



FLASH REPORT

THREE SIGNS THAT YOUR PROFESSIONALS ARE EXCEPTIONAL

As someone looking to make smart decisions about your money so you can live a life of significance, one of your biggest goals should be to ensure you're getting value from your professionals—the wealth managers, lawyers, accountants and similar experts you rely on for guidance. This becomes especially true as your level of wealth grows over time and your financial concerns and objectives become increasingly complex. With that in mind, consider how you would rate the following statements in terms of their accuracy as they relate to you and your experiences.

Not at all accurate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Extremely accurate*

- _____ *The professionals I'm using really understand me as a person (including my hopes and dreams as well as concerns and anxieties).*
- _____ *The professionals are very good at explaining concepts, ideas, opportunities and solutions to me (and others) in a way that is clear and understandable.*
- _____ *I have a sincere and trusting relationship with the professionals I'm working with.*
- _____ *The professionals I work with are consistently able to access best-of-class expertise and solutions.*
- _____ *The professionals I'm working with consistently are able to attain the expertise I need and want on an expedited and cost-effective basis.*
- _____ *The professionals I'm working with regularly employ "What if?" scenario thinking to identify possibilities and opportunities in order to determine the very best courses of action.*
- _____ *The professionals I'm working with make sure I'm staying on track and following the best possible course of action, or they determine whether an alternative approach would be more appropriate and effective.*

In our view, each answer you rated a 1, 2 or 3 means that an important element of your working arrangement with the critical professionals in your life is far from optimal.

Answers that you rated 4, 5, 6 or 7 often mean that the element in question is in progress but your professionals could do better.

The 8-, 9- and 10-rated answers indicate that the professionals you rely on are where you want them to be—they're adding real value to your financial life. If you ranked some statements 1 through 7, you may be able to make improvements. Take a moment to consider what it might mean if you could rate every statement an 8, 9 or 10.

- How might your life and your financial world improve?
- How would your ability to take care of the people you love and the causes you care about be enhanced or even optimized?

THREE DRIVERS OF EXCEPTIONALISM

Achieving an optimal financial world for yourself and the people you care about most is largely a function of three key drivers: the human element, a cohesive team and systematic processes. These drivers are fundamental to all types of professional relationships.

- 1. The human element.** This powerful driver is essential because it addresses the quality of the relationship you have with the professionals you engage. In our experience, the way to consistently get great results is to work with professionals who truly and deeply understand you—and who are able to communicate with you in a way that truly resonates with you. This is what we call the human element—the extent to which advisors and other experts who serve you get to really know you “beyond the numbers.”

When the human element aspect of relationships is strong, the professionals you work with know who you are and what matters to you (as well as what doesn't matter!). Only by being so in tune are they able to coordinate solutions that best serve your specific needs and wants.

- 2. A cohesive team.** When it comes to your overall financial life and its many moving parts (which might include investments, tax management, estate planning, philanthropy, business operations and so on), it is extraordinarily unlikely that one single professional can do everything you need and want. In our experience, no single expert—even the smartest or hardest-working one—possesses the full range of knowledge that affluent clients require. That's why we believe you need a strongly motivated team of experts.

That said, it takes more than just any old roster of skilled professionals to pursue exceptional outcomes. Those professionals also need to be able to work together seamlessly on your behalf. That's the “cohesive” part of the team equation. Referrals to other experts are good—but what can really make the difference is when all the experts come together to work collaboratively and creatively on your behalf. When that happens, there is typically one professional—often a wealth manager or an accountant—who coordinates the team and the process of working together. The end result can potentially be ideas, plans and solutions that wouldn't have been thought of if each professional stayed working in their own “silo.”

- 3. Systematic processes.** Some professionals deal with their clients in a haphazard, disjointed manner—an approach that makes it essentially impossible to get optimal results. On the other hand, there are proven methodologies to ensure that you get ideal, integrated results. When you have a professional adeptly coordinating the efforts of other experts on your behalf and doing so based on proven methodologies, you can enhance the likelihood of achieving the best outcomes. Bottom line: You want the professionals you work with to use systematic processes to engage with you and your finances.

Our advice: Strive for excellence by identifying and working with professionals who see the importance of being exceptional—and who have the resources in place to actually be exceptional on your behalf. It's one of the best ways we know to pursue optimal financial outcomes—now and in the years to come.

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