

The RIA Roadmap

**Your essential guide
to making the transition**

Your guide to making the transition to an independent Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) firm

You have worked hard to build a successful business. You know your clients and their evolving needs. It's time to take your business to a new level—one that gives you the freedom to act on your unique vision.

Financial advisors continue to make the move to the RIA model

Plan your path to independence backed by our team of professionals. At every step of the way, Schwab Advisor Services™ brings you more than 30 years of experience working with thousands of financial advisors as they transition to the RIA model. Use this roadmap to explore the key steps on your path to launching and growing your own firm.

Financial advisors work in many different models, including wirehouse firms and independent broker-dealer (IBD) affiliates. Depending on your current model, you may have experienced limitations in your technology platform, marketing options, or communication channels.

Those are some of the reasons why more and more financial professionals are choosing the RIA model. Independent investment advisors have the potential to keep more of what they earn, build equity in their businesses, and set up their firms for continued growth.

Most RIA firms provide services such as personalized advice, while customizing portfolios to fit specific client needs. They also have the freedom to determine everything from their compensation structures and technology platforms to their firms' brands.

The advantages are clear, but the prospect of making the transition can seem daunting. What about your existing client relationships? What are the legal and compliance responsibilities of becoming an independent investment advisor? How will your compensation change?



The fiduciary standard: RIA firms are registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or state securities regulators and are held to the fiduciary standard by the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 as well as similar state laws. Firms are required by law to act in the best interests of their clients and to file annual Form ADVs to help ensure their business practices and client communications comply with the standard.

Financial advisors continue to make the move to the RIA model



12K+

More investment advisors

More than 12,000 independent or dually registered investment advisors joined the RIA channel between 2013 and 2019, while the number of financial advisors at wirehouses and IBDs decreased.¹



22.7%

Asset market share growth

The asset market share of the independent RIA and hybrid RIA channels is projected to grow 22.7% between 2018 and 2023.²



60.8%

Increased AUM

In fact, for RIA firms that participated in Schwab's 2019 RIA Benchmarking Study, median assets under management (AUM) increased 60.8% since 2014.³



21.6%

Greater merger and acquisition value

The total transaction value of mergers and acquisitions involving RIA firms increased by 21.6% to \$129 billion in AUM in 2019, compared with \$106.1 billion in 2017.⁴

The RIA channel has matured dramatically in recent years, as thousands of financial advisors have successfully navigated the well-worn path to independence. The transition no longer requires a leap of faith. And the support for RIAs is more robust than ever before. Regardless of the unique path you choose, you can leverage that support to help with your transition.

At Schwab Advisor Services™, we have helped more financial advisors transition to the RIA model than any other custodian in the industry—transferring over \$321 billion AUM in total.⁵ With an average tenure of more than nine years, our professionals understand the transition process and can provide guidance along your path to becoming an independent investment advisor, sharing insights and resources every step of the way.

Whether you need support on a national level or right in your own backyard, turn to a leader in the industry. We provide exceptional service before, during, and after your transition.

We've designed this guide to be a comprehensive tool to help all types of financial advisors move toward greater independence. Of course, no two transitions are alike. For financial advisors who already have limited independence today or are looking to join a firm, some of the steps discussed here may not be relevant; we will note those steps throughout the guide. But reading through each step will help you gain a more comprehensive understanding of the process and be prepared to consult your Schwab Business Development Officer (BDO) to craft your own plan.

Every journey begins with a conversation.

Get answers today. Talk to a Schwab BDO to learn how we can help you get to where you want to be. All conversations are completely confidential.

Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.

Transition overview

The interactive timeline below outlines key steps in transitioning to the RIA model. They are grouped within four major topic areas.

Click on any topic area to navigate to more details

Define your
business
strategy >

Prepare for
legal and
compliance >

Set up
your office >

Convert your
accounts >

Before you move

- Identify goals and vision
- Complete pro forma analysis
- Research advisory models
- Complete business plan
- Develop marketing strategy
- Cross-check financial strategy
- Carry out business plan

As you move

- Create marketing materials and PR plan

Before you move

- Speak with legal counsel
- Form exit strategy
- Research Broker Protocol
- Choose entity structure*
- Determine licensing and registration

As you move

- Protect business with insurance
- Create legal and compliance program
- File disclosure documents and forms
- Draft client agreements

Before you move

- Define technology needs
- Search for office space*
- Make a list of required supplies and furnishings*

As you move

- Select and implement technology
- Choose the space, and set a move-in date*
- Equip the office*

Before you move

- Understand custodian's role
- Complete client asset review
- Choose resignation date
- Begin training

As you move

- Resign and send announcements
- Prepare client packets
- Transfer clients' assets

*Depending on the level of independence you have today, this step may not be relevant.

Your Schwab Advisor Services team

The decision to go independent starts with you, but you'll have an entire team working on your behalf before, during, and after the transition. Here are some of the key Schwab Advisor Services™ specialists who will help you envision your future, formulate a plan, and direct you to the best resources to set up your firm.



Business Development Officer

Your BDO is the quarterback of your transition team. They will listen to your goals, help evaluate your situation, and guide your transition from start to finish. As a facilitator of the process, your BDO can put you in touch with subject matter experts (both from Schwab Advisor Services and from third-party vendors) to help you make important decisions about setting up your business.



Schwab Relationship Manager

Your Schwab Relationship Manager is dedicated to helping you meet your ongoing needs and goals as you look to grow your business after making the transition. They work with an integrated team of professionals to help you take advantage of everything Schwab Advisor Services has to offer RIAs—such as products, services, and strategic consultation—to keep your firm ahead of the curve and the competition.

Start a dialogue about what the transition process could look like for you. Get answers from a Schwab BDO. All conversations are completely confidential.

Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.



Schwab Advisor Transition Services®

Your Schwab Advisor Transition Services team offers hands-on support with decisions both big and small, from defining your initial vision to ensuring the smooth transfer of client accounts. They're responsible for managing your transition, training your team on the Schwab platform, and helping you navigate the challenges you're anticipating—as well as the ones you're not.



Technology Engineer

Your technology engineer assesses the tools required to support your ideal client experience and evaluates third-party solutions to fit your needs. From strategic planning through launch and beyond, the technology team is there to help bring your vision to life.



In addition, your BDO can connect you with experienced third-party specialists, including legal and compliance counsel, as well as recommend marketing and branding agencies and more. Schwab Advisor Services develops teams based on your specific needs, so yours may look slightly different from what's presented here.

Define your business strategy



As an independent investment advisor, you have the ability to define your company on your terms. That freedom is exciting and inspiring, but it can also leave you wondering where to turn first. When you're ready to tackle your transition, start by making a strategic plan based on your business goals with the help of your Business Development Officer (BDO).

Consider your existing clients, your strengths, your desired future, and your competition and market landscape. This will help you define your vision and develop a plan for bringing that vision to life.



View our infographic to explore how the growth trajectory of the RIA model compares with those of other channels. [Download the Fast Forward infographic >](#)

View the Three Bridge Wealth Advisors video >



“That day was kind of the defining moment in our lives, and definitely in our careers. When we took our future, when we took our clients’ future and we said, ‘We’re going to do this better.’”

—**Brett Sharkey**

Managing Director,
Three Bridge Wealth Advisors

Before you move

Before you make a move, your Schwab Advisor Services™ team will get to know you and your business objectives by asking thorough questions and providing support as you develop your plan.

View Chris Baker's "Plan Your Move" video >



See how Chris Baker of Baker & Associates planned her move to become an independent investment advisor with Schwab's support.

"This is where it matters. We put the energy in and make sure we take all the responsibility that we possibly can, so that when the time comes, she's got every confidence in the world to focus on meeting with her clients and feeling very confident that she's making the right decision."

—Adam Schwartz

Schwab BDO who worked with Baker & Associates



Ranks highest year-over-year

With more recommendations from RIAs than any other custodian, Schwab Advisor Services ranks highest year-over-year when it comes to service.⁶ We provide support at every step, from optimizing operations to building an efficient business.

Identify your goals and vision

All the decisions you make should be rooted in your firm's value proposition and business objectives. Before you get started, you should have an idea of where you are going. That direction may evolve as you continue your research, but it's important to begin with a target in mind.

Complete a pro forma analysis

Your BDO will work with you to bring your envisioned firm and client experience into sharp focus—building a [Firm Design Blueprint](#) to help set you up for a smooth transition and long-term success. When you assess how your current earnings and expenses would shift in the RIA model, you can begin to get a sense of the economic outlook for your new firm. You can also start to plan for the costs associated with the transition.



Use the RIA Economic Discovery Tool to get started.

Based on insights from the experiences of more than 7,500 investment advisors as of December 2019, the tool charts your potential income, profit, and business equity. [Access the tool >](#)

“Our Business Development Officer with Schwab Advisor Services™ laid out a roadmap that was scheduled out by week in terms of all the critical things that needed to be done—like technology, finding real estate, working with vendors for marketing, and designing a website.”

—**Trevor Callan, CIMA®, CPWA®**
Managing Partner, Callan Capital

Research various advisory models

Investment advisors have more options available for independence than ever before. Perhaps you are an entrepreneur who enjoys the idea of building your business and brand from the ground up. Or you may prefer the freedom to focus on your clients without having to deal with office and technology setup.

Before making a choice, you should decide exactly who you want to be.

Complete your business plan

You’ve solidified your vision. Now you can create a detailed plan for your firm. It’s important to define your mission statement and investment philosophy.

Here are some other items to get in writing:

- Investment process, management bios, and launch date
- Revenue projections, pricing strategy, and transition financing plan
- Organizational structure and technology and operations plans

Your BDO will be there to guide you during every step of this process and to help ensure you make the right choices for your firm.

Most independence

Least independence





The hybrid model

If commission-based business is part of your offer, you may not want to give it up. The good news is, you don't have to. You can explore the hybrid model, which lets you maintain both advisory and brokerage business. If you select the hybrid model, your BDO can introduce you to broker-dealers you can evaluate for your commission business.

Learn more by reading the Schwab Advisor Services™ white paper *Going Independent as a Hybrid RIA: Understanding the Practice Model*.

[Download the white paper >](#)

Develop your marketing strategy

Part of owning your own firm is communicating the news when the time is right and in a way that's founded on your business strategy. As an independent investment advisor, you have control over communication and marketing to your clients. Take this opportunity to revisit your current marketing approach. You should clearly define your competitive advantage and use it to inform your brand identity and target client. Start vetting marketing vendors, and think about the name of your firm as well.



Take a deeper dive into what you should consider before making the RIA transition with the Schwab Advisor Services white paper *Exploring Independence*.

[Download the white paper >](#)

“The most rewarding aspect of being independent is knowing that we own our business. We are our brand.”

—**Stephen Korving**

President, Korving & Company

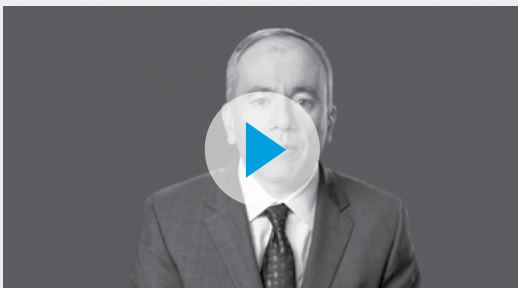
Cross-check your financial strategy

To ensure you are tracking your transition costs and ongoing expenses, you can use the [Schwab Advisor Services™ RIA Economic Discovery Tool](#) as you execute your plan. Contact your BDO to get access to the expanded tool.

Carry out your business plan

Now is the time to write job descriptions and begin thinking about interviewing and hiring employees to fill your organizational chart. Pick a payroll and benefits provider, and implement your firm's technology platform.

View the Advisor Growth Strategies video >



“One of the greatest things about being independent now for advisors that are in the independent channel is the ecosystem that surrounds them. And why is it better? Well, the first reason why it's better is options. There's optionality in independence.”

—John Furey

Principal & Founder, Advisor Growth Strategies

Here's an example of some transition costs you may want to research. If you are currently associated with an independent broker-dealer, you may be able to leverage some of your existing infrastructure, such as office space, equipment, and supplies.

Benefits

- Set-up fees for benefits administration

Marketing and business development

- Logo
- Brand creation
- Printing
- Stationery
- Website

Technology

- Hardware
- Software
- CRM
- Portfolio management and reporting
- Financial planning software
- Research

Office space, equipment, and supplies

- Security deposit
- Signs
- Additional build-out
- Furniture
- Appliances

Compliance and legal

- Employment contract review
- New business structure creation
- Drafting new client agreements

As you move

Create marketing materials and a PR plan

Once you've selected a marketing vendor, you can create the materials you'll use to introduce and promote your new firm. This is where you'll be working on your firm's logo, business cards, website, and communications and PR strategies, which can include efforts such as identifying media targets and channels, as well as establishing metrics and goals.



Read the Schwab Advisor Services™ public relations toolkit to learn how to craft media pitches and news releases, talk to reporters, and more.

[View the PR toolkit >](#)



View the “Independent RIA Life: Unscripted” transition video >



“There were a lot of things going on, and what really helped us just stay grounded and focused and start doing what we needed to do ... was the people from Schwab we had helping us organize our paperwork.”

—**Sarah Keys, J.D.**

Founding Partner, Cardan Capital Partners

Checklist

See what can be involved in creating your website

Your firm website is a key communications hub and should highlight:

- ☐ Your firm's unique value proposition
- ☐ Firm mission and values
- ☐ Services and products
- ☐ Investment approach and philosophy
- ☐ Client case studies
- ☐ Background and expertise of firm principals
- ☐ Firm history and facts
- ☐ White papers, firm publications, videos, blogs
- ☐ A clear call to action with a phone number or lead form

Consider other content to include:

- ☐ Weekly market update/commentary
- ☐ Links to your quarterly newsletter (educational articles, firm updates, and related investment and market news)
- ☐ Links to firm-authored articles on areas of expertise
- ☐ Links to article reprints of interest (firm- or market-related)

Display your firm's logo and website URL on your LinkedIn profile. This dynamic online presence connects your firm with clients, prospects, and centers of influence.

- ☐ Make your website mobile-friendly to support the increasing number of searches made from mobile devices.
- ☐ Include a LinkedIn follow button to allow a client or prospect to follow your LinkedIn company page easily.

Plan

- ☐ Identify your goals and vision
- ☐ Complete a pro forma analysis
- ☐ Research various advisory models
- ☐ Complete your business plan
- ☐ Develop your marketing strategy
- ☐ Cross-check your financial strategy
- ☐ Carry out your business plan

Execute

- ☐ Create marketing materials and a PR plan

Start a conversation about advisory models and transition costs. Get answers from your Schwab BDO. All conversations are completely confidential.

Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.



Prepare for legal and compliance

With the freedom and opportunity of the RIA model come additional legal and regulatory responsibilities. That may sound like more compliance work for you, but it doesn't have to be. When you make thoughtful and deliberate decisions during the transition, you can position your firm for long-term success.

Your Schwab Advisor Services™ Business Development Officer (BDO) can introduce you to legal and compliance experts who can assess where you are and help guide you from a legal perspective throughout the transition. These experts have been down this path to independence before. They'll assist you with everything from determining your firm's structure to reviewing existing contracts and compliance policies to guiding you through the disclosure and form filing it takes to become an independent investment advisor.

Before you move

Assess your goals with legal counsel

After choosing your counsel, you should discuss your firm's vision and history to date. It's important that counsel understands your business in order to advise you during and beyond the transition.



Transition tip: Keep your plans confidential. Even well-meaning friends, family members, and business associates can inadvertently disclose your plans to leave. Your BDO and legal counsel can help you determine the right time to announce your plans.

View legal expert Brian Hamburger's video series >



Watch this series of videos from legal expert Brian Hamburger, and learn more about the questions you should be asking to develop a comprehensive legal strategy for your transition.

Review employment agreements, and form an exit strategy

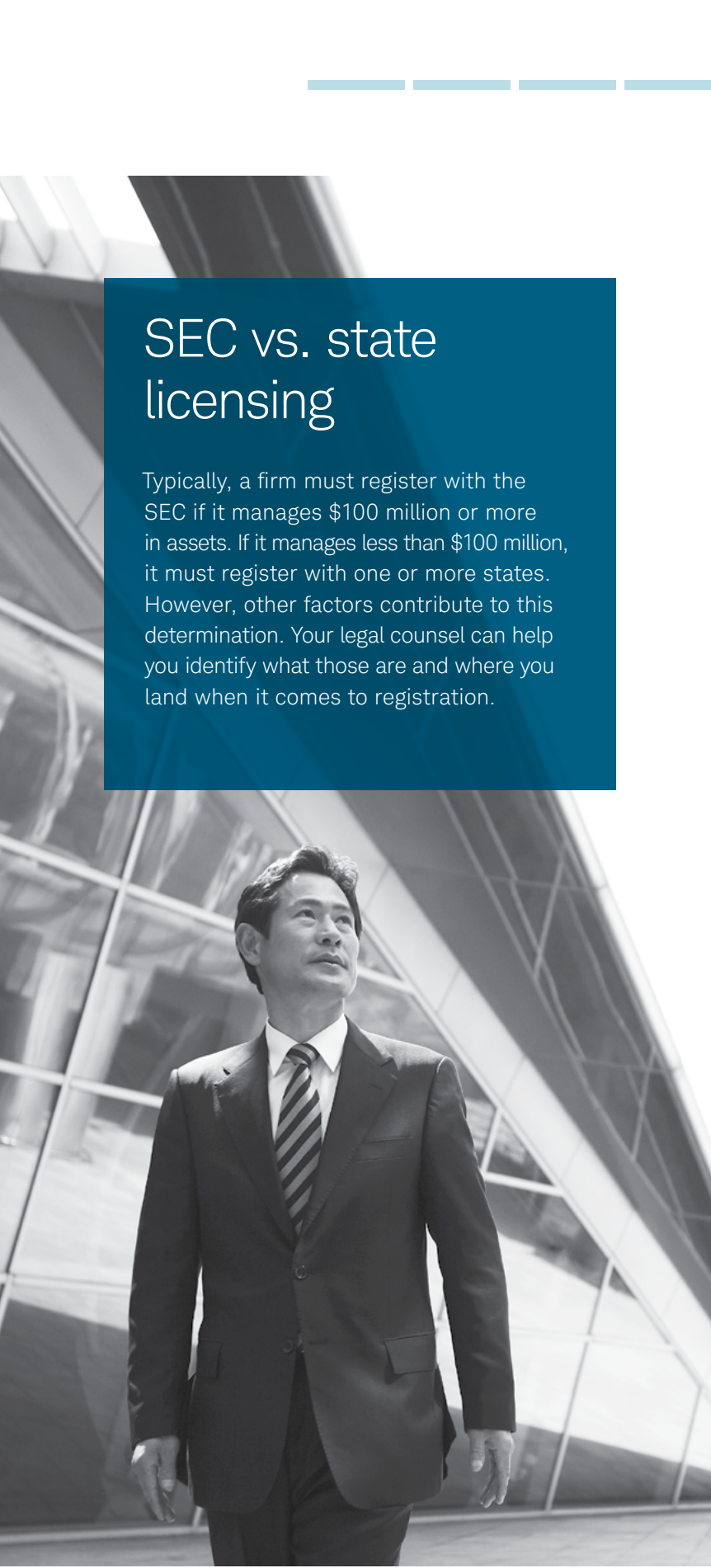
Restrictions in your agreements with your current firm, including your compensation agreement, may dictate when and how you transition. By formulating an exit strategy, you can make the transition smoother and avoid any legal concerns.

Legal should review some of the agreements focusing on:

- Training agreements
- Confidentiality restrictions
- Promissory notes or other forgivable loan arrangements
- Non-solicitation and non-compete agreements

Determine if the Broker Protocol is available to you

The Broker Protocol, created in 2004 by some of the major wirehouses, attempts to avoid costly lawsuits and temporary restraining orders against departing financial advisors. Please look at the protocol guidelines as well as any relevant agreements you may have with your current firm and review those with legal counsel. Your legal counsel can help determine if the Broker Protocol is an option for you and can guide you through the process.



SEC vs. state licensing

Typically, a firm must register with the SEC if it manages \$100 million or more in assets. If it manages less than \$100 million, it must register with one or more states. However, other factors contribute to this determination. Your legal counsel can help you identify what those are and where you land when it comes to registration.

Choose your entity structure

Many RIA firms will select a corporation or limited liability company (LLC) as their legal structure. Consult your legal and tax advisor to determine the advantages of each structure, both of which allow for proper succession planning. It's also important to decide where to form your RIA and to formalize any agreements with partners.

Determine licensing and registration

Legal counsel can help you understand the SEC and state requirements and find out where to register. Certain individuals will also need to register as Investment Advisor Representatives and meet state qualifications, most commonly by passing the Series 65 examination.



See how Schwab Advisor Services™ is committed to helping investment advisors stay up-to-date on the latest industry [legal matters and regulatory education](#).

As you move

Protect your business with insurance

It's important to obtain insurance to safeguard your firm against common risks.

Here are some types of insurance to consider:

- General business
- Errors and omissions (E&O)
- Life
- Disability
- Buyout

Create your legal and compliance program

Independent investment advisors have options when it comes to managing compliance. You can handle tasks such as registration updates and annual reviews in-house or turn to a third party. Work with your BDO and legal and/or compliance counsel to determine how to build a program that satisfies the needs of your firm and your clients.

Prepare and file disclosure documents and forms

You'll need to complete all applicable parts of the Form ADV and register individuals, typically with a Form U4. States may require additional filings, such as balance sheets or marketing materials.

Draft client agreements

Based on your firm's specific business practices, which will be described in your disclosure brochure, you can create client agreements.



Learn more about legal and regulatory insights by visiting the Advisor Services risk and regulations page.

[Visit the website >](#)

Clients come first, always

You are dedicated to protecting your clients' assets—and so is Schwab. Investments custodied with Schwab are protected by SIPC for securities and cash in the event of broker-dealer failure.

Read our brochure for additional information on how client assets are protected at Schwab page.

[View the brochure >](#)



Checklist

Plan

- ☐ Assess your goals with legal counsel
- ☐ Review employment agreements, and form an exit strategy
- ☐ Determine if the Broker Protocol is available to you
- ☐ Choose your entity structure
- ☐ Determine licensing and registration

Execute

- ☐ Protect your business with insurance
- ☐ Create your legal and compliance program
- ☐ Prepare and file disclosure documents and forms
- ☐ Draft client agreements

A chat with your BDO can help you make sense of the compliance, regulatory, and legal responsibilities of becoming an independent investment advisor. All conversations are completely confidential.

Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.





Set up your office

As an independent investment advisor, you have a wealth of resources open to you—so you can run your office your way. Now is your opportunity to create a space that aligns with the experience you want for your clients and staff.

Your Business Development Officer (BDO) can introduce you to real estate partners and furniture providers to help get your office up and running. And Schwab Advisor Services™ technology engineers are there as research guides and sounding boards to help you find the right solutions for you and your clients.

“Schwab’s approach was refreshing and different. They made a great effort to find out what was important to us instead of trying to sell a platform. That really stood out for us.”

—**M.J. Nodilo, AIF®**

Regional Director/Partner, EP Wealth Advisors

Before you move

Define your technology needs

Your Schwab Advisor Services™ technology engineer can help you to build a technology strategy to support your ideal client experience. Together, we'll streamline the account set-up and transfer process. Then, we'll create efficient digital workflows that make the most of our comprehensive platform and integrated network of third-party providers.



Learn more about powerful and flexible technology solutions by visiting the technology section of the Schwab Advisor Services website.
[Visit the website >](#)

Search for office space

If you will need office space, you should start the search for a location that allows you to deliver on your business plan. Choose a real estate partner, and visit some potential sites. You can consider selections based on the number of employees you plan to have and your allotted budget.

Make a list of required supplies and furnishings

You'll want to decide what furniture, supplies, and hardware will make your office functional. Your BDO can help you think through your list and connect you with potential suppliers.

Integrated technology

Our platform combines Schwab expertise and advanced proprietary tools with leading third-party technology. The result is an integrated, end-to-end solution that helps you seamlessly run your business—from CRM (customer relationship management) to trade order to portfolio management.

As you move

“We worked a lot of hours in the first year of that transition. But it is all paying off now. We didn’t expect to be where we’re at this early, and we’re ready now to set new goals and objectives for our business.”

—Chris Baker, CPA/PFS, CFP®
President, Baker & Associates

Select and implement technology solutions

It’s time to sign agreements and schedule your implementation and training. Depending on your technology choices, the process can vary, but you will get assistance with your new systems.



Schwab Alliance, our customized website and mobile platform, can help drive a seamless experience for your clients.

[View the client website demo >](#)



The Client Learning Center is a resource that can help your clients understand how Schwab works with you to provide excellent service.

[Visit the Client Learning Center >](#)

Choose your space, and set a move-in date

After you’ve narrowed your options, your real estate partner will help you pick the appropriate space, negotiate lease documents, and set a move-in date with your building manager.

Equip your office

Once you’re settled, you’ll need to arrange and outfit your office. You should negotiate pricing with your chosen furniture provider and make sure to allow enough time for delivery. This is also when you set up essentials such as phone and Internet service.



7,500+

RIA firms served by Schwab as of December 2019—and growing

Our deep industry experience allows us to match powerful insights with creative innovations for your firm.

View the SBK Financial video >



“I wanted to work at a place where clients’ needs came first. We started day one with four people: three partners and one staff. The transition team at Schwab was invaluable.”

—Andrea Broughton
Vice President and Managing Director,
SBK Financial

Checklist

Plan

- ☐ Define your technology needs
- ☐ Search for office space
- ☐ Make a list of required supplies and furnishings

Execute

- ☐ Select and implement technology solutions
- ☐ Choose your space, and set a move-in date
- ☐ Equip your office

Chat with your BDO about how to choose a technology platform that fits with your client service goals and back-office needs. All conversations are completely confidential.

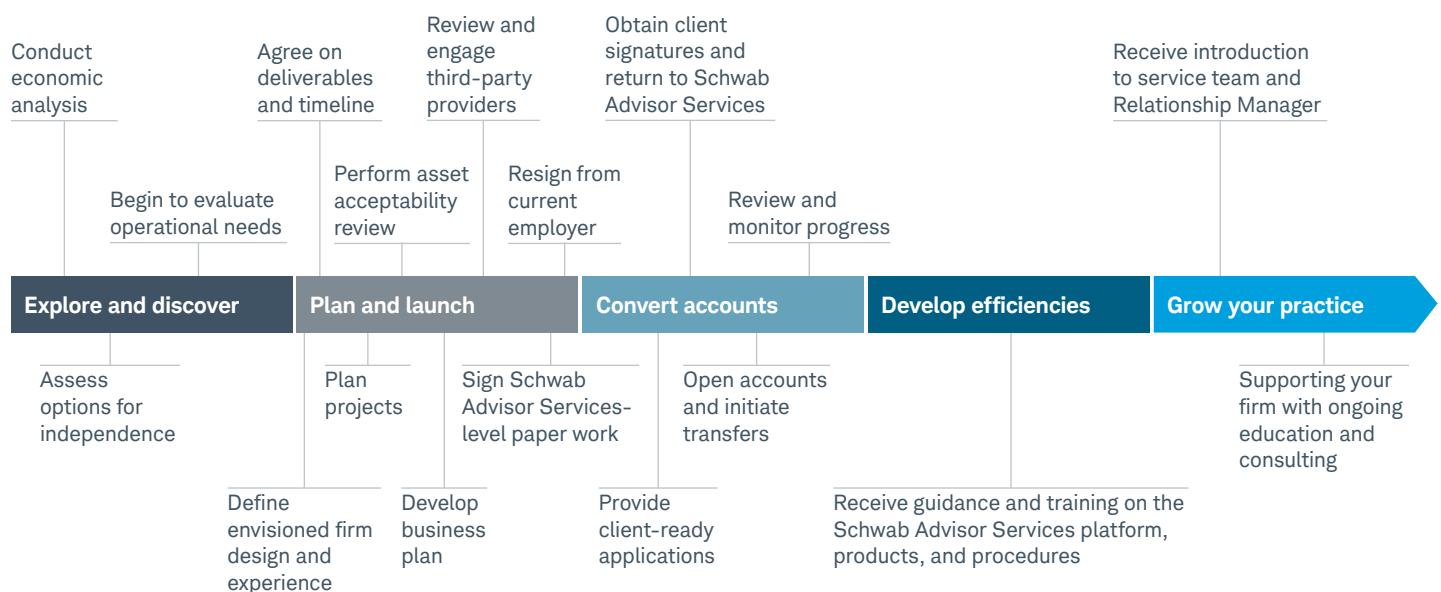
Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.



Convert your accounts

As an independent investment advisor, you have the power to serve your clients in a more customized way. Even so, you may wonder whether they will make the transition with you. Part of getting them on board is using the expertise of your custodian to drive a seamless transition.

We have an experienced team—your Schwab Advisor Transition Services® team—dedicated specifically to guiding you through every step of asset transfer. They are focused on providing a seamless and accurate conversion. That way, you can focus on your clients.



Before you move

“There are people out there who will listen and understand your needs. You don’t have to go it alone and search for the best options without guidance.”

—**David Bromelkamp**

President and CEO, Allodium Investment Consultants

Understand your custodian’s role

A good custodian isn’t merely functional; it’s an independent investment advisor’s biggest advocate and ally for success. Schwab, as your custodian, can provide access to a wide range of financial products, technology options, educational resources, thought leadership, and industry insights—plus business consultants who work closely with investment advisors to develop business strategy.

Complete client asset review

Your Schwab Advisor Transition Services® team will conduct asset acceptability reviews with you to understand which assets will transfer.

Choose your resignation date

You should consult with your legal counsel to determine your resignation timing and strategy for client communication. Once you identify your ideal resignation date, you can back into the evaluation, planning, and execution of the transition process.

Begin training

You will become familiar with the way your custodian operates. Work with your Schwab Advisor Transition Services team to ensure your staff is trained on the Schwab Advisor Services™ platform, and develop a working relationship that will allow you to get the most out of your custodian as your RIA firm evolves.

View RIA firm Concentus Wealth Advisors’ video >



“We knew that when we were going to talk with our clients to recommend that they use Charles Schwab as their primary custodian, we weren’t going to experience any push-back.”

—**Erik Strid**

Founding Principal and CEO,
Concentus Wealth Advisors



Serving firms of all sizes

Since 1987, Schwab Advisor Services has earned the trust of RIA firms of all sizes—helping them take charge of their businesses and do what’s right for investors.

As you move

“We’ve had a lot of positive feedback from potential clients and current clients. Since we’ve gone independent, our firm has experienced the best growth rate in our history.”

—Tony Palazzo

President and CEO, Berkeley Capital Partners

Resign and send announcements

Once you deliver your letter of resignation, consult with your legal counsel on when it’s appropriate to start publicizing your new firm and seek their guidance on your client communication strategy.

Prepare client packets

Your Schwab Advisor Transition Services® team will help you prepare the transfer paper work and set up what you need in order to transfer client accounts. The forms will be signature-ready to simplify the process.

Transfer your clients’ assets

Your Schwab Advisor Transition Services team will track and oversee the account opening and transfer process through our fully digital workflows. This eliminates paper—enhancing speed and security. That way, you have the time and space to stay focused on your clients. Schwab Advisor Services™ can provide you with materials to help educate your clients about the RIA model and explain the benefits it provides to you and them.



Matt Faries, Director of Advisor Transition Services, breaks down the key elements of the transition process.

[View the video >](#)

View Chris Baker’s “Convert Your Accounts” video >



“I had done some research and expected about 70%–75% of our clients would transition with us and move their assets over. I was pleasantly surprised that we had closer to 95%. It was seamless. We had no complaints at all from any clients in this transition.”

—Chris Baker, CPA/PFS, CFP®

President, Baker & Associates



3,200+

Financial advisors transitioned to the RIA model

Schwab Advisor Services is the most experienced team in the industry. We’ve transitioned more than 3,200 financial advisors to the RIA model in the past 14 years and moved more than 970,000 client accounts.⁷

Checklist

Plan

- ☐ Understand your custodian's role
- ☐ Complete client asset review
- ☐ Choose your resignation date
- ☐ Begin training

Execute

- ☐ Resign and send announcements
- ☐ Prepare client packets
- ☐ Transfer your clients' assets

There's no need for guesswork. Your Schwab BDO can help you prepare and guide your client accounts through a smooth transition. All conversations are completely confidential.

Contact us at advisorservices.schwab.com or **877-687-4085**.



A black and white photograph of three business professionals walking and smiling. On the left is a man in a light shirt and dark tie. In the center is a woman in a dark dress. On the right is an older man in a light shirt and patterned tie. A dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Strengthen your practice' in white.

Strengthen your practice

Once you've successfully made the transition to the RIA model, your relationship with Schwab Advisor Services™ has only begun.

As a Schwab client, you get immediate access to teams of professionals with more than 200 years of collective experience serving more than 500 unique consulting engagements each year. And we go far beyond high-level strategy consulting. We're here to help you with both the big and small decisions. Turn to us as you build out your strategic plan to grow your firm. Optimize your practices with our data-driven insights from more than 7,500 firms. Then help your team steadily develop new skills and relationships through our education, leadership, and networking programs.

As you grow and fine-tune your business, Schwab Advisor Services is here to offer ways you can stay ahead of the curve. For instance, Schwab's business consultants can provide you with access to the intellectual capital you need to support your firm's growth. Beyond tools and information, our core consulting process includes discovery, planning, and launch. Consulting can start well before you become a client and continue as your firm evolves. And our ongoing practice management support programs are always available to help you gain your next competitive advantage.

“The entire support team at Schwab Advisor Services™ has been with us every step of the way. Now that we’ve launched, they are really an extension of our firm. My sense was that other custodians treat this in a very transactional way, as opposed to Schwab, which was really making a commitment to our business.”

—Dorie Fain

CEO, &Wealth



Going independent doesn’t mean going it alone. Schwab offers a number of services that can connect you to a community of independent investment advisors and shared resources. For example, if you choose to participate in Schwab’s annual RIA Benchmarking Study, you can access information about your firm’s key business metrics and how they compare with those of your peers. Use these metrics to evaluate strengths and opportunities for your firm.

In addition, with Schwab Advisor Services you have access to some of the largest and most notable conferences and events in the industry—including **IMPACT®**, the industry’s leading event. When you attend the annual conference, you can spark new ideas and build your professional network to help you learn best practices for growing and scaling your business.



See how RIA firms use the RIA Benchmarking Study to evaluate and assess their businesses.

[Read the overview >](#)



With Schwab by your side, you can be confident that you're making the right move for your clients, your team, and yourself.

Start your journey with a single conversation. Talk to a Schwab BDO today. All conversations are confidential.

Contact us at **advisorservices.schwab.com** or **877-687-4085**.

Resources

Define your business strategy

Infographic: *Moving to Independence: The Growth Trajectory of RIAs* (p. 7)

https://advisorhub.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/IBD_Fast_Forward_Infographic_FIN-lo-OPT.pdf

Video: Brett Sharkey's "Jerry Maguire" Moment (p. 7)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/rias/tools-resources/brett-sharkey>

Video: Plan Your Move (p. 8)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/ibd-plan-your-move>

Sample: RIA Firm Design Blueprint (p. 8)

<https://www.schwab.com/public/file/P-12645916>

Demo: RIA Economic Discovery Tool (pp. 8, 11)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/econ-tools>

White paper: *Going Independent as a Hybrid RIA: Understanding the Practice Model* (p. 10)

https://advisorservices.schwab.com/public/file/P-4002185/SAS_Trans_HybridMKT_WEB021011.pdf

White paper: *Exploring Independence: An Overview of the Registered Investment Advisor Model* (p. 10)

https://www.schwab.com/public/file/P-6708281/Exploring_Independence.pdf

Video: Inside the RIA Ecosystem: Advisor Growth Strategies (p. 11)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/inside-ria-ecosystem-advisor-growth-strategies>

Toolkit: *Using Public Relations to Help Boost Awareness of the RIA Model and Your Brand* (p. 12)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/public/file/P-9798673>

Video: Unscripted: Transition (p. 12)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/unscripted-transition>

Prepare for legal and compliance

Website: MarketCounsel's Brian Hamburger discusses legal considerations to help with an advisor's transition (p. 15)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/hamburger>

Website: Navigating legal matters and regulatory education (p. 16)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/navigating-risk-regulation/legislative-regulatory>

Website: Navigating Risk & Regulation (p. 17)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/navigating-risk-regulation>

Brochure: *How Client Assets Are Protected at Schwab* (p. 17)

http://content.schwab.com/learningcenter/assets/pdf/Asset_Safety.pdf

Set up your office

Website: Technology Strategy (p. 20)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/serving-your-clients/technology-strategy>

Demo: Schwab Alliance: Simple, Fast, Secure (p. 21)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/schwab-alliance-simple-fast-secure>

Website: Client Learning Center (p. 21)

<https://content.schwab.com/learningcenter>

Video: Andrea Broughton, SBK Financial (p. 21)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/andrea-broughton>

Convert your accounts

Video: Cententus Wealth Advisors: Our Story of Independence (p. 24)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/cententus-wealth-advisors-our-story-independence>

Video: Convert Your Accounts (p. 25)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/ibd-convert-accounts>

Video: Advisor Transition Services (p. 25)

<https://advisorservices.schwab.com/content/advisor-transition-services-video>

Ongoing support

Overview: The RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab (p. 28)

<https://www.schwab.com/public/file/P-7224839>

Website: IMPACT® conference (p. 28)

<https://impact.schwab.com>

About Schwab Advisor Services™

Schwab Advisor Services helped pioneer the RIA model and has earned the trust of more than 7,500 RIA firms. Schwab provides custodial, operational, practice management, and trading support to independent firms of all sizes. For over 30 years, Schwab has worked resolutely with independent advisors to develop proven processes and insights for starting, building, and growing RIA businesses. Schwab Advisor Services has a strong vision for RIAs and their futures and is committed to pushing the financial advising industry forward on investment advisors' behalf.

1. *The Cerulli Report, U.S. Intermediary Distribution 2019: Capitalizing on Specialization*, Exhibit 2.05, Cerulli Associates, September 4, 2019.
2. *The Cerulli Report, U.S. Intermediary Distribution 2019: Capitalizing on Specialization*, Exhibit 2.13, Cerulli Associates, September 4, 2019.
3. *RIA Benchmarking Insights, 2019 RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab*, January–March 2019.
4. Schwab Advisor Services, Strategic Business Development, 2020.
5. ACT Advisor Conversion Services Dashboard Metrics: January 2005–December 2019.
6. Annual Charles Schwab AS CPS Benchmarking Survey, December 2018.
7. See note 4 above.

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Schwab's annual RIA Benchmarking Study is the largest of its kind focused exclusively on RIAs. In 2019, 1,310 firms representing nearly three-quarters of a trillion dollars in AUM completed the survey, reflecting their experiences in 2018 as well as their annual growth rates from 2013 to 2018. The study categorizes participants into 12 peer groups—7 wealth manager groups and 5 money manager groups—by AUM size. The results, unless otherwise noted, include all firms with at least \$250 million in AUM, representing the vast majority of total assets managed by this year's participants. All results are self-reported and not independently verified.

The Economic Discovery Tool (Tool) is intended solely for use by investment professionals. The Tool simulates the pro forma financial results of various hypothetical scenarios for establishing, operating, joining, and/or selling an investment advisory practice or firm and compares those simulated outcomes to various alternatives. The scenarios and alternatives covered are not exhaustive and may not be representative of those you actually encounter. Moreover, the simulated pro forma results are materially dependent on various assumptions and inputs, some of which are made and specified by you and some of which are static. These assumptions and inputs may not reflect actual circumstances, and thus the Tool is inherently limited and intended for general informational purposes only. The simulated pro forma results do not reflect, and are not guarantees of, actual or future results. Your actual results may be materially different from those simulated. Schwab makes no warranty of the accuracy or completeness of the Tool or the simulated pro forma results and shall have no liability for your use of the Tool. The Tool is not intended to provide financial, investment, legal, tax, or regulatory compliance advice. You are urged to consult your own professional advisors.

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