



The Elite Adviser

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH INTELLIGENCE

The pursuit of excellence demands groundbreaking practices, acute insight and expert skills. Backed up by decades of rigorous study and practical application, the industry leaders at CEG Australia deliver precisely the tools and strategies you need to reach the elite level.

Your Elusive Best Client

Ah, your best client. You know the one—the one who walked into your office with a nice amount of assets from the beginning and has given you more assets to manage every year. The one who refers his or her colleagues and friends. The one you really enjoy helping reach long-term financial dreams.

Wouldn't you like to get more clients just like your best client? To find more of these elusive best clients, it's useful to understand how quality clients find advisers. A CEG Worldwide survey in the United States of more than 1,400 quality clients (each with US\$500,000-\$5 million in liquid assets), found that more than half—54.2 percent—found their primary financial adviser through a referral from an accountant or lawyer. Referrals from another client ranked second, at 30.1 percent. All other sources, such as seminars, mentions in the press, direct mail or cold calls were relatively insignificant.

The story was much the same when the study asked 512 advisers about the source of their best new client (defined as one with at least US\$500,000 or more in investable assets over the previous 12 months). Nearly two-thirds of the advisers (64.4 percent) cited a referral from an accountant or lawyer, while 29.5 percent said that the source was a referral from a client.

It's clear that both legal and accountant referrals are the top source of new, best clients for advisers, with client referrals running a distant—but still not insubstantial—second.

This study reinforces what our coaching experience has shown us to be true: While client referrals are certainly a worthwhile source of qualified prospects, your major focus should be on cultivating referrals from other professional advisers—in particular, accountants and lawyers.

Because accountants and lawyers generally have a clear picture of their clients' financial situations, they're in a position to know both when an individual is qualified for your services (in terms of investable assets or net worth) and needs your services. This is information that your clients, by and large, will not have about friends and colleagues.

Perhaps most important, the individuals referred to you by accountants and lawyers are much more likely to end up working with you than those referred to you by other clients. Quality clients believe—rightly so—that they have complex financial situations that require the expertise of a lawyer. And they know that the best way to find an expert is often to ask another expert—in this case, their accountant or lawyer.

Effective strategic alliances with the right professional advisers can be key in your quest to find more clients who are just like your best client—and thus can play a major role in your success.