Questions Every Plan Sponsor Should Ask Their Financial Advisor

Choosing the right advisor for your company's retirement plan is an important decision and you probably have a lot of questions. To help, we've pulled together answers to the most common questions business owners and plan sponsors ask when evaluating their options.

Plan Design & Fiduciary Oversight

Are you acting as a fiduciary for our plan?
We serve as either a 3(21) co-fiduciary or a 3(38) investment manager for your retirement plan. As a 3(21) co-fiduciary, we share in the responsibility and liability for selecting and monitoring the plan's investment lineup.
As a 3(38) investment manager, we take full discretion and assume all fiduciary responsibility for managing the investment lineup on your behalf.

How often do you review our plan design to ensure it still meets company goals?
At least annually, or sooner if regulations or company goals shift. We make sure your plan evolves as your workforce and objectives change.

Can you explain how you select and monitor the plan's investment lineup?
We use a structured, research-driven process with independent benchmarking. Investments are reviewed quarterly against against risk-adjusted returns, expense, manager tenure, and more.

How do you document and benchmark the plan's fees to ensure they are reasonable?
We regularly benchmark your plan's fees against industry standards, broken down by each service provider. This helps ensure your costs are reasonable relative to the value received and remain in line with Department of Labor (DOL) guidelines. All benchmarking reports are stored in a secure Fiduciary Vault, available to you anytime.

Employee Outcomes & Education

What steps do you take to improve employee participation and deferral rates?
We provide enrollment instructions for each employee via email as well as present in-person during a Kick-off meeting. Everyone on your team has the opportunity to schedule a 1:1 meeting with the advisor to help them personally.

How do you measure whether our employees are on track for retirement readiness?
We provide retirement readiness reports, showing projected income replacement rates and identifying gaps for individual participants.

Do you offer personalized advice or just general education to participants?
As Certified Financial Planner™ professionals, we believe ongoing education is key to helping participants make informed retirement decisions. Every participant has the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one meeting with a CFP® professional for personalized guidance.

Performance & Monitoring

How do you monitor and report on investment performance?
Quarterly reviews are conducted using industry benchmarks, and reports are shared with both sponsors and participants.

Do you provide reports that are easy for both us and our employees to understand?
Yes. Reports are designed to be transparent, easy to understand and actionable, with high-level summaries for sponsors and simplified breakdowns for participants.

How do you evaluate the plan's success metrics (participation rates, average balances, etc.)?
We track participation, deferral rates, investment diversification, and projected retirement readiness, then provide actionable recommendations.

What process do you use to identify when an investment should be replaced?
We conduct a comprehensive analysis of the plan's fund lineup every quarter. We follow a structured and consistent monitoring process that assesses key factors such as risk-adjusted returns, expense ratios, manager tenure, and other critical indicators to ensure each investment option remains prudent and aligned with plan goals.

Compliance & Risk Management

How do you ensure our plan is compliant with ERISA, DOL, and IRS regulations?
By conducting regular compliance reviews, coordinating with your recordkeeper and TPA, and documenting fiduciary decisions.

What role do you play in helping us prepare for a DOL or IRS audit?
We provide the necessary documentation, sit alongside you in the audit process, and help respond to regulator questions.

How do you help us keep an updated Investment Policy Statement (IPS)?
We create, review, and maintain your IPS annually, ensuring it reflects current goals and best practices.

Do you maintain all required fiduciary documentation on our behalf?
We maintain thorough records and make them easily accessible for your review or in the event of an audit.