



Generating referrals

For financial advisors, being in a community bank or credit union offers a distinct advantage: The opportunity to gain highly valued clients and deepen community roots through close collaboration with their home institution. The benefit is twofold when those institutions are partners of the [Raymond James Financial Institutions Division \(FID\)](#), which offers full access to a robust resource and technology platform. Not only does this open the doors for seemingly endless referrals – it also allows clients to find everything they need in one place and from a single team.

THE POWERFUL KNACK OF NETWORKING

Cultivating close ties with local bankers has made a world of difference for advisors like Jacob Hovendick from ABT Wealth Management of Raymond James, a division of Adams Bank & Trust.

As a branch manager in Ogallala, Nebraska, Hovendick – who is also a certified public accountant and CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ – has expanded his reach by building trust and rapport with both his bank team and their clients and prospects. The result? Increased referrals from both.

Hovendick sees this collaboration as an opportunity to inform bank colleagues about his depth of service, helping them determine when a client could benefit from his expertise.

“If we have good relationships with our bankers, it leads to those introductions,” Hovendick said. “If the bankers don’t trust us, then they’re not going to introduce us to their best clients or relationships.”

One of the keys to building those close relationships is to show initiative in reviewing clients’ finances with the bank team to uncover specific needs, and then work with bankers to help fill those gaps. This also allows you to determine which services to offer clients, as opposed to overwhelming them with an array of options.

Another tip? Lead with the bank – the name prospects know – as opposed to your investment firm, and tout the collaboration between you and the bankers on behalf of clients. Once you do get an introduction, make sure to stay in the loop with bankers and follow up on the potential relationship.

In addition, while it's likelier you'll have a direct referral pipeline and built-in trust working in an established financial institution, it's not a given. That's why it's essential to develop close ties with your colleagues, as Stephen Kruchten explained. And he would know – because prior to serving as Central division director of Raymond James FID, Kruchten held the role of program manager in a FID community bank.

“Most of our competitors don't have various bank partners with credit expertise sitting down the hall who can partner with them on behalf of their clients. Our advisors came as a team,” Kruchten said of his time as a program manager.

“Not only was this our value proposition, but it also enhanced the client experience and the brand of the bank. The advisors, equipped with the Raymond James resources and technology, were routinely accompanied by bank partners who were supporting us – from property and casualty specialists to mortgage specialists, a trust department, and even business bankers when we were working with a business owner.”

Ultimately, relying on Raymond James for any services or resources that weren't available in-house at his community bank allowed Kruchten and his team to retain more clients.

Kruchten also made it a point to prioritize open lines of communication across the bank. His team even determined that advisors and bankers would have a certain number of joint meetings, either with prospects, new referrals or existing clients coming in for reviews.

“These joint meetings allowed everybody to gain respect for each other, to learn what the other one does, and to realize how smart their partners are. They also helped convey the value that a partner, either a banker or advisor, could bring to a client or prospect.”

HARNESSING A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP

Echoing the value of building trust with colleagues is Manuel Garcia, a financial advisor and branch manager in Tampa, Florida, who operates from floridacentral Credit Union.

“Whenever we have new employees, on the second or third day, I go to that new employee class. I introduce myself.” If Garcia happens to be unavailable, fellow advisor Jesse Burchill goes. “We get in front of them, we tell them what we do and why we do it,” Garcia said.

As for actually getting referrals, Garcia says it's simple: Just ask.

“We ask for their referrals. We let them know that this is an important way for them to build that relationship with their members and help their members. And when we go to the credit union branches, we thank them for the referral.”

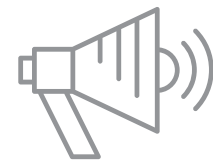
As Burchill explained, it's crucial for the relationship between the credit union branches and employees to start from day one. The goal is to inform them about the specific services the advising team provides – including how those can ultimately benefit clients – so that they remain top of mind whenever a referral opportunity arises.

“We always work with them to find ways for them to leverage what we offer,” Burchill added. “Every now and then, I'll try to organize a day at the branch. If I'm going to be down in Port Charlotte, I tell them, ‘Fill up the day with all the referrals that you can.’”



“I find that I get introduced to bankers' parents who don't even live in our geographical area. But because of the way that we treat the banker, they want us to work with their parents.”

– Jacob Hovendick, CFP®, CPA
Branch Manager
Financial Advisor



“Promoting our process – explaining how our bankers and advisors can team up together on behalf of the client – that's what has generated so many referrals.”

– Stephen Kruchten
Vice President
Central Division Director, FID

Raymond James and its advisors do not offer tax advice. You should discuss any tax matters with the appropriate professional.

Their efforts – in combination with the robust resources of Raymond James FID – have paid off time and again, noted Garcia, who has had numerous clients in the process of buying a home turn to him for their needs instead of an external company. Working with local institutions and with home office professionals, his clients have done everything from set up necessary insurance to attain trust services.

WOWING CLIENTS AND COLLEAGUES ALIKE

Making the most of their relationship with FID and proximity to the Raymond James headquarters, located in St. Petersburg, FL, Garcia and his team have taken advantage of By Invitation Only (BIO) visits.

Also available in a virtual format, BIO visits offer an opportunity for high-net-worth prospects and referrals to spend a day at the Raymond James headquarters, exploring the firm areas that most interest them, hearing from guest speakers and department specialists, and enjoying everything from an art tour to an IT security briefing.

It was a BIO visit that made all the difference for one of Garcia's clients.

“We were up against big-name competitors. And I invited my client to the home office, and they were blown away by everything that we had, including the fact that we had department heads sit down with them.”

Recognizing the power of these home office trips, Garcia's team has modified BIO visits to accommodate colleagues, inviting them to the home office or, alternatively, hosting home office professionals at their credit union to lead informative presentations.

FOSTERING FAMILIARITY FROM FAR AWAY

For Garcia and his team, fostering close relationships with both colleagues and potential clients has been a top priority throughout the turmoil of COVID-19.

“I've used a lot of prepared, compliance-approved pieces from Raymond James Marketing to help clients stay focused on the long term and remind them that the volatility we see is just a bump in the road,” Burchill said. And, even beyond the need to expand and reinvent communication during the pandemic, advisors highlight the advantage of working with Raymond James Marketing and of having a partner firm help promote their institutions' brands instead of its own. “Since those pieces can be white-labeled and look like they are coming from us, they also serve as reassurance that we'll get through this together.”

Hovendick affirms that the technological capabilities of Raymond James were particularly vital in 2020, when his colleagues were able to seamlessly complete the first round of Paycheck Protection Program loans through offerings like eSignature.

Cooking up profits

To inspire his team to generate referrals, Garcia often hosts inventive competitions – typically with complimentary meals as the big reward:

“In the summer, we had a contest in which the losing branch got ice cream sandwiches and the winning one got lunch. For another contest, I hosted the winning branch at my home for a barbecue.”

Most recently, the team participated in a March mayhem competition among different branches. Here's how it worked: Getting the name of a referral equaled two points; touching base with a referral through a phone call or an in-person discussion merited four points; scheduling a meeting to discuss financial planning services with a referral resulted in five points. At the end of the month, the branch with the most points was awarded a delicious, hearty lunch.



“Good communication is about trying to stay in front of people,” Hovendick said. “And the technology we have access to allows us to do that at a high level.”

The firm’s proprietary financial planning software, Goal Planning & Monitoring (GPM), is also among Hovendick’s go-to tools, especially to serve high-net-worth clients. “It’s ideal for clients who want to go from wealth accumulation to retirement planning and income generation. GPM is really powerful because it allows them to see all of the varying puzzle pieces.”*

CONTEMPLATING NEW HORIZONS

Looking ahead, Burchill expects technology to become increasingly pertinent in financial services. Johanny Pressley, the team’s registered sales assistant and advisor in training, noted how their account onboarding process now includes an email inviting clients to enroll in Client Access, which offers clients secure access to their accounts from any smartphone or tablet.

Garcia also anticipates more investors will opt for the do-it-yourself route through services like Robinhood. Ultimately, however, he’s confident the value of advisors will remain uncontested.

“No matter what investments individuals are trying to execute, we can provide a greater depth of expertise. We have the tools, products and entire resources of Raymond James behind us. We just have to help investors see that.”

*The projections or other information generated by Goal Planning & Monitoring regarding the likelihood of various investment outcomes are hypothetical in nature, do not reflect actual investment results and are not guarantees of future results. Goal Planning & Monitoring results may vary with each use and over time.

Top tips to spark success



1
“Treat people how you want to be treated. That’s allowed me to get introduced to more bankers and even to offer my services to their parents.”

– JACOB HOVENDICK
Branch manager



2
“If you’re starting out, find yourself a good mentor and use the resources your firm offers, particularly the educational tools.”

– JOHANNY PRESSLEY
Registered sales assistant and advisor in training



3
“The resources you need are out there – it’s up to you to reach out and grab them. The more you do that, the better impression you’ll make on clients and the more inspired they’ll be to make referrals.”

– JESSE BURCHILL
Financial advisor



4
“Never look at a small account as just a small account. Whatever amount it is, that’s a lot of money for the individual who has worked hard for it. One of my largest clients started out as a \$25,000 account. That client now has a \$6 million account.”

– MANUEL GARCIA
Branch manager

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