

Leading Questions to Discover Sales Opportunities



RETIREMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES, LLC
Plan Consulting • Administration • Design

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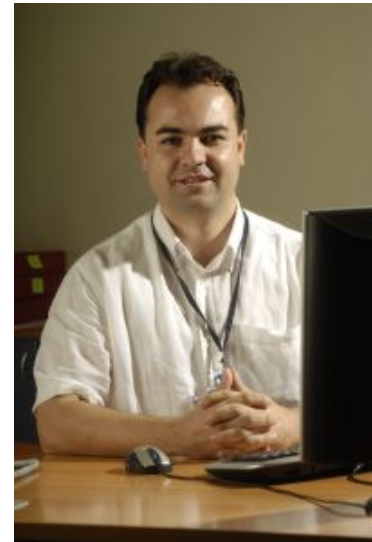


Annemarie Keehn

We recently met with a local Human Resources outsourcing firm to discuss a partnership to provide mutual clients with full human resource and retirement plan consulting services. The Human Resources firm we were meeting with asked us for a checklist of items that could be used during a client's annual HR review to gauge whether the client would be a good candidate for referral to our firm for retirement plan services. The idea of the checklist was to ask questions that would uncover concerns or frustrations with the plan for which our firm could provide a solution.

I thought I would share this list for others who market to retirement plans, as a helpful tool for sparking a conversation with a business owner or HR manager and identifying potential business opportunities. This short list of questions seeks to inquire about all aspects of the plan's administration and current providers, from the financial advisor to the investment platform.

- What is the goal of your company's retirement plan (to primarily benefit the owners, to provide retirement income for employees, to provide a tax shelter for the business, as a means to recruit and retain employees, etc.)?
- Is the current retirement program meeting that goal? What changes or improvements do you think are needed to achieve the plan's goal?
- Do you know your current employee participation rate and average savings rate? (Many advisers are now suggesting a goal based on economist Shlomo Benartzi's suggestions of 90% employee participation and an average employee savings rate of 10% or higher).
- Do you have a financial advisor? Does that individual stay regularly engaged with the plan via enrollment meetings, educational services to plan participants, and strategic and investment consulting with the company's plan decision makers?
- Do you have any difficulties in the day-to-day administration of the plan – sending in contributions, processing distributions, getting questions answered, timeliness of reports?
- What is your overall impression of the customer service being provided for the plan?
- If you have access to a plan sponsor website, are you able to easily locate on the website the reports you need to maintain and monitor the plan?



- Do you feel like the personnel and resources your company regularly commits to maintaining the plan is ___ reasonable ____ too much.
- Does the Form 5500 get filed on time each year?
- Has the plan ever been audited by the Department Of Labor or Internal Revenue Service and, if so, were there problems discovered on audit?
- Are participants receiving plan account statements on a regular timely basis?
- Are participants happy with the plan website functionality (if applicable)?
- For a 401k plan, do you fail your annual nondiscrimination testing (requiring refunds to the Highly Paid employees)?
- Does the company typically have discretionary funds in the budget each year that it could contribute to the plan as profit sharing, if you were given projections that demonstrated a tax-effective way to benefit certain targeted employees or owners of the company?
- Are there other plan features that you are aware of that you would like to have in your plan – like automatic enrollment, paperless processing, daily valuation, self-directed brokerage accounts or other plan features that you would like to change or enhance?



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