



How to Create an Effective Introductory Packet

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An impactful information packet is an easy and effective way to gain an advantage over your competition. It is especially valuable when working with centers-of-influence (COIs).

In order to appear objective, some COIs have instituted a standard of referring their clients to more than one financial professional.



Ask yourself this question: If your estate planning attorney hands his client a business card for each of three financial advisors, one of those cards being yours, would you stand out? Probably not.

If, on the other hand, the estate planning attorney hands his client a business card from each of two financial advisors and also hands the client your introductory packet, you would immediately stand out from the competition in a positive way and appear more professional in the eyes of the client.

What to include in your introductory packet

Here are some options to consider including in your introductory packet:

- Business cards – Place three of your business cards in the introductory folder: one for each spouse or partner and one to hand out to a family member, friend or colleague
- Bio – I will discuss this later in this article
- Information on how the prospect should prepare for the initial meeting. This should include answers to the following:
 - o what prospects should bring to an initial meeting, including any questions they have for you
 - o how long to anticipate this meeting to be
 - o directions to your office, including any specific parking instructions

- Menu of services – Refer to my article on menu of services
- Mission and/or value proposition – Refer to my articles on these topics [here](#) and [here](#)
- Description of what a client can expect from you, and what you expect from your client – Refer to my [article](#) on expectations
- Company specific brochure – If you are associated with a firm, there is likely a brochure that describes the benefits and services of the firm, which is separate from your individual menu of services mentioned above
- CFP brochure – *What is the CFP Certification* brochure (if you are a CFP)
- Copy of clean U-4 – If you have a clean U-4, share this with prospects. Don't assume they aren't interested in having this information

Creating a compelling bio

To introduce yourself to someone through your bio, be sure to include information that connects you to the reader. This will help prospects begin to develop a rapport with you.

If you grew up in the area where you practice, include the name of the high school you attended. If you played sports or were involved in other activities, inform the reader.

Where you went to college and any degrees or designations you earned are important to share. Here again, any sports or extracurricular activities should be noted.

Information about your work history, including any careers outside of the financial industry, are worth mentioning. Military service is also worth mentioning.

Letting your reader know who you serve best is valuable information. Don't be concerned that you will turn away prospective clients by sharing this information.

If you have not already done so, you can access information on developing your ideal client profile in [this article](#). Use an abbreviated version of the ideal client profile in your bio.

Share information about designations you have acquired. Don't just list an alphabet soup of designations, CRPC, CFP, CIMA and so on; explain what the designation stands for and, more importantly, tell readers what this designation will mean to them if they choose to hire you as their advisor. You should be able to find verbiage about a designation on its website. Here's information gathered from the CRPC website, used in an advisor's bio. You probably won't use this much information, but you could:

Don has been certified as a Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (**CRPC®**) by the American College.

Individuals who hold the CRPC® designation have completed a course of study encompassing pre-and post-retirement needs, asset management, estate planning and the entire retirement

planning process using models and techniques from real client situations. Additionally, individuals must pass an end-of-course examination that tests their ability to synthesize complex concepts and apply theoretical concepts to real-life situations.

All designees have agreed to adhere to Standards of Professional Conduct and are subject to a disciplinary process.

Designees renew their designation every two-years by completing 16 hours of continuing education, reaffirming adherence to the Standards of Professional Conduct and complying with self-disclosure requirements.

In addition to professional designations, if you are a member of a professional association, include this in your bio. If you are a board member, that's even better.

If you have been honored by the industry – for example, by being named a Five-Star Wealth Advisor – let the reader know about this.

The professional information you include reinforces the fact that you are knowledgeable. But, it's the personal information that encourages readers to reach out to you, so end your bio with personal information. Readers will remember most what they read last.

If you are married, share this. If you have children and or pets, share this information too. Be careful about including the age of your children. If you do so, you will have to update your bio each year.

Clients and prospective clients want to learn about your hobbies, favorite vacation locales and the charitable organizations in which you are involved.

Be specific with your information. Don't say you enjoy sports; tell readers which sports and which teams you cheer for.

Even if they support a rival ball team, it's not going to turn them away. It may just be a topic for which you can innocently tease one another.

If their son or daughter went to the same college you did or they too coach their child's soccer team, they begin to form a connection with you.

Advisors have asked me if they should include their religious affiliation. Many of my advisors have done so without issue. Other have chosen not to include any religious or political information in their bio. This is ultimately a personal decision.

In addition to providing introductory folders to your centers-of-influence, provide them to your advocates and anyone else who refers prospective clients to you.

As always, if you have any questions about the information provided here, feel free to reach out to me. I am happy to answer any questions that will help you move a project forward.

For the past 18 years, Teresa Riccobuono has been a professional organizer, business consultant and practice-management specialist to the financial services industry, helping advisors bridge the gap between their existing and their ideal financial planning practice. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area but works with advisors across the country. She is a member of the board of directors of the East Bay Chapter of the Financial Planning Association and is currently the co-chair of the Public Relations committee. She can be reached at teresa@simplyorganized.com.