focus on the value proposition the firm and advisor provide to clients. This often includes a graphic depiction of your branded financial planning process. It should be limited to the front/back of a single page.
- **Advisors and team biographies (bios):** Each member of the team who services client accounts should have a bio, which includes experience, how they serve clients, and personal passions/info. It should also include direct, personal contact information.
- **Resources:** Fact sheets, articles or free guides that are specific to information discussed in initial meetings or phone calls. This should be topical information such as social security, retirement planning, taxes, etc.
 - If you specialize in working with certain client niches like executives with stock options, physicians, etc. You may include some sort of a relevant "checklist" or e-book to demonstrate your expertise.
- **Client Bill of Rights:** a short document that describes what prospects can expect of you.
- **A list of documents and information that prospects should bring to the meeting.**
- **Template cover letter/email:** Make it easy on your team by creating a template cover letter that can be customized as needed.

COACH TIP: If you only use electronic documents, have all the prospecting packet materials in one link (or PDF). Don't make prospects open multiple links or documents.

When mailing hard copy materials, include the following:

- **Hard copy of Prospecting Packet materials**
- **Handwritten note** – Handwrite a note to the prospect using a customized note card from the advisor, especially if the prospect was referred by a client. The purpose of the handwritten correspondence is to convey the level of personalized attention the prospect will receive if they decide to become happily engaged with the practice. The note should state:

My team and I look forward to the possibility of working with you. You will not find a group of professionals more committed to providing you with a great experience. I look forward to seeing you soon.

[Insert Advisor's Name]

Advisor's Personal, Handwritten Signature

Paperclip the note card to the outside of the Prospect Packet.

- **Business reply envelope** – Large, metered envelope for prospects to return any questionnaires and planning documents
- **Branded folder** – Use a branded folder to hold the materials.

Materials that you will need for your initial discovery meeting include:

- **Value proposition presentation:** A slide deck with talking points and visuals to support you in sharing your value proposition.
- **Branded Confidential Profile:** Create a professionally-designed confidential profile or questionnaire to gather the personal and financial information you will need to create a financial plan. The best format for this is a fillable PDF, so that prospects can choose whether to type in the information or write it out by hand.

COACH TIP: If the prospect is a referral, don't forget to send a Referral Thank You letter/email to the referring client or Center of Influence (COI)!

Now that you have a list of prospecting materials, move on to the next step to learn how to create the actual materials!

Step 2: Design effective prospecting support materials.

Now that you have the list of prospecting materials, you can begin to design and create them. This lesson will guide you through the process.

First, you and your team will need to determine the central theme of your messaging. To begin, refer to your [Blueprinting Workbook](#) and our course on [Branding Your Planning Process](#). You will focus on your mission and unique value proposition to apply them throughout the creation of your prospecting materials.

COACH TIP: This course includes a number of Carson Wealth marketing samples. Use them as material to inspire your thinking – don't just "copy and paste!" Why? For one, the messaging is not authentic to your firm, so it's not as powerful.

Second, you likely don't have the same technology, investment process, and client experience, so it's not accurate. Third – and this is an important concept to remember anytime you find great material you are tempted to replicate – many taglines, graphics, resources, and text are protected intellectual property. Using them without permission could put you in legal "hot water." When in doubt, always ask permission from the creator.

Next, create a rough draft of each of the materials. What do you want them to say? What images might be helpful?

After you have the rough draft complete, send them to a copywriter, who will review and help tighten up the wording, making it more impactful.

Finally, engage a graphic designer to create professional-looking materials.

Coach Tip: Unless you or someone on your team has high-level graphic design and marketing skills, you should hire a marketing consultant or graphic designer to help translate your thoughts into the actual materials. The difference will be huge and the cost can be very reasonable. You can hire a traditional full-service marketing firm, but for smaller budgets, we suggest contracting with a freelancer or independent professional who has the skills you need. www.upwork.com is a site where you can find freelance marketing, advertising, and graphic design help.

As you begin thinking about creating the materials, here are some concepts to keep in mind:

- Maintain a consistent brand identity. All your collateral should share the same logos, fonts, color schemes and overall "look."
- Create messaging and design layout with the prospect in mind. Present the message in a way the prospects can easily scan, using lists or emphasizing points in different colors/fonts/sizes. Use plenty of white space, so the information doesn't overwhelm. It's not about showing off how much you know.
- Most of the time, less is more. Demonstrate your ability to simplify a message or process by creating clear, focused, and compelling collateral material. Advisors sometimes make the mistake of creating messaging that is too complicated or too filled with jargon. Our experience is, "If you confuse them, you lose them!"
- If the piece of collateral will be seen by prospects **without you there**, it should include a *Call to Action (CTA)* or clear suggestion of the next step they should take. This might be a link to learn more about your planning process or maybe to the advisor's calendar to set up an informational call or appointment.
- Include supporting images – such as infographics that allow readers to quickly grasp key concepts. Facts, figures and statistics that add credibility should be presented visually, because images grab attention and clarify. Websites like www.infograpia.com have professional-looking infographics for a very reasonable subscription fee.

- The higher the segment of your prospect, the more tailored the prospecting materials should be. You might send a potential \$200,000 prospect just a link to your website as an introduction to what you do. However, you would want to send information that relates specifically to a potential \$1,000,000 prospect's situation, such as a white paper on things to think about when selling a business.
- At the very least, make sure to do an annual review of all collateral to ensure everything is current.

Most marketing and graphic design professionals are used to rough drafts. It is their job to take the rough example, ask you some clarifying questions and then create the materials. You will get drafts for approval that you can tweak before finalizing everything.

Coach Tip: In the past, most prospecting and sales collateral was in print form. However, Carson Wealth and many other firms have converted to only using electronic collateral. Electronic materials are less expensive and easier to edit. Some firms create materials that can be viewed electronically and printed. While it may be true that some people prefer printed materials – how many times have you heard the assumption that "older people prefer printed"? – the fact is that the ease of using technology is changing the need for print materials.

Once you've created your set of prospecting materials, keep them in a central location on your firm's shared drive that is easy to find and send when needed. If you use hard-copy materials, ensure someone is assigned to monitoring your supplies and re-ordering when necessary.

Summary:

In the competitive world of financial advice, differentiation is important. Creating effective prospecting materials takes time, but doing so can help you demonstrate your authentic brand in the professional way that most ideal clients expect.

Having a professional, prepared set of prospecting materials will help you tell your story and keep the focus where it belongs – on how you can help the prospect!

FAQs:

- **I'm not very creative, so I'm worried that I won't be able to even come up with ideas for the consultant to work with. What do I do?**
 - First, take a breath. Second, when you are looking for someone to help, find a few who have created materials you like. As you "interview" them, find out how much of the conceptual design they were responsible for in their work examples. Did they create graphics that supported text, or did they just take rough sketches and turn them into compelling images?

Depending on the number of pieces and their complexity, the more likely you will need the help of a graphic designer or copywriter, rather than just a graphic designer. The right consultant will be able to help you help them!

- **I'm nervous about the idea of not having printed material. Most of my clients are older, and I think they expect print material.**

- There are two responses to this point:
 - If you really want to use print materials, feel free to do so.
 - Some of the highest AUM firms in the country have switched almost entirely to electronic materials. They have plenty of older clients. Remember that older people, in general, are becoming far more comfortable with technology.
- **I've already spent \$4,500 with this marketing agency, but they're taking forever and they just aren't getting it. Should I cut bait or stick it out?**
 - Think about the big picture: what is the opportunity cost of not having had these materials in hand months ago? Most likely a lot more than \$4,500. But before you cut bait – and in our experience over many years of having heard this, it's probable that you should – ask yourself to confirm:
 - Have you been consistent and very clear about what you expect from them?
 - Have you been sufficiently available with feedback, or are the multiple rounds of changes you're getting because they are guessing on each round?
 - Have you changed your mind or messages frequently?
 - Could they be taking conflicting instructions from multiple people in your firm?
 - Do they respond to you quickly or do you feel ignored?
 - If your answers to these questions indicate that it's you and/or yours who might be “the problem,” that's OK! There is time to amend your ways and turn it around. Because a new agency might not solve anything.

But, if your answers confirm that you have hired a dud: as they say, “Never chase sunk costs.” Consider it a cost of doing business, and move on to a better fit. Soon, your great new prospecting materials will attract wonderful new clients who will more than make up the difference!

Resources:

Learn more and download the resources referenced in this document from the [Creating Effective Prospecting Materials](#) course in Carson Coaching Online.

- **Advisors and Team Bios**
- **Prospect Packet Cover Letter Template**
- **Value Proposition Presentation**
- **Client Bill of Rights**
- **Documents and Information to Bring to Discovery Meeting**
- **Sample Confidential Profile**