

The 2012 FA Insight Study of Advisory Firms: Growth by Design

Survey Overview

This year, in addition to exploring general business performance, our annual study returns to focus on two distinct business capabilities that drive sustainable growth—operations and marketing. Depending on the size and complexity of the firm, the survey will take 30–60 minutes to complete. It asks firms to provide information on the following topics:

1. Core Characteristics of the Firm
 - a. Financials (including complete income statement for 2011)
 - b. Affiliation model, service model, and custodian or broker-dealer information
 - c. Information on clients and assets, including the number of clients and assets under management for years 2009 through 2011 with anticipated numbers for 2012
 - d. Staffing information for years 2009 through 2011 with expectations for 2012
 - e. Composition of ownership and parent company (if applicable)
2. Growth Attitudes and Experience
 - a. Owners' attitudes toward firm growth
 - b. Changes experienced because of firm growth
3. Operations
 - a. Process and procedure management, including documentation, consistency and tracking of processes
 - b. Client service turnaround time for clients of medium complexity
 - c. Operations accountability
 - d. Productivity, including staffing capacity and the use of productivity metrics
 - e. Technology usage, integration and training
4. Marketing
 - a. Pricing based on AUM, minimum fee requirements and the frequency of pricing structure reviews
 - b. Target client definition and minimum asset level requirements
 - c. Client retention, segmentation and marketing to existing clients
 - d. Marketing strategy including budget, growth goals, areas of new client acquisition, marketing accountability and client value proposition