

## How To Find an Advisor

You can ask 100 different people what they would look for in a financial advisor, and get somewhere around 100 different answers. Everyone has a little different situation, background, perspective and objective.

I think the primary factor is trust; but trust takes a little time to develop.

When looking for an advisor, think about and ask the following:

1st...What do *you* want from an advisor? How do *you* think one will help you? This is the best starting point and the first items to be addressed with any potential advisor.

Next,

Competency...What is the background, education, certifications and experience of the advisor?

Trustworthiness...Are there any civil or criminal complaints, either filed or pending; is the advisor a fiduciary?

Meeting of the Minds...Personality is key; do you and your prospective advisor click?

Philosophy...Does the advisor have preset notions about you? How will the advisor go about helping you? From an investment perspective, does the advisor believe that markets are efficient or does the advisor believe in market timing and active trading within investment portfolios?

Commitment to Continuing Education...What organizations does the advisor belong to? Is there a genuine commitment to continuing education?

Fee Structure...How is the advisor paid? By your fees only or does the advisor accept commissions for products or transactions sold?

Objectivity...Do you believe that the advisor is objective concerning your life and your money? Is the advisor willing to refer you to another advisor that may be better able or qualified to help you?

Professionalism...What kind of practice does the advisor have? Does the advisor dress, act and present a professional image? Does the advisor have quality relationships with other professionals such as lawyers, CPAs, other financial advisors, etc?

Passion...Does the advisor have a passion for the financial planning process?

Satisfied Clients and Peers...Will the advisor provide referrals to clients and other professionals?

A couple of good reference sites are the Financial Planning Association:  
<http://www.fpaforfinancialplanning.org/FindaPlanner/HiringaFinancialPlanner/>

and the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors:  
[http://www.napfa.org/tips\\_tools/index.asp](http://www.napfa.org/tips_tools/index.asp)