



Prospecting **GUIDE**

New Clients Are Out There—And
You **Can** Find Them

Table of Contents



3
First Things First: Who Are You?

9
Your Ideal Client

12
Your Digital Presence

17
Finding and Connecting with Prospects

Prospecting for new clients is simply a part of running a business.

On the one hand, you can take comfort in knowing that every business has to prospect, so clearly, it's doable. On the other hand, figuring out what will work for you and your business can feel like a critical and maybe even overwhelming decision: you certainly don't want to waste time and resources on methods that don't work.

The good news is that there are some straightforward, tried-and-true methods of finding and connecting with prospective clients that have proven effective for financial professionals, regardless of demographic, location, business size, or area of specialty. And the best part is, you have the teams and resources of Cetera at your disposal, including your service and engagement teams, the Business Consulting Group, [MarketingCentral](#), and much more—all ready to help you **find new clients and create the business you envision.**

First Things First: Who Are You?

To lay the foundation for prospecting success, you need to fine-tune your value proposition, identify your ideal client profile, and make it easy for prospects to find you and clients to refer you. Without having these three pillars well-crafted and solidly in place, your lead generation efforts will be more based on luck than strategy:

- **Your value proposition:** what do you offer clients that will make you stand out from competitors?
- **Your ideal-client profile:** what type of client is a good fit for your business?
- **Your digital presence:** with your website as the hub of your lead generation strategy and your social media presence boosting your credibility and organic search results, you can create a recurring, and in many cases automated, prospecting and client awareness plan that promotes your value proposition and reminds your ideal client why you're a good fit for their needs

Even if you have these elements already in place, you may want to use the following information to revisit them and ensure they're still current and as effective as possible.



Your Value Proposition

Simply put, your value proposition tells people two things: what you do, and what you do that makes you different from other financial professionals.¹ That may sound repetitive, but it's not. There may be lots of basic tasks you do that are similar to other financial professionals—portfolio construction, retirement planning, budgeting, and so forth—and people need to know you offer the fundamental services they need.

The crux of your value proposition, however, is what makes you different from other financial professionals—why should someone go to you instead of someone else, and why would someone refer a friend or family member to you over someone else? Another way to think about it is, what problem do you solve for your clients?²

This could be experience that comes from a special area of focus (such as parents with special-needs children), a certain type of client you specialize in or a field you have a passion for (such as small-business owners), or a unique credential or background that may help you better relate to and serve certain demographics (maybe you once worked construction or were an athlete).

The unique skills and understanding you bring to the table are what make you a better fit for a someone's needs over other financial professionals.

Does your value proposition limit who might want to work with you? Yes, and that's a good thing! "Everyone" is not a target market. In concert with developing your value proposition, you need to determine who your ideal client is—it will help you zero in on the right places to look for leads and economize your outreach efforts.

¹BNY Mellon/Pershing. (2019). Advisor value propositions: how advisors showcase their value to investors, and what investors secretly think. [Article]. Retrieved on July 10, 2020.

²Kolowich, L. (2018). How to write a great value proposition. HubSpot. Retrieved on July 21, 2020 from <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/write-value-proposition>.

CRAFTING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

A quick internet search will demonstrate the variety of articles and resources out there designed to help you understand value propositions and define your own. BNY Mellon's Pershing has put together a well-researched, straightforward [article about creating a value proposition](#) specifically for financial professionals, which was the basis for the list below.³

Value Proposition Essential #1: Stand Out

As noted, your value proposition should separate you from your competitors and define the differentiating factor that makes you the right person for your ideal client to work with.

Value Proposition Essential #2: Tell Clients What the Emotional Result Might Look Like

Nearly all marketing is predicated on an emotional response which is later rationalized. Whether it's the two-seater convertible bought because "it will make the long commute more fun" or the expensive designer fashion accessory purchased because "it's a timeless anchor piece," we have the capacity to adjust our belief systems to align with our actions, wants, and emotions. This is one of the hallmark principles of cognitive dissonance.⁴

Helping your clients envision what's in it for them if they work with you not only gives them an emotional basis for rationalizing their decision to work with you—it also builds in a focus on them. You aren't trying to win them over with an abstract vision of a strong portfolio; you are helping them look toward a better, more enriching life.

Value Proposition Essential #3: Let It Grow

You should put in the time to create the best value proposition you can, but it isn't set in stone for your entire career. If your business is well established, there may be little need to reconsider how you position the value you deliver clients. But if you're still building experience, expanding your professional skill set, and finding or redefining your niche and target client profile, your value proposition can change to reflect your career growth and development. It is also not unheard of to have more than one value proposition to address different client segments or the different niches of the financial professionals comprising your business.

³BNY Mellon/Pershing. (2019). Advisor value propositions: how advisors showcase their value to investors, and what investors secretly think. [Article]. Retrieved on July 10, 2020, from <https://information.pershing.com/rs/651-GHF-471/images/per-advisor-value-propositions.pdf>.

⁴Psychology Today. Cognitive dissonance. Retrieved on July 21, 2020, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/cognitive-dissonance>.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As an example, let's say you spent your summers working for your uncle's contracting business and you leveraged that network to get your first few clients. Your value proposition might be something like:

"Fiduciary financial advisor with **a background in construction*** crafting customized solutions for **empowering small-business owners in real-estate, design/build, and contracting.**** You focus on your clients; we'll help you make smart financial decisions for you and your business **so you can build a stronger financial future for yourself and your loved ones.*****"

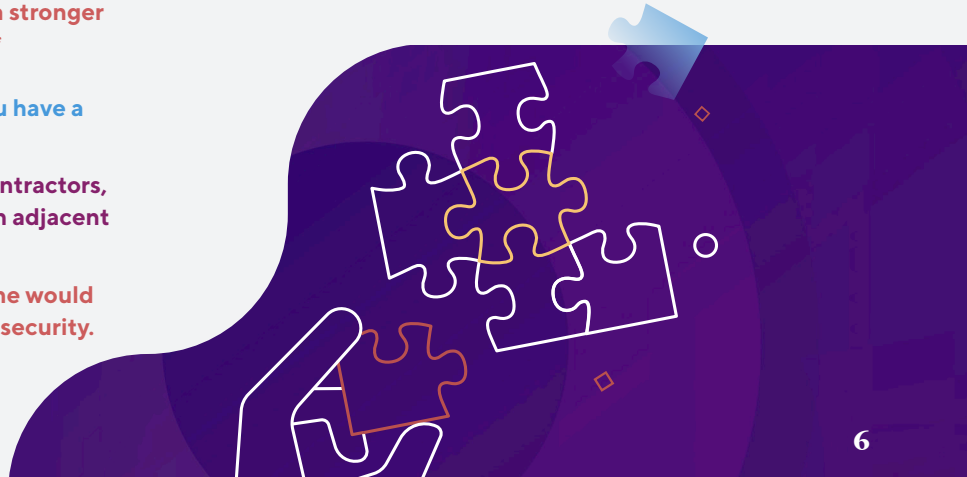
***Standing out: how many people can claim this? You have a unique perspective on their business.**

****Letting it grow: maybe you started off with just contractors, but are looking to expand to other specialties within adjacent industries.**

*****Focusing on the client's emotions: nearly everyone would feel an emotional relief if they had greater financial security.**

Creating your value proposition will not necessarily be an overnight event. If you are struggling with it, you may want to consider creating your elevator pitch first (see *Always Have Your Elevator Pitch Ready* on the next page).

Talk your way through a variety of elevator pitches with your family and friends, and see what feels natural to you and intriguing to them. For additional inspiration, see Pershing's *Advisor Value Proposition Words that Work*.



ALWAYS HAVE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH READY

You never know when you may run into a good prospective client, so you need to be prepared at all times. Your elevator pitch—a 15- to 30-second description of what you do and how working with you could benefit the prospect—is a mandatory piece of marketing that can mean the difference between someone becoming your next client or being the one that got away. As the adage goes, you only have one shot at a first impression.

To be effective, your elevator pitch should:

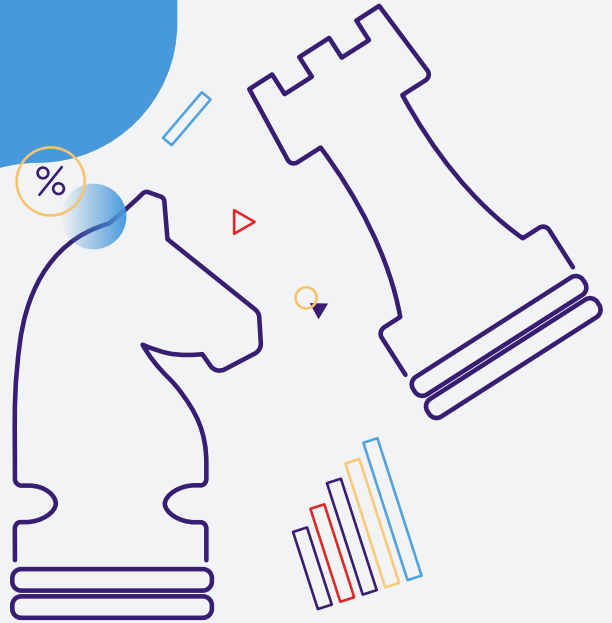
- **Explain what you do in a memorable, tangible way**
- **Reflect enthusiasm for what you do**
- **Allow you to engage the listener with questions**
- **Include opportunities for you to mention any designations you have or niches you serve**
- **Be flexible to adapt to different audiences' needs**

For instance, instead of saying “I am a financial professional who helps people choose sound investments for pursuing a comfortable retirement,” you can try something along the lines of “I help take the stress out of people’s finances. It’s one of the most satisfying parts of being a Certified Financial Planner.[®] Is there anything about your finances that keeps you up at night?” or “I help people fund their bucket list through sound financial advice as a wealth strategist. What’s the thing on your bucket list you are most excited about?”

FINDING YOUR VALUE DIFFICULT TO SUCCINCTLY DEFINE?

Creating your unique value proposition and working through your elevator pitch can be a challenge, sometimes even more so when you have an established practice that grew organically from a broad and diverse client base. You *are* unique, and defining that for potential clients can help you go from “a choice” to “the obvious choice” when they’re selecting a financial professional.

The Business Consulting Group can help you clearly explain and share that value. To define or refine your unique value proposition and elevator pitch, contact them at **619.702.9651** or **businessconsulting@cetera.com**.



Your Ideal Client

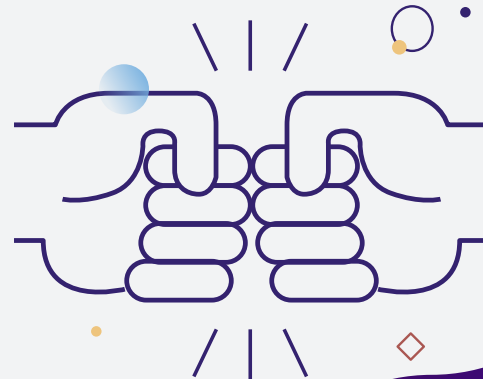
Your value proposition should be created with your ideal client in mind. Who do you want to service? Who do you enjoy spending time with? Are there particular careers or fields you admire or have a history with? What demographics in your area represent the most enticing opportunity for you?

When you are looking to fill up your client roster, it may seem like anyone and everyone is a good prospect. But resisting this urge can pay dividends down the road and make creating the practice you envision easier.

Having a clearly defined ideal client helps you create a niche that allows you to target your marketing to a limited group, saving time and money. Having a niche in turn makes you more of a specialist, which makes you more referable. People who know you can handle a unique set of needs, such as those of physicians or artists, are more likely to refer you to their physician or artist colleagues and friends. And when your clients tend to have the same challenges and same needs, you can more easily create repeatable processes—and limit the range of services needed—to serve them.

Conversely, people who don't fit your ideal client profile—or are clients you don't enjoy working with—can divert your attention with specialized needs, time-consuming demands, and in extreme cases, decreased morale for you and your staff.

While you might be tempted to think of your ideal client in terms of investible assets, don't. Of course, depending on your business and fee structure, you may need to service clients that have enough assets to help you generate income, but there are a number of ways to generate income that are not dependent on assets under management (AUM) (see *Net Worth Not Worth Worrying About?* on the next page).



NET WORTH NOT WORTH WORRYING ABOUT?

In an ideal world, your business might be built from a group of ultra-high-net-worth advisory clients that handily meet or surpass your AUM target. Unfortunately, depending on where you live, there may be a very small number of such people even available, if any at all. However, you can still create a thriving business from the prospect list available to you.

Through Fee for Service on [AdviceWorks™](#), you can charge for a variety of services on a one-time, recurring, or subscription basis, which may allow you to generate the revenue you desire without a focus on AUM—or, looking at it from another perspective, without excluding clients who will truly benefit from your insight and experience and can still appropriately compensate you for it. For example, think of young professionals with significant incomes but no assets. Getting paid to help them earlier in their financial lifecycles can reap greater rewards in the future.

Creating Your Ideal Client Profile

Start with your existing book to see if you already have some ideal clients. If not, you may need to use your imagination within the context of your available prospects. Use the questions below within your existing book and beyond to explore who would be a good fit for your business.

Who are your ideal clients now?

Write down why you enjoy working with them and, to help in your ongoing refinement of your value proposition, what you provide that makes you the ideal financial professional for them.

Which clients represent a strong future for your business?

You may love working with your retiree clients, knowing you helped them toward the life they are enjoying, but onboarding more retirees is obviously not a good business model!

Which clients are your most profitable and/or demand the least from you?

Keep in mind that profitable clients that demand a lot of you may generate a lower hourly rate for you to service them versus clients who generate less revenue but take up very little of your time.

Which clients refer prospects to you?

You might have a client or group of clients that may not quite fit your ideal-client profile, but they regularly connect you to their colleagues and friends who are a match.

Which clients align with your service philosophy?

Maybe you are extremely traditional with a wood-wainscoted office, or maybe you prefer to make informal house calls in jeans and a polo shirt. Who appreciates the way you approach client service?

Looking at your service area, how big is your client pool?

While technology may allow you to cover any area in which you're licensed to practice, you and your prospects may prefer the ability to meet in person from time to time, so the demographics in your immediate area may play a significant role.

Who needs the services you enjoy providing?

Do you love working with people who want to get in the weeds and build a custom portfolio from the ground up, or do you prefer to create a more plug-and-play repeatable service model and focus on relationships?

Which clients fit your value proposition and the qualities that make you unique?

If your value proposition and your ideal-client profile don't match, you'll need to explore why and reconcile the difference.

SEGMENTING IDEAL CLIENTS

Depending on your criteria and level of granularity, you may have more than one ideal-client profile. For example, if you live near a large university with a teaching hospital, you may want to attract more physicians, but may be equally enthusiastic about working with university professors and administrators.

Additionally, there may be medical residents or postdocs who may not have a lot of assets now, but either show long-term potential for increasing wealth or are ideal candidates for a subscription billing model or other fee-for-service offering. **MarketingCentral** can help you set up targeted campaigns and communications to nurture each group. There are even pre-built campaigns designed specifically for outreach to physicians, small-business owners, teachers, and women.

NEED ONE-ON-ONE HELP CREATING YOUR IDEAL-CLIENT PROFILE?

The Business Consulting Group is ready to give you customized guidance on creating your ideal-client profile. They can also help you segment your existing book to identify top referrers, and provide ideas on how to share your ideal-client profile with them to help refer the right prospects to you. To learn more and get started, contact the Business Consulting Group at **619.702.9651** or **businessconsulting@cetera.com**.

Your Digital Presence

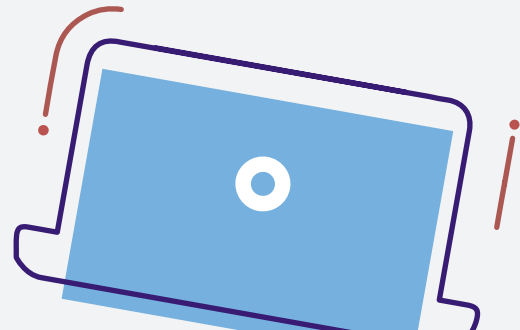
Once you know what you offer as a business and who you want to service as a client, you need to have a way to connect those services to prospective clients. The most prevalent and economical strategy is through a strong and multifaceted digital presence that starts with your website, which is not only the hub of all your marketing and prospecting activities, but in many cases the basis of someone's first impression of you and your business.

For broker-dealer use only. Not for use with the public.

If crafted well, your website is your 24/7 storefront that brings leads one step closer to working with you.

Note that people will do their due diligence on you, likely starting with your website. Not having one is tantamount to not existing, and not having a good one can be a turnoff to current clients and prospects alike.

In addition, your social media and other lead-generation activities, as discussed on the following pages, depend on a strong website playing a critical role in your client journey—the path prospective and current clients take to creating a deeper, more robust connection to you and your business.



Your Website: What Belongs on It?

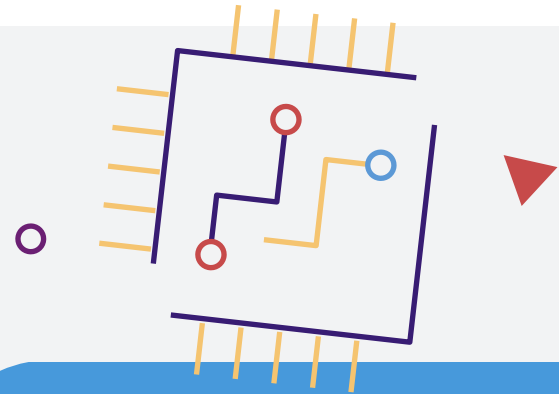
At the very least, your website needs to accomplish **three things** well:

1. It should feature your **value proposition** and the problems you can help solve so people can understand what you do and whether you are a good fit for their needs
2. It should prominently display your **contact information**
3. It should feature your **bio and a headshot** (and bios for your team if you have one) to “put a face to a name” while highlighting your credentials and experience, and offering some personal information to help people get to know you

To be an effective lead generation and nurturing tool, your website should also feature:

- **An appealing design** that matches your branding and is easy to navigate with high-quality pictures
- **Strong, concise content** that builds on your value proposition, engenders trust, answers questions about what you do and how you can help, highlights your team members (professionally and on a personal level), and appears to anticipate and solve a prospect’s needs
- **Prominent calls to action** that make it easy for visitors to engage with you to request more information, ask a question, or schedule a meeting
- **Thought leadership**, such as an article or analysis you’ve written, or instructional or educational materials that show your commitment to helping clients pursue greater financial well-being and understanding, further establishing your credibility and value

- **Gating of select content** such as a popular article or proprietary insights where you require more information from the visitor before they can access it, giving you the ability to capture their name and email—and learn a little about their interests
- **A list of events** that you are hosting or participating in, and information on how to attend
- **Mobile-friendly** capabilities and design
- **Security measures** with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) or Transport Layer Security (TLS) certification
- **Web analytics** to help you understand how your site is performing—where visitors are coming from, how long they spend on your site, and what pages they visit, so you can make necessary adjustments and improvements



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of maximizing the number of visitors to a website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine like Google.

There are many tips and tricks you can execute throughout your website to improve your SEO, and most website vendors will offer SEO options within their packages. If you are interested in expanding your personal knowledge of SEO, we suggest visiting [Google's Help Center](#) to review their *Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide*.

LOOKING FOR A SIMPLIFIED SOLUTION TO CREATE OR UPGRADE YOUR WEBSITE?

Your affiliation with Cetera gives you access to FMG Suite’s website design and creation services at a significant discount. Whether you have an existing site you want updated or are starting from scratch, they can help you rise above the “sea of sameness” comprising most financial professional websites, and efficiently incorporate effective lead generation features. Plus, your FMG Suite website is fully integrated with **MarketingCentral**, making it easier to coordinate your lead-generation activities, stay connected with and nurture prospects, and continuously drive traffic to your website with engaging content like videos, infographics, quizzes and calculators. **See how it works.**

For broker-dealer use only. Not for use with the public.



Social Media

Just as your website is an invaluable digital resource, sharing content through social media is an important tool for connecting with people to nurture their interest organically. If you are like the majority of adults who use social media regularly,⁵ you probably already have at least one personal social media account. But if you don’t have professional social media accounts on **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, and **Twitter**, you’re missing an essential tool in your prospecting arsenal.

In general—and this applies to just about all your lead-generation activities—**your posts should focus on adding value to your followers’ lives.** Doing so will reinforce your brand and encourage people to follow you and share your posts with others, broadening your reach. Overtly self-promotional or salesy posts are not likely to get you far and may even backfire. In addition, your social media account(s) must be approved and monitored by your broker-dealer’s social media supervision tool, and there are guidelines on what you can and cannot post.

⁵ Pew Research Center (2019, June 12). Social media fact sheet. Retrieved on July 22, 2020, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>.

For more information on setting up your supervision tool, please visit your workstation. If you have questions on your broker-dealer's policy, contact Advertising Review at socialmedia@cetera.com.

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

To optimize your social media profiles:

- Use a **professional photo** for your background and profile images
- **Leverage the headline space** to market your abilities (e.g., Delivering financial solutions for 20 years, empowering small-business owners in real-estate, design/build, and contracting)
- **Share what makes you unique** in terms of your offerings, philosophy, and the value your services provide
- **Get personal** by sharing life experiences such as sending your first child off to college, running a marathon, your volunteerism, and stories and topics that are of value to you; the more personal, the better (but you may be wise to avoid sensitive or potentially divisive topics such as religion and politics)

- Add or share **relevant and educational articles and posts** with timely information, and link to additional content on your website when possible
- Speak in the **first person** by using “I” and “we”
- Keep your profile **up to date**
- **Post regularly**—an inactive account is like an abandoned storefront; you can activate [MarketingCentral's automated social media capabilities](#) and draw on the Cetera Social campaign (available in select FMG Suite upgrade packages) and/or FMG Suite's [Social Foundations](#) campaign to send regular posts for you
- **Invite clients and prospects to connect**—search “connect” in MarketingCentral's content library for ready-to-use communications and be sure you've added your social accounts to your signature in [MarketingCentral \(Profile > Social Media\)](#)

While there are similarities in how Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can be used to reach prospects and promote your business, there are some stark differences as well. If you're new to using social media in a business context or just want a quick refresher, FMG's *The Financial Advisor's Guide to Social Media* provides an excellent primer on setting up and getting started with the “Big Three” platforms.

Finding and Connecting with Prospects

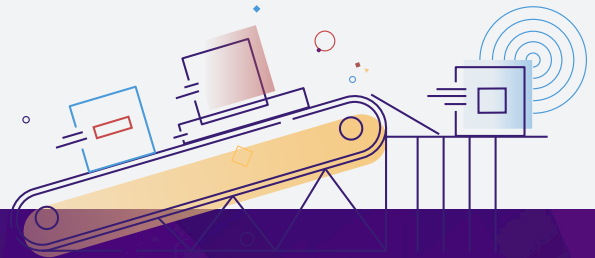
At this point, you have the foundation for strong proactive outreach where you can build your list of prospects, connect with them directly or lead them to your website, and get to work on converting them into clients. The following list of methods is far from exhaustive, but contains some of the more reliably consistent approaches. All require you to focus on the person, not yourself or your business, and demonstrate a desire to help them solve a problem, have a stronger future, or add some other sort of value.

YOUR CRM: YOUR CLIENT RECRUITING MACHINE

As you build your list of prospects within your contact relationship management system (CRM), gather and enter as much information as you can. Their name and email are baseline targets, and many people will provide them in return for exclusive content from your website, the ability to participate in an event, or to receive follow-up information. When you can, be sure to build out their CRM profile with spouse and children's names, where they live, their career, likes and dislikes, their key financial interests or concerns—information that can help you better target your outreach to them as you nurture the relationship.

Hopefully this information will come up as a part of natural conversation, but don't be afraid to ask for information in order to be able to send them articles or other relevant non-sales-focused information that may be of interest to them.

For instance, ask about their children and their ages in reference to providing information on college savings plans, or even ask their age and retirement status in reference to sending them relevant Social Security or required minimum distribution (RMD) information. By using this data to create groups or categories of clients within your CRM, you can more easily set up targeted campaigns through [MarketingCentral](#) built around information relevant to those clients and prospects.



Digital Prospecting

The previous section on social media best practices essentially outlines how to use this powerful suite of platforms to reach prospects and create a lead generation pipeline. The key ingredients are to have a profile that clearly describes who you are and how you can help, and provide regular, meaningful posts that, ideally, link back to your website for a reason. Creating posts that people find inherently sharable can provide avenues to connecting with their family, friends, and greater social circle.

LinkedIn and Facebook in particular offer ways for you to expand your reach beyond your current network. On LinkedIn, you can [join or create groups](#) focused on a shared interest or attribute (such as career or industry, school affiliation, and hobbies and interests). Many groups are public, but some are private, and you will have to ask the group administrator to join. By becoming an active member of a group and posting relevant content for other members to see, you can quickly expand your prospecting audience—groups can have several thousand, or even tens of thousands, of members.

Facebook offers a more active way of reaching prospects through Facebook Ads and “boosting” posts. Both methods allow you to reach targeted groups of new people that don’t follow your page (see *Turn on the Faucet for a Wash of Potential Leads* on the next page). **Facebook Ads** allow you to create your own campaigns, target them to specific demographics based on criteria you choose, and track your campaign’s performance. You can also [boost a post](#) to extend its reach to friends of people who follow your page or, like [Facebook Ads](#), target your boost to certain demographics.

Keep in mind your social media accounts are merely a platform. To stay relevant (and more searchable), you will need to post to each account regularly. Setting up social media automation through [MarketingCentral](#) will help ensure your digital prospecting not only keeps you top of mind with your current followers, but also maintains your prospecting momentum by helping you find new clients even while you’re busy servicing your existing ones.

TURN ON THE FAUCET FOR A WASH OF POTENTIAL LEADS

Facebook is the largest social media site by far, with 2.45 billion active monthly users.⁶ While that represents tremendous potential for client prospecting, the content you post on Facebook is only available to people who follow you, meaning it only helps you reach prospects you've already somehow connected with.

Faucet is a turnkey solution that lets you compliantly use Facebook Ads, which in turn let that lets you target your ideal-client profile using criteria you select, and use your posts to drive leads to your website where you can turn them into high-quality prospects and, potentially, high-quality clients. Faucet even offers a managed-services solution offering additional assistance. Faucet is currently exclusive to Cetera-affiliated financial professionals. For more information on how it works and to get started, visit <https://getfaucet.io/>.

Client Referrals

Directly asking for a referral can be uncomfortable for you and for your clients, and make you come across as salesy, or worse, more focused on your bottom line than on your clients. A soft ask is often the best approach, and the automated referral campaign in [MarketingCentral](#) can help. It sends out quarterly reminders to clients that you're available to help their friends and family with financial questions or guidance. (One of your Cetera peers shared how they used it to help them generate a 125% increase in referrals from their current clients in just one year.)

Another option when asking for referrals is not to ask at all, but to use insights from conversations with your clients about their friends and family, or even build off topical financial news or trends, to discuss how you'd be happy to talk and offer insights to anyone they know facing a financial challenge or opportunity. You can find several examples, along with sample language you can use with clients when employing these approaches, in *The Best Way to Ask for Referrals? Don't Ask for Referrals*.

⁶Kellogg, K. (2020, February 3). The 7 biggest social media sites in 2020. Search Engine Journal. Retrieved on July 22, 2020, from <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/social-media/biggest-social-media-sites/>.

Niches

A client niche is both a group and a marketing tactic. Having one (such as business owners, attorneys, divorcees, or people from a local industry or employer) brings nearly everything you do into alignment. Your marketing can be leveraged across your book because your target market all shares key similarities. Plus, you'll likely encounter the same problems, concerns, fears, and opportunities, and therefore be able to employ repeatable solutions and thinking.

The real value of a niche comes from getting known for service within it. People in a community tend to know and associate with others in their group, so there's a built-in referral network targeting exactly your niche. Ideally, you'll become the "go-to" person for anyone in it. Having a niche also simplifies your prospecting: most people are NOT candidates, and when you want to find new clients, you know exactly where to look.

If your existing book or ideal client profile doesn't already point to a likely niche you're developing an affinity for, you can build one around a group or industry you love or have a connection to, your skill set and designations as a financial professional, your prior career or degrees you may have, and/or your business model (see page 2, *Your Unique Value Proposition*).

Start with someone in your extended social circle who is in that niche and ask them what they would look for, or feel is missing, in financial professionals servicing them. Ask if they have colleagues willing to talk with you as well. Treat them like mentors. Your goal is not to sell them on the idea of becoming a client, but to build rapport and understand how to build a practice around servicing that niche. As you do, you can reach out to these mentors for recommendations and referrals.

Events

The webinar, client appreciation dinner, golf outing, and wine tasting are familiar ways to get to know current clients better while prospecting among the family and friends you encouraged them to bring. There are, of course, plenty of other events you can hold, either virtually or in person, that may appeal more to your ideal client.

For example, if you are targeting millennial business owners, a dinner in a hotel ballroom or webinar on transitioning into retirement will bear little fruit. But a discussion on purchasing a home, managing student debt, or cause-based investing may be more likely to harvest RSVPs.

Your options are limited mostly by your imagination, but be sure to get compliance approval for your idea first. Then, promote it heavily on your social profiles, client newsletter and email campaigns, correspondence, meetings, and so forth. Make a participant's name and email a requirement for signing up, which you can rationalize by requesting them to send information in advance of the event or to notify attendees of changes to the access information.

Don't be too worried if attendance is low in the beginning—it may take time to find your audience. If people are attending, you're doing something right—and with continued marketing, word will spread.

For more information on events and other prospecting tactics, including targeting your efforts to specific groups, see our *Prospecting Essentials* guide.

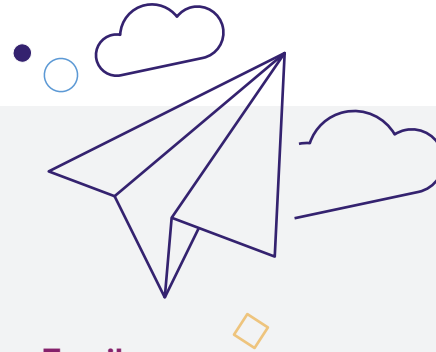
WHEN IN PERSON IS OUT OF THE QUESTION

If you can't gather in person, the rapid and widespread acceptance of Zoom and similar videoconferencing services means you can reach people in the comfort of their own home. Guests can be anonymous with only you able to be seen and heard, asking questions through the chat feature, or you can allow for free discussion among the group. Calls can be built around a pre-existing seminar or be informal and built around a financial literacy book club, a monthly recap of economic news, or a Q&A for clients and their friends (but be sure to have participants send questions in advance and have your own list of questions at the ready).

MAKE EVENTS EASIER WITH MARKETINGCENTRAL

You can create custom events through MarketingCentral's event builder, which will create a branded landing page for your event, allow you to capture RSVPs, and easily drive promotion through email, social media, and print. See the step-by-step instructions on [managing](#) and [promoting](#) your event for more information.

The Downloadables section of MarketingCentral's Content Library is a great source of prebuilt presentations and event kits for educational seminars or webinars. Each presentation will include the presentation file, script or speaker notes, and handouts to accompany the presentation. Timely presentations will be released in the library throughout the year, including State of the Markets (beginning of year) and Half-Time Report (midyear). Cetera's Workplace Financial Wellness event kits make it easy to engage with business-owner clients—and uncover new opportunities—by delivering educational workshops that teach their employees about financial health.



Emails

One of the primary reasons to capture email addresses through channels like your website and at events is to support your email campaigns. These can take a variety of forms, from a monthly or quarterly newsletter to promotions of upcoming events.

The goal is to maintain contact so you stay top of mind, promote your value proposition and services, help recipients prospect for you by forwarding your email, and provide a call to action that will prompt people to engage with you more.

The heart of an email campaign is an offer or call to action, such as a newsletter, blog post, or thought leadership piece. Your digital media properties (website, email, social media) will work in conjunction with each other to drive this engagement.

For example, a communication sequence may go like this:

- 1. You post on your Facebook page or Twitter account that you have a new guide on managing student debt available for download from your website**
- 2. A link will take people to a page on your website where they enter their email address to have the guide sent to them**
- 3. While there, they can also check a box to receive your future papers or your newsletter directly to their inbox**
- 4. Each email contains a forward link so people can send it to friends who may be interested, allowing them to opt in to receive future emails**

[MarketingCentral](#) is one of the most robust—and economical—tools available for creating and automating your email outreach, tracking results, and targeting specific audiences with information relevant to them. From birthday cards to lifestyle communications to insightful market commentary and much more, it may be the easiest way to get started or augment your current efforts.

It also features a dedicated support team to help you understand and get the most from its capabilities—not to mention a host of other features to help you with your prospecting and client engagement efforts, and a proven track record among your peers.



Segmenting Prospects

As noted earlier in this section, your CRM is an essential tool for documenting information not only about your clients, but your prospects as well. The more details you have about your prospects, the more you can target your outreach to topics of interest to them.

For example, Redtail is a CRM built specifically for financial professionals and contains extensive features that help you organize households, clients, and prospects. Redtail (along with Salesforce, SmartOffice, and Wealthbox) also integrates with [MarketingCentral](#), allowing you to target an email or social media campaign only to pre-retirees, invite only millennials to your seminar on buying a first home, or send only parents of high-school-aged children your piece on financial aid and paying for college.

You can also think beyond the standard outreach: [AdviceWorks'](#) integration with Redtail means you can conveniently use it to offer prospects free access to it—under your business's branding—and allow them to use its suite of features. For example, a lead who has mentioned they struggle with budgeting or reining in their bigger financial picture might appreciate its ability to display all their credit card, bank account, and mortgage statements all in one place, with real-time updates.

A lead that you know travels frequently or lives in a disaster-prone area might benefit from [AdviceWorks'](#) secure vault where they could keep copies of their passports and plane tickets, or important documents they might need in a disaster-recovery effort.

GETTING THE INFORMATION TO SEGMENT

The key to segmenting prospects is, of course, getting information about them. If the prospect is a referral from an existing client, you can ask the client to give you a little background about the prospect when they bring it up. If you personally meet the prospect, you can ask them questions as part of getting to know them better, such as whether they have children and their ages, what they do for a living, what they hope for the future, when and if they plan to retire, if their parents live nearby and depend or are likely to depend on them, and so forth.

Try to flow these questions into conversation and have it come across as natural curiosity and a genuine interest in them as an individual, not an inquisition. If it seems to the prospect that you're angling to get information from them for business purposes, you can expect guards to go up and the conversation to end there. If you do take a verbal misstep, you may be able to get it back on track saying something like:



"I'm sorry—I don't mean to pry! I am a financial professional and caring for parents is something many people don't budget for and can be an emotional burden. I hate to see anyone go through that, especially when there are ways to mitigate or eliminate the financial challenges. I would be happy to send you some information about it—not salesy, no obligation, of course—if it would help. Please know if you need to talk anything through or bounce ideas off someone, or get a second opinion, I am here for you."

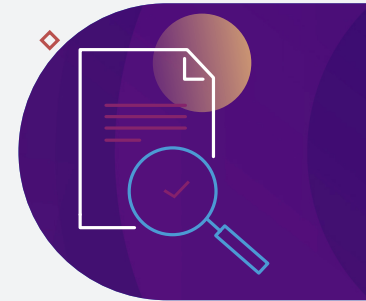
Of course, the goal is to get the prospects' email address or, at the very least, give them your business card. It's better to hand out a business card and leave a positive impression than get their contact information while leaving a bad taste in their mouths.

If you hold an event, whether in person or online, you should always get participants' email information as part of the signup process. As noted earlier, this is simply a best practice to engage with participants before the event. You may also include a short questionnaire about their financial concerns or dreams, such as "What's your number one financial goal right now?" or "What financial concerns keep you up at night?"

If you invite attendees to bring guests, at the event ask them to provide their email information as well—again, it's best to request this for a reason such as following up with more information, slides from the presentation, and so on. You could add the question in the pre-event email if it feels natural under the circumstances.

You might also consider a survey or simple questionnaire on your "Contact Us" page on your website or prior to an event, asking clients which of the following are at the top of their financial wish list:

- **Saving for Retirement**
- **Paying for Children's Education**
- **New Home Purchase**
- **Paying Down Debt**
- **Traveling**
- **Not Running Out of Money**
- **Charitable Giving**
- **Covering Health Issues**
- **Retiring Early**
- **Caring for Parents**
- **Not Being Bored in Retirement**
- **Spending Time with Friends and Family**



CREATING THE SEGMENTS

Once you've logged prospects' personal information into your CRM, you can start to create or add people to groups based on their interests so you can better target your outreach to their needs, wants, and desires. Start with your value proposition and ideal-client profile first—people whose needs and situation align with them most are likely some of your strongest prospects.

Next, **look at people with similar needs and interests to current clients**—this will make your service model more repeatable should they become clients, but also allows you to invite these prospects to client events built around a particular profile. Your clients may not appreciate being asked for a referral, but will likely speak well of you to prospects they meet at an event. Implicit in that is ensuring a chance for attendees to mingle—either with a wine and cheese reception, or even just asking everyone to introduce themselves to the person(s) sitting next to them.

Next, **review your list in light of the marketing materials you already have**. For example, do you have a newsletter focused on a specific topic or life stage? Do you have outreach focused on budgeting or paying down debt?

Review the [MarketingCentral library](#) for materials and campaigns that align with your prospect profiles.

Finally, **look for any other similarities at all among prospects, or any details unique to a particular prospect**. Maybe some are into gardening or cooking, or one is a fan of a particular sports team. If their favorite team is heading into the playoffs, a simple note about how exciting that is can go a long way. Similarly, if you come across a gardening tip or recipe you enjoyed, it gives you another reason to reach out. Just showing that you paid attention to them and remembered is a subtle indicator of the service you provide.

Segmenting your book of business and list of prospects can be a challenge, but the Business Consulting Group can help.

You can reach them at 619.702.9651 or businessconsulting@cetera.com.

Now that you're well underway to generating leads and staying meaningfully connected to your prospects, it's time to focus on turning them into clients!

See our [Client Conversion Guide Forging Ahead: from Prospect to Client](#) to learn how.