

Finding trustworthy investment advice

Has recent market volatility got you worried about your current investment strategies? Before changing directions on your own, it's a good time to look at getting professional assistance with your investments. Professionals are experienced in analyzing the significance of economic and market events and their portfolio management implications.

But whom can you trust?

Trust is an intangible quantity in a relationship. It's not something that you can measure or quantify scientifically. But when it comes to choosing someone to serve as an investment advisor, if you cannot be 100% certain at the outset that the person whom you choose deserves your trust, certainly you want to do all that you can to stack the odds in your favor.

Just as with choosing a doctor, lawyer or other professional, finding the right advisor is a matter of due diligence—conducting a detailed analysis and appraisal of the candidates that you are considering to entrust with your assets.

Here are some suggestions that may help you along as you do your research:

- *Take advantage of the experience of others.* Ask your family, close friends and other advisors (your attorney or accountant, for example) for a referral to someone with whom they have established a successful relationship.
- *Use a screening process.* Contact several candidates, visit their Web sites and contact them to obtain written information about themselves and the organization with whom they are affiliated.
- *Make introductory appointments.* Face-to-face meetings with each advisor can tell you a great deal, but first verify that you will not be charged for the visit. The meeting is likely to give you an idea as to whether he or she is someone with whom you will be comfortable.

- *Find out about the advisor's knowledge, experience and specialties.* For instance, if you have a significant amount to invest, be certain that the advisor has an extensive background in wealth management for affluent investors.

- *Make sure that the advisor has comprehensive resources.* He or she should have a wide array of investments choices available; access to research, up-to-date analytic tools and relationships with other professionals when you have need of guidance outside of the expertise of the advisor.

- *Determine what additional financial services the advisor offers.* Look for an advisor who can help you integrate your investment strategy with your retirement and estate planning goals or has someone on staff who can.

- *Understand how the advisor is compensated.* Your advisor may be compensated in several ways: He or she may charge a flat fee, charge a percentage fee based upon the assets that he or she is managing, or receive commissions.

- *Check references.* If you don't know anyone who has used the services of the advisor that you are considering, ask for the names of some of the advisor's clients who would be willing to talk to you about their experiences with the advisor.

Interview us

We would be pleased to be on the list of candidates that you are considering as your investment advisor. You'll find that a meeting with us (without cost or obligation, of course), will reveal that we can provide you with reliable, trustworthy advice about your investments.

What's more, we can tailor our services to what you are looking for. For instance, you may choose to have us provide the guidance, but leave you to make the ultimate decision making. Or, if you are someone who expects that an investment manager should be making the important decisions, you may leave them to us.

We are ready to answer your questions. Contact us now to set up an appointment at your earliest convenience.

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Any developments occurring after January 1, 2009, are not reflected in this article.