

Interviewing a Financial Planner

Finding the right financial advisor can be a daunting task. There is a lot of lingo tossed around and various letters behind their names that mean different things. It can be difficult to determine where their expertise truly lies and just because they have references doesn't mean they are the right fit for you. With that in mind, here are some questions you might ask when interviewing to compare advisors.

- 1) **How many clients do you have currently and how many times per year do you see them?** Any number over 150 is unlikely to be a very "high touch" relationship. Decide how much personalized service you will want and inquire about how much you can expect to receive.
- 2) **If I hire you, how often will we talk and what is your process for keeping tabs on my investments and planning?** Is there a formal review process or is it a casual "as needed" which can lead to poor communication? Do they aggregate and review all your accounts and worksite benefits or just the stuff they manage?
- 3) **How are you paid and where can I view the information?** There's a cost to work with ANY advisor. The advisor should be able to clearly define it and not be afraid to put it in writing. You shouldn't have to guess or feel bad asking.
- 4) **Could you show me a sample or generic type portfolio you might suggest for me based on my situation?** This will give you an idea of the products they use and test their willingness to disclose upfront versus after you're committed.
- 5) **How long have you been in the field and what is your long-term plan?** An advisor should have enough training and experience to provide you effective guidance no matter the market conditions. Good advisors also often have an office team to back them up and a well-planned succession strategy in place.
- 6) **Have you ever had a complaint or disciplinary action brought against you?** Check them out at www.brokercheck.org
- 7) **Do you have any advanced designations?** A CFP® designation is one of the most useful and comes with the plus of requiring a fiduciary standard for the client, which is acting in the best interest of the client approach when providing planning related services.



Daus Financial Group, LLC
487 S. Drake Rd., Suite A, Kalamazoo, MI 49009, Tel. 269.321.7472
333 Bridge Street NW, Suite 600, Grand Rapids, MI 49504, Tel. 616.752.4500
Fax. 866.302.8110
ryan@dausfinancial.com
www.dausfinancial.com

Ryan M. Daus, CFP®, ChFC®, CLU®
Founder & Principal

- 8) **What is your specific investment process?** Find out if they design and structure investment portfolios themselves or use a third party or take a one-size-fits-all type approach for their clients.
- 9) **Ask them to provide a list of all the things they explicitly WILL and WILL NOT do as part of their service.** This will help ensure that they mean what they say.
- 10) **What does your typical client look like in terms of age and net worth?** If much older and more affluent than you, it might curtail the time and attention that is paid to your account.
- 11) **How many formal financial plans do you complete per year and could I view a sample?** If they are serious about planning and not just selling product, they should have a sample binder or PDF you can view. Many just say “we do planning” as a marketing scheme versus putting in 20-30 hours that’s typically required for a first-year client.
- 12) **Why should I hire you?** This answer tells you more about them and helps you determine if they are a good fit with your goals.