

## QUICK POLL FROM SEI ADVISOR NETWORK

# 2010 Practice Management Poll: Advisors Aim to Grow Business, Want to Learn From Peers

The **SEI Advisor Network** recently conducted a Quick Poll on Practice Management. The poll, conducted in April 2010, was completed by 417 financial advisors from the United States. The goal of the poll and this summary is to examine the key focus areas within practice management, as seen through the eyes of financial advisors. Further, of the top priorities, the poll sought to determine what, if any, actions would be taken to achieve these goals.

### Top Priorities of Advisors for 2010

- **#1: Increase sales and grow business (66 percent)**  
The past 18 months has had a substantial impact on the financial advisor industry. As a result, two-thirds of poll participants said that their top priority for 2010 is to grow their business.
- **#2: Communicate to clients and prospects more frequently (20 percent)**  
One-fifth (20 percent) of advisors polled identified communicating with their clients and prospects more frequently as a top priority. Additionally, more than half (53 percent) chose this goal as the second most important priority.
- **#3: Improve office efficiency through technology (8 percent)**  
Less than one-tenth (8 percent) of advisors polled view their top priority in 2010 as improving their business operations through technology.
- **#4: Invest in staff (6 percent)**  
Of the four priorities listed, investing in staff was the least popular option. Only 6 percent of advisors said that staff investments – including new hires and professional development – are a top priority. Additionally, nearly three-quarters (70 percent) of advisors selected this option as their lowest priority of the four choices.

### How to Learn Best Practices

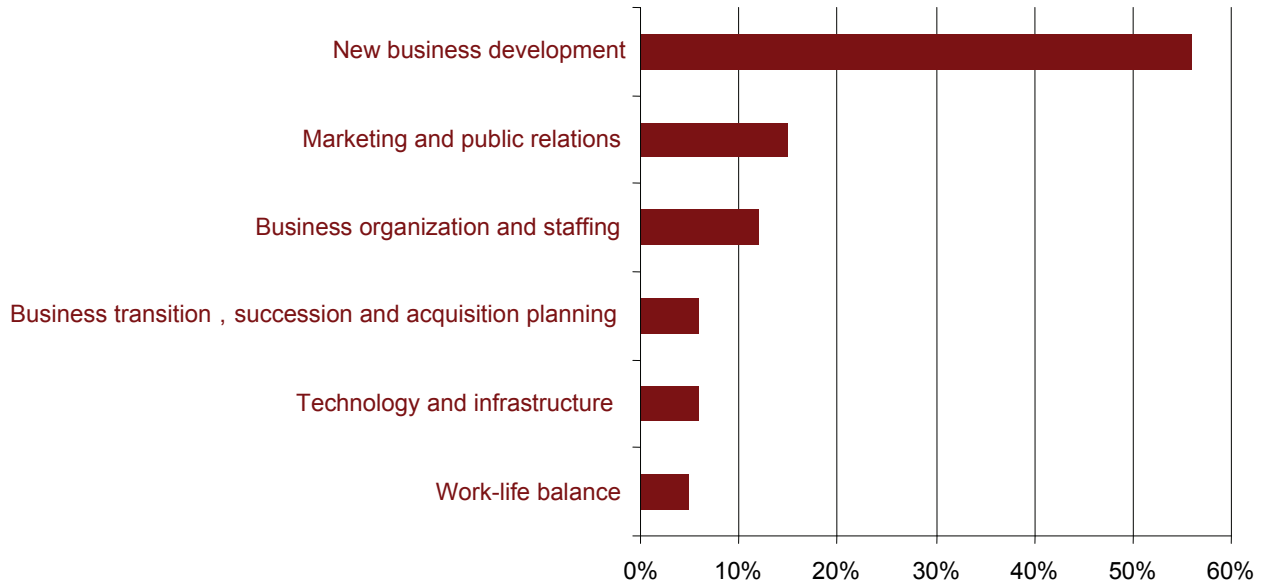
- **Peer-based learning a popular option**  
There is no shortage of ways for financial advisors to learn about best practices within the field. There are dozens of industry publications, online and print, countless continuing education courses and industry associations offering insights about how to be the best advisor to a client base. However, there is an increased emphasis recently among advisors to improve through their peers. In fact, nearly all (90 percent) poll participants said that learning best practices of peers is important.

### Professional Coaches for 2010

- **Advisors seek advice, strategic guidance around new business development**  
More and more advisors rely on outside support for strategic guidance. Poll participants were asked which area of expertise they would be most interested in receiving advice around from a

professional coach. The most common choice, by a significant margin, was new business development. More than half (55 percent) chose this option.

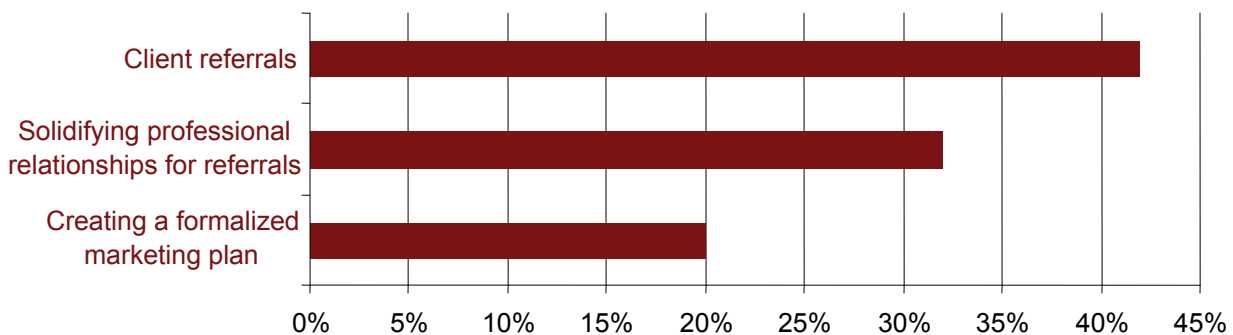
**If you were going to hire a professional coach for 2010, what area of expertise would they advise you on?**



**Plans for Business Growth**

- Client referrals, solidifying professional relationships for referrals lead the way**  
 The majority of poll participants identified growing their business as the top priority for 2010. Among those who chose this area of focus, the majority plan to do so through client referrals, by solidifying professional relationships for referrals and by creating a formalized marketing plan. Client referrals led the way with nearly half (42 percent) identifying it as the most important element to growing their business. Solidifying professional relationships for referrals was the second most popular option (32 percent) and a marketing plan was third (20 percent). However, three other options – holding seminars, exploring social media and increasing advertising and public relations – combined for only 6 percent.

**When it comes to growing your business, what is most important?**



## Plans for Increased Communications

- **Changing communications tactics, increasing frequency high on to-do list for advisors**  
One clear outcome of the market crash in 2008 was that clients want their financial advisors to be more proactive in their communication. Advisors have heard that message – as evidenced by the results of this poll. Of the poll participants who said that increased communications was their top priority in 2010, nearly one-third (29 percent) plan to increase the frequency of outbound communications. More than one-quarter (26 percent) said they plan to increase the frequency of client review meetings. Additionally, nearly one-quarter (22 percent) said they plan to develop a new approach to client review meetings.

Ten percent of respondents said they plan to hold more client appreciation and/or education events. The remaining respondents chose either using third-party content in communication materials, distributing a regular newsletter, or retooling their website, as their tactic of choice.

## Conclusion

The results of this poll illustrate that increasing the book of business is a key priority for financial advisors. Overall, the recent market turmoil of 2008 and 2009 has had a significant impact, and the desire for advisors to grow their business and the need to increase client contact are two direct outcomes. Additionally, it's particularly significant that nearly all advisors value knowing what their colleagues are doing to run their businesses more efficiently and effectively. The key will be to determine what practices of their peers work best for their individual business.

## About the SEI Advisor Network

The SEI Advisor Network provides financial advisors with turnkey wealth management services through outsourced investment strategies; administration and technology platforms; trust, banking, and institutional services; and practice management programs. It is through these services that SEI helps advisors save time, grow revenues, and differentiate themselves in the market. With a history of financial strength, stability, and transparency, the SEI Advisor Network has been serving the independent financial advisor market for more than 16 years, has more than 6,000 advisors who work with SEI, and more than \$30.2 billion in advisors' assets under management (as of Mar. 31, 2010). The SEI Advisor Network is a strategic business unit of SEI. For more information, visit [www.seic.com/advisors](http://www.seic.com/advisors).

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