



Worry Less. Retire More.

9 Questions to ask a Prospective Financial Advisor

The following questions are designed to help you see “behind the curtain” of any firm with whom you might entrust your financial future. For your convenience, we’ve included our answers.

(1) Are your recommendations truly in my best interest?

Imagine going to your doctor with a concern about your heart, and before running any tests, the doctor tried to sell you a pacemaker. The doctor then explained that you needed to act today before prices went up. Later you learned that the doctor was paid extra to promote this particular brand of pacemaker. While absurd for the medical profession, this scenario closely resembles much of the investment world.

As a firm, we take very seriously our fiduciary duty to always act in the client’s best interest (vs. just trying to sell you a product). In addition to a legal obligation, for 18 years, our firm has been built on a foundation of placing the client’s interest before any thoughts of our own compensation. We recommend for clients the same investment and tax strategies used in our personal accounts and the accounts of our immediate family members. Our commitment to honest and ethical behavior has allowed us to build a very successful firm.

[Click here to view an enlightening 2-minute video](#) that compares fiduciaries and stock brokers to butchers and dieticians.

See our [Fiduciary Pledge](#).

(2) Will your recommendations be primarily focused in one area of my finances, or will your recommendations be comprehensive in nature? In other words, will I need to find another advisor for advice in other areas?

For our clients, we serve as a single point of contact for all their financial needs. As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional this includes coordinating every aspect of their financial needs. Each of our clients has a financial plan and financial action checklist detailing all of the actions needed to achieve their financial goals, including a successful retirement. And we coordinate these action items with our clients' accountants, attorneys, bankers, realtors, and other professionals.

(3) Do you have the knowledge and experience necessary to successfully navigate the complicated financial planning and tax world to achieve my financial goals?

Dr. Chris Mullis is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and has a doctorate degree in astrophysics. Each year he studies countless pages of financial texts, academic research papers, plus retirement and tax law. He is mentored by the country's top minds in financial, legal and tax planning. He has been serving clients for 18 years with \$80 Million of assets under advisement. In addition, Dr. Mullis is assisted by Drs. James Irwin and David Berger who have been with the firm since its inception in 2006.

(4) How many clients do you serve and how does their situation compare to mine?

We currently serve approximately 70 clients, totaling \$80 Million in combined assets. We have intentionally limited the size of our practice to ensure all of our clients receive the service they require to achieve their financial and life goals. Our typical client family is the multi-millionaire next door who is retired, or close to it. We primarily focus on the investment, tax, income and legal issues related to retirement.

(5) What is your financial planning process in plain English?

We're going to walk you through your estate plans -- wills, trusts, healthcare directives, durable powers of attorney, and we're going to get these things done. We're going to talk about risk management, which is a fancy way of saying insurance. We're going to go through all your insurances -- life, health, disability, long term care. We're going to talk about retirement income. Where's your money going to come from? What are your goals? What are your desires? What are the things you truly want to do? We're going to optimize your investments and lower your lifetime tax bill. That is comprehensive financial planning: (1) Estate, (2) Risk Management, (3) Retirement Income, (4) Investment, and (5) Tax Planning.

(6) What does Tax Planning look like in your firm?

Taxes are a central component of our work. Almost every financial planning issue -- whether it's retirement, investments, cash flow, insurance, or estate planning -- has important tax considerations. Tax planning is a year-round activity that permeates everything that we do. We help you hit the "easy button" during tax prep season, conduct in-depth reviews of your returns before and after submission, and ensure you understand exactly how your tax bill actually works. We collaborate closely with your accountant and help you effectively respond to "love letters" from the IRS. We construct and continually update your tax projections (current year & lifetime!). We continually improve and update our knowledge of the complex and ever-changing landscape of retirement and tax law. We execute multi-year Roth conversion plans to dramatically lower your looming tsunami of taxes in retirement, while avoiding tax "torpedoes" like Medicare surcharges, Social Security taxes & ACA credit losses. This is not an exhaustive account of all we do, but does reflect our deep commitment to making sure you don't get killed in taxes.

(7) How often will I hear from you?

You're encouraged to call or email us at any time for prompt assistance. We return calls the same day and reply to emails within one business day. We start new relationships with a surge of 4 to 5 initial planning sessions; then meet twice each year -- in the spring and fall -- like clockwork. Plus, we schedule working meetings anytime an issue pops up. Finally, education is a big focus for our firm. We write a memo to you every Tuesday morning explaining what the headlines mean for you and breaking down important retirement topics in plain English.

(8) Will you help me solve any and all financial problems I may encounter?

Yes. We have assisted clients in solving an assortment of financial issues such as complex intergenerational wealth transfers, family deaths, disability, 401(k) plans, IRS audits & tax issues, real estate, debt, Social Security, Medicare, health insurance, college, gifting and almost any other financial issue imaginable. While we certainly don't have all the answers, through our network of resources, we will not stop until a solution has been found.

(9) Where do you keep my money and how can I see it?

For your convenience and safety, the investment accounts that we manage on your behalf are owned by you and housed at custodian Goldman Sachs. Goldman keeps your money safe, protects against fraud, manages the IRS reporting, and sends you independent, monthly statements.

As a close partner of NorthStar, Goldman Sachs supplies cutting-edge data and technology that we leverage in our proprietary portfolio algorithms that are designed to maximize your returns & retirement income and minimize your taxes.

Your investment accounts can be viewed at any time at Folioclient.com.

We also create "Mission Control" for your money. This provides you a clear view of your entire financial landscape and simplifies your life. It's a centralized dashboard where you can see every single one of your financial accounts in one location. It's easy, comprehensive, and always up to date.