

The Best First Meeting Ever



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How do you have The Best First Meeting Ever?

There are two characteristics that separate highly successful financial advisors from the rest of the market: their activity level, and the quality of the relationships they build.

It's not their technical knowledge, their office, their suit, their education, or the organization they are affiliated with: it's their activity, and the quality of the relationships they build. When you reflect on that, what do you think?

Are you meeting enough people? Are you marketing consistently? Are you getting the introductions that you think you should? Do potential clients gravitate toward you? Do they hang on your words? Do they trust you? Are you the person they go to first for advice?

We could write for days on these topics and on how you can shift them to an optimal state. But instead, we want to give you one thing to do, one move, a single play that can permanently alter the course of your career.

The moment where your activity and the quality of your relationships intersect is when you first meet a potential client. The moment that you lock eyes, sit down, and start to have "the conversation," is the make-it-or-break-it moment. It doesn't mean that there aren't other factors that will affect your career; of course there are. But when you first meet, that's when the magic happens.

And that's why you need to have The Best First Meeting Ever.

There's a Formula

The world wants you to think that there's a formula or a recipe for everything. They want you to think there is a secret, and if you can ***just know that secret***, everything will change. But at the end of the day there are three things you have to have to win in anything. That's right, anything.

We're not going to hold them back, we're giving them to you right here, right now.

The formula to find success in all things has three components:

Mindset – Process – Tools.

This is so important and so fundamental that if you actually understand this single concept, you can literally stop reading and your life will be better. Your business will be better. It will all be better.

But we're not leaving you with something that basic, and we're going to show you how to specifically and directly apply this to ensure that you have The Best First Meetings ever. And more than that, you'll be able to have The Best First Meeting Ever, every time.

So let's dig into the details.

Mindset of The Best First Meeting Ever

Your thoughts open opportunities, or close opportunities constantly. You know what we're talking about. You've seen it when someone is failing in a specific market or with a specific goal and then someone else – someone with no more skill, experience, or knowledge – simply shows up and creates incredible results. We've all seen it at some time or another.

The question is: how does that happen?

How does someone who isn't as smart as you make more money than you? How does someone who doesn't work as hard as you, get better results than you?

It's their mindset. They are thinking differently than you.

Here's the good news. Although thoughts are habitual, they can be changed.

Here's the bad news. You're going to resist changing your thoughts. It's a natural response to a new idea, so don't be hard on yourself. But at the same time, be aware: as we share the elements that create The Best First Meeting Ever, you're going to resist some of them and you'll do it in two ways.

The first way you'll resist is by saying, "I already know that." Nothing will limit your opportunity to learn better than that phrase. So if you find yourself thinking it, slow down and see if you actually do know it. Consider whether or not you're actually acting on that knowledge.

The second way you'll resist is by saying, "I don't agree." You're allowed to not agree. You're allowed to do whatever you want. But here's something to consider... we've spent 22 years working with literally tens of thousands of financial advisors, studying how they operate and decoding what creates unprecedented success. You can disagree with us all you like, and the one thing we can guarantee is that if you don't change anything, nothing will change. That's your call.

With all that being said, however, you're still reading and so you're probably the kind of person that is ready to see things change once and for all. Keep reading...

The mindset required to have The Best First Meeting Ever has two parts: The Four Pillar Mental State, and The Meeting Mastery Preparation.

Part 1: The Four Pillar Mental State

There are four thought-pillars that you have to have before you walk into your first meeting with a potential client. Without these as the dominant thoughts, you cannot have your best first meeting.

You are equals.

Far too many advisors arrive at meetings in last place before the meeting starts. They do not feel like equals and they feel under intense pressure to show some value quickly. They often feel like someone is doing them a favor by meeting with them. This actually makes sense because when most advisors started in the business and were building their meeting habits, the people meeting with them **really were doing them a favor**. But you're beyond that. And even if you're not, you'd better hurry up and get beyond it because you are, indeed, equals.

You are a professional.

We've heard financial advisors repeatedly speak of the different way they are treated than accountants, lawyers, and other professional advisors. Financial advisors crave to be treated that way. But until you behave and carry yourself like those other advisors, don't expect to be treated like them.

They need your help.

Potential clients are not meeting with you because you need their help. They are meeting with you because they need *your* help. *You're* the one who can solve their problem or capture an opportunity, not the other way around.

Your Words Matter

You must hold the thought that your words, and their words matter. You cannot be loose with your words – they carry far more meaning than you might expect, and can easily begin eroding or undermining what otherwise appears to be a great conversation.

The sub-conscious is very attuned to words and your words will impact people. They need to be chosen deliberately.

We could go on for quite some time about the use of language, but start being more particular and deliberate about your words and watch the results. You might be surprised.

Your mental state before you walk into a first meeting is a defining factor in your success.

Mental state matters. Manage it carefully.

Part 2: The Meeting Mastery Preparation

Our experience is that if you're like most advisors, you are dramatically unprepared for your initial client meetings.

You may be resisting that thought. You may do a lot of preparation, or your team helps you prepare, or you're justifying yourself with the thought that "I've been doing this for 25 years and every one of those conversations has been preparing me for my first meetings."

Those are good thoughts, and there may be truth in them, but largely it's just resistance to a new thought. So, try something new because you're already good at your existing thoughts. Let's look at some of the things you can do to prepare.

First, you start preparing by recognizing that you're not sufficiently prepared. You've had so many meetings through the years that you may feel "you've got this." But the opportunity is to take it up a notch.

Also, keep in mind that you work hard to get in front of someone. It takes effort, time, money, relationships, attention – a lot goes into it. So don't get stingy on your preparation time for what could be one of the biggest meetings of your year.

The Pre-Approach Plan

The preparation for your Approach Meeting needs to address four elements:

1. Result Definition
2. Research
3. Materials
4. Practice

Result Definition

You cannot hit a target you cannot see. Therefore, you must name your target, and in this case, that is the successful result of the meeting. Do not attend meetings where you do not know what a successful result looks like. You'll be wasting your time and the time of others.

When you are having your first meeting with a potential client, what is the result you require? Do you expect to sell something? Do you want another meeting? Do you want them to fill out an application? What do you want?

In our work over two decades with financial advisors we've recognized four consistent potential outcomes.

1. YES: You're engaged to address a tactical issue (Pebble in the shoe)
2. YES: You're engaged to deliver planning
3. MAYBE: They want to think about it or include others in the discussion/decision
4. NO: There is no engagement

It's important to have a clear result at the end of the meeting. How many times have you started to solve a problem or tactical issue, you do the work but never get engaged? This happens all the time.

We highly suggest using engagement agreements for both tactical and planning engagements. It creates a much greater sense of commitment and a higher likelihood that you will get the business. Your compensation model plays a significant role in your engagements as well. When people pay for a service it increases the perceived value and their commitment to seeing it through.

Finally, let's talk about the Maybe situations. This is probably the greatest time-suck in financial advisors' practices. When you start doing work on behalf of an un-engaged client, you professionally devalue yourself while at the same time increasing your opportunity costs. When you work for un-engaged clients, you pay a financial and professional cost.

Research

Begin to operate like an benevolent intelligence service. With the support of your team, find out everything you possibly can in advance of meeting a potential client so that you can look for ways to help them. What's happening in their lives? What do they enjoy? Who do they hang around? Where do they work? Get into their lives so that you know who you're dealing with before you meet them.

Know who you're going to help, before you meet them.

Materials

While it is very tempting to show up with the glossy brochures and branded pens, you might want to save those for later. Remove the distractions. They will not be impressed by the semi-aqueous coating of your four-color-process-printed-tri-fold handout.

They will be impressed when everything in the meeting space is tuned to them. They will be impressed when they feel that their goals supersede yours, and that you're organized well-planned.

Practice

Bad news: people don't rise to the challenge. People sink to the level of their training or conditioning.

Good news: you can improve your conditioning if you practice.

Spoiler alert: Practice does not make perfect. Practice makes permanent.

Good news: Perfect practice makes perfect.

If you want to have The Best First Meeting Ever, you have to practice perfectly. The language is critical and so is the sequence. We'll give you both in the next section.

Process for The Best First Meeting Ever

Here's something that advisors do, that doesn't work. They make it up. They keep introducing themselves differently every time. They have a different meeting every first meeting. They can't break through to the next level of success because they rarely repeat anything (except perhaps behaviors that aren't helping).

A process demands that you repeat things. Why does that matter? Because then you can fix things. If you follow a process and something doesn't work, it becomes easier to troubleshoot.

Meeting Structure

Following a structure for your first meetings or Approach Meetings, allows you to stay on track. Sometimes conversations will drift. That's not a problem if you're working with a structure because the format gives you somewhere to bring the conversation back to. Without it, you can wander in the conversation wilderness for a long time and reduce your chances of a successful engagement.

The other advantage of having a structure to your meetings is that you're able to bring your full creativity to the meeting. When you're no longer wondering which way to take the conversation next, you can be present, powerful and engaged.

The structure creates freedom in the meeting.

Script

Yes: Script.

You must have a scripted Approach Talk.

The purpose of the script is to allow you to practice so thoroughly that you will not have to remember the script in the meeting; it will flow out of you automatically.

More advisors resist this single issue more than any other. That resistance creates an opportunity for you: if they are all resisting, but you're the one who does it, you become the one that masters this.

We'll give you a framework for the meeting in the next section, and then you need to script it. In our IGNITE program, we provide the "red letter language" that thousands of advisors are using to create dramatically more powerful first meetings. You may want to take a look at that program, but to have The Best First Meeting Ever, you need a script.

Tools for The Best First Meeting Ever

You must have the right structure for your first meetings.

The Best First Meeting Ever Structure

Step	Key Notes
Present Talk	<p>Stop doing “small talk”. Small talk is just that, small. Name it what it is: Present Talk. The purpose of initial conversation with people is to get them relaxed, comfortable, and most importantly Present. You don’t want them thinking about work, or babysitters or whether or not they have enough time at the parking meter.</p> <p>Talk with them. Get them present. And help them release any distractions that could interfere with the meeting.</p>
Appreciate and Bridge Talk™	<p>Ensure parity and remind them who you help and what problem you solve.</p> <p>Do not say “Thank you for meeting with me.” You just became unequal when you said that. Tell them that you appreciate that we could all share some time together.</p> <p>Then remind them of what you do and who you help. The Bridge Talk™ is part of our IGNITE program and will help you to once-and-for-all be able to explain what you do for people, but for now, just remind them what you do.</p>
Right Fit & Meeting Plan	<p>Everyone needs to know that you both have to qualify. Are they the right kind of client for you, and are you the right kind of advisor for them.</p> <p>Share that you have a Meeting Plan, not an “Agenda” (remember, words matter) and that this meeting will end with some decisions for both parties.</p> <p>The Meeting Plan has three steps: You, Me, Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOU: Learn more about them • ME: Share a bit about yourself • DECISIONS: Clear expectations on how you’ll work together

	Get confirmation before you move forward so that their minds are clear on what's going to happen next.
The Planning Horizon™	<p>The Planning Horizon™ is part of our secret formula at Legacy. It's a conversation that will completely change the quality of the relationship and will allow them to share more about what they've done to date, where they're headed, and much more.</p> <p>It starts by drawing a simple horizon line across the center of a piece of paper, creating a clear delineation between an area above and below the horizon line. The area below is all technical structures and products someone might have in place today. The area above is their vision for the future, what they value and their goals. The key is that most conversations with advisors focus on the area below the horizon and so by starting above the horizon – by clarifying what matters most to them – you're now onto an entirely different type of conversation.</p> <p>It will demonstrate your difference, don't talk about it – show it.</p> <p>Our IGNITE program goes into The Planning Horizon™ conversation in great detail and spells out the specific conversation that will shift how clients engage with you.</p>
You	Find out what they've done to date, and what they'd like to do.
Me	Point to your capabilities to support them.
Decisions	Take them to a dichotomy: engage, or not. If they engage, is it a Planning Engagement or a Tactical Engagement?

Advisors are prone to doing whatever they can to please a potential client, but that's not the business you're in. Your business is to help them make wise decisions about their financial present, and financial future.

Summary

Having The Best First Meeting Ever requires the right Mindset, the right Process and the right Tools.

We've provided this to you for two reasons. The first reason is to help. We spend all our time helping advisors be as successful as possible because it is the only way the industry will evolve. You have to evolve if *it* is to evolve.

The second is because we wanted to give you an experience, a sense of what we can do. Our programs are effective and impactful. They work. They are not expensive. They are online. Don't like online? They are also in live webinars with other advisors. Don't like live webinars with other advisors? They can be delivered live.

Here's the thing to keep in mind: decades of working with tens of thousands of advisors (more than you've probably ever seen, let alone met), three books, countless industry articles, regular sources in mainstream press and a team operating in two countries all lead to one thing:

We can help you have the clients, the business and the life you want.

Visit us at www.think-legacy.com to learn more.