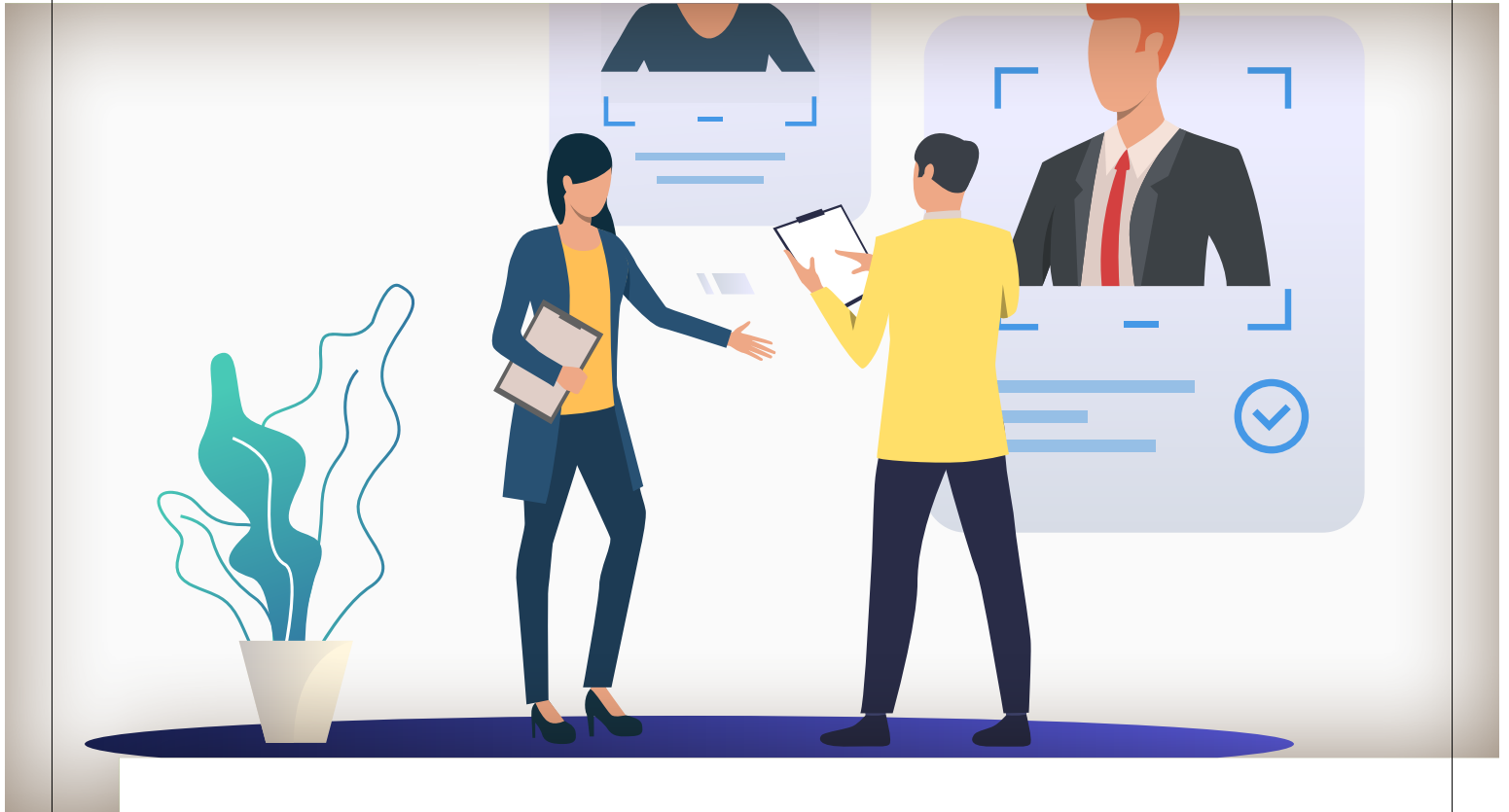


When Should an Advisor Add a Team Member?



Would you like to grow your clientele and add to or improve the services you offer? Are you struggling to keep up with increased competition and compliance requirements? Adding a team member will likely help you solve these issues and more.



Christine Timms,
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The following is an excerpt from *Team Building for Financial Advisors*, one of three *Handbooks for Financial Advisors* written by retired Financial Advisor Christine Timms.

“The size of an advisor’s team depends on the size of the practice, the practice’s service model, the approach to investing and financial planning as well as how much the advisor wants to grow. Larger practices and more services usually require bigger teams.”


Advisors have often asked me for a “rule of thumb” regarding the appropriate number of assistant/associates based on the size of the practice. As a result, I feel compelled to answer the question and will do so later in this book. However, I think the more relevant question for a practicing advisor is “When should an advisor add a team member?”. My team expanded one member at a time as the need for help grew. I did not add a member based on a “rule of thumb”. My practice’s need for additional help was driven by many factors relating to my evolving service model, approach to investing, desire to grow, etc.

Questions to Ask Yourself and Existing Team

I recommend that the advisor work with their existing team members to answer the questions below as they relate to their practice. Each “yes” answer could indicate that it is time to add to their team:

- 1) Are you or your clients unhappy with the timeliness or quality of your practice’s responses to their needs and requests?
- 2) Do you find yourself or senior team members performing necessary tasks that feel like a poor use of time, or that someone else could do better?
- 3) Are you and your team so busy responding to the day to day needs and deadlines of individual clients that you are unable to do or think of much else?
- 4) Are you feeling overtired and/or in danger of burning out?
- 5) Do you and/or your team need more time to think of ideas to better serve existing clients?
- 6) Do you and/or your team need more time to actually implement the great client service ideas that you and your team have thought of?
- 7) Do you and/or your team need more time to think of marketing and prospecting ideas to find new clients?
- 8) Do you and/or your team need more time to actually implement the great marketing or prospecting ideas that you and your team have thought of?
- 9) Would you like more personal time but don’t want your practice to suffer or stop growing?

If an advisor and their team answers “no” to all of the above questions, I expect the current size team is likely appropriate for the practice at that time. If you are answering “yes” to a number of the above questions, you are probably experiencing a lot of frustration. Adding another team member would likely reduce the frustration and boost your team’s productivity. If you believe the need for additional help is temporary or seasonal or caused by short term projects, (e.g. new documentation requirements), you could consider outsourcing a project or hiring a full or part time contract worker like a university co-op student. I often hired university co-op students on four or eight-month contracts. They were relatively inexpensive, usually interested in learning and there was no long-term obligation. They were able to perform some of the simpler, repetitive, time-consuming tasks saving time for the rest of the team.

“These questions should be revisited whenever you are feeling frustrated or overwhelmed and during your annual practice planning process.” 

Christine has created templates to help advisors identify and organize activities to delegate to team members, estimate costs of adding team members and keep track of ongoing team compensation costs.

Available through <https://christinetimms.com/team-building> :
Team Member Roles & Duties (updated 2022)
Team Payroll Sensitivity Analysis
Advisor Actual Team Compensation Costs
Related short videos: <https://christinetimms.com/template-tutorials>

Christine Timms is the author of three Handbooks for the Professional Financial Advisor including “Team Building for Financial Advisors” (available in paperback and ebook). www.christinetimms.com provides descriptions and testimonials, as well as written, audio versions of the introductions of each book and videos of tutorials for templates.

