

The annual checkup this firm never misses

The RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab gives advisors the essential insights they need to meet their firm's goals year over year.

When Jim Berliner and his father started Westmount Asset Management in Southern California nearly 30 years ago, they adopted the emerging RIA model because they felt it would allow them to deliver the best client experience. That drive for excellence has guided the management of their firm as well, with tools and processes that have helped them excel through all phases of their growth.

Now the firm has over \$3 billion under management, with nine partners, 32 employees, and about 1,000 clients. All along the way, they've found Schwab's annual RIA Benchmarking Study essential to managing their business for long-term growth and continuous improvement.

Annual assessment

"We participate in Schwab's Benchmarking Study for the same reason that people get an annual checkup. It's a great way to find out how we're doing," explained Berliner, the firm's president.

"Schwab's Benchmarking Study confirms the steps we've taken to improve the health and strength of our business and helps us identify areas where we can and should devote more attention and resources."

—Jim Berliner

"This is a very fragmented industry," said partner Mike Amash, "and you can feel that you're operating in a silo. Being able to get a true assessment of what the rest of the industry is doing gives us a better perspective."



The power of insight

For more than 20 years, the Schwab Business Consulting and Education team has been working hand in hand with RIAs, leveraging our deep expertise in core business issues to help independent advisory firms achieve their goals and gain competitive advantage.

Impactful adjustments

Over the years, Schwab's Benchmarking Study has helped the firm's leadership make a number of impactful decisions.

For one, cumulative benchmarking data revealed to firm leaders that, "as our client size increased, we dropped well below our peers in what we were charging," said Amash. Participating in the study annually gave the firm reliable, repeatable information that "made it an easy decision to implement the fee change we needed."

Another impactful example involved the number of advisors at the firm. “It was enlightening for us,” said Amash. “The benchmarking data really let us see below the hood with regard to our profitability,” and indicated that the firm was likely understaffed. “It led us to work on rightsizing our staffing to make sure clients got the attention we want to give them,” added Berliner.

One especially helpful aspect of the study is Schwab’s online compensation tool, said chief operating officer Chris Werner. “I use the tool regularly to get good comparative data on compensation ranges.”

Essential to the firm’s success

All in all, said Berliner, “participating in the Benchmarking Study is a very comprehensive and introspective process. It forces you to look deep within your firm and know aspects of it that maybe you weren’t very well acquainted with.”

“I would describe the Benchmarking Study as an essential tool for anyone who cares about running their business well.”

—Mike Amash

For all these reasons, added Amash, “once you do the study, you realize it’s a necessity because the data points are so critical to making good decisions.”

About the RIA Benchmarking Study

The RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab, the largest study of its kind focusing exclusively on RIAs, captures detailed insights on topics such as asset and revenue growth, sources of new clients, products and pricing, staffing, compensation, marketing, technology, and financial performance. The RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab comprises self-reported data from advisory firms that custody their assets with Charles Schwab. Schwab does not independently verify the self-reported information. Participant firms represent various sizes and business models. They are categorized into 12 peer groups—7 wealth manager groups and 5 money manager groups—by AUM size.

The study is part of Schwab’s Business Consulting Services, a practice management offering for RIAs. Grounded in the best practices of leading independent advisory firms, Business Consulting Services provides insight, guidance, tools, and resources to help advisors strategically manage and grow their firms.

Experiences expressed are no guarantee of future performance or success and may not be representative of your experience.

This material is intended for an institutional audience. For informational purposes only.

Any mention of third-party firms or individuals is not, and should not be construed as, a recommendation, endorsement, or sponsorship by Schwab, nor are they affiliated with or employed by Schwab.

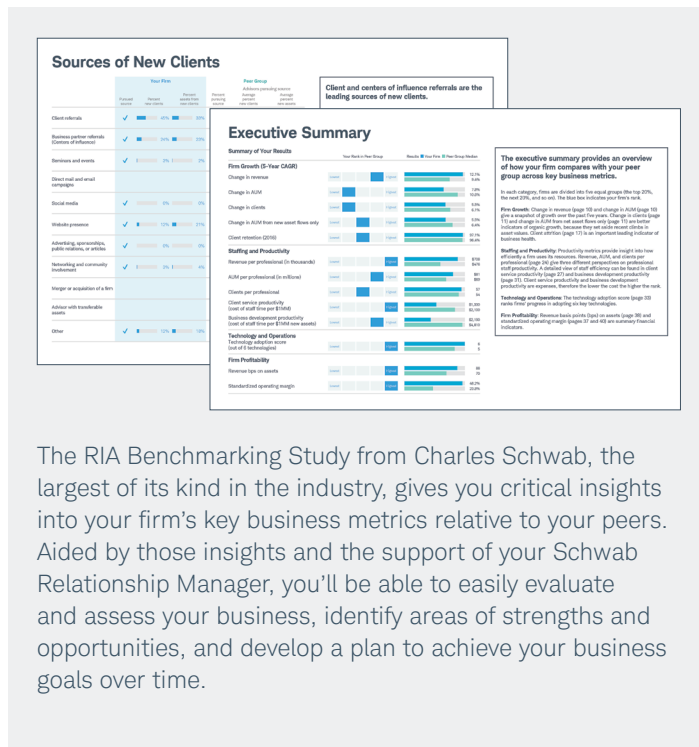
Independent investment advisors are not owned by, affiliated with, or supervised by Schwab.

Schwab Advisor Services™ serves independent investment advisors and includes the custody, trading, and support services of Schwab.

©2019 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (“Schwab”). All rights reserved. Member SIPC.

Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., 211 Main Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

JUT (0319-9BCR) MKT106446-00 (03/19)



The RIA Benchmarking Study from Charles Schwab, the largest of its kind in the industry, gives you critical insights into your firm’s key business metrics relative to your peers. Aided by those insights and the support of your Schwab Relationship Manager, you’ll be able to easily evaluate and assess your business, identify areas of strengths and opportunities, and develop a plan to achieve your business goals over time.

Chart your course

Clearly see how your firm is performing in the marketplace with the RIA Benchmarking Study, open from January to March each year.

Contact your Schwab Relationship Manager to learn more.



Own your tomorrow.