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The 2016 FA Insight Study of Advisory Firms: Growth by Design

Survey Overview

This year, in addition to exploring general business performance, we give particular focus to strategic planning, operations, and marketing as the study strives to identify key factors that are the strongest contributors toward sustaining growth. Depending on the size and complexity of the firm, the survey will take 30–60 minutes to complete. It asks firms to provide information on the following topics:

1. Core Characteristics of the Firm
 - a. Financials (including complete income statement for 2015)
 - b. Affiliation model, service model, and custodian or broker-dealer information
 - c. Information on clients and assets, including the number of clients and assets under management for years 2013 through 2015 with anticipated numbers for 2016
 - d. Staffing information for years 2013 through 2015 with expectations for 2016
 - e. Composition of ownership and parent company (if applicable)
2. Growth and Strategic Planning
 - a. Characteristics of the firm's strategic plan (if applicable) and financial and non-financial objectives utilized in the plan
 - b. Initiatives utilized to drive past and future growth
 - c. Merger and/or acquisition experience and benefits
3. Operations
 - a. Process and procedure management, including documentation, consistency, and tracking of processes
 - b. Client service delivery
 - c. Operations accountability
 - d. Productivity, including staffing capacity and the use of productivity metrics
 - e. Technology usage, integration, and training
4. Marketing
 - a. Pricing based on AUM, minimum fee requirements, frequency of pricing structure reviews, and implementation methods for making pricing changes
 - b. Target client definition and minimum asset level requirements
 - c. Client retention, segmentation, and marketing to existing clients
 - d. Marketing strategy including budget, areas of new client acquisition, marketing accountability, and client value proposition