

COI – Relationship Building Process

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Engaging In A New COI Relationship



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Who: COIs with the potential to be a valuable resource for both clients and the business.

Purpose: Establish a connection, assess the potential for a meaningful COI relationship, and set clear expectations for collaboration.

Meeting Plan

Personal Introduction

- Where are you from?
- Tell me a little about your family.
- What do you enjoy doing outside of work? (Hobbies, interests)
- Seasonal touchpoints: If summer → Ask about travel plans. If winter → Ask about holiday traditions.

Professional Background

- What led you to this profession?
- Tell me more about your company and the services you provide.
- What drives your passion for this work?
- What is your vision for your firm?

Ideal Clients & Client Experience

- Are you currently looking to take on new clients?
- Who is your ideal client? Who do you do your best work with?
- What is your client service model like? How often do you interact with your clients?

Working with Other Professionals

- Besides financial advisors, what other professionals do you collaborate with?
- When choosing professional partners, what qualities are most important to you?
- What has made your best professional relationships successful? What hasn't worked well?

Experience with Financial Advisors

- How many financial advisors do you currently work with?
- What has that experience been like for you?
- Has working with advisors helped grow your business? Have you made introductions to them?
- Do you personally work with a financial advisor? (Understanding their perspective)

Decisions & Next Steps

If it feels like a strong fit...

"I really enjoyed learning more about you and your practice/service/expertise today. I want to share that we take a different approach than many advisors when it comes to professional partnerships. Rather than having a large number of surface-level relationships, we focus on developing deep, meaningful partnerships with a select few firms that align with our values. We prioritize collaboration both in serving clients and in making introductions.

Does that align with how you approach professional partnerships?"

(Pause and let them respond.)

If the conversation continues in a positive direction:

"Great! I'd love to have another meeting where we dive much deeper into client experience and services offered to ensure that we can create the value in this relationship we are both seeking. How does that sound? Would now be a good time to look at calendars for a follow-up, or would you prefer I send some dates after I get back to the office?"

If it's not the right fit...

"I appreciate your time today and enjoyed getting to know you. If we can ever be a resource to you, please don't hesitate to reach out."

Productive Meeting Tips



Listen more than you talk. Let them share about themselves and their business.



Be selective with questions. You don't need to cover everything—just enough to assess fit and potential for a strong working relationship.



Build a genuine connection. Professional relationships are more impactful when they're built on trust and there is authentic connection.

Who: COIs who can provide strong value to our clients, are influencers in their field, and show high potential for reciprocity and partnership.

Purpose: Gain a deeper understanding of each other's services and client experience, and establish value we can provide to each other.

Meeting Plan

Client Experience Overview

- What does your client onboarding process look like?
- How do you support clients on an ongoing basis?
- Observe is their approach relationship-based or more transactional?

Service Offerings

- Overview of your key services.
- How do you charge?
- How do you educate and communicate with your clients?
- What differentiates your firm from others in your space?

Client Profiles

- What does your ideal client profile look like?
- Do you focus on specific niches or target markets?
- Would it be helpful to review a case study together?

Decisions & Next Steps

If it feels like a strong fit...

"Thank you for taking the time to dive deeper and help me understand your services and the value you bring to clients. We want to ensure that when we introduce our clients to other professionals, to which they have a seamless and high-value experience. I feel confident that our clients would benefit from working with you."

How do you feel about the services and value we provide? Do you see this as something that could benefit your clients? Any potential challenges you foresee?"

(Pause and let them respond.)

If the conversation continues in a positive direction:

"We'd love for you to be one of the select firms, we work closely with in serving our clients. How do you feel about that?"

If they express interest:

“Great! I’ve found that the best way to build a successful partnership is to set clear expectations, align on goals, and create a structured plan for working together to help ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. Would you be open to scheduling a meeting to outline those next steps?”

If it’s not the right fit...

“I really appreciate your time and the insights you’ve shared about your services and ideal clients. I want to be respectful of your time knowing that our intention was to explore to see how we can add value and be a strong resource for one another for years to come. At this time, I’m not confident there is opportunity to create abundant ongoing support and value.”

And close with one of two ways...

“That said, I do now have a better understanding of what you do and if an opportunity comes up that aligns with your services, I’ll certainly keep you in mind and make the connection”, or

If you know someone who might be a better fit for collaboration with this COI, make the introduction.

“That said, a good professional partner of mine may have great synergy with you and your services/offerings. I would love to make the introduction as I think it could be a fruitful connection. Would you be open to me making this connection?”



Send an agenda in advance to set expectations.



Have repeatable materials to streamline these meetings for other COIs.



Stay engaged—ask questions as they share about their firm.



Identify opportunities where they could integrate introductions to us.



Bring leave-behinds & visuals to illustrate your services and process.



Set expectations for the final meeting to ensure alignment moving forward.

Who: COIs where we see strong potential for a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship after the first two meetings.

Purpose: To set clear expectations for the relationship moving forward. This is an *upfront contract* to ensure alignment.

Meeting Plan

Growth Goals

- Annual targets: Number of new households, business owner clients, and retiring clients
- Business Development (BD)/Marketing goals: Growth through professional partnerships.
- Personal goals (optional): A valuable relationship-building component, especially if the COI prioritizes personal connections.

Introduction Process

- What is the best way to introduce you?
- What do you need from me when making an introduction?
- Once an introduction is made to us, what follow-up expectations do you have?

Lead Generation Expectations

- Review of the ideal client profile.
- Discuss ideal COI introductions.
- Set a number of introductions/referrals.

- Commitment to active participation in the process and regular review of prospect and lead opportunities.

Ongoing Communication & Relationship Review

- Expectations around collaboration on shared clients.
- Best practices for building and strengthening our partnership.

Commitment Moving Forward

- Agreement to quarterly in-person meetings (adjust frequency if the COI is a proven influencer—every 6 weeks or monthly may be appropriate).

Decision Point

Yes – Moving Forward

Commit to developing the relationship with intentionality. Strive to be the first to provide value.

No – Not a Fit

If there are red flags, hesitancy about making introductions, reluctance to commit, or a lack of connection—slow it down. Don't move forward with a formal commitment unless it feels like the right fit.

If the decision is no, consider this closing statement:

"I really appreciate your time and the insights you've shared about your services, ideal clients, and goals. Our intention was to explore how we can add value and be strong resources for one another. At this time, I'm not confident there's an opportunity to create abundant ongoing support and value."

Then close in one of two ways:

"That said, I now have a better understanding of what you do. If an opportunity arises that aligns with your services, I'll be sure to keep you in mind and make the connection", or

"That said, I know a professional partner who I believe will have great synergy with you and think it would be a valuable connection for both of you. Would you be open to an introduction?"

Success Tips



Don't rush into a commitment if it's not the right fit. Slow things down if needed.



Be clear about expectations for ongoing commitment and partnership.



Adjust meeting frequency if working with a proven influencer.



Be transparent about your goals to build trust and alignment.

Ongoing Relationship Building

- **Quarterly meetings** with a set agenda.
- Review collaborations and opportunities.
- Discuss new developments in each other's worlds.
- Identify ways to **move the needle** over the next three months.

Review Process

Introductions Made to Them:

- Total number of introductions.
- How many converted into clients?
- Review client feedback.

Introductions Made to Us:

- Total number of introductions.
- How many were qualified?
- Do they align with our ideal client profile?

Working Relationship Assessment

- Are you still as excited about this relationship as when we started?
- Is communication effective between meetings and when introductions are made?
- Do you see potential for deeper collaboration?
- Are there any concerns or challenges?
- Does this feel like a long-term partnership?

Outcomes

Feeling Great – Exceeding expectations:

- Strong connection and likeability.
- Introductions are happening regularly.
- Positive feedback from clients introduced.

Status Quo – Meeting commitments or close, but still developing:

- Leads are being generated.
- Relationship is progressing but still taking shape.
- Good feedback from introductions.

Not Going Well – Signs of misalignment:

- No introductions or lack of commitment.
- Struggling to build a strong connection.
- Relationship seems to be going in a different direction.

Success Tips



Address the relationship status at the six-month and one-year reviews.



If things are going well, share your excitement!



If improvements are needed, be direct. The upfront commitment meeting sets the foundation for open, honest conversations.