



Beyond Annuities: Strengthening your financial practice

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In today's complex economic environment, clients are looking for more than portfolio management – they want a trusted partner who understands their full financial picture and takes a more holistic approach to their services. Relationship quality, clear communication and personalized support now weigh as heavily as investment performance in how clients evaluate their financial professionals. Focusing on the client experience isn't just about meeting expectations; it's about building trust and maintaining long-term business success.

The good news: enhancing your client experience doesn't have to be overwhelming. Small, intentional actions – like strengthening your communication, collaborating more effectively, providing ongoing education and creating business efficiencies – can make a meaningful difference in how clients perceive your value. **In this brochure, we'll share practical strategies to help you deliver a stronger experience, deepen relationships and ensure the continued growth of your practice.**

Why is client experience so important?

Nearly 90% of client reviews about financial advisors focus on relationship quality, planning advice and emotional factors¹ – not just portfolio returns. This shows that today's investors are looking for more than asset management; they expect an advisor who understands their broader needs, anticipates challenges and builds a relationship rooted in trust.

By focusing on the holistic client experience, you can differentiate yourself, strengthen loyalty and demonstrate lasting value beyond financial performance.

Investing in your client's experience can:



Increase client satisfaction and retention



Build client trust and confidence



Demonstrate your value of your service



Lead to better financial outcomes for clients

¹ 2025 Voice of the Client Study: What Americans Really Think About Their Financial Advisors, Wealthtender, Brian Thorp, 2025

Strengthening client relationships

Every interaction with a client shapes their overall experience with your practice. Going beyond investment performance to provide reassurance, personal attention and clear communication helps build lasting trust. Let's dive into some practical tips for strengthening client relationships through effective communication, meaningful collaboration and ongoing education.

Make first impressions count

As the saying goes, you only get one first impression. Onboarding sets the stage for your professional relationship; to make it count, be sure to address the following topics when onboarding new clients.

- **Listen to your client.** Give clients the opportunity to share about themselves first, including their financial history, work background, family values, and family dynamics.
- **Outline your planning process.** Share an overview of what clients can expect from your financial planning process, including a brief summary of each step.
- **Review financial information.** Thoroughly review financial documents and other materials with clients to confirm you're on the same page.
- **Share expectations.** Set guidelines for your professional relationship, such as when and how to reach you, and what tasks each of you are responsible for.
- **Involve others.** Introduce other team members or partners clients may interact with through your practice.



Commit to ongoing communication

High-quality client communication doesn't end with onboarding. You build trust, loyalty and long-term success by staying present, showing genuine understanding, and anticipating needs over time.

Strong communication means being reliable in your follow-ups, personalizing your outreach so every client feels valued, and taking the initiative to guide them through challenges or opportunities. The following practices can help you put these principles into action and strengthen your commitment to client success.

1

Stay in touch regularly.

Connect with clients on a regular basis, outside of their scheduled meetings. This could be an update email monthly, or as simple as a text.

4

Check in during life events.

When clients experience a major life event, such as the passing of a close loved one or a child starting college, send a message letting them know you are there.

2

Customize communication

All communication with clients – including the advice you provide and how you reach clients – can be tailored to fit each individual client. Factors such as age, gender identity, career, and financial behavior may influence how you choose to communicate with clients.

5

Prepare in advance.

Anticipate what concerns clients may have based on their background and be prepared to address them. For concerns that apply to most of your clients, such as major market shifts, a communication to all clients through a newsletter or similar channel may be appropriate.

3

Commit to following through.

Although it may be obvious, following through with commitments made to clients – or failing to do so – can significantly impact client levels of trust and confidence in you.

6

Ask for feedback.

Request feedback from clients whenever possible. Doing so can demonstrate your care and provides opportunities to improve your practice.

Prioritize collaboration

More than ever before, today's clients want to be an active participant at every step of their financial planning. Actively collaborating with clients at different stages of their financial journey is an important way to ensure your clients are not only satisfied with the services you provide but understand the value they offer.

To best serve your clients, consider shifting your mindset from protecting client money, to working with clients to help them reach their goals.

Opportunities to collaborate with clients

Compare plan options and features side by side

to help clients clearly see how different strategies align with their goals.

Explore “what if” scenarios and potential outcomes

to prepare clients for both opportunities and risks.

Walk through proposed financial solutions together

so clients feel informed and confident in their choices.

Schedule regular plan reviews and updates

to keep clients engaged and ensure their strategies evolve with life changes.

Invite clients to share their priorities and concerns openly

so they feel heard, valued and involved at every step.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Only **19%** of children continue working with their parents' advisors¹. This means when beneficiaries inherit their wealth, you run the risk of losing those assets.

Involve client spouses, children and other loved ones in planning. This gives them the opportunity to understand the wealth they are set to inherit while getting to know you, increasing their likelihood of remaining a client.

¹ Cerulli Finds Just 19% of Investors Use Their Parents' Advisor Cerulli Associates. (2023, November 23). <https://www.cerulli.com/press-releases/cerulli-finds-just-19-of-investors-use-their-parents-advisor>

Encourage participation through education

An informed client is an empowered client. Providing ongoing education and insights not only helps clients understand their financial plans but also builds confidence in the decisions you guide them through. When clients can clearly see the “why” behind recommendations and stay informed about market trends, strategies and potential risks, they’re more engaged in the planning process and more trusting of your expertise.

Here are a few best practices for educating clients to help reinforce the value you bring beyond investment management.



Timing is key. Address market volatility when it occurs to give clients context.



Find ways to relate. Build on previous financial experience to explain current market conditions.



Keep it simple. Use terms and analogies that are easy for clients to understand and avoid using industry-specific terms or acronyms.



Use your resources. Find answers to client questions you don’t know and stay on the lookout for materials to share with clients.



Share your knowledge. Host free educational events or workshops for clients to attend and expand their financial education.

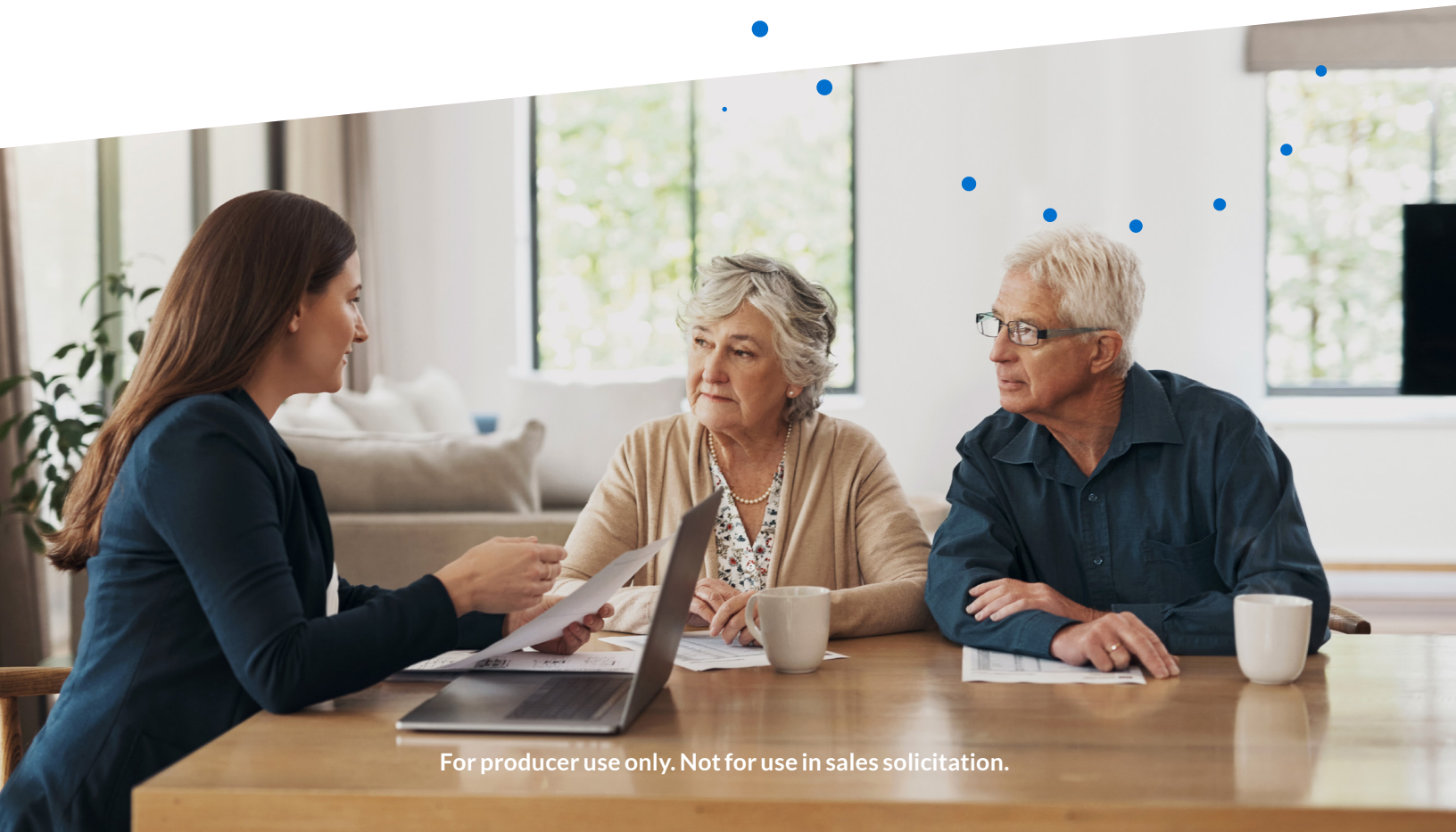


Encourage questions. Create space for ongoing dialogue, reinforcing that education is a two-way exchange.

Client relationship management

A great client experience doesn't happen by accident – it's supported by strong processes, efficient systems and thoughtful preparation. The work you do behind the scenes ensures your practice runs smoothly and your clients feel consistently supported. From anticipating questions to streamlining operations, the right back-office actions free up time and energy so you can focus on what matters most: serving your clients.

Let's explore some strategies that can help you manage client relationships more efficiently while maintaining a great customer experience.



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CLIENT SEGMENTATION

What?	Why?	Example
Client segmentation is the process of breaking clients into smaller groups based on shared characteristics.	Effective client segmentation can help you reduce time spent on client communications and ensure your messages meet the unique needs of different client groups.	Divide clients into groups based on their age and assets under management; then create tailored content for this group to share with each client.

STANDARD PROCEDURES

What?	Why?	Example
Establish and document standard procedures for processes or tasks you repeat frequently. If you work with a team, identify who will be responsible for each step of the process.	Establishing standard procedures is critical for improving efficiency, as well as ensuring accuracy, consistency and legal compliance.	Create a client on-boarding template that can easily apply to each new client. Establish what team members will be responsible for each step in the process, such as preparing materials and following up.

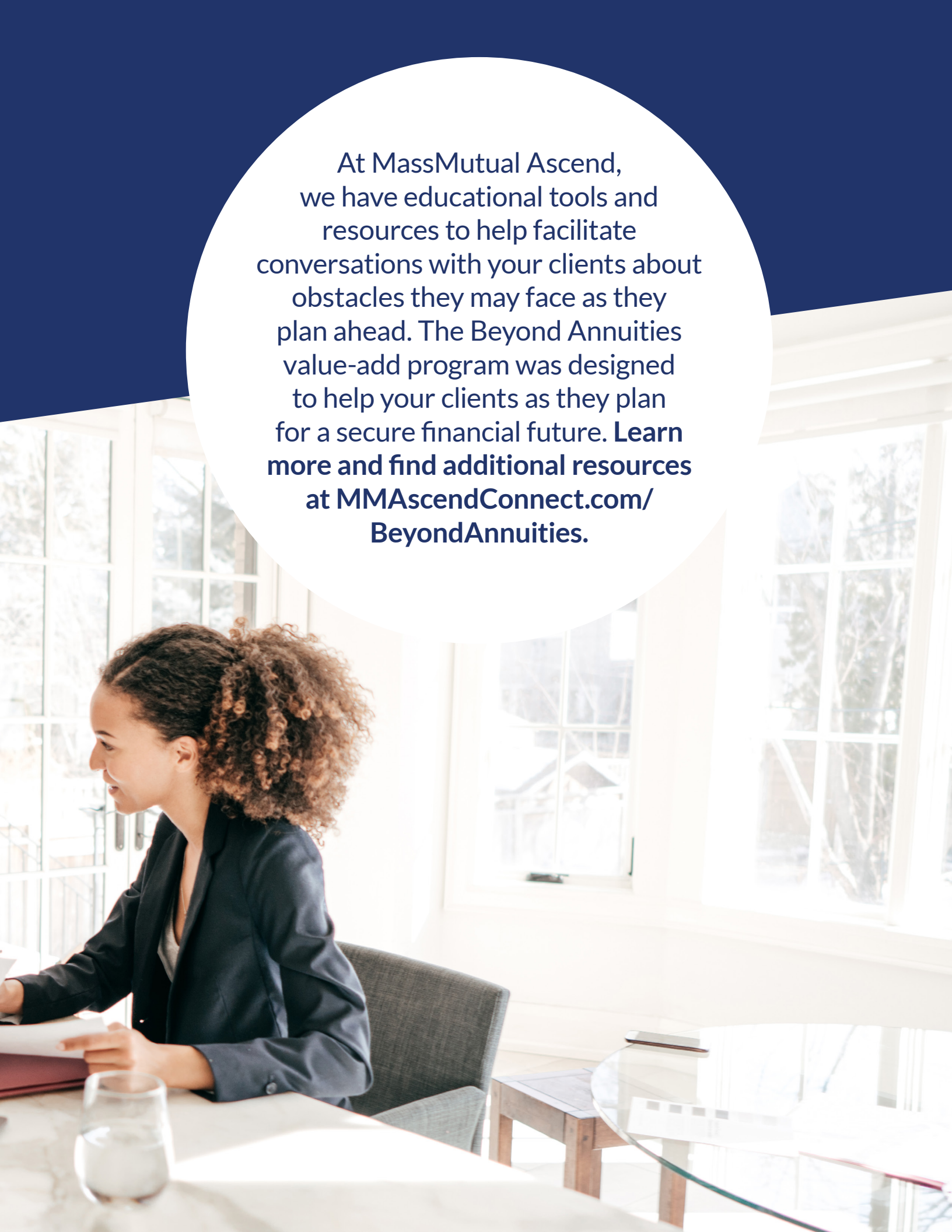
CLIENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

What?	Why?	Example
There are a variety of Client Relationship Management (CRM) tools available to help manage your client interactions and information. Some CRM tools include an integrated client portal.	CRM tools can assist in managing client data and interactions by centralizing data and automating tasks, enhancing the client experience while reducing the time you spend on administrative tasks.	Client relationship management tools offer a variety of features such as analytic and reporting tools, marketing and sales capabilities, or customer service tools.

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An elevated client experience is no longer a luxury, but an expectation. Use the strategies outlined in this brochure, alongside your financial expertise, to differentiate the client experience you offer and ensure the continued growth of your practice.



A woman with curly hair, wearing a dark blazer, is seated at a table in a bright room with large windows. She is looking down at papers on the table. A glass of water is also on the table. The background shows a view of trees and buildings through the windows.

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we have educational tools and
resources to help facilitate
conversations with your clients about
obstacles they may face as they
plan ahead. The Beyond Annuities
value-add program was designed
to help your clients as they plan
for a secure financial future. **Learn
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