

Practice Management Symposium

Dimensional

Scaling for Growth

Livia Ramirez

Regional Director and Vice President

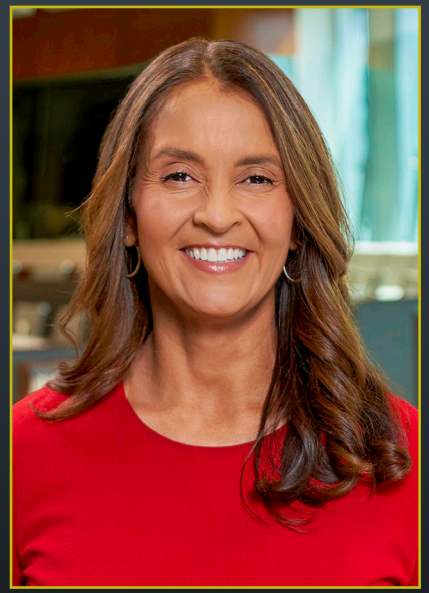
David Turner, CFA

Senior Manager and Vice President

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Livia Ramirez

Regional Director and
Vice President

Dimensional Fund Advisors



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What do you think the rowing coach should do?

A. Switch the JV and varsity boats

B. Exchange individual boat members (reshuffle the boats)

C. Seek individual feedback from varsity team members to identify problems

D. Empower the varsity team to settle their differences as a unit

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How do you ensure everyone is rowing the boat in the same direction and in sync with each other?

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SCAN

FOCUS

ACT

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SCAN	*Where is capacity constrained?*
FOCUS	*Which constraints matter given where the firm wants to go?*
ACT	*What needs to change to get there?*

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Tactical

Strategic	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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Global Advisor Study

A strategic practice management tool



FOCUS AREAS:

- Key Business Metrics
- Roles and Compensation
- Income Statement
- Rotating Topic-specific Modules

Global Investor Study

Insight into your firm from a client's point of view



FOCUS AREAS:

- Demographics
- Business Development
- Values & Services
- Investments

2015-2026 Global Investor Study all-time stats. 2010-2026 Global Advisor Study, all time stats.

2026 Global Advisor Study

US Results



FOCUS AREAS

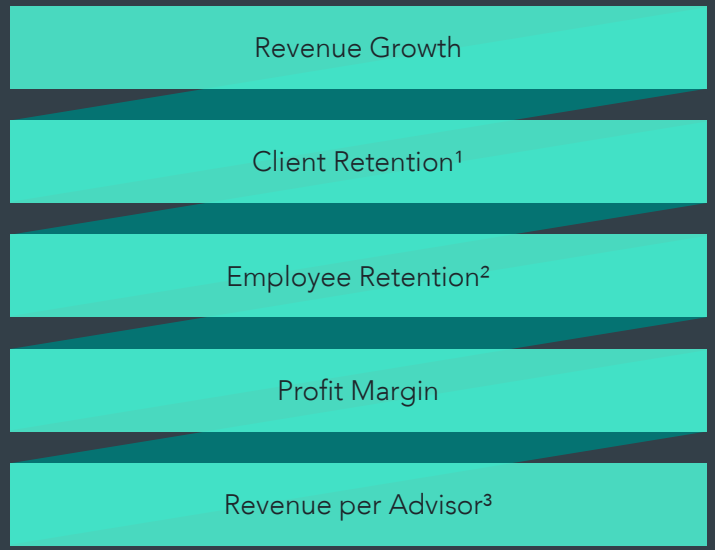
Core Business Metrics	Income Statement	Roles and Compensation	Compliance and Cybersecurity	Investments

Results from Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study. US Only. 410 participating US firms.

High Performing Firms Defined

Dimensional defines the universe of High Performing Firms by ranking firms across five key metrics.

Each firm is given a percentile rank across the five metrics, and the average of these determines the overall ranking. The top quartile of firms by overall ranking are selected as High Performing Firms[4].



1. Excluding death, divorce, "we terminated".
2. Excluding "we terminated".
3. Service and Senior combined.
4. Firms must provide data for at least four of the five metrics to be under consideration as a High Performing Firm

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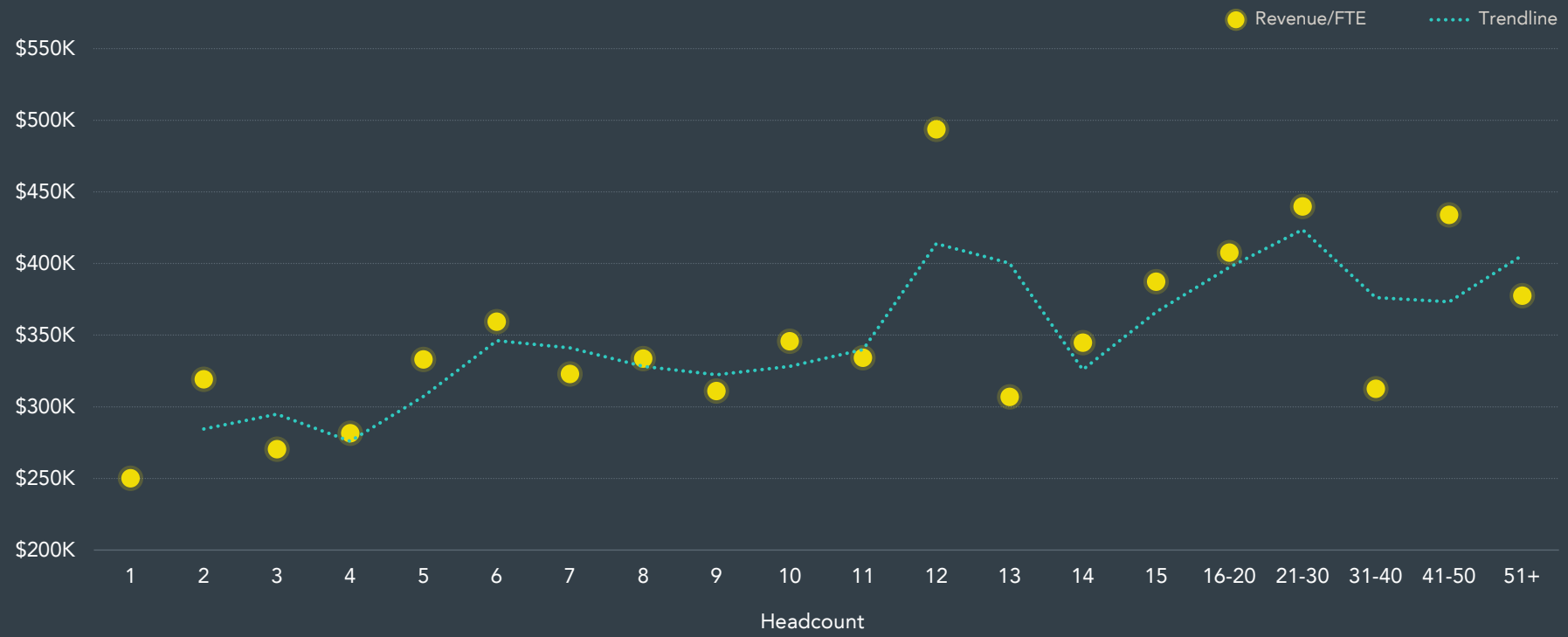
	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

Capacity Constraints

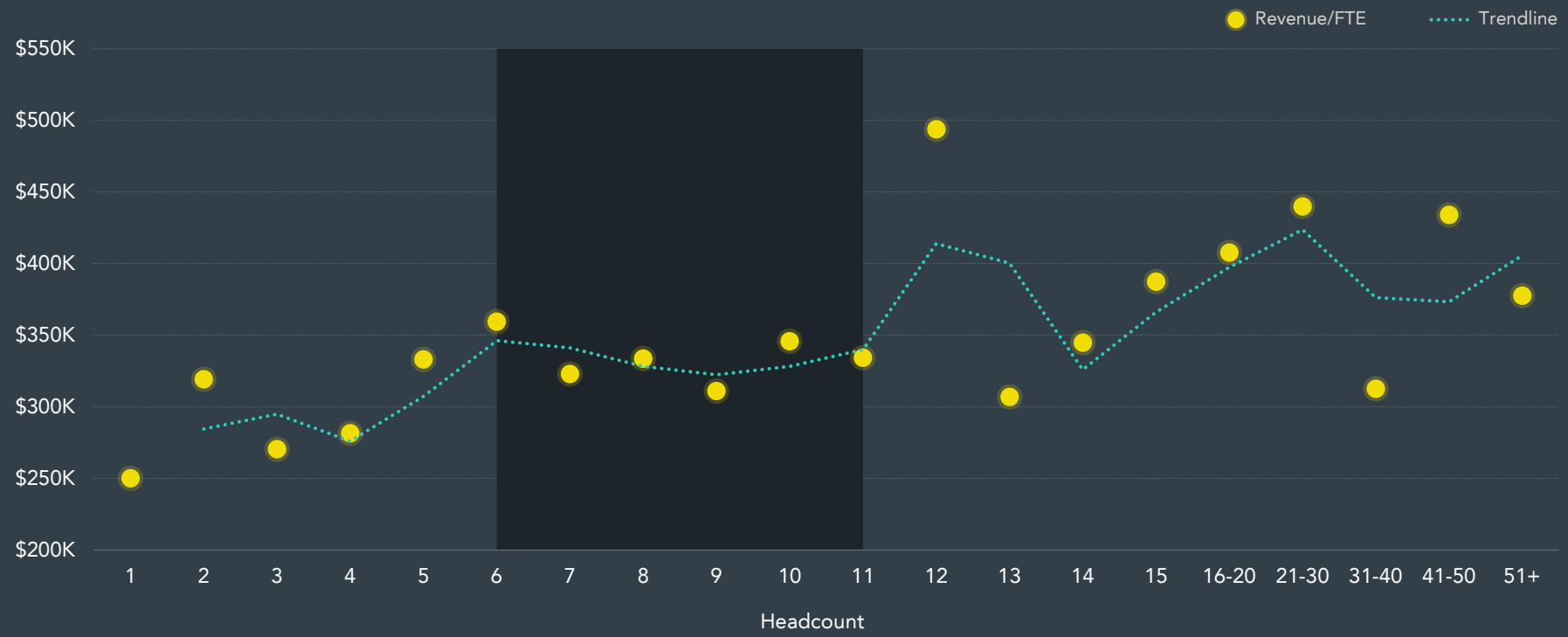
Firm revenue/FTE by headcount (median)



Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study. 410 US firms participated.

Capacity Constraints

Firm revenue/FTE by headcount (median)



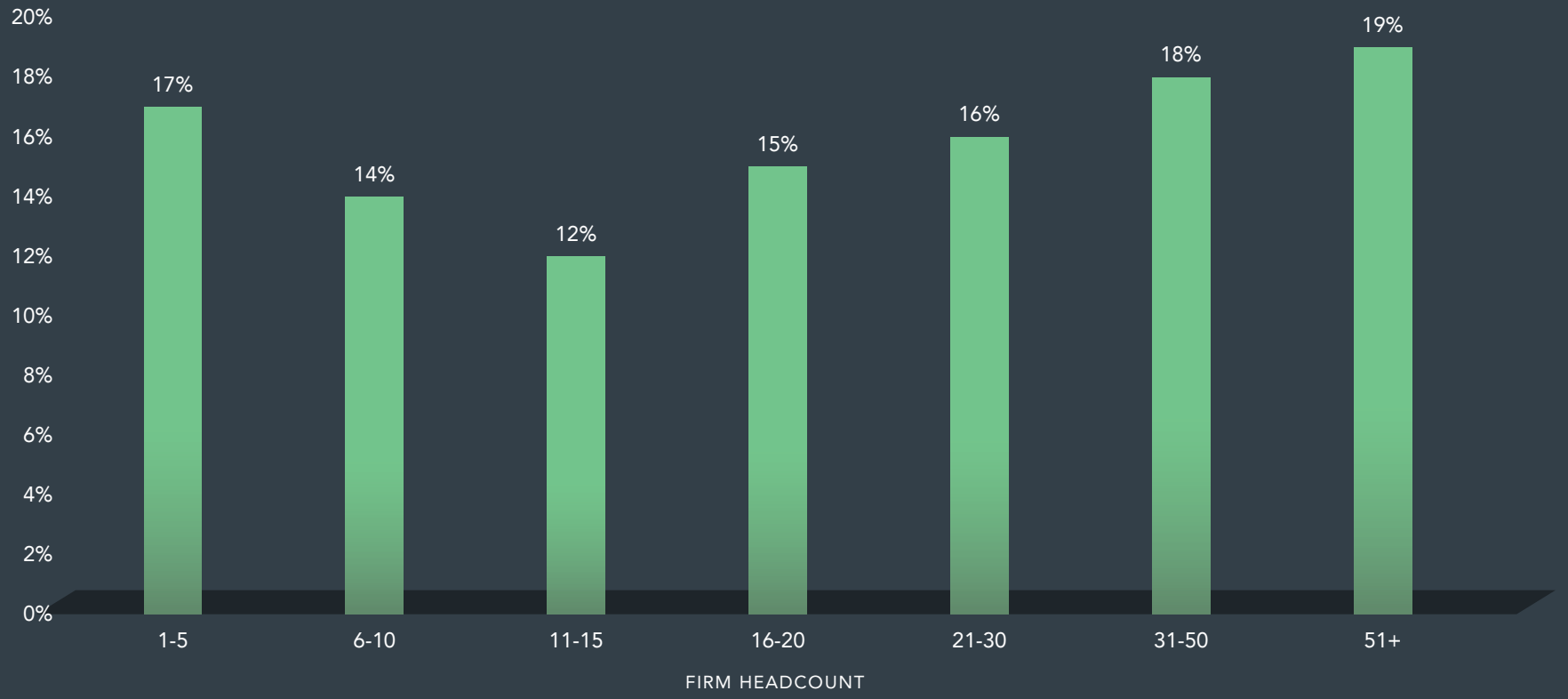
Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study. 410 US firms participated.

How Advisors Spend Their Time

	SERVICING CLIENTS	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	MANAGING PEOPLE	OTHER
All Firms	62%	16%	9%	13%

Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated.

Senior Advisor Time Spent on Business Development



Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated.

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

Identify the Attributes of Individuals to Add to Team

Your organization is an eco system; too much of anything is bad

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Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success (Adam Grant)

Identify the Attributes of Individuals to Add to Team

Your organization is an eco system; too much of anything is bad

Dimensional

	GIVER	TAKER
AGREEABLE		
DISAGREEABLE		

Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success (Adam Grant)

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SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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FOCUS			
ACT			

Technology Vendor Trends

2022 to 2025 Global Advisor Study Results

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CUSTODIAN

	2022	2025
1	TD Ameritrade/ Schwab	Schwab
2	Fidelity	Fidelity
3	Pershing	TIAA

CRM

	2022	2025
1	Redtail	RedTail
2	Salesforce	Salesforce
3	Junxure	Wealthbox

FINANCIAL PLANNING

	2022	2025
1	MoneyGuide Pro	MoneyGuide Pro
2	eMoney Advisor	eMoney Pro
3	Right Capital	Right Capital

PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

	2022	2025
1	Orion	Orion
2	Envestnet	Envestnet/ Tamarac
3	Morningstar	Morningstar

CLIENT PORTAL

	2022	2025
1	eMoney Advisor	eMoney Advisor
2	Orion Advisor Solutions	Orion Advisor Solutions
3	Envestnet Tamarac	Black Diamond Wealth Platform

TRADING AND REBALANCING

	2022	2025
1	TD Ameritrade Rebal	iRebal
2	Orion Eclipse	Envestnet/ Tamarac
3	Tamarac	Orion Advisor Solutions

Results from the Dimensional 2025 Global Advisor Study. 515 US firms participated.

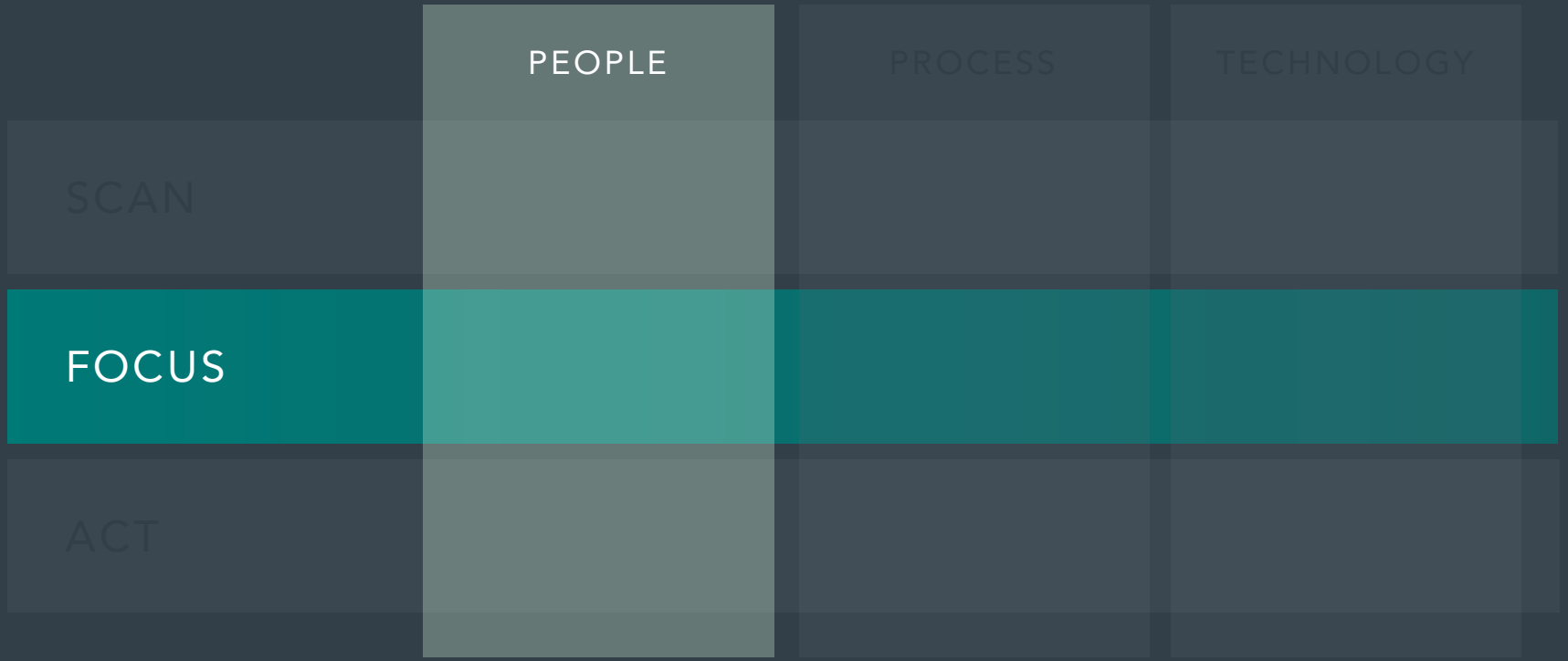
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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

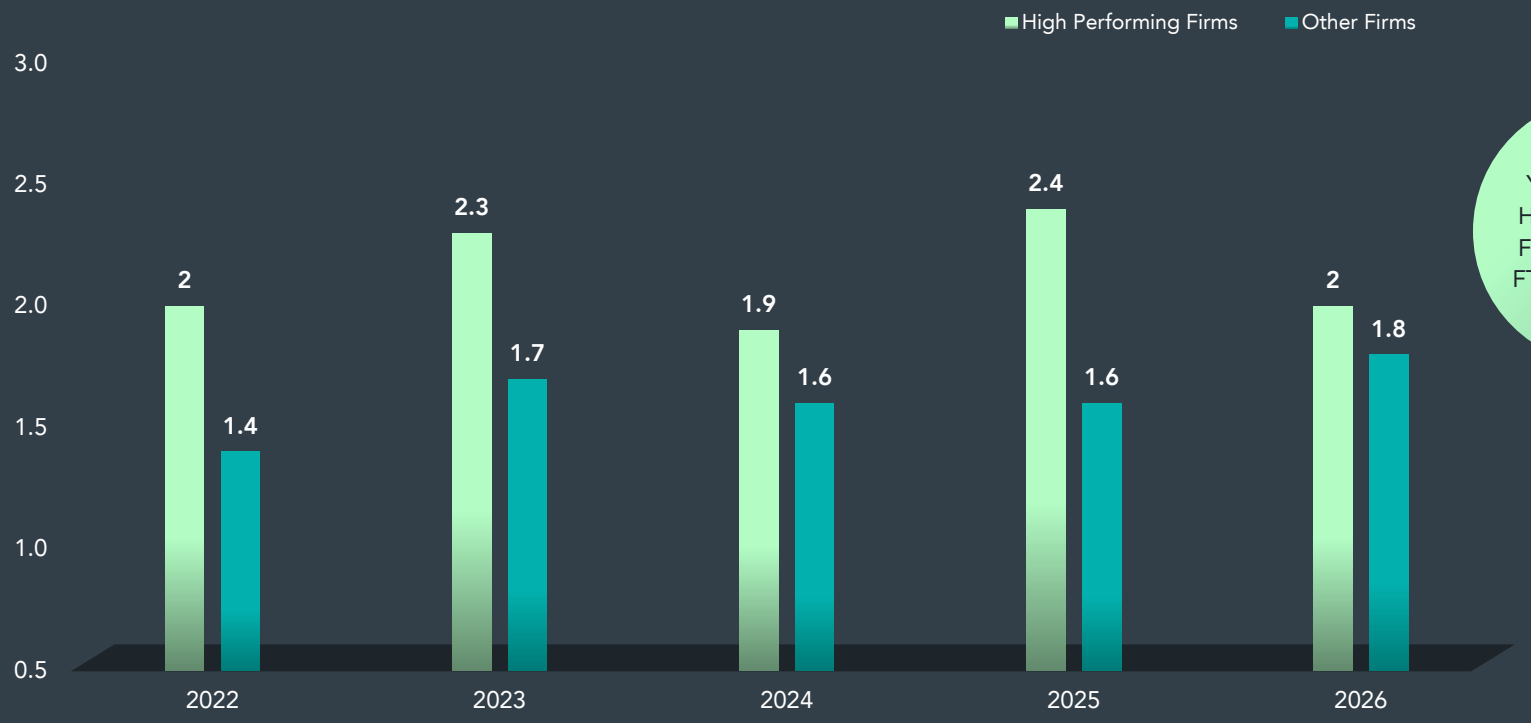
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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
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ACT			

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Full-Time Equivalents Per Advisor

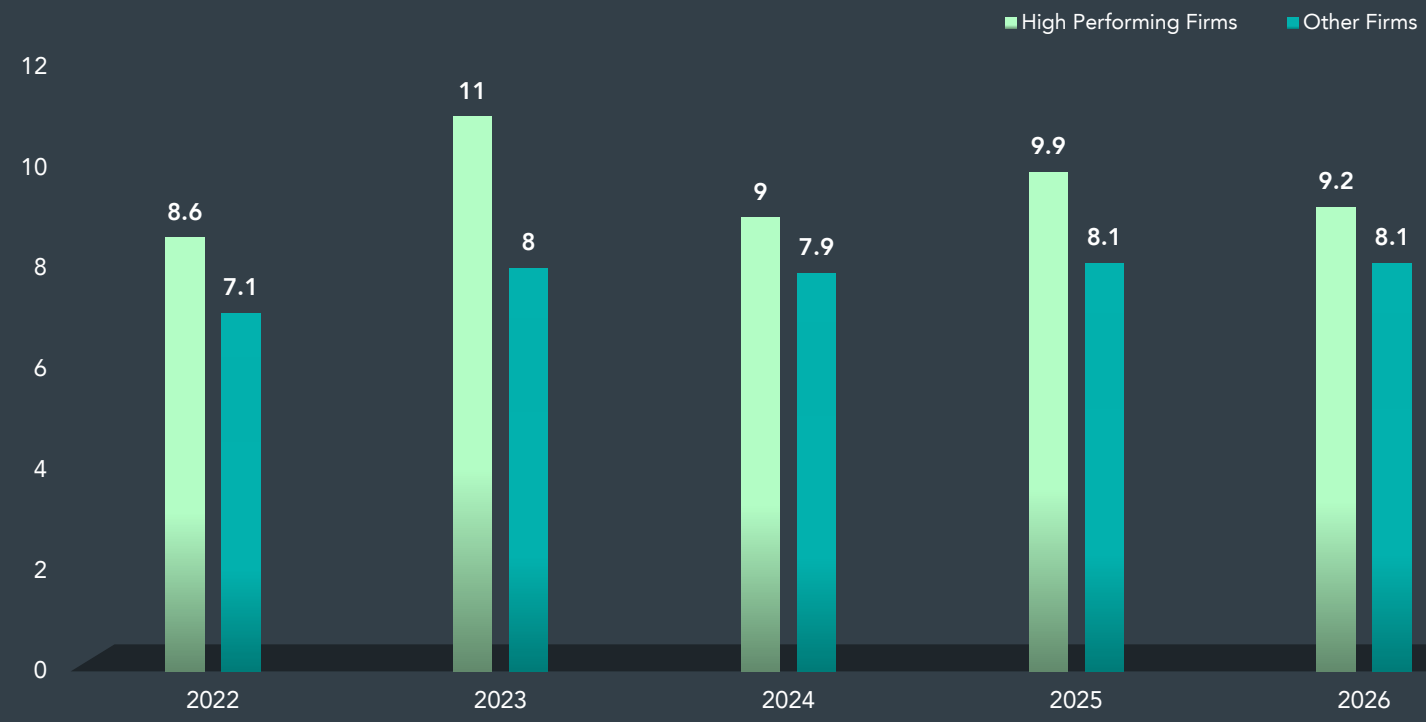


Year over year, High Performing Firms have more FTEs per Advisor.

Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated, of which 103 met the High Performing Firm criteria.

Operations and Investments Staff

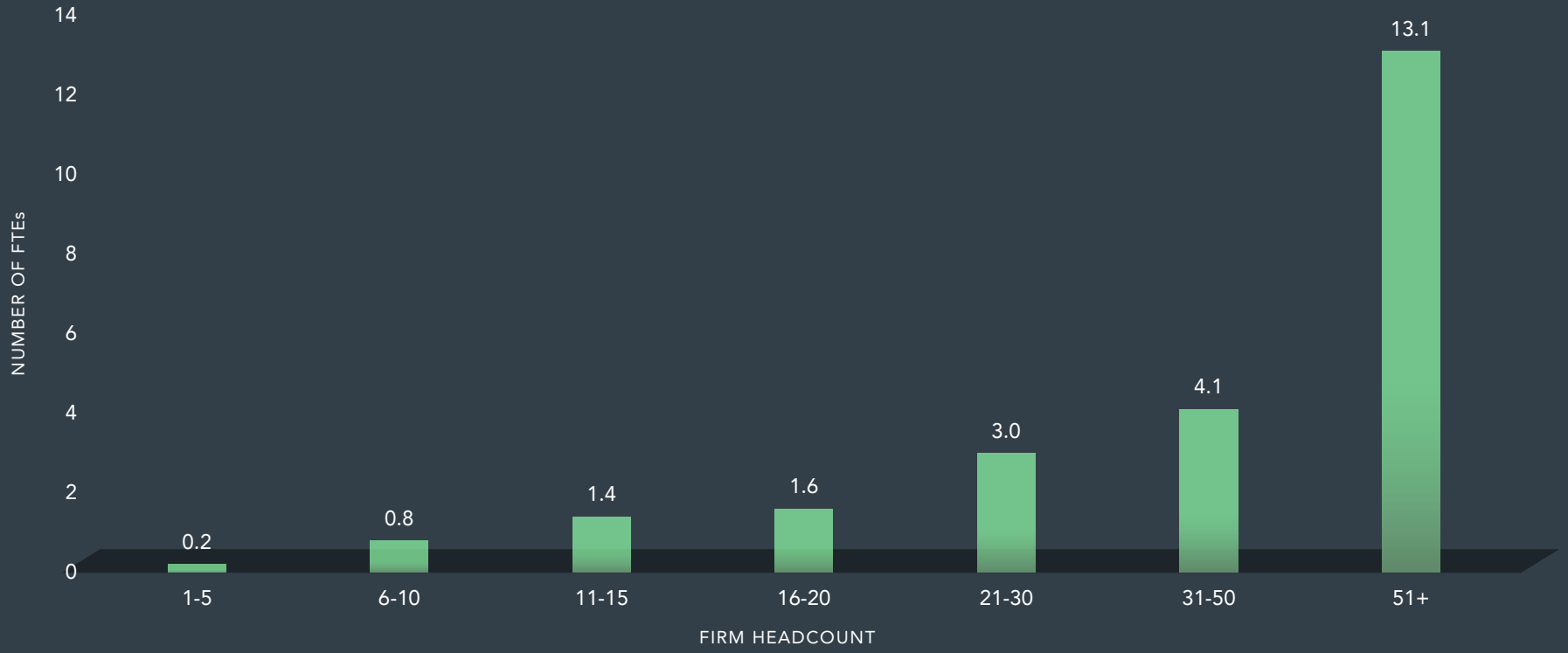
As a percentage of total FTEs



Year over year, High Performing Firms generally have a higher percentage of Operations and Investments Staff.

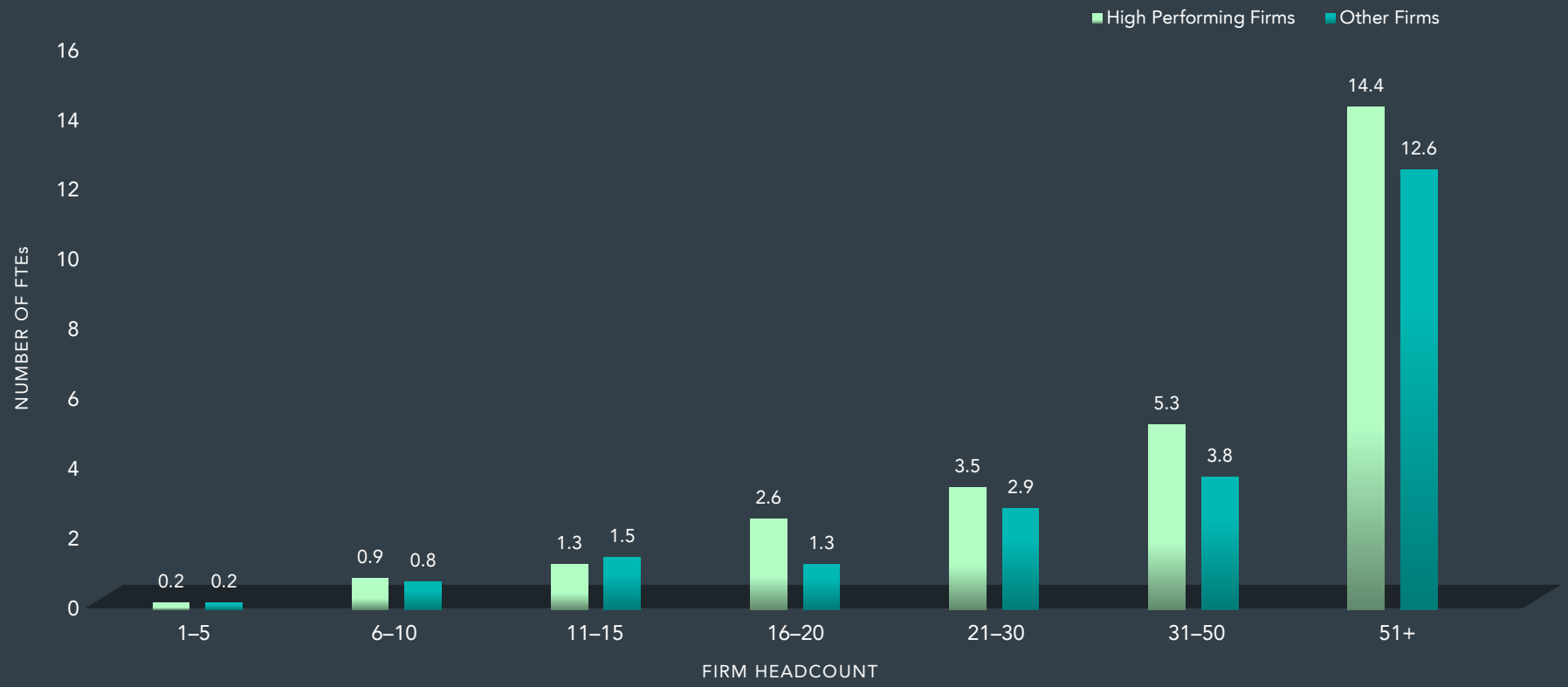
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Operations/Investments Headcount



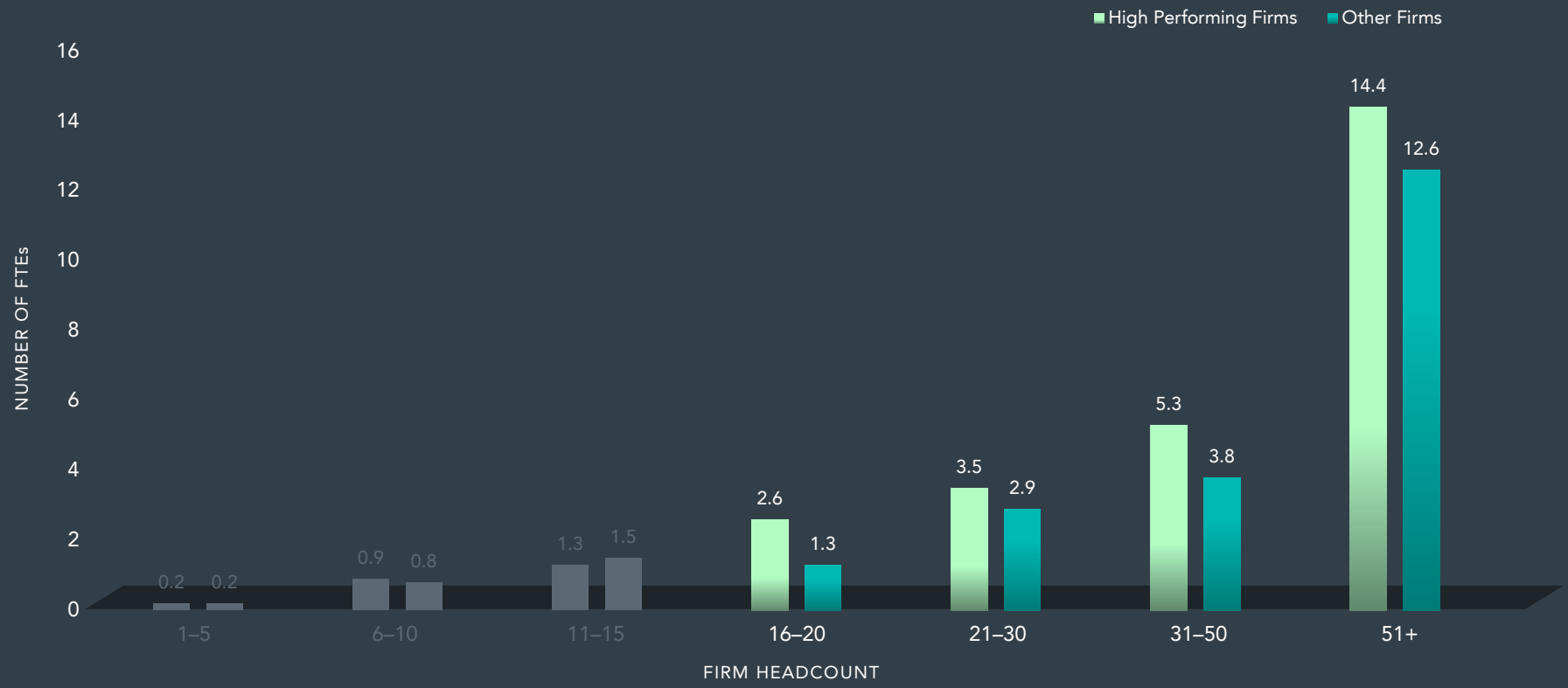
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How Advisors Spend Their Time

	SERVICING CLIENTS	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	MANAGING PEOPLE	OTHER
High Performing Firms	**65%**	**17%**	**11%**	**7%**
Other Firms	60%	16%	8%	15%

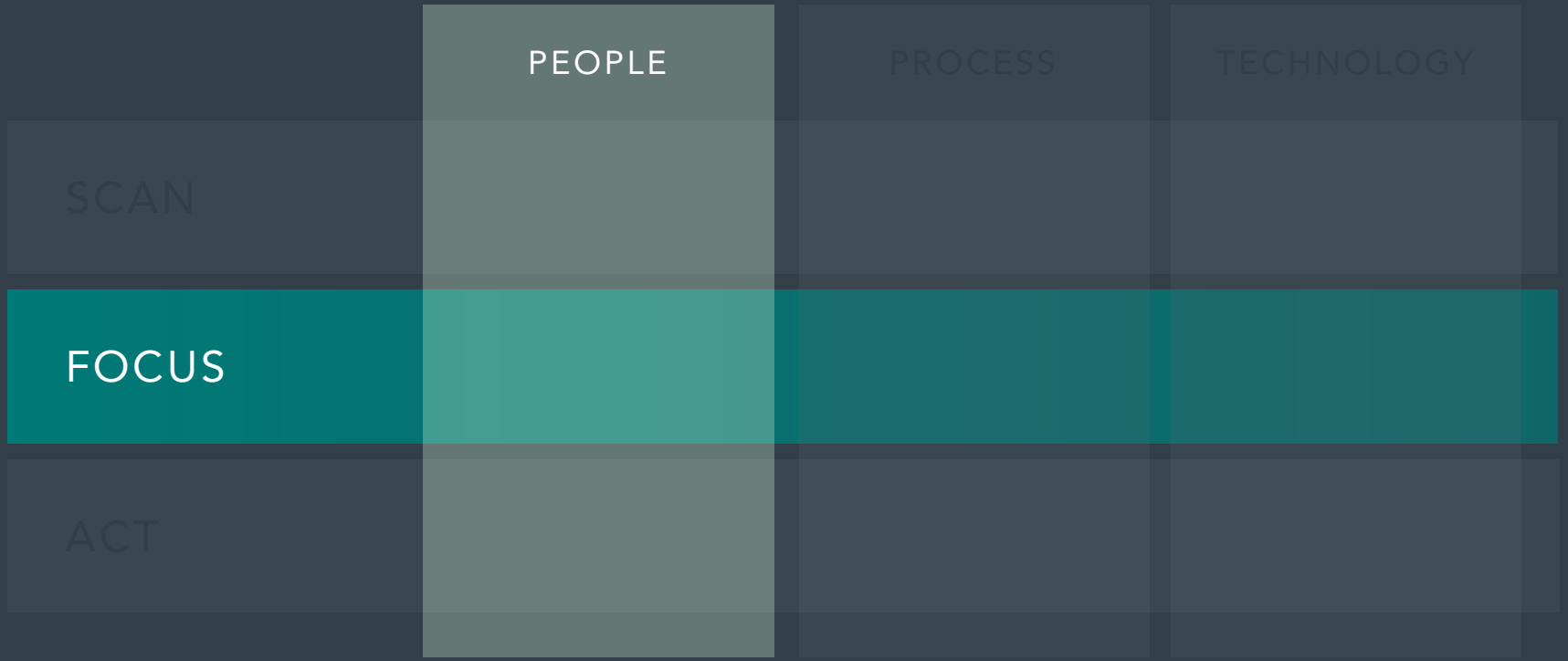
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How Advisors Spend Their Time

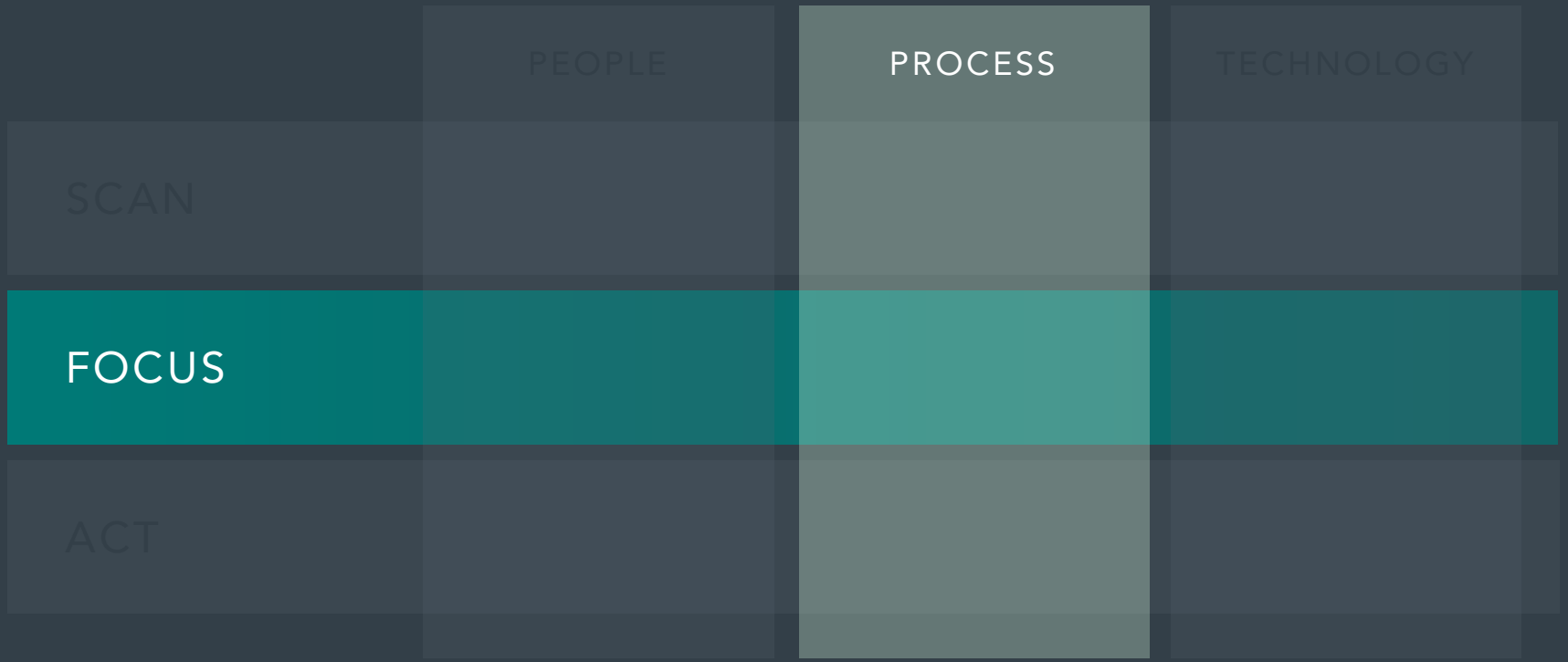
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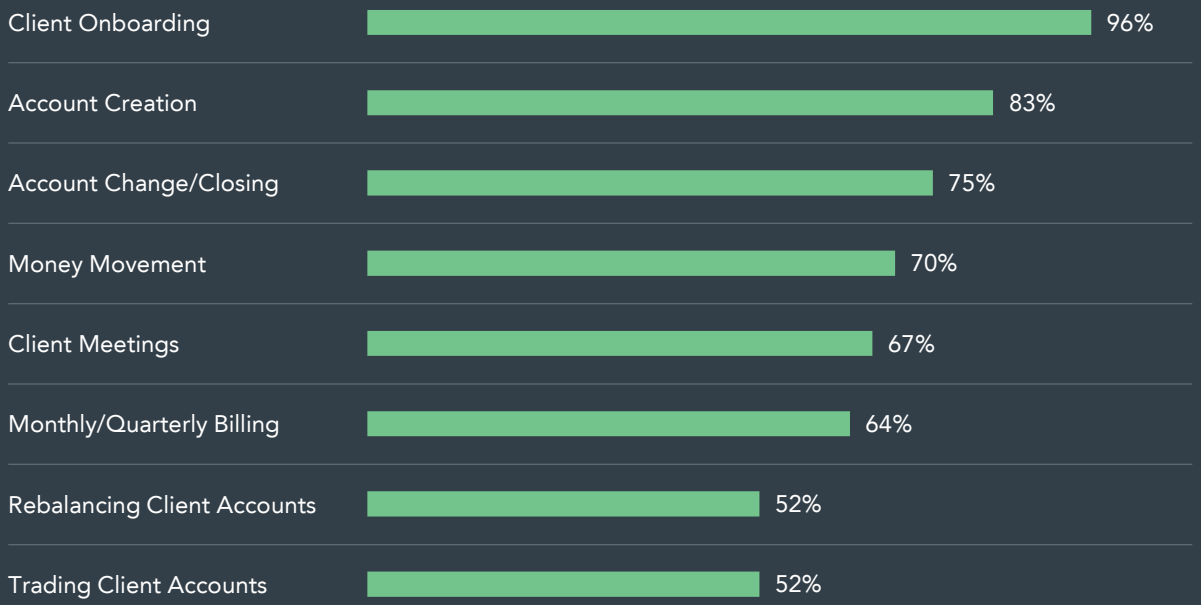
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Top Functions with a Defined/Automated Process

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Percent of firms with a defined/automated process



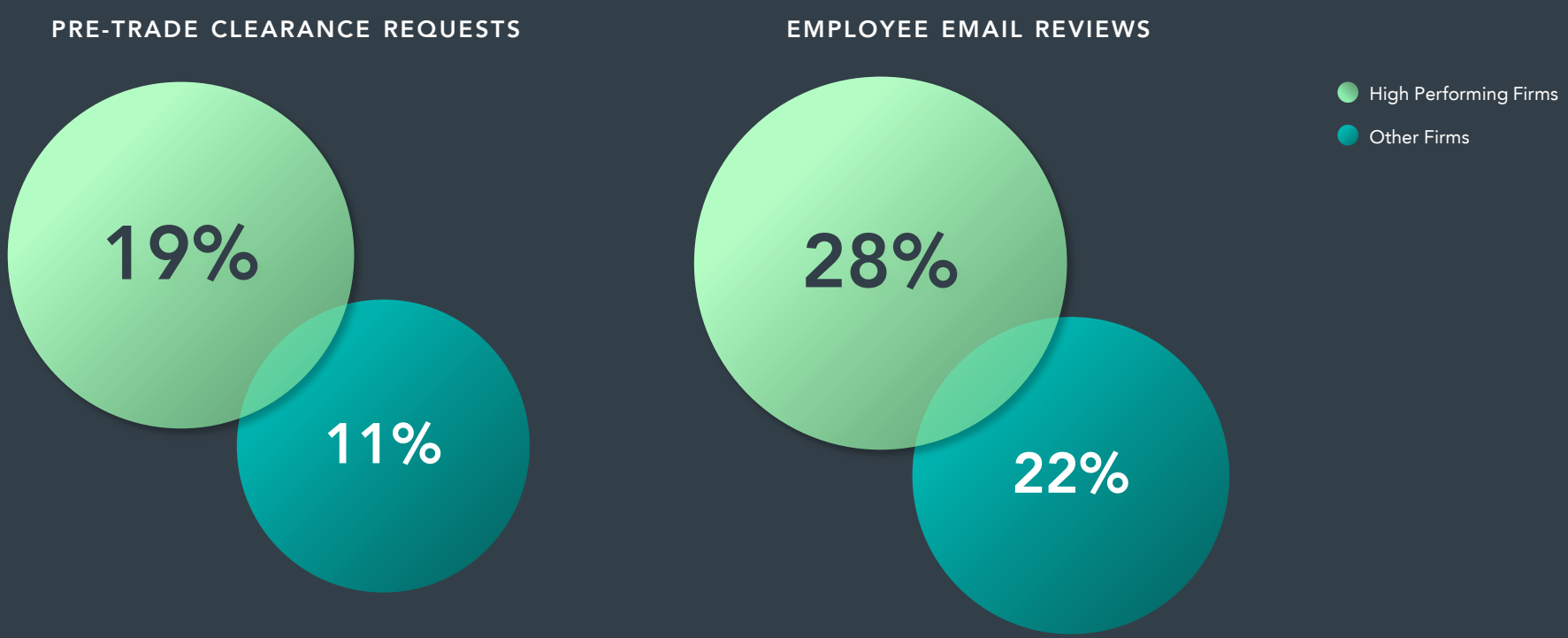
The average firm using workflows has approximately 10 different functions they use a workflow/process for.

Results from the Dimensional 2025 Global Advisor Study. 515 US firms participated.

Workflows in Action

Percentage of firms that have an automated/system-based workflow

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Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated, of which 103 met the High Performing Firm criteria.

Milestone Moments

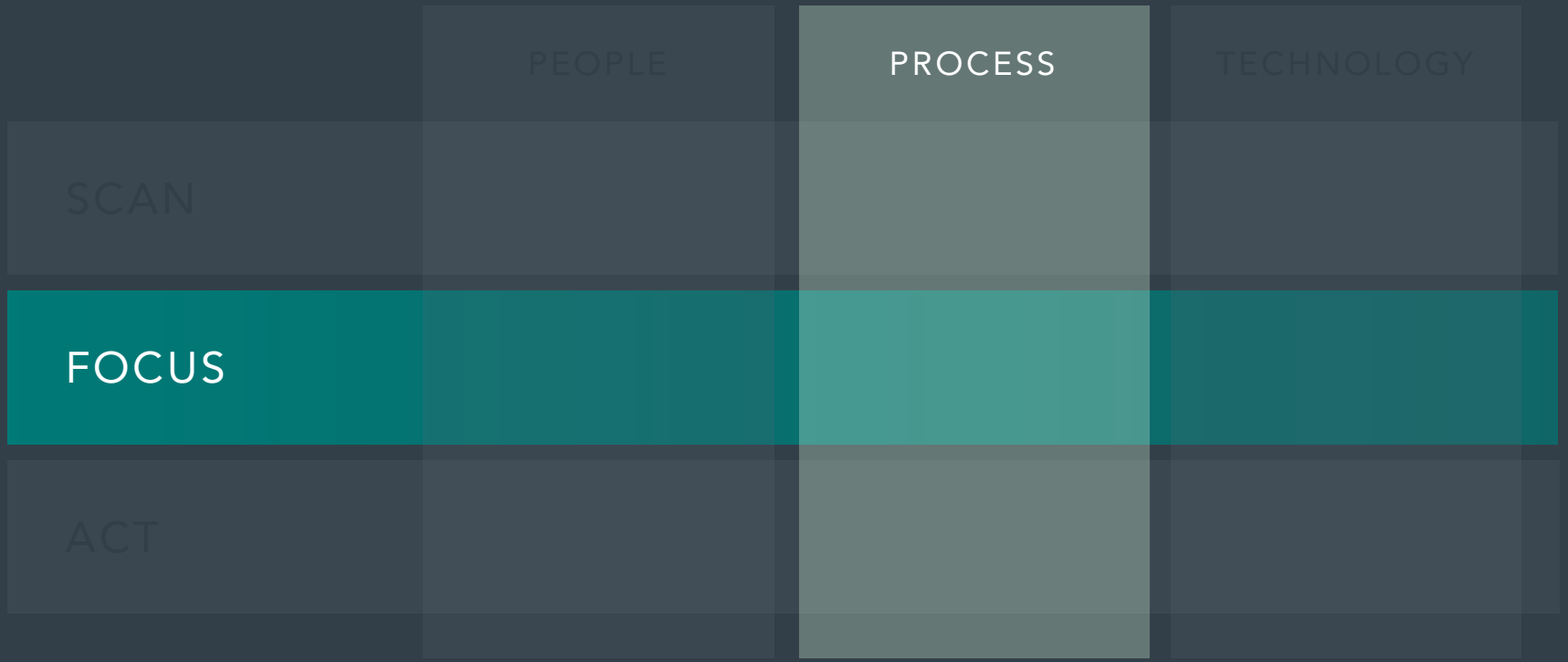
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Life events in which you can provide support through offered services



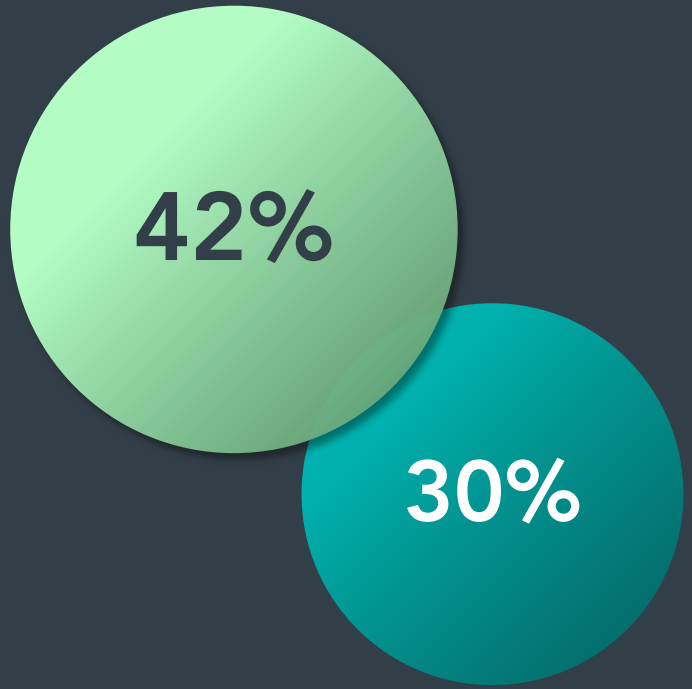
T.H.Holmes and T.H. Rahe. "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," Journal of Psychosomatic Research. 11:213, 1967

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			



COMPLIANCE AND CYBERSECURITY

High Performing Firms are more likely to be using or actively considering using machine learning or generative AI to enhance security functions.

Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated, of which 103 met the High Performing Firm criteria.

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

How Advisors Spend Their Time

	SERVICING CLIENTS	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	MANAGING PEOPLE	OTHER
Firm has an Operations Manager	61%	18%	10%	11%
Firm does **not** have an Operations Manager	63%	15%	8%	15%

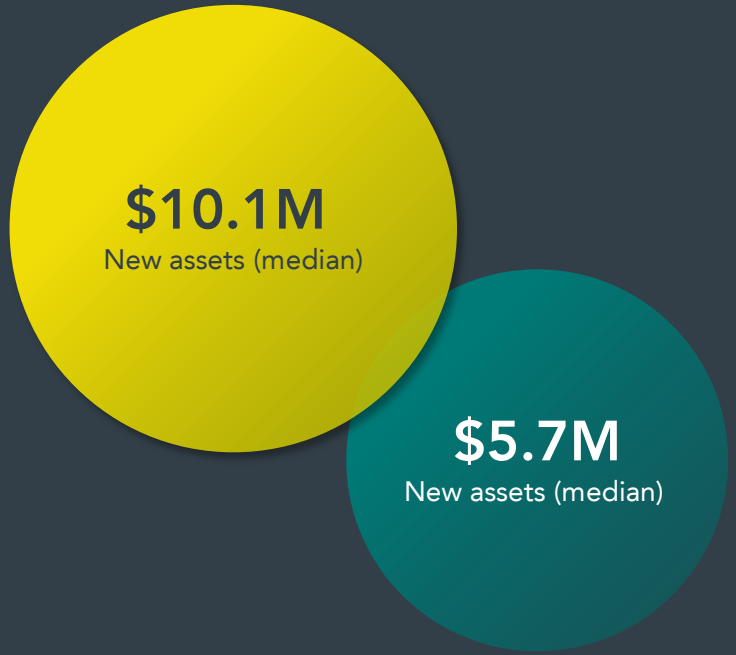
Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated.

How Advisors Spend Their Time

Dimensional

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Firm does **not** have an Operations Manager	63%	15%	8%	15%

Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated.



Senior Advisors at firms with an Operations Manager are able to source more assets.

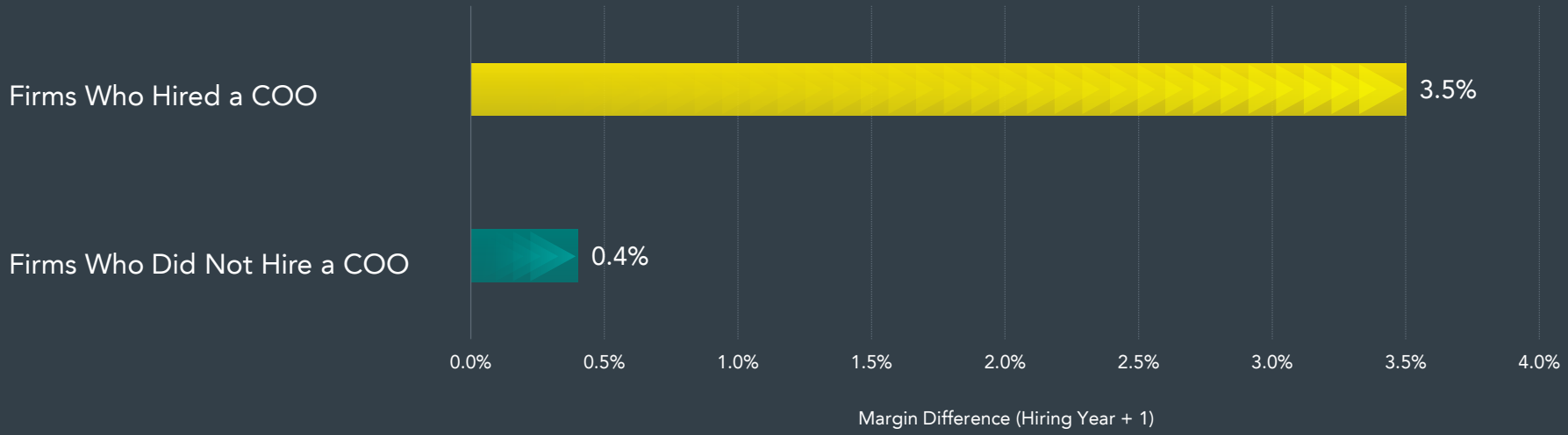
- Senior Advisors at firms with an Operations Manager
- Senior Advisors at firms without an Operations Manager

Results from the Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study, 410 US Firms participated.

Impact of Hiring a COO on Profit Margins

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Increase in profit margin for firms who hired a Chief Operating Officer (COO) vs. firms who did not



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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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EMPLOYEE
HIRING

Checklist
vs. Flow Chart

For illustrative purposes only.

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EMPLOYEE HIRING

Checklist
vs. Flow Chart

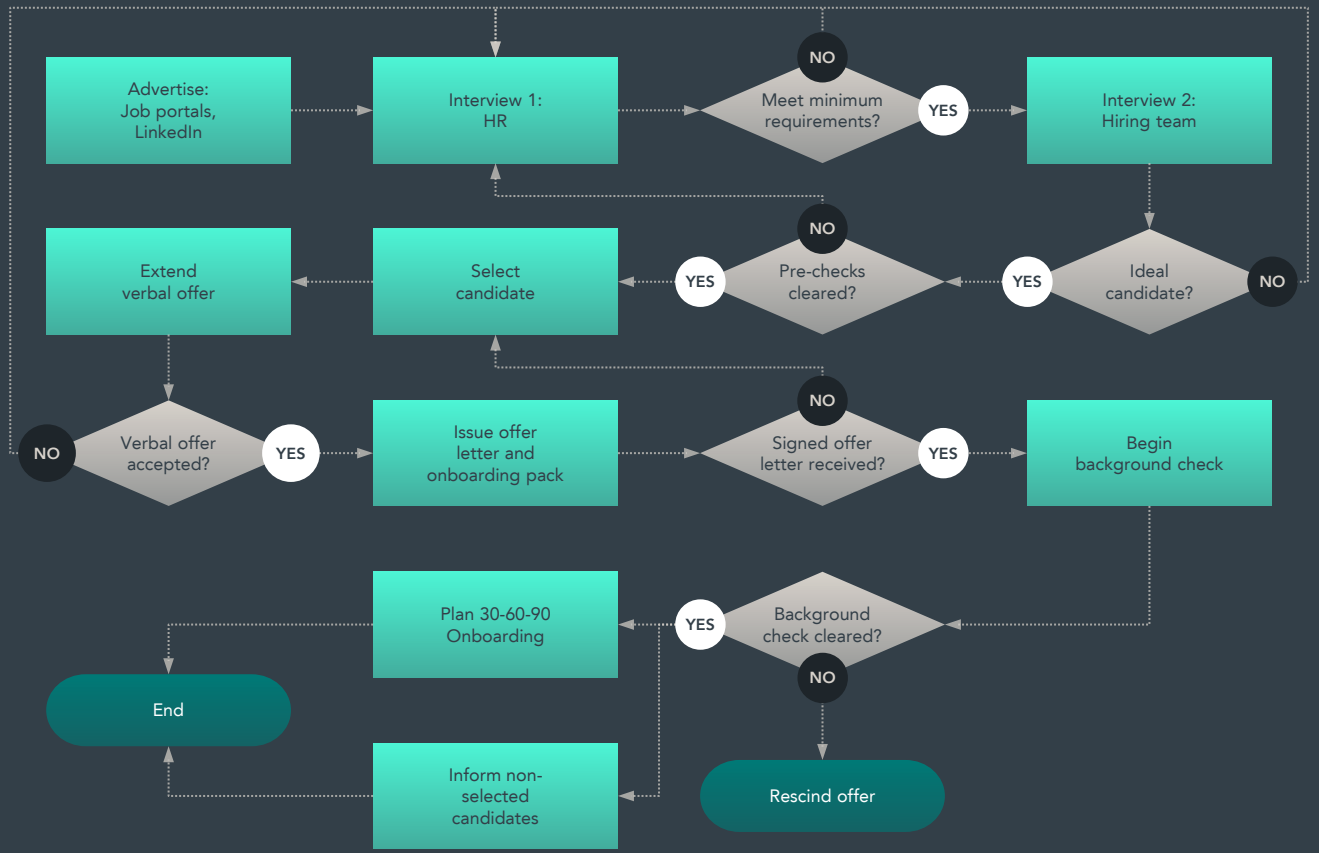
TASKS	OWNER
1. Advertise	
a. Job portals	Admin
b. LinkedIn	Admin
2. Screen and shortlist candidates	
a. First Round: HR	HR
Select preferred candidates	
b. Second Round: Team	Hiring Team
3. Complete pre-employment background checks	HR
a. Resolve issues with candidates	HR
4. Final decision on candidate	HR, Hiring Manager
5. Offer	
a. Extend verbal offer	HR
b. Issue offer letter and onboarding pack	HR
c. Offer letter signed and received by candidate	HR
d. Background check complete	HR
e. Inform non-selected candidates	HR
6. Plan 30-60-90 day onboarding	Hiring Manager

For illustrative purposes only.

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EMPLOYEE HIRING

Checklist vs. Flow Chart



For illustrative purposes only.

Employee Onboarding

Example framework

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

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Scaling for Growth: Employee Onboarding Framework

		LEARNING First 30 Days			ALIGNING 30–60 Days			EXECUTING 60–90 Days			CONTINUOUS LEARNING After 90 Days
		Tasks	Resources	Key Contacts	Tasks	Resources	Key Contacts	Tasks	Resources	Key Contacts	Tasks
Priorities Key focus areas that will guide contributions and decisions during the first 90 days	1										
	2										
	3										
	4										
	5										
Learning Core knowledge, systems, or relationships that should be absorbed to be effective in the role	1										
	2										
	3										
	4										
	5										
Performance Milestones, deliverables, or behaviors that demonstrate progress and success at each phase	1										
	2										
	3										
	4										
	5										
Personal Individual goals to support smooth transitions and integrations	1										
	2										
	3										
	4										
	5										

Tip: When building out your firm's onboarding plan, consider how people, processes, and technology come into play.

MKT-72259 10/26

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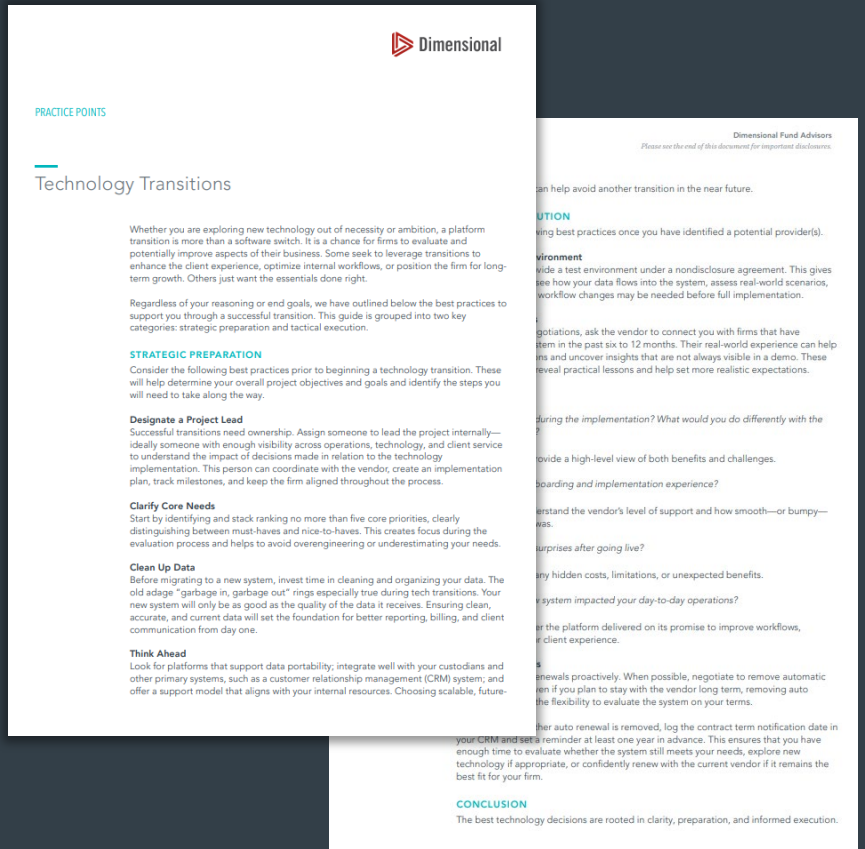
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	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
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Technology Transitions

An opportunity to evaluate and improve aspects of the business



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PRACTICE POINTS

Technology Transitions

Whether you are exploring new technology out of necessity or ambition, a platform transition is more than a software switch. It is a chance for firms to evaluate and potentially improve aspects of their business. Some seek to leverage transitions to enhance the client experience, optimize internal workflows, or position the firm for long-term growth. Others just want the essentials done right.

Regardless of your reasoning or end goals, we have outlined below the best practices to support you through a successful transition. This guide is grouped into two key categories: strategic preparation and tactical execution.

STRATEGIC PREPARATION

Consider the following best practices prior to beginning a technology transition. These will help determine your overall project objectives and goals and identify the steps you will need to take along the way.

Designate a Project Lead
Successful transitions need ownership. Assign someone to lead the project internally—ideally someone with enough visibility across operations, technology, and client service to understand the impact of decisions made in relation to the technology implementation. This person can coordinate with the vendor, create an implementation plan, track milestones, and keep the firm aligned throughout the process.

Clarify Core Needs
Start by identifying and stack ranking no more than five core priorities, clearly distinguishing between must-haves and nice-to-haves. This creates focus during the evaluation process and helps to avoid overengineering or underestimating your needs.

Clean Up Data
Before migrating to a new system, invest time in cleaning and organizing your data. The old adage "garbage in, garbage out" rings especially true during tech transitions. Your new system will only be as good as the quality of the data it receives. Ensuring clean, accurate, and current data will set the foundation for better reporting, billing, and client communication from day one.

Think Ahead
Look for platforms that support data portability; integrate well with your custodians and other primary systems, such as a customer relationship management (CRM) system; and offer a support model that aligns with your internal resources. Choosing scalable, future-

…an help avoid another transition in the near future.

…UTION

…ving best practices once you have identified a potential provider(s).

…vironment

…vide a test environment under a nondisclosure agreement. This gives …see how your data flows into the system, assess real-world scenarios, … workflow changes may be needed before full implementation.

…gotiations, ask the vendor to connect you with firms that have …tem in the past six to 12 months. Their real-world experience can help …ns and uncover insights that are not always visible in a demo. These …reveal practical lessons and help set more realistic expectations.

…during the implementation? What would you do differently with the …?

…ovide a high-level view of both benefits and challenges.

…boarding and implementation experience?

…erstand the vendor's level of support and how smooth—or bumpy— …was.

…urprises after going live?

…ny hidden costs, limitations, or unexpected benefits.

…system impacted your day-to-day operations?

…r the platform delivered on its promise to improve workflows, …r client experience.

…

…enewals proactively. When possible, negotiate to remove automatic …en if you plan to stay with the vendor long term, removing auto …the flexibility to evaluate the system on your terms.

…ther auto renewal is removed, log the contract term notification date in your CRM and set a reminder at least one year in advance. This ensures that you have enough time to evaluate whether the system still meets your needs, explore new technology if appropriate, or confidently renew with the current vendor if it remains the best fit for your firm.

CONCLUSION

The best technology decisions are rooted in clarity, preparation, and informed execution.

Strategic Preparation

Prior to beginning a technology transition

- Designate a Project Lead
- Clarify Core Needs
- Clean Up Data
- Think Ahead

Tactical Execution

Once you've identified potential provider(s)

- Request a Test Environment
- Talk to Peer Firms
- Contract Renewals

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Tactical

Strategic	PEOPLE	PROCESS	TECHNOLOGY
SCAN			
FOCUS			
ACT			

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What do you think the rowing coach should do?

A. Switch the JV and varsity boats

B. Exchange individual boat members (reshuffle the boats)

C. Seek individual feedback from varsity team members to identify problems

D. Empower the varsity team to settle their differences as a unit

Dimensional

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

African Proverb