



Bertram
financial

Fullcircle planning around the pillars of life

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QUESTIONS TO ASK ANY ADVISOR



01

WHAT DO YOU SPECIALIZE IN?

Just like medicine, the financial world (including tax, legal and insurance) can have different specialized areas. There are times when a general practitioner is ok, and other times that you need a specialist. For example, most people need just a generalized tax advisor, however if you are selling a business or something with high capital gains, you'll probably need the help of a specialist (or two).

Our attorney specializes in estate plans, while our portfolio management team specializes in risk-adjusted returns. We also have specialists inside the team for specific sectors, including bonds. We have multiple specialists in the tax and insurance world for different situations, and we specialize in retirement planning. Someone nearing or in retirement has different needs and requires different investment strategies than someone in the midst of their accumulation years.

02

WHO ARE YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS?

We always say, “We don’t work with everyone.” We cannot be all things to all people — no one can. Every advisor has an ideal client; for some advisors, it’s a client within a certain field or with a certain amount of assets. For others, like ourselves, it’s more about stage of life and values.

We only work with clients who are likable, coachable and ethical. That may sound simple enough, but it’s also in-depth. There are some times when we say we aren’t a fit and redirect people to another advisor.

You may also have your ideal advisor. Always feel free to ask questions and see if you are a match.



03

WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS?

No advisor will say they have a cookie-cutter approach, yet many do. If you answer a few simple risk questions or are put into a portfolio based on your age, your plan is probably no more than a one-size-fits-most plan. Another example would be if a trust or a will is presented as the best planning tool for every situation.

Here's the key: Your advisor's process should be focused around YOU. It should consider what you want, what you have and what you need. In fact, that's our process in a nutshell! It starts with YOU and what you want.

If your advisor hasn't asked you what you want, it should be a red flag. For example, if you are close to retirement, they should be asking questions about when you want to retire, what you would like to do in retirement, what's a comfortable income for you, etc.

You can view our process here: <https://bertramfinancial.com/>



04

HOW DO YOU MANAGE RISK?

This is really a continuation of the planning process. Once an advisor creates a plan for you or puts a portfolio together, then what do they do? If it is a colorful “diversified” pie chart that’s simply rebalanced once a year, what are you paying them for?

Life isn’t lived on a spreadsheet. Multiple risks need to be accounted for, including market risk, inflation, taxes, sequence of returns and income stability, just to name a few. So, how is your advisor managing your risks? Your plan (and your advisor) needs to be agile enough to make adjustments due to changes in the economy or new laws.

While you don’t need (or maybe even want) the full details, your advisor’s answers to your questions should be simple to understand without being loaded with too much financial jargon. If you can’t understand what they’re saying, ask. If they still can’t explain things in a clear way, that’s a red flag as well!

We manage risks in multiple ways, but here’s one example of how we manage risk and protect retirement income. Our team puts together a portfolio with individual stocks and bonds that allows them to use risk management tools, especially on key positions. They are constantly looking at the market for opportunities to reduce risk (by avoiding specific areas at certain times) or to increase gains. They adjust as needed and always ensure at least two years of retirement income is protected, either in cash, non-correlated or appreciated assets. You can listen to a more thorough explanation of this approach in our Retirement Shift blog.

<https://bertramfinancial.com/the-retirement-shift/>

05

HOW DO YOU GET PAID AND WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YOUR FEES?

Not all fees are transparent. No one works for \$50 a year; if that's the only fee listed, then you're likely paying other hidden fees. Some advisors are paid a management fee, while some are paid from the funds or companies they use. Others may be paid both ways. No one works for free, and the question for you is are you receiving value for what you're paying for?

Check out our Colors of Money ebook to learn more about how advisors are paid. Available at www.bertramfinancial.com under resources.



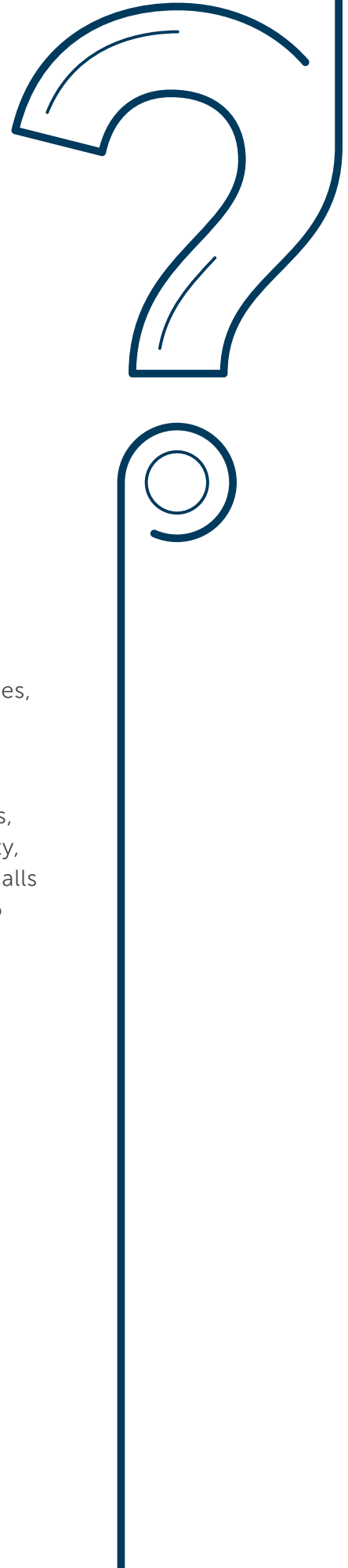
06

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CLIENTS?

There are two components here, regular reviews and updates, especially in volatile markets or with law changes.

For us, we communicate regularly through emails and text messages with updates about the market, legislative actions, current news and more. In times of extreme market volatility, we will make calls as well. We're always open to schedule calls to answer your questions, including with our head portfolio manager when it makes sense.

We also have annual reviews with clients to talk about performance and compare the personal benchmark we set. We will often check in at other points throughout the year or will schedule more frequent review when desired.





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BertramFinancial.com

We are an independent financial services firm helping individuals create retirement strategies using a variety of investment and insurance products to custom suit their needs and objectives.