

50 Things: What a Professional Financial Advisor Does for You

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FINANCIAL PLANNING

1. Cares more about you and your money than anyone who doesn't share your last name.
2. Guides you to think about areas of your financial life you may not have considered.
3. Formalizes your goals and puts them in writing.
4. Helps you prioritize your financial opportunities.
5. Helps you determine realistic goals.
6. Studies possible alternatives that could meet your goals.
7. Prepares a financial plan and/or an investment policy statement for you.
8. Suggests creative alternatives that you may not have considered including the best way to claim Social Security.
9. Reviews and recommends life insurance policies to protect your family.
10. Assists you in setting up a company retirement plan.
11. Assists in preparing an estate plan for you.
12. Reviews your children's custodial accounts and 529 plans.
13. Helps you determine your IRA Required Minimum Distribution.
14. Provides reminders about key financial planning data.
15. Checks with you before the end of the year to identify any last minute financial planning needs.
16. Guides you on ways to fund health care in retirement.

INVESTMENTS

17. Prepares an asset allocation for you so you can achieve the best rate of return for a given level of risk tolerance.
18. Stays up to date on changes in the investment world.
19. Monitors your investments.
20. Reviews your investments in your company 401(k) or 403(b) plans.
21. Reviews your existing IRAs.
22. Helps convert your investments to lifetime income.
23. Refers you to banking establishments for loan and trust alternatives.
24. Suggests alternatives to increase your income during retirement.
25. Records and researches your cost basis on securities.

26. Provides you with unbiased investment research.
27. Provides you with personal investment analysis.
28. Determines the risk level of your existing portfolio.
29. Helps you consolidate and simplify your investments.
30. Can provide you with technical, fundamental, and quantitative investment analysis.
31. Provides introductions to money managers.
32. Shows you how to access your statements and other information online.

TAXES

33. Suggests alternatives to lower your taxes during retirement.
34. Reviews your tax returns with an eye to possible savings in the future.
35. Stays up to date on tax law changes.
36. Helps you reduce your taxes.
37. Repositions investments to take full advantage of tax law provisions.
38. Works with your tax and legal advisors to help you meet your financial goals.

PERSON-TO-PERSON

39. Monitors changes in your life and family situation.
40. Proactively keeps in touch with you.
41. Serves as a human glossary of financial terms such as beta, P/E ratio, and Sharpe ratio.
42. Provides referrals to other professionals, such as accountants and attorneys.
43. Shares the experience of dozens or hundreds of his clients who have faced circumstances similar to yours.
44. Helps with the continuity of your family's financial plan through generations.
45. Facilitates the transfer of investments from individual names to trust, or from an owner through to beneficiaries.
46. Keeps you on track.
47. Identifies your savings shortfalls.
48. Develops and monitors a strategy for debt reduction.
49. Is a wise sounding board for ideas you are considering.
50. Is honest with you.

—William Smith