Dimensional

# Practice Management Symposium





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# Make it Storm—
# Developing Your Team of Rainmakers


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# Growth and Marketing

## Client growth by channel

| | US Firms |
|---|---|
| Referrals from existing clients | 50.1% |
| Referrals from centers of influence (COI) | 8.3% |
| Referrals from parent company (e.g., CPA firm or bank) | 3.1% |
| Advisor business development | 13.7% |
| Non-advisors | 3.2% |
| Traditional marketing (e.g., print advertising, PR) | 0.3% |
| Digital marketing (e.g., website, social media, paid media) | 8.3% |
| Lead generation | 0.8% |
| Custodian referral network | 0.5% |
| Events | 1.5% |
| Merger and/or acquisition | 4.6% |
| All other | 5.6% |

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

# Growth and Marketing

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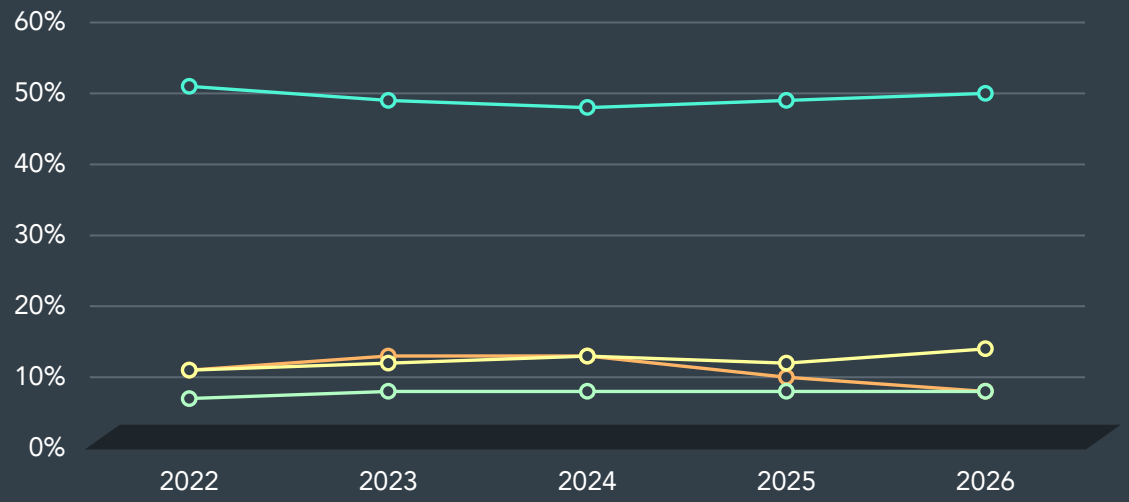
# Growth and Marketing

## Top channels of growth, 2022–2026




- Referrals from existing clients
- Referrals from centers of influence (COI)
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- Digital marketing (e.g., website, social media, paid media)

Results from the Dimensional 2022-2026 Global Advisor Study.

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# Make It Storm

## Developing Your Team of Rainmakers




### Meg Carpenter, Ficomm CEO



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# Rainmakers are not born or made. The conditions have changed.

A rainmaker has the influence, the relationships, the network and the know how to bring business in. That has not changed. What the client requires before they say yes has.

## FOUNDER GENERATION

**Trust built in person**

Built a network in a community over decades, earned trust face to face, turned it into referrals. Hard to teach, because it was mostly presence.

## NEXT GENERATION

**Trust built before the meeting**

Same relationships, same referrals, but the client validates before they ever call. Credibility now has to exist in rooms the advisor is not standing in.

# One channel is growing.

The only organic channel moving up is the one that depends on an individual advisor being known and credible, being a rainmaker.

| Percentage of new clients by channel | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | Median new client size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Referrals from existing clients | 49% | 48% | 49% | 50% | $970,242 |
| Advisors | 12% | 13% | 12% | 14% | $1,086,876 |
| Referrals from centers of influence | 13% | 13% | 11% | 8% | $1,228,870 |
| Digital marketing | 8% | 7% | 8% | 8% | $1,041,076 |

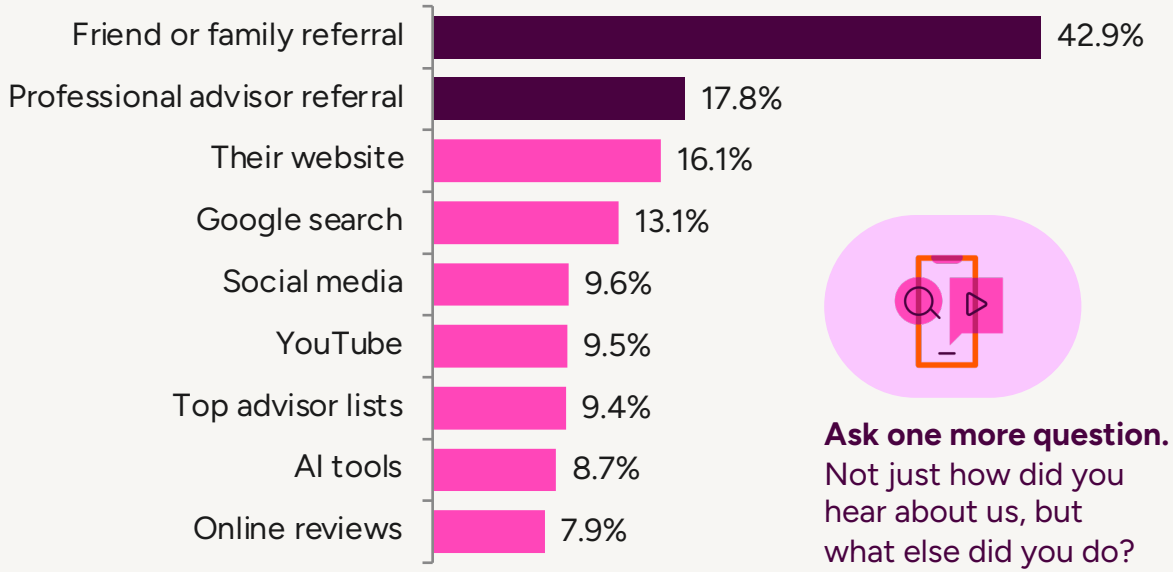
Source, Dimensional 2023 to 2026 Global Advisor Study. 410 US firms participated in 2026. Median client size, US only.

# That 8% is a last-click answer.

We asked investors to select every method that led them to their advisor, not just the last one.

**8%** of new clients attributed to digital marketing when firms report the source.

**64%** of all effective touchpoints in our study were digital.




**Ask one more question.**
Not just how did you hear about us, but what else did you do?

Source, The New Growth Equation, Ficomm Partners 2026, conducted with Absolute Engagement. n = 1,000. Multi-select, so percentages do not total 100. Digital marketing share from Dimensional 2026 Global Advisor Study.

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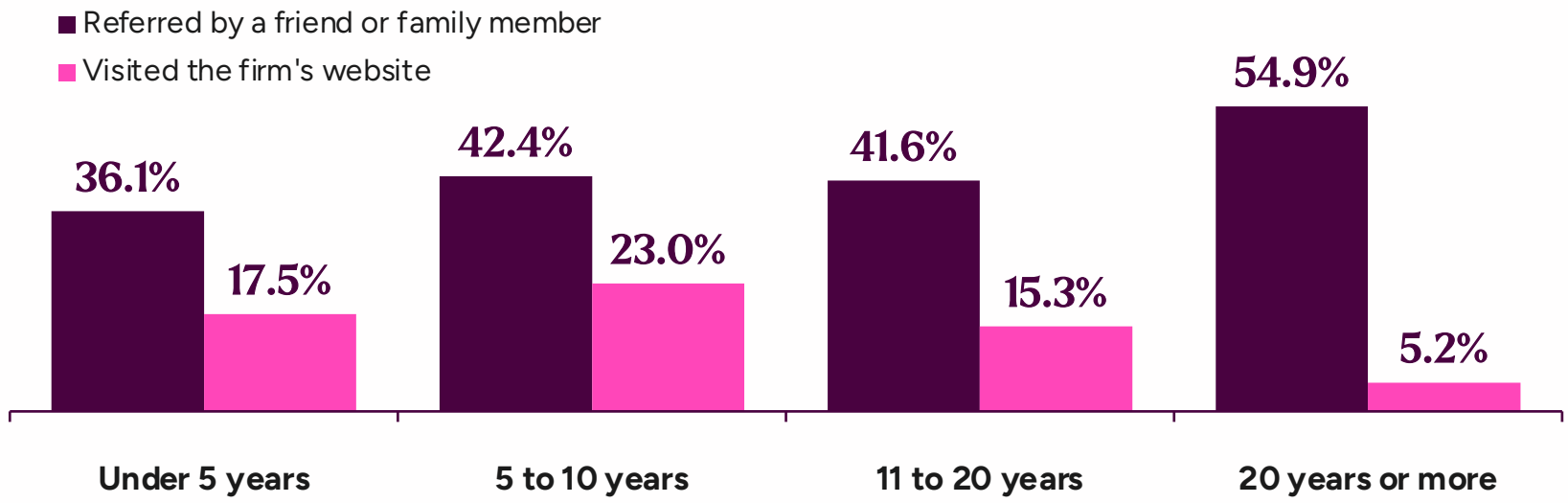
# The founding rainmaker's client is aging.

A nineteen-point spread on referrals, and the website line runs the other way.

**How clients found their advisor, by how long they have been a client.**




Source, The New Growth Equation, Ficomm Partners 2026, conducted with Absolute Engagement. n = 1,000 investors.

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# It is preference, not memory.

The referral is still there for the younger investor. It is no longer the whole decision.

INVESTORS UNDER 45

**49%**

**used four or more methods**

Only 14% used a single method

VS

INVESTORS 65 AND OVER

**1%**

**used four or more methods**

The large majority used a single method

Source, The New Growth Equation, Ficomm Partners 2026, conducted with Absolute Engagement.

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# The counterfactual.

For a growing share of the market, the referral opens the door. Something else closes it.

*Only*
**39%**
of all referred investors say they would not have hired their advisor without the referral.



Under 45 drops to
**27%**

Source, The New Growth Equation, Ficomm Partners 2026, conducted with Absolute Engagement.

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# You have already seen the gap.

Here is the same finding from a second dataset, and the reason it happens.
Most referrals never become introductions.

DIMENSIONAL

**100** households

**82** are promoters

**27** promoters who referred

**5** new clients from referrals

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**46%**

of clients say they referred in the last 12 months

**4 to 5%**

is the share of the client base firms report receiving referrals from

HOW A REFERRAL HAPPENS

**60%** informally mention the advisor's name

**26%** send an email

**8%** make a face to face introduction

Sources, Dimensional Global Investor Study 2021 to 2026 and 2021 to 2026 Global Advisor Study.
Ficomm Partners with Absolute Engagement, 2026. Question wording differs across studies, see notes.

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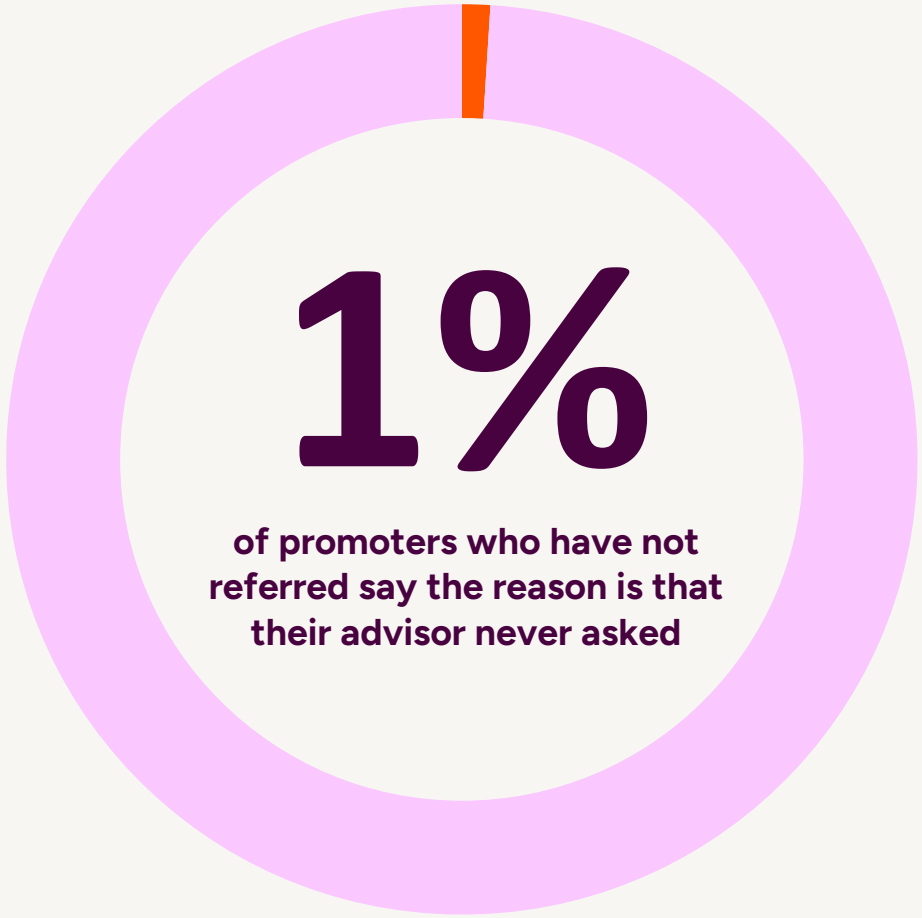
# Asking is not the bottleneck.




WHAT THEY SAY INSTEAD

**29%** No friend or family member has ever raised the subject

**24%** Their friends already have an advisor

**18%** They referred before, just not in the last 12 months

**15%** They have not had a referable experience

Source, Dimensional Global Investor Study, January 2021 to April 2026. 35,872 promoters.

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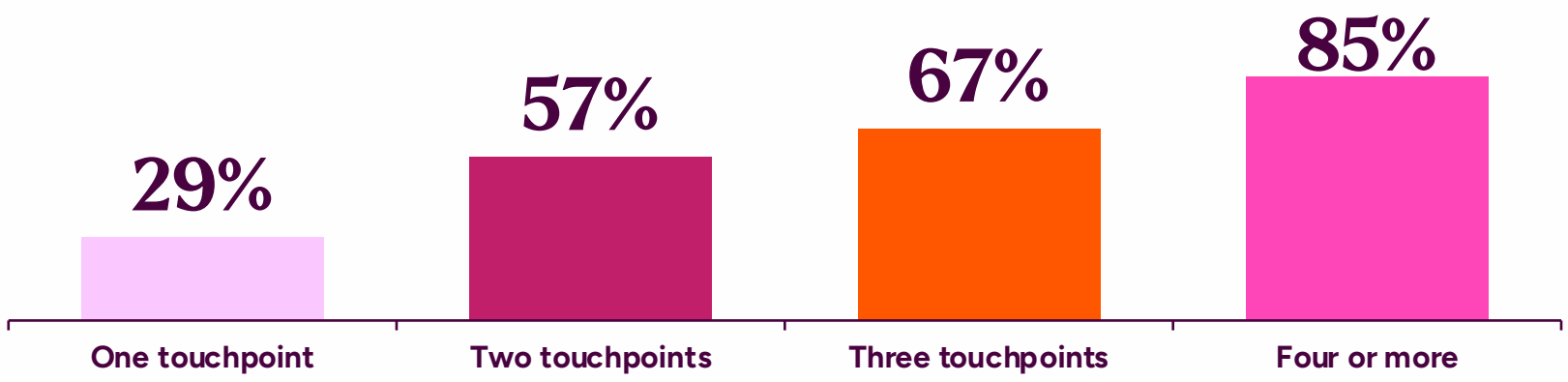
# The multiplier.

The client who did the most work before hiring you becomes the client who sends you the most business. Show up where your ideal clients are already looking, consistently, and every referral your advisors earn works harder.

**Referral activity by the number of touchpoints a client used to find the advisor**




Source, Ficomm Partners and Absolute Engagement research.

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# Two things have to be true at once.

Everything we just looked at splits cleanly into what the firm owns and what the advisor owns.

### WHAT THE FIRM OWNS

**Being Findable**

The website, search, reviews, and every advisor's individual presence. The validation happens whether the firm has built for it or not.

### WHAT THE ADVISOR OWNS

**Being Referable**

Earn the experience worth mentioning, then make the introduction easy enough that it actually gets made.

Neither one works without the other. That is the conversation.

# Research and credits.

**The New Growth Equation**
Ficomm Partners, 2026. 1,000 investors currently working with a financial advisor across three asset tiers, $500K to $999K, $1M to $4.99M, and $5M and above. Fielded early 2026. Margin of error 3.1%.

**Research partner**
Absolute Engagement, Julie Littlechild.

**Advisor and investor benchmarking**
Dimensional Fund Advisors Global Advisor Study, 2023 to 2026. Dimensional Fund Advisors Global Investor Study, January 2021 to April 2026.

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# Let's talk about it.



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