

# How technology has transformed marketing for financial planners: by Jon Pittham, ClientsFirst

BY SUE WHITBREAD

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In his third article of this mini series for IFA Magazine, Jon Pittham of ClientsFirst considers how planners can harness the power of technology to support the human nature of the financial planning process

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This transformation has led consumers to expect the same level of personalised service from pretty much all their service providers, including financial planners.

Early adopters of new technologies have enjoyed rapid growth, as that same tech allows planners to elevate their proposition well above their traditional service model. For instance, artificial intelligence is offering massive gains in efficiency and performance across the board. Also, robotic investing uses algorithms to recommend investments and can sometimes even invest a client's money on their behalf.

With the popularity of this kind of technology rising, we're seeing firms focus on delivering a far more personalised and engaging client experience. With a sleek website and the cutting edge offerings that clients have come to expect, financial planners are testing new marketing and communication methods to ensure that technology doesn't replace the human element of financial advice. Instead it's a focus, through technology, on the very human value you add.

## The personalisation of modern marketing in the advisory space

People have unique likes, dislikes, hobbies and preferences, all of which can be reflected in how brands communicate with them. Whereas traditional online marketing might involve sending the same mailer to a pool of 2000 subscribers, technology allows us to capture the personal attributes of prospects using artificial intelligence and store them in a CRM.

The major benefit is that people are more likely to engage with a piece of marketing if it has been written especially for them. This can then translate into stronger business/client relationships, raising the prospect of retention or of upselling.

The challenge lies in managing the huge amount of data collected while still delivering personalised messaging across all your channels, whether email, social media, a call centre, display advertising and so on. Luckily, there are platforms (yes, more technology), such as HubSpot, that can help firms orchestrate their personalised marketing.

## New tools to stand above the competition

One challenge for advice firms wanting to stand out is doing so when everybody else is also investing in updating their tech to attract new clients. This is where finding unique ways of engaging potential new clients becomes really exciting.

Tools like [Nuttshell](#) offer financial planners the chance to send their clients hyper-personalised digital presentations, tailoring the message to each client and increasing engagement.

Analytics further allows companies to track behaviour across their sites and identify trends they can respond to.

Email automation software allows you to do just that: automate your emails. Back in the digital stone age, this used to be a time consuming process but an 'autoresponder' sets a sequence of emails that are sent automatically to people who have opted in. The sequence can offer the

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Speaking of booking an appointment, online schedulers have pretty much eliminated the need to email back and forth with prospects and clients alike to find a good time to speak. Instead, they have the power to pick a time in your schedule, and it's this client empowerment that helps build trust with your brand.

Finally, it's the value of the content that prospects and clients receive that will drive more enquiries for financial planners. Whether your marketing takes the form of a digital brochure, a series of well-crafted emails or fancy new tools that facilitate communication, advisers need to structure all this around delivering value, not simply information.

With technology taking over much of the day to day process of client onboarding and engagement, there's an opportunity for financial services firms to use it effectively in order to emphasise the human element of their service. This, I believe, is where businesses can really start to perform going forward, by harnessing the power of technology to drive even greater business efficiency and client engagement.

## About Jon Pittham

Jon founded ClientsFirst in 2010, having previously worked in both plc and SMEs. Having started in what he describes as a 'broom cupboard', Jon has grown ClientsFirst from the ground up and continues to take an active role in both our own marketing and that of our clients, as well as setting the strategic direction of the business.

Jon's most difficult 'management' task away from the office is keeping three young offspring busy but, when he's not doing this or anything related to ClientsFirst, he heads out into the great outdoors, with tennis, golf and running the occasional half-marathon amongst his hobbies.

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