

How Advisors Can Increase Sales and Grow AUM in 2023



The start of a new year is an opportunity to outdo yourself. Ambitious advisors set big goals, often around growth. However, seeking to boost assets under management or expand your book of business takes great coordination and effort to achieve.

Growing sales is not just about establishing new connections, it's about accelerating your sales cycle to close those relationships faster. And then it's about nurturing and growing the client relationships you already have to expand assets under management without needing to find new contacts.

Fortunately, it's possible to implement a systematic approach to growing your prospect list, speeding up your early conversations, and expanding your existing relationships. Here are our best tips for advisors looking to increase sales in 2023.

Prospect & Plan: Accelerating Your Sales Cycle

How long is your sales cycle right now? That is, how much time (on average) is there between your first contact with a prospect and the moment they open their account with you?

What if you could turn a prospect into a client in one week?

The key to accelerating your sales cycle is building trust. And the best way to build trust is to rely on behavioral finance techniques. Orion's Chief Behavioral Officer, Dr. Daniel Crosby, speaks passionately about the incredible benefits of bringing EQ to the table at all of your client discussions — including early prospect meetings.

He outlines five key tactics to enhance conversations with prospective investors.

1. **Empathize** Building empathy boils down to putting yourself in your prospect's shoes.

Take care to make eye contact and explain your investing philosophy and approach in jargon-free terms. Remember, not everyone is a financial expert! Check in regularly to ensure your prospect understands what you're saying and has time to ask questions.

You should ask questions, too. This shows you're actively listening and deeply engaged in providing personalized support.

Finally, keep an eye out for body language cues. Shuffling feet or a wrinkled nose can be signs of hesitation. If you see any warning signs, it's time for another check-in!

2. **Normalize**

Your prospects want reassurance. It's your job to provide the affirmation they need. This may come first in the form of anecdotes. Personal stories or news items can confirm their feelings or concerns are normal and valid. Take things a step further by engaging your tech. Stress-testing scenarios, like those from Orion Risk Intelligence, can visualize our shared experiences and fears.

3. **Define Purpose**

Aligning with prospects on purpose can build trust immediately. Start every prospect conversation by asking about their goals. Why are they here? And how can you help them get where they want to go? Then, open up about your own why. Eighty-three percent of millennials want to share values with the companies they do business with. This generation is currently in its prime wealth-building years. Show how your firm's values intersect with theirs.

4. **Provide Proof** Now that you've built an emotional connection, the data you share will hold greater significance.

Numbers are powerful. Use them to back up the strategy you've already outlined. Orion Risk Intelligence's stress testing allows for side-by-side comparisons of current and proposed strategies.

5. **Establish Process** Just because the proposal presentation is over doesn't

mean you're done! Professional follow-up is essential.

Set clear expectations. Let your prospect know exactly what they can expect from you if they choose to become a client. Then, thank them for their time and ask for the business. A simple thank you and a clear ask can go a long way in taking your conversation over the finish line.

If they need time to think, establish clear expectations for your follow-up. Tell the prospect that you're available to answer any questions they have, and provide a date on which you plan to check in.

Finally, remember that actions speak louder than words. Follow through on any timelines or expectations you set in this conversation.

These five simple steps build trust with prospects quickly. Not only does this approach have the ability to accelerate the sales cycle, but it can also increase your close rate with prospects.

Invest: Grow Your Existing Client Relationships

Once you've opened accounts for your new client, the real work begins. In addition to delivering on the expectations you set in your initial meeting, there's further sales work to be done.

It's not uncommon for individuals to have money tucked away in odd places — a 401(k) with a former employer, for example, or inherited accounts they just never bothered to move. Convince your existing clients to bring all of their assets under your roof, and you boost your AUM.

Your clients, of course, will want to understand what's in it for them. As you well know, the best financial plans are comprehensive. With full visibility into a client's entire financial portfolio, you can build a plan that takes *everything* into account and leaves them well-positioned to achieve their financial goals.

With the Orion Risk Intelligence model builder tool, you can help clients see the importance of housing all assets under one roof.

The model builder handles a wide range of asset types — and includes a custom asset builder feature — which allows you to create different versions of a client's proposal and analyze them side-by-side.

You can run these strategies through the stress-testing feature to demonstrate how all of their holdings may perform in certain market scenarios. With this visual representation of a holistic management approach, it's much easier to show why clients will benefit from consolidating all of their assets under your firm's management.

As you expand the client relationships you already have, you grow AUM without having to onboard a single new investor.

Achieve: Expand AUM Regardless of Market Conditions

Economic uncertainty isn't going away anytime soon. It's a reality of investing even in the best of times, and we've seen some unprecedented market events in the past handful of years.

But there's real value in confronting uncertainty to ensure you retain your current customers. According to research from Bain & Company, "In financial services...a 5% increase in customer retention produces more than a 25% increase in profit."

Advisors who want to hold onto their existing relationships need a plan to keep investors calm and ready to stay the course regardless of market conditions.

Fortunately, Orion Risk Intelligence features a model management tool that syncs seamlessly with Eclipse. And with model management, you have a robust and flexible tech platform at your fingertips featuring:

- **Unlimited stress-testing capabilities.** No matter how many times your client asks you to return to the drawing board, you can always show how your plan might react in future market conditions.
- **On-the-fly adjustments.** Make changes without impacting models until you're ready to move forward.
- **No limitations, no matter who owns the model.** You can stress test any model — yours or a third party — within the Risk Intelligence platform.
- **Enhanced client engagement.** Improve your risk review process by running multiple models against your client's portfolio.

The model management tool allows you to lean in, once again, to those core

behavioral finance principles of empathizing, normalizing and providing proof.

There are countless opportunities for advisors to expand their business, all across the sales funnel. Whether you're launching conversations with new prospects or providing guidance to existing clients, you should always think about how an interaction could help fuel your firm's growth. By keeping an eye on growth throughout the year and across all conversations, you set yourself up for a successful 2023.

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