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AI IN FINANCIAL ADVICE: WHAT'S NEXT?

Trends and Guidance for Forward-thinking Planners

"With AI handling the back-office work, financial planners can reimagine their role as trusted advisors, focusing on personalization, building lasting relationships, and providing advice that is not only informed by—but deeply connected to—their clients' unique life stories."

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eMoney

Understanding AI for Financial Planning

At its core, financial planning has always been about people helping people. Technology has evolved, markets have shifted, and tools have become more sophisticated. Still, one thing remains unchanged: Effective financial planning professionals are personally invested in their clients' lives, financial habits, personal goals, and family decisions.

Artificial intelligence is transforming industries by improving efficiency, enhancing decision-making and allowing professionals to focus on high-value tasks. The financial planning profession is no exception. But many wonder how it will fit in with an industry focused on people helping people where the human aspect is integral to creating personalized plans.

To explore this, eMoney surveyed 400 financial planning professionals to better understand the impact of AI on the wealth management industry. Those surveyed represent a cross section of financial professionals by age, gender, tenure, channel, levels of AUM, and firm size.

Key among our findings[1]:

99% of financial professionals say AI is an opportunity that should be taken seriously, and most of those surveyed say a cautious approach to integration is best.

91% of financial professionals say clients will still need human financial planners at the helm of financial planning, even if AI plays a more prominent role in their work.

Financial planners are overwhelmingly positive about integrating and using AI strategically, augmenting their practices and freeing them up to improve relationship-building opportunities and the human side of financial planning. This eBook examines how the financial planning industry perceives this shift, and why planner's continue to see their role as the primary driver of success.

Harnessing AI's Potential in Financial Planning

What Is AI and How Does It Work?

AI is an evolving technology that allows computers to simulate learning. This allows it to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence—from analyzing complex data to recognizing patterns and making recommendations. While AI might seem like futuristic technology, it has existed in many forms for years, and most of us have used it without even realizing it.

AI began as rules-based engines driven by logic and parameters. It has since evolved into machine learning, where systems identify patterns in data and refine decision-making through algorithms. This evolution fuels faster, more personalized experiences.

Planners Are Partnering with AI

Today, we are witnessing the rise of Generative AI (GenAI), which represents a significant leap forward with its ability to generate creative content—whether text, images, or videos—powered by state-of-the-art large language models (LLMs). These advanced software systems can analyze vast sums of information and generate outputs in seconds instead of minutes or hours.

Yet, human planners must fully control these technologies, especially those that create outputs, results, or recommendations. With a better understanding of AI, financial planners and home office decision-makers can align on potential uses, which is essential for balancing opportunity and risk.

What Can AI Do?

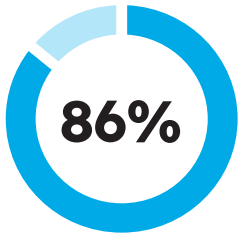
Among it's many growing applications, AI's most immediate value for financial planners lies in processig large data volumes with unmatched seed and accuracy. This enables planners to automate manual tasks, personalize the client experience, gain deeper insights, and better understand client behaviors.

With these potential advantages in mind, financial professionals have identified several key areas where they anticipate significant benefits.

Expected benefits	Business impacts
68% say **greater work efficiencies**	Enhanced operational efficiency allows planners to optimize their time allocation, particularly regarding administrative responsibilities.
38% say **deeper data analysis**	Planners can conduct scenario analyses, make more informed decisions, and uncover new insights into client behavioral patterns.
38% say **financial gains**	Practices can reduce operational costs while increasing assets under management (AUM).
36% say **improved client service** and **marketing**	Practices can reduce operational costs while increasing assets under management (AUM).
27% say **better advisory services**	Practices can deliver more personalized planning through collaborative approaches—which **research consistently shows** leads to superior outcomes.

What Does This Mean for Financial Planners?

AI helps planners uncover hidden opportunities in their existing book of business. For example:



agree that AI could enhance their ability to analyze large data sets.

believe AI supports better decision-making through faster, deeper analysis.

Beyond improving efficiency and insight, AI positions financial planners as forward-thinking professionals in a rapidly evolving marketplace. By adopting cutting-edge tools, planners can differentiate themselves, build trust, and develop stronger client relationships while staying ahead of industry disruptions.

Assessing AI is About Balancing Risk and Reward

Is AI the Right Fit for My Practice?

Successful AI implentation requires focused use. In pursuing greater efficiency, planners should take an intentional approach to ensure that enhanced productivity never comes at the expense of the client experience or quality of service.

Financial professionals considering AI should:

- Learn the range of AI tools available
- Compare providers
- Consider risks as carefully as rewards

What Hesitations Do Financial Planners Have About AI?

Any AI implementation requires careful consideration. Planners should maintain a clear understanding of what data their AI systems use and be able to explain in simple terms how the resulting outputs are determined.

Proactive risk management strategies and thoughtful implementation approaches can help to offset the top three concerns about AI among financial planning professionals:

67% cite the potential for inaccurate output

61% worry about a lack of human oversight

60% are concerned about data security/breaches

People Will Always Lead the Partnership

The data reinforces anecdotal sentiment that human planners will always remain essential to the advisory relationship. By maintaining leadership in client relationships, planners can preserve appropriate oversight of AI systems.

To mitigate data breach risks, AI practices must include standard security protocols, such as strong encryption standards, consistent software update schedules, and multi-factor authentication requirements.

Financial professionals should recognize that while AI can augment many aspects of financial planning, it cannot fully replicate human judgment, contextual understanding, or empathy—qualities essential to managing risk and fostering meaningful planning relationships.

What Should My Financial Planning Practice Do Before Implementing AI?

1. **IDENTIFY TIME-CONSUMING MANUAL PROCESSES:** The first step in integrating AI is pinpointing areas of your workflow that are time-intensive and ripe for automation. **68% see AI helping in summarizing complex documents.**

2. **FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH AI TECHNOLOGIES:** Gain a solid understanding of the AI tools available in financial planning and stay up to date on industry trends related to AI-powered software.

3. **REFLECT ON RECENT OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES:** Consider the inefficiencies, bottlenecks, or recurring tasks you have faced over the past year or two. Did these challenges impact client service or hinder business growth? **71% see AI helping in routine report generation.**

4. **EDUCATE YOUR TEAM:** AI adoption is most successful when the entire organization is on board. Ensure both you and your team feel confident and prepared to embrace new AI tools.

5. **START WITH HIGH-IMPACT, LOW-RISK SOLUTIONS:** Instead of overhauling your entire system, begin with AI tools that offer measurable benefits with minimal disruption. **64% see AI helping in summarizing meeting notes.**

6. **DEFINE FUTURE PLANNING NEEDS:** Look ahead to your practice's growth drivers and key performance metrics. With a clear vision of your goals, you can implement AI solutions that align with strategic planning and performance measurement.

As planners and decision-makers begin to integrate AI into their practices, many are quickly recognizing its potential to enhance business growth.

What Do Financial Planners Believe Are the Best Opportunities for AI?

While most financial planners' express interest in eventually leveraging AI for advisor and client services, current adoption plans reveal specific prioritization patterns:

82% plan to use AI for **middle-** and **back-office processes**

76% expect AI to **streamline tasks for staff**

70% see AI opportunities in **portfolio management**

81% anticipate AI **applications in client administration**

75% plan to implement AI for **fraud detection**

70% anticipate using AI to assess **client attitudes and behaviors**

80% see potential for AI in **compliance/regulatory functions**

71% envision AI supporting **performance** and **analysis reporting**

69% plan AI implementation in **financial planning processes**

AI Is Poised to Make Us Better Financial Planning Partners

What Will Be the Impact of AI on Financial Planning?

While AI's full impact on financial planning has yet to be determined, industry professionals are optimistic about the potential breadth of its influence.

91% Believe **clients will continue to need financial advisors**

88% Anticipate AI will require **new skills/training for advisors**

77% Expect AI to **enhance productivity**

74% Believe AI will **help provide greater value**

57% Anticipate AI will **help improve client relationships**

56% See AI enabling **more holistic financial planning processes**

52% Expect AI to assist in **client acquisition**

47% View AI **as a key competitive advantage for their firm**

Research shows AI's impact will be both direct and secondary. Automating routine tasks boosts efficiency, but planners should avoid filling the regained time with more administrative work. Instead, planners should use it to deepen client relationships, improve their skills and grow their practice.

Planners Will Leverage AI to Strengthen Human Connections

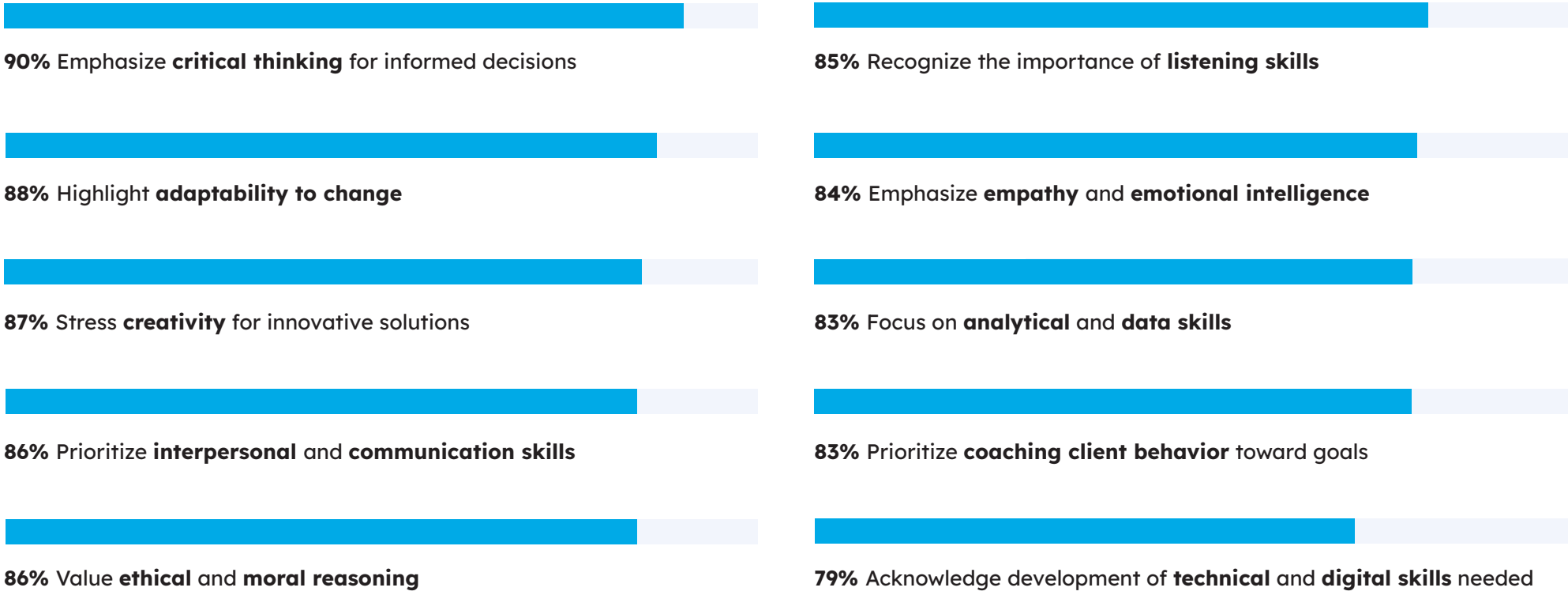
Industry consensus suggests that while AI adoption will require new technical capabilities, it will also demand stronger interpersonal skills such as active listening, motivational coaching, collaborative problem-solving, empathetic communication, and adaptability.

AI-enhanced planning gives financial planners a chance to really get to know their clients as people. Instead of just collecting facts and figures, planners can have real conversations about what motivates and inspires them—uncovering clients values, passions, and life goals.

These discussions shape better investment plans and build the kind of trust that turns a professional relationship into a meaningful partnership. When planners make these deeper connections a priority, they become more than money managers—they become trusted partners in their clients' financial journeys.

How Can I Get Ready for AI?

As more financial planners build AI into their workflows, they should simultaneously prioritize interpersonal skill development that differentiates human financial professionals from automated AI systems. An overwhelming majority of financial planners agree that AI integration will provide an opportunity to strengthen specific capabilities:



These findings highlight the growing need to enhance human-centered capabilities—such as **empathy, communication, and relationship-building—** as essential components of effective financial planning.

How to Get AI-ready

Here are 7 important skills financial professionals should focus on building in an AI-supported practice and ways to practice upskilling:

1. **CRITICAL THINKING:** After making a decision, take time to reflect on both your reasoning and emotional responses. Consider what worked, what did not, and why. Depending on the situation, process these thoughts and feelings intentionally to uncover meaningful takeaways.

2. **ADAPTABILITY:** Regularly solicit feedback and schedule dedicated time with colleagues to assess your flexibility in response to changes and unexpected challenges. Use this input to continuously refine your adaptable planning approach.

3. **CREATIVITY:** Participate in role-playing exercises, specialized workshops, or conferences that stimulate creative thinking—even those outside traditional financial planning contexts.

4. **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** Engage actively in professional networks and social groups to enhance your ability to connect meaningfully with diverse individuals. Focus particularly on developing active listening, conflict resolution, and collaborative teamwork capabilities.

5. **ETHICAL REASONING:** Periodically review past ethical decisions you have made or encountered. Reflect on how you might better manage similar situations in the future, integrating lessons from previous experiences.

6. **LISTENING:** Be aware that multitasking or distractions can leave clients feeling unheard. Focus on giving them your full attention—paying close attention not just to what they say, but how they say it. Use reflection and summarization to show you are listening and to better understand their perspective.

7. **EMPATHY:** Work to understand your clients' emotional states, experiences, and perspectives. Ask clarifying questions to better understand their viewpoints and try to imagine yourself in their circumstances to guide your responses with care and understanding.

These uniquely human capabilities are essential for monitoring AI outputs and providing thoughtful and tailored advice.

What Key Concepts Should I Take Away and Share with My Team?

Financial planning will always be about people helping people, and **technology will augment**—rather than replace—this human foundation.

With AI, planners can process vast amounts of information with exceptional speed and accuracy, allowing them to redirect attention toward higher-value practice areas.

Planners should apply AI judiciously in appropriate situations to achieve specific outcomes.

Take time to understand different AI approaches, service provider variations, and both the opportunities and risks these technologies present.

Manage your data and AI access intentionally to ensure appropriate usage while protecting against security vulnerabilities.

Financial planners maintain cautious optimism regarding AI's potential to positively transform their work.

AI implementation will free capacity for professionals to strengthen soft skills and activities requiring human judgment, insight, and personal connection.

Planners can lead practices in compelling new directions by enhancing personalization capabilities and improving the human elements of client service.

"The potential of AI to augment financial planning is significant, offering planners the chance to work smarter and deliver more personalized services. But it must be used deliberately, with caution and data security in mind. By integrating AI thoughtfully, planners can enhance their impact while preserving the human touch that is the core of successful financial relationships"

Joshua Belfiore,
Group Product Manager,
eMoney

Want to learn more about AI's journey in financial planning?

Visit and subscribe to the Heart of Advice blog for more on industry trends and practice management.

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Sources:

[1] eMoney, "The Future of Financial Planning and AI", June 2024