

# The *Sweet* Spot

FOUR ESSENTIALS FOR  
THE RIGHT FIRM PARTNER

Why *scale, soul, and support*  
matter more than ever.





As a modern financial advisor, you wear many hats. The right partner firm should help you *take a few off*—not add more.

Finding the right fit matters. The ideal partner should align with your goals, values, and how you work. Yet many advisors feel stuck choosing between boutique firms with high-touch support but limited scale, and large institutions with deep resources but little personal connection.

There's a better path. Mid-sized firms offer a powerful blend: *the scale to grow and the freedom to run your practice your way—without sacrificing personalized support.*

But size alone isn't enough. What truly matters is fit. Does your current firm understand your mission, your clients, and your aspirations? This paper will help you answer that—and *define what the right partner really looks like.*

## Gut Check: Is Your Firm Fueling or Hindering Your Growth?

Before diving in, take a moment to assess your current firm relationship.

**Check all that apply:**

- ☐ I spend more time on compliance/admin than with clients
- ☐ I juggle disconnected tech systems
- ☐ I outsource key services like tax or estate planning
- ☐ I feel like a number, not a valued advisor
- ☐ I want to grow but see no clear roadmap
- ☐ I'm unsure what succession looks like
- ☐ My vision doesn't match my firm's direction
- ☐ I worry that switching firms would mean losing support or tools



If you checked even a few boxes, you're not alone. The challenges many advisors face today—**too much admin, clunky tech, limited support**—aren't just annoyances. They're barriers to growth, client service, and long-term success. Let's break down some common pain points, and what to look for in a firm that helps you overcome them.

### Your Score

**0–2 checked** – You're likely in a good spot—but make sure your firm can support your next chapter.

**3–5 checked** – You're managing, but pain points may be slowing your growth.

**6–8 checked** – It sounds like it's time for a change!





On average, advisors spend just **9.4% of their day with existing clients**, and **12.8% on administration**.<sup>1</sup>

## *You're Wearing Too Many Hats*

**Your clients are your focus. But admin overload?** That's the reality for too many advisors. That imbalance drains productivity and reduces the time you could spend deepening relationships or winning new business.

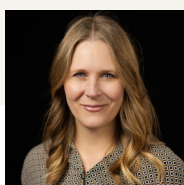
### *What to look for:*

- Dedicated teams for onboarding, billing, and compliance
- Workflow tools that remove friction
- A culture that guards your time with clients

### *The payoff:*

- More face time with clients
- More momentum in your practice

*"Previously ... my time wasn't fully dedicated to the clients I serve. Offloading those other tasks allows me to spend the majority of my time with my clients. I really enjoy that as an advisor."*<sup>4</sup>



— Chelsie Stilson,  
MARINER SENIOR WEALTH ADVISOR



25% of advisors list  
**disconnected tech as  
their #1 pain point.**<sup>2</sup>

## ***Your Technology is Slowing You Down***

**Technology should be your power tool**—not your pain point. Yet many advisors juggle disconnected systems that slow them down. The right firm brings intuitive, integrated platforms that scale with you.

### *What to look for:*

- Seamless CRM and financial planning integrations, like Salesforce, Orion, and eMoney
- Onboarding and training to drive adoption
- Advanced tools like Holistiplan and Vanilla for complex client needs

### *The payoff:*

- Streamlined operations
- Sharper insights
- Confidence to grow



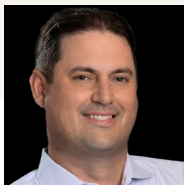
**78% of ultra-high-net-worth individuals** (UHNWIs) consider **value-added services—such as tax planning, estate planning, and philanthropic advisory—as essential** components of their wealth management relationships.<sup>3</sup>

## *You’re Lacking Support for Complex Clients*

**High-net-worth clients expect more**—and you shouldn’t have to piece together outside professionals to deliver the level of service they deserve. With the right partner, you gain access to in-house specialists who work with you, not around you.

<i>What to look for:</i>	<i>The payoff:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal teams for tax, trust, estate, and business planning</li><li>• Collaborative client meetings that preserve your lead role</li><li>• Broad investment platforms, including alternatives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sophisticated</li><li>• Seamless client service that elevates your value</li></ul>

*“When there is a question about taxes, trust or investment banking, there’s someone we can call to get really top-line advice.”<sup>4</sup>*



— Kevin Barlow, CFP®,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, MARINER





How many advisors say  
that firm culture matters?  
**90%.**<sup>5</sup>

## ***Your Firm Doesn't Feel Like Home***

**Culture shapes everything**—from how you're treated to how you grow. Firms with advisor-first values foster innovation, loyalty, and performance.

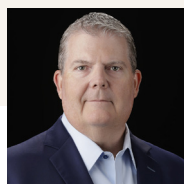
### *What to look for:*

- True fiduciary alignment and ethical standards
- Flexible comp structures (fee-based, AUM, hybrid)
- Autonomy with real backing

### *The payoff:*

- A firm that reflects your values—and supports your ambition

*"I tell people at every stage of their career, culture is one of, if not the most important, aspects of getting things done with and through the people you work with. The culture of the firm is what leads to the success or failure of the organization."*<sup>4</sup>



— **Guy Lamb, CEPA®**,  
SENIOR WEALTH ADVISOR, MARINER



## *The Advisor's Partner Checklist:* What Leading Firms Offer

***The right firm offers more than resources***—they provide the freedom, infrastructure, and trust you need to scale on your terms.

Advisor-first mindset	You maintain control and client ownership
Admin and compliance support	Free up time for high-impact work
Integrated tech	Get better insights, not more busywork
In-house expertise	Keep key services close, not outsourced
Flexible affiliation	Grow as an employee or entrepreneur
Succession support	Plan your future with confidence
Talent-focused culture	Attract the next generation of advisors

Choosing the right firm partner is one of the most strategic decisions you'll make. Whether you're seeking independence, looking to scale, or planning your legacy, the right firm offers more than tools—***it provides clarity, capacity, and culture.***







## Ready to *Grow Without Compromise?*

At Mariner, we don't believe advisors should have to choose between freedom and support. Our model gives you the tools, team, and trust to ***grow your business—your way.*** Let's explore what the right fit could look like for you—***start by telling us a bit about yourself.***

*Let's Get Started*

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<sup>1</sup>[Kitces Research 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Orion Advisor Wealthtech Survey, 2024](#)

<sup>3</sup>[Capgemini World Wealth Report, 2024](#)

<sup>4</sup>The advisor's personal comments may not be representative of the experience of other advisors and there is no guarantee of future performance or success.

<sup>5</sup>[Advisor Hub Culture Study, 2021](#)

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