

# MARKETING MADE

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# EASY



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL YEAR-END CLIENT APPRECIATION EVENTS

With the holidays rapidly approaching, many of you are thinking about holding events for clients and prospects. Client appreciation events are a way for financial advisors to express gratitude, build engagement, and make clients so happy that they tell their friends about you. A successful client appreciation event can create rapport, which leads to more referrals.

### Why Is Client Appreciation So Important?

Client appreciation events are important because they set financial advisors up to get streams of referrals from a stronger and more loyal client base. They help boost your credibility, increase awareness of you and your brand, and give your clients a chance to see you in a different (perhaps more human and relatable) light.

A client who feels appreciated is more likely to stick with you. You might feel like you're holding onto your clients with a periodic phone call, but that will eventually come back to haunt you. You won't get loyalty from someone who doesn't know or trust you. An impersonal phone call or birthday card often won't establish the relationships needed to secure more referrals.

### Best Practices

Here are a few best practices to ensure your event is a success:

#### Get the Timing Right

Ask your clients and get a feel for when they are free. For example, financial advisors like to throw holiday events because December tends to be a slow month for them. However, it's usually the busiest time of year for clients. Make sure you carefully consider the date and time of your event to maximize attendance.

## Know Your Clients' Demographics and Interests

Look at your current client base and see if there are any patterns. Do they have shared interests? Can you segment them into different groups? For instance, a happy hour event won't work well with families, while a formal client base might not appreciate a tailgate BBQ. If you decide to hire a guest speaker, make sure to find a good speaker who can supply a presentation tailored to your clients' interests. This should be a brief 20-to-30-minute presentation – not a pitch.

## Don't Pitch

Continuing the idea of the bullet point above, a client event is about showing gratitude and building loyalty. The only thing you're "selling" is how great it is to work with them. However, it does not mean you should let valuable opportunities slip away.

## Always Allow Family and Friends

You want your clients to feel comfortable. Make it abundantly clear to everyone that they can bring guests. It turns into a group outing and maximizes your chances of getting referrals.

## Don't Spend a Lot of Time with One Person

Move around, shake hands, and mingle. You want to make everyone feel welcome and worthy of your attention, no matter how much money they have invested with you.

## Add an "Events" Page to Your Website

This lets everyone know that you have events. It gives your website visitors a peek at what it's like to become your client. Also, be sure to keep your old events page. Use previous events as an opportunity to reinforce the image that you're committed to providing excellent customer service.



## Client Appreciation Event Ideas

Here are some client appreciation event ideas that you can implement:

- Holiday party
- Wine or beer tastings
- Cooking classes
- Sporting events (golf, tennis etc.)
- Movie night
- Group picnic or lunch/dinner meal featuring a speaker

Client appreciation events should be small and intimate or large with dozens of people. If you want to go big and invite 50 or more people, you're going to need help. Shop around for event planners and get ideas from at least three of them.

The best way to increase attendance is a phone call. An invitation in the mail or mass social media invite is easy to brush off. You can frame every phone call as, "I know I sent the invites in the mail (email), but I wanted to make sure I invited you personally."

Finally, make sure you plan well in advance. You want to have time to promote the event, and you want to plan far enough in advance that your clients and prospects are available to attend. As a rule of thumb, plan at least two months in advance. Carefully consider the timing of your event along with other factors, such as location and weather conditions.

By following these tips, you can make your next client appreciation event a resounding success and continue to bring in new prospects through referrals.



# MONTHLY MEGA HIT

## Benjamin Barning

Each month, we like to feature an advisor that's doing exceptional work. This month we are featuring Benjamin Barning. He earned his bachelor's degree in Business Administration with concentrations in Finance and Marketing from Eastern Connecticut State University and has worked in the financial services industry for the past 14 years.

Primary Coach Rick Bates had this to say:

**"Ben has worked hard at learning the Scranton Sales Process as well as the Simplified Sales Process. His efforts have been showing up in his increased production lately. He has not let a background void of sales experience stand in his way and that is why Ben is our Megahit this month. Great job, Ben!"**

Well done, Ben, and best wishes for your continued success!