NORTH POINTE
PARTNERS

Preparation Disciplines – Maximize Every Opportunity

Our ability to engage virtually any advisor is dramatically enhanced through preparation. More importantly, our ability to align our ideas and solutions to their specific preferences and/or concerns is also greatly enhanced. However, to be successful, preparation demands dedicated time each day or week, a template and a well-defined routine to execute consistently.

Guidelines for better preparation:

- Consider both internal and external sources for your preparation disciplines. Your CRM and in-house systems contain a great deal of important information including production, AUM, prior meeting notes and current marketing materials but excellence in preparation goes further.
- External sources such as LinkedIn (their representation to the professional community), their website and Facebook pages (their representation to their clients and prospects) plus a Google search (articles, charity and community events, etc.) will generate a more than sufficient knowledge of an advisor's practice and interests.
- We suggest utilizing a template with the following six categories as a worthwhile starting point… product use and production details, team structure and business dynamics, professional associations, personal interests, prior meeting/call notes and "news you can use" (recent publications from the advisor, their firm, your firm, etc.).
- Your goal is not to build a dossier for each advisor but to identify 6-8-10 pieces of information you might use comfortably in conversation to better align your efforts to their interests, beliefs, needs and challenges.
- Next consider your preparation routine prior to a key meeting with an advisor or team. We have included a separate template for you to consider in advance of meetings or scheduled calls.
- Do you have a clear objective for the meeting or call? How does your objective relate to the interests and concerns of advisors and their clients? What "need" or problem will your conversation address?
- Too often the client has had no input into the agenda if they are even aware one exists. They have no opportunity to prepare or consider the topics or questions in advance. How and when do you communicate the agenda to the advisor?
- Doing your homework, so to speak, is often the best source of the questions we should ask. What additional information do you seek? Do you have a list of prepared questions?
- As a professional communicator, you should gather the key data points in support of your objective and prepare the talking points you will utilize in advance. Why this advisor? Why now? Consider the stories or visuals you will utilize in support of your message. What questions and objections might you encounter? Do you have a well thought through response?
- What constitutes progress from the meeting/call? In our too busy lives, we all want if not need clear direction on what happens next. How do we act on the information shared? What will you do next? What should they do next?

Worksheet: Preparation – Research

Product Use / Production Details

Team Structure / Business Dynamics

Professional Associations

Personal Interests

Prior Meeting / Call Notes

News You Can Use

Worksheet: Meeting/Call Preparation

Meeting Objective – Problem or Need to be Addressed

Agenda – Focus on Problems/Solution not Product Name

Research Notes / Data Points

Prepared Questions

Potential Next Steps