

How We Will Communicate in the Future

New technology and communication methods are being released nearly every day. Financial planners have worked diligently over the past decades to cultivate meaningful relationships with clients, but technology is significantly changing the expectations clients have of their planner. As a financial planner, you want to continue to engage and serve clients to the best of your ability with the aid of technology. In the session notes below, you will learn about current and leading-edge technology to help you do just that.

Information

The information you gather, manage, and present to clients and prospects represents the foundation of the services you provide. Deliver better service to clients and also increase efficiency by adopting electronic content management with the following resources:

- **Scanners:** Convert all of your paper to digital records with affordable scanners. Major manufacturers include **Fujitsu, HP, Kodak, Panasonic**, and pricing ranges from \$200 to \$450. Also use your **mobile phone camera** for capturing a few pages on the spot.
- **File Storage:** There is no shortage of cloud file storage services. Popular providers include **Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, Microsoft SkyDrive, ShareFile, SpiderOak, Egnyte**, and **iCloud**.
- **Document Management:** Go beyond basic cloud file storage with robust document management software including **Laserfiche, Worldox, Cabinet**, and **NetDocuments**.

You can easily share content and information with clients and prospects without compromising the security of sensitive information. Again, consider file storage services mentioned above that feature document sharing capabilities.

- **Dropbox, Box, Google Drive, Microsoft SkyDrive, ShareFile**, and **Egnyte** all support sharing with other users of the service.
- If you seek maximum security, consider **SpiderOak** and its "zero knowledge" encryption.
- No matter what service you use, activate and use **multi-factor authentication!**

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It is now possible to edit the same document simultaneously with someone else. **Google Drive** allows simultaneous editing in Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. **Office 365** features coauthoring, where one person “checks out” a paragraph, makes changes, and “checks in” changes for others to see.

When you need to show documents to others, leverage screen-sharing software like **GoToMeeting**, **WebEx**, **Mikogo**, and **Join.me**. All support screen sharing on mobile devices, and none of these cost more than \$50/month.

Google Glass has the potential to facilitate communication and collaboration like no other device. It’s a computer connected to wireless Internet built in to a pair eyeglasses. Its ubiquity may (or may not) foster more collaboration worldwide with less friction.

Text Messages

Ask most 20-somethings about the communication method they use the most. Chances are the response will be text messaging and not email. But even mature clients embrace text messaging as a way to quickly communicate with others.

No matter what you choose, your solution must work on all devices (desktop, laptop, and mobile) and comply with regulatory requirements for record retention of client correspondence. **Google Voice** is an example of one solution that will allow you to send and receive texts with clients and copy messages to your email inbox for archiving.

Video

Where does work take place? Is there something magic about the four walls and the desk you have in your office? And why must you primarily service clients who live within a reasonable driving distance?

It is now possible to converse, engage, and interact with people across the world. Your ideal client is one whose needs are closely matched with your specialized services, not one who simply lives near your office.

Video calling apps like **Skype**, **FaceTime**, and **Google+ Hangouts** are becoming the standard way people meet and engage online. These apps let you overcome geographical barriers to connect with clients and prospects, and all three work from desktops, laptops, and mobile devices.

Presence technology expands on video calling apps, with products like **Beam** (from Suitable Technologies) and **Kubi for iPad** allowing callers to control the video device in use.

Video content is quickly becoming the most effective way to connect with and market to your audience. Properly implemented, “video SEO” is likely the most effective way to stand out in financial services today.

Video SEO from Wistia: <http://wistia.com/learning/video-seo>

Here are three primary ways you can create online video:

- Use your **mobile device**. It's free, easy, and convenient, but the audio and video quality may not make the best impression on your audience.
- Purchase "**prosumer**" gear such as a DSLR camera and lenses, an external digital audio recorder, a lighting kit with a backdrop, and professional video editing software.
- **Hire the experts**. Services are available from Man With A Cam, Wealth Management Marketing, Advisor Studios, and more.

Your first video should be an **explainer video** that clearly identifies who and how you help others in less than 60 seconds.

Your final video can be hosted online in multiple places. **YouTube, Wistia, and Vimeo** all support high-definition video, embedding, content metrics, and more. Syndicate and embed your videos on your website and your social profiles (see below). Periodically updating video content gives visitors a reason to come back to your online resources.

Social

The next generation of clients expects accessibility and transparency. Maintaining social profiles provides an accessible outlet of your personality and value proposition that is available 24/7.

- Create profiles on the Big Four social networks: **Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+**.
- Consider niche sites like **Pinterest, tumblr, and Quora** for engagement. Audiences are smaller (and more accessible), so expect less immediate interaction, but on a less-competitive platform.
- Managing multiple social profiles is complicated. Consolidate your effort with social media dashboards like **HootSuite** and **Buffer**.
- Online video is the biggest blue ocean for your social content. **Vine** is a social platform for videos no longer than 6 seconds. Be creative with what you can publish in just 6 seconds. And remember, YouTube is the world's second largest search engine (behind Google), so publishing your content there increases your accessibility and visibility.

Your Roadmap

Your takeaways as you consider how to effectively communicate through technology:

- Synchronize and share information through services that are easy for clients to use.
- Add text messaging to your communication options with a compliant tool that works on all devices.
- Virtual meetings allow clients to choose when and where to meet. The video content you publish is your 24/7 storefront: the rewards are worth the effort.
- Maintaining social profiles makes you transparent and accessible to an audience with rising expectations for interactivity.