

About PLAN The MIT AgeLab's Preparing for Longevity Advisory Network (PLAN) surveys financial and retirement planning professionals from around the world to better understand the future of advice in the global longevity economy. This brief report highlights financial professionals' perceptions of their industry and their capability to adapt to a fast-changing world. We also briefly examine advisors' communication strategies with clients and how they might be altered both presently and in the future by the COVID-19 pandemic.

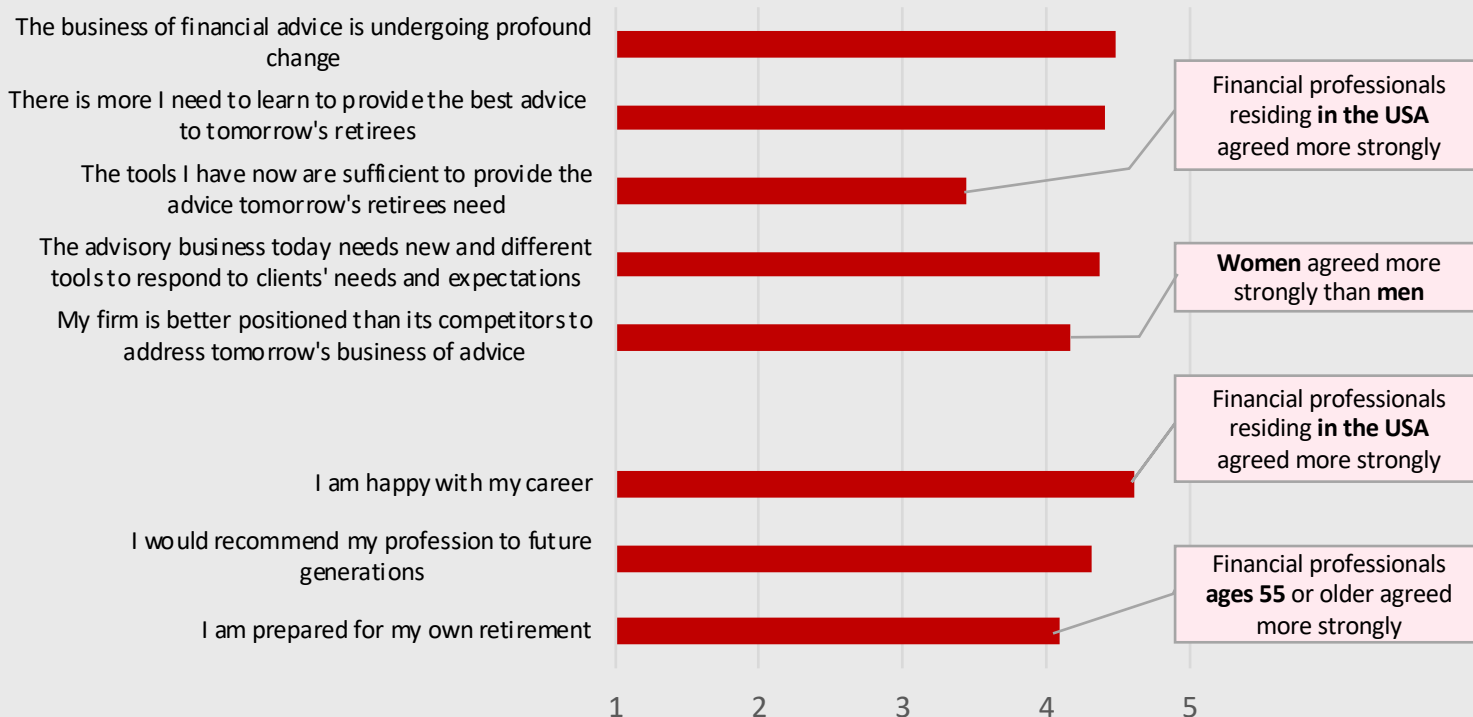
Survey Participants Data in this brief includes participants who completed the PLAN intake questionnaire between June 25th 2020 and January 3rd 2021. On January 3rd 2021, 576 participants had participated in the questionnaire and joined the PLAN panel.



- ❖ 42 states, 6 countries represented
- ❖ 33% female, 67% male
- ❖ Average age: 53

The Financial Industry of the Future

Financial professionals agreed that their industry is undergoing profound change. While nearly all respondents agreed they have more to learn when it comes to providing advice for clients of the future, some variance arose in regard to beliefs about whether their current tools were sufficient for remaining successful in the future. The majority of respondents felt that their own firms were better positioned than competitors to meet future client needs, suggesting an apparent bias toward their own employers. Additionally, respondents reported an overall satisfaction with the financial industry and an optimistic view of its future. The vast majority were happy with their career and would recommend it to future generations. Ultimately, while financial professionals reported contentment with their careers, they anticipate and welcome coming changes to the financial industry that will help support their clients.



*N=399; Graph depicts mean scores; Level of agreement measured using the following answer options:

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Somewhat agree, and 5 = Strongly agree

How are financial professionals communicating with clients?

Financial professionals expect that following the COVID-19 pandemic, increased virtual communication with clients (especially via video call) will continue, while in-person communications will remain below pre-COVID-19 levels. Advisors also reported a notable increase in the use of communicating via text message since the beginning of the pandemic.

Younger advisors were more likely than older advisors to have used video calls and text messaging with clients prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and also were more likely than older advisors to expect to continue using text messaging in their practice following the pandemic.

Top modes before COVID-19



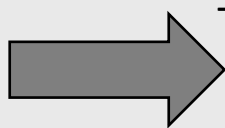
In person



Phone call



Email



Top modes expected post-COVID-19



Video call



Phone call



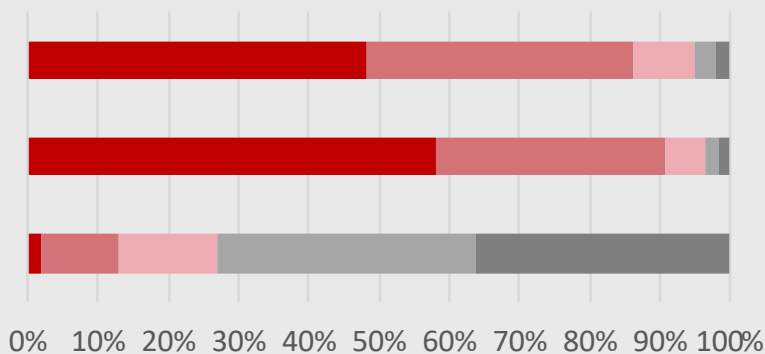
Email

Regarding the content of communications with clients, most advisors reported making some effort to discuss topics in addition to just finances and to check in with how clients are doing. There were pronounced gender differences on this topic, with women significantly more likely than men to report engaging clients on topics in addition to finance and significantly less likely to report talking about finances exclusively.

I tend to check in with clients to ask how they are doing

I try to engage clients on other topics in addition to finance

When I reach out to clients, I tend to talk about finances exclusively



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

N=367

Invite others to join plan!

agelab.mit.edu/plan

The context of how we live in retirement has changed, and a new approach to anticipating, planning and preparing for older age is accordingly needed. We invite financial advisors, retirement planners, and others in the retirement industry to join PLAN to contribute to the understanding of the future of advice and be among the first to learn key research take-aways.

