eMoney

RESEARCH REPORT

Financial Planning and AI: Strategic Adoption

Understanding the Role of AI in Financial Planning

The marriage between human insight and artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing financial planning. As market volatility increases and client needs grow more complex, AI technology is emerging not as a replacement for human advisors, but as a powerful ally in delivering more personalized, efficient, and impactful financial guidance.

eMoney undertook comprehensive research to examine AI's impact on financial planning, surveying 400 financial advisors and conducting in-depth interviews with executives from leading wealth management firms. Our findings reveal clear opportunities for advisors to leverage AI in ways that amplify their expertise and deepen client relationships.

Key Findings

1. AI will significantly impact how financial advice is delivered, with **78% of advisors anticipating moderate to significant changes** in their work.

2. Technology will enhance rather than replace human advisors, with **91% of advisors believing clients will continue to need financial advisors** and **70% viewing AI as a tool to support** their decision-making.

3. Professional evolution presents opportunities for advisors to **focus more deeply on client relationships** and complex planning.

4. Specific, high-value use cases for AI are already emerging in **performance analysis, planning automation, and portfolio management.**

5. Early adoption of AI positions advisors to better serve clients through **enhanced efficiency and deeper insights.**

Research Methodology

To develop a robust understanding of AI's impact on financial planning, we conducted a study in October 2024 with a mixed-methods approach:

- A quantitative survey of 400 financial advisors representing diverse industry segments.
- Cross-sectional representation across age, gender, tenure, channel, assets under management (AUM) levels, and firm size.
- In-depth interviews with nine wealth management executives from leading institutions.

Our methodology is designed to reflect both the macro-level industry landscape and the critical perspectives of key stakeholders.

How AI Is Transforming Financial Planning

Financial planning is undergoing a transformation driven by AI, extending beyond simple task automation. Our research shows this shift allows advisors to enhance personalization and focus more on areas where human judgment remains essential.

Degree of impact of AI on advisors' work

Consider a typical client meeting about retirement planning: While AI analyzes market data and runs complex scenarios in the background, the advisor can focus on understanding the client's goals, concerns, and personal circumstances—the human elements that truly drive successful financial planning. This transformation is unfolding in several key ways:

- AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data equips advisors with deeper insights and more informed decision-making capabilities.
- Automation of routine tasks allows advisors to focus on complex planning and strengthen client relationships.
- Enhanced analytical capabilities enable more sophisticated scenario planning and risk assessment, allowing for more proactive and personalized financial strategies.

Attitudes and Expectations

The research reveals a clear consensus on AI's role in financial planning:

91% of advisors believe clients will continue to need financial advisors.

72% value AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of financial data.

70% see AI as a tool to help support their decision-making.

AI will help advisors identify client behaviors and patterns more effectively.

Ultimately, this technology will help advisors deliver more valuable and insightful advice.

The focus is on augmenting advisor capabilities, not on replacing them.
By streamlining data analysis and routine tasks, AI enables advisors to focus on what they do best—understanding client needs, providing contextual guidance, and building lasting relationships.

AI Uses and Benefits

While AI offers significant potential in financial planning, advisors have expressed concerns about **accuracy and reliability (67%)**, the need for **human oversight (61%)**, and **data security risks (60%)**. Additionally, regulatory compliance, client privacy, and ethical considerations highlight the need to balance innovation with trust and precision.

Despite these challenges, the research indicates substantial opportunities for advisors who effectively integrate AI. The potential benefits span multiple aspects of the advisory business, from improved client service to enhanced operational efficiency.

Advisors report that AI enables them to achieve:

68% **Greater work efficiencies**
Use time more effectively by relieving administrative burdens.

38% **Deeper analysis**
Conduct scenario analysis, improve decision-making, and gain insights into client behaviors.

38% **Financial gains**
Reduce costs, increase revenue, and grow AUM.

36% **Improved client service and marketing**
Enhance client communication and personalized marketing efforts.

27% **Better advisory services**
Provide a more collaborative, personalized planning process while reducing financial anxiety for clients.

Current High-priority Applications

AI is playing a crucial role in helping advisors tailor their services to individual client needs. From **assessing risk tolerance (43%)** to **creating personalized communications (53%)** and **marketing strategies (50%)**, AI allows advisors to enhance engagement and provide more precise, data-driven recommendations. The result is a more customized client experience that fosters stronger relationships and better financial outcomes.

Performance Analysis and Reporting

21% current usage
71% planned adoption

Benefits: Enhanced reporting accuracy, deeper analytical insights, faster delivery of results

Portfolio Management

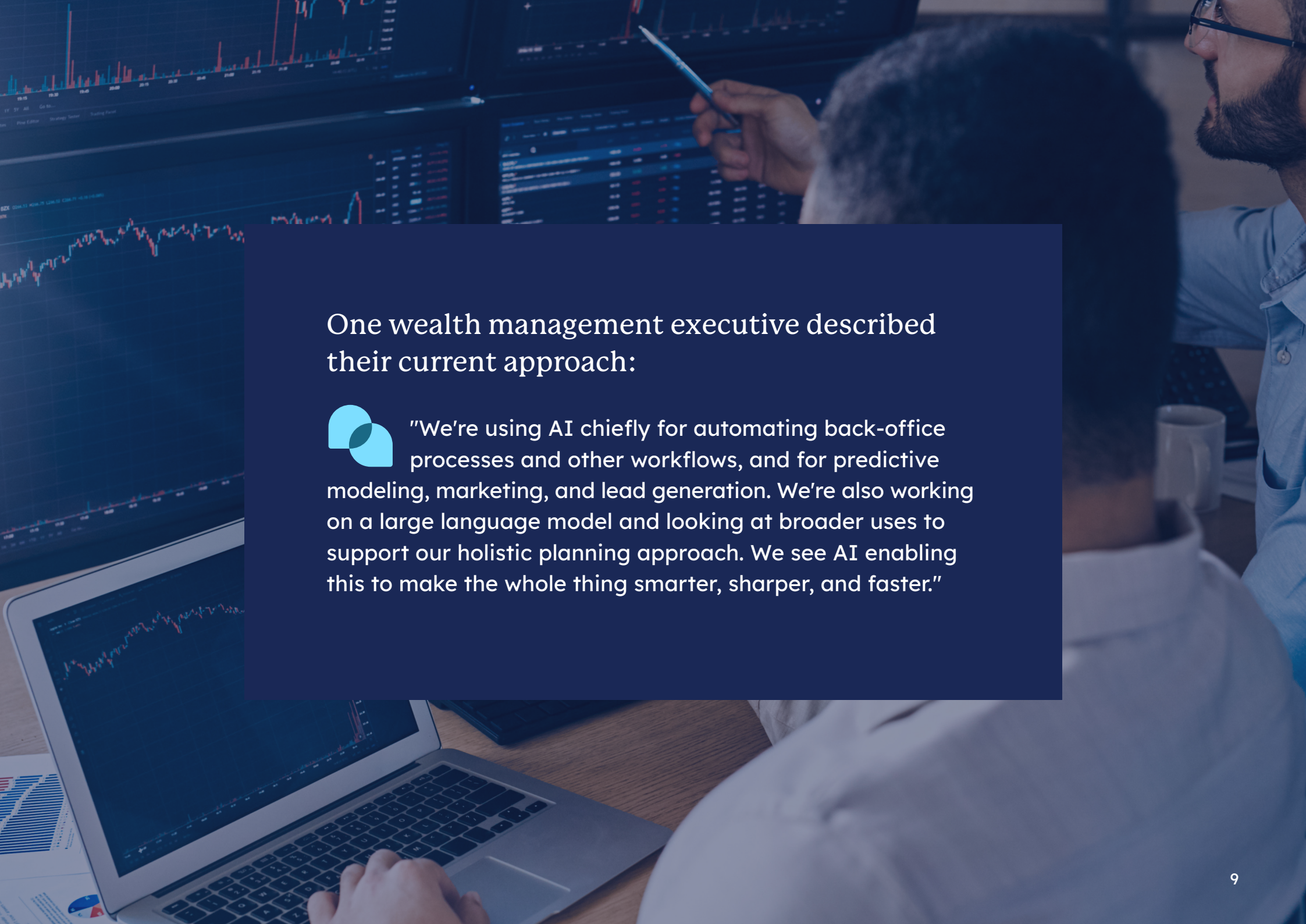
17% current usage
70% planned adoption

Benefits: Improved allocation strategies, better risk management, more precise rebalancing

Operational Opportunities

AI is also transforming firm-level operations, with high adoption interest in:

- Middle- and back-office processes **(71% likely to use)**
- Streamlining tasks for advisors and staff **(69% likely to use)**
- Client administration **(68% likely to use)**
- Hiring, onboarding, and training **(65% likely to use)**



One wealth management executive described their current approach:

"We're using AI chiefly for automating back-office processes and other workflows, and for predictive modeling, marketing, and lead generation. We're also working on a large language model and looking at broader uses to support our holistic planning approach. We see AI enabling this to make the whole thing smarter, sharper, and faster."

The Role of AI in Decision Making

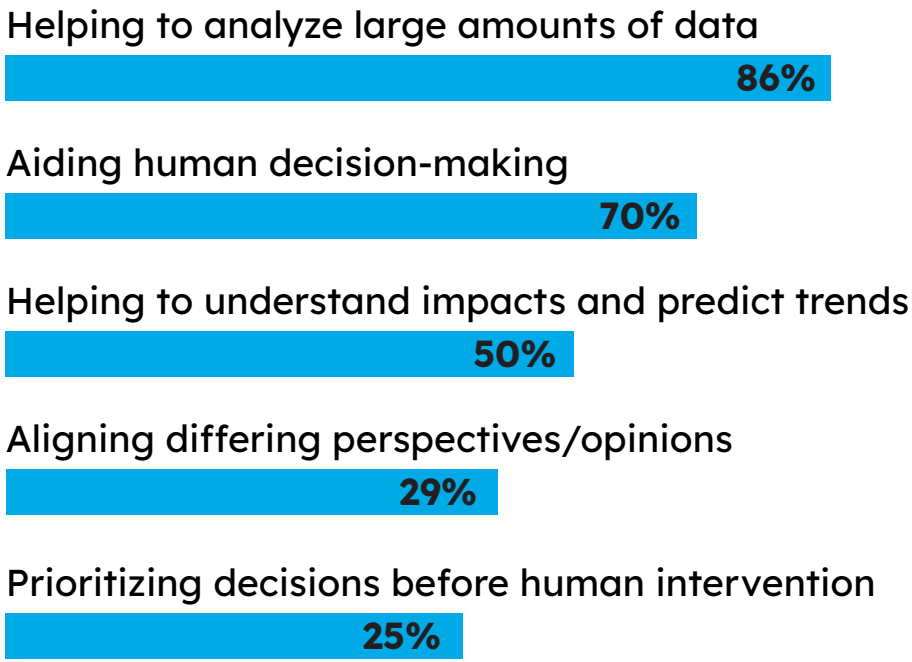
The research reveals a nuanced picture of how AI can best support financial planning decisions. Rather than replacing human judgment, AI shows the greatest promise when used to analyze large amounts of data and aid in decision-making processes. This enables advisors to make more informed decisions while maintaining their crucial role in client relationships.

86% of advisors see AI's greatest value in its ability to analyze large amounts of data.

AI's Expected Impact

The data clearly shows that AI's strength lies in amplifying—rather than replacing—human decision-making. Most valuable is AI's ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data, providing advisors with insights they can use to make more informed recommendations. This technology serves as a powerful support tool, helping advisors identify trends and predict potential outcomes while leaving final decisions in the hands of experienced professionals.

When advisors believe AI works best in decision-making:



70% of advisors view AI as an aid to enhance their decision-making process.

Evolving Advisor Capabilities

With the vast majority of advisors embracing the opportunity to enhance their skills, the industry is poised to deliver even more value to clients.

Moderately or very important skills and abilities

90% Critical thinking to make informed decisions

88% Adaptability to change

87% Creativity to find innovative solutions

86% Interpersonal and communication skills

85% Ethical and moral reasoning

85% Listening Skills

84% Empathy and emotional intelligence

83% Analytical and data skills

83% Coaching/ client behavior modification towards goals

79% Technical and digital skills

The findings outline a strategic advantage: Advisors who succeed will be those who balance digital fluency with interpersonal skills and human connection. The future of financial planning lies not just in mastering new tools, but in developing the critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills needed to translate AI-driven insights into meaningful client guidance.

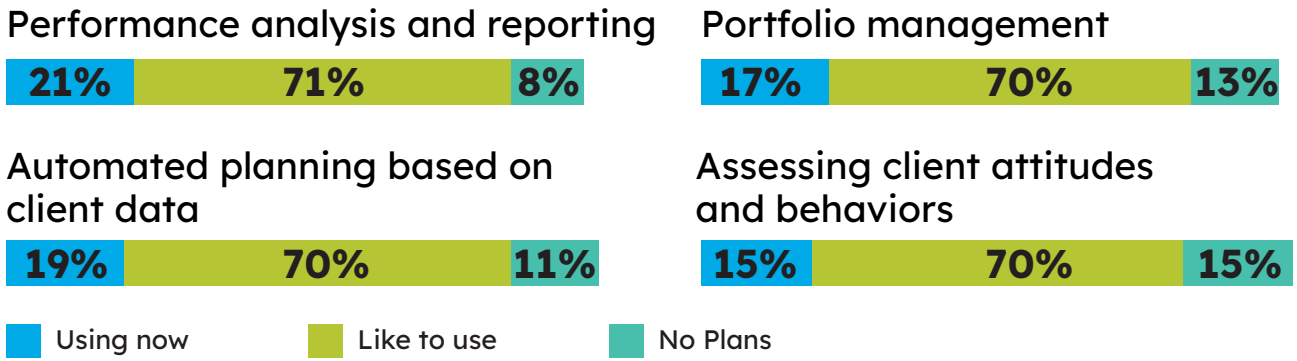
This combination of human skills and technological capability creates opportunities for advisors to focus more deeply on understanding client needs, providing contextual guidance, and building lasting relationships.

90% of advisors identify critical thinking as crucial for success in an AI-enhanced environment.

Transforming Client Service

The research reveals specific, high-value applications where AI is reinventing the delivery of financial planning services. These applications focus on bolstering advisor capabilities to provide deeper insights and more personalized service.

Extent of use of AI for advisor and client services



Performance analysis and reporting emerge as primary areas for AI enhancement, enabling advisors to provide more sophisticated insights and recommendations. Automated planning capabilities allow for more dynamic scenario testing and strategy adjustment, while portfolio management tools support more precise investment decisions.

With these advancements, advisors can minimize time spent on routine and administrative tasks, shifting their focus to strategic decision-making and client engagement. AI automates complex data analysis, enhancing the quality of insights while maintaining the personal relationships clients expect.

92% of firms are either using or planning to implement AI for performance analysis and reporting.

Industry Leader Perspectives: AI's Impact on Financial Planning

Across the board, industry leaders agree on one thing: AI enhances, not replaces, human advisors. Executives from top banking, insurance, and wealth management firms share insights on AI's role, challenges, and opportunities.

Key Takeaways from the Top

1. **AI will transform financial planning, but disruption levels vary.** Some firms anticipate rapid change, while others cite regulatory hurdles slowing adoption.

2. **AI empowers advisors, not replaces them.** It enhances efficiency and knowledge, allowing advisors to focus on high-value client interactions.

3. **Advisor roles may need to shift.** Advisors will need to develop technical and interpersonal skills to succeed with AI, and the productivity boost from AI may allow advisors to take on more clients.

4. **Data accuracy, compliance, and security are top concerns.** Executives stress the importance of human oversight to mitigate AI risks.

5. **AI may effectively identify client attitudes and personas.** This can help tailor investment actions, improve communication, and provide deeper insights into client psychology.

6. **Early adopters gain a competitive edge.** Firms integrating AI now are positioning themselves for long-term success.

What Executives Are Saying

"Not every advisor has deep subject matter expertise. The range of topics that they're supposed to be experts on, from taxes to social security, to healthcare, to investments, is ever expanding and more complex. There's a limit to how many advisors will have the capacity and experience to be smart at these things. AI has the ability to save time and make them smarter."

— Senior Vice President, Wealth Planning

"It's all about augmentation, making the world of financial planning and wealth management better. But clients are going to want trusted relationship advisors to help them think through the financial planning decisions."

— Head of Operational Excellence & Growth

"AI forces a shift in skills away from more mundane administrative tasks to higher order tasks that a machine can't deliver at scale. We don't yet know how to make a machine feel an emotion or understand a very complicated dynamic human interaction based on a life event. We will need to upskill advisors to engage in those things and move away from administrative tasks."

— Head of Advice and Planning

Top AI Use Cases in Financial Planning

The research reveals a clear consensus on AI's role in financial planning:

Automating back-office tasks:
Compliance, risk management, and administrative processes

Boosting advisor productivity:
Summarizing meeting notes, analyzing financial documents

Personalizing client interactions:
AI-driven insights for tailored recommendations

AI adoption is growing, but success depends on responsible implementation. Leaders emphasize compliance, security, and balancing innovation with human expertise.

"AI can prepare advisors for client meetings with summaries of previous communications and what's going on in the client's life, using unstructured data. And when that meeting is over, AI can summarize the meeting minutes so they can get on with their day."

— Chief Data and Analytics Officer

Embracing the Future of Financial Planning

The integration of AI into financial planning represents not just a technological shift, but an opportunity to enhance how advisors serve their clients and manage their practices.

91% of advisors believe clients will continue to need financial advisors in an AI-enhanced future.

Enhanced Client Service

AI technology enables advisors to provide more sophisticated insights and personalized service. By handling data analysis and routine tasks more efficiently, AI allows advisors to focus on what truly matters: **Understanding client needs and providing contextual guidance.**

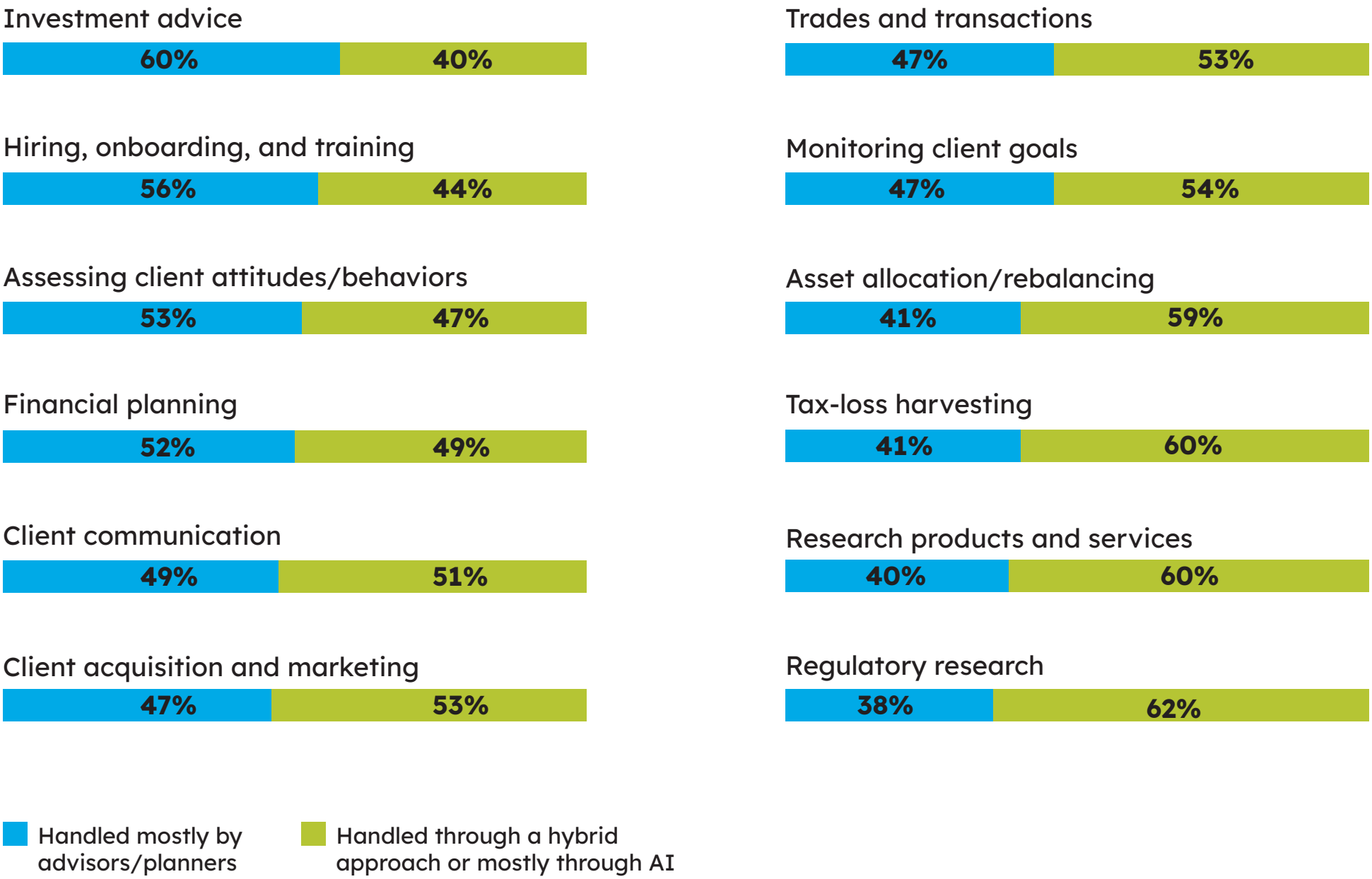
Professional Evolution

The future of financial planning demands a combination of traditional advisory skills enhanced by technological capabilities.

The human element remains crucial, with most industry professionals believing advisors will continue to lead in areas requiring personal touch and judgment:

- Providing tailored investment recommendations based on holistic client understanding
- Managing the sensitive process of hiring and onboarding new team members
- Assessing client risk tolerance, goals, and changing life circumstances
- Developing and adjusting comprehensive financial plans through market cycles
- Building and maintaining long-term client relationships through personal interaction

AI's future role in advisor activities



On the Horizon

As the industry moves forward, several key trends are likely to shape the evolution of AI in financial planning:

1. **Enhanced Personalization -** The combination of AI analysis and human insight will enable unprecedented levels of service customization:

   - More precise risk assessment
   - Highly targeted investment strategies
   - Personalized communication approaches
   - Customized planning scenarios

2. **Increased Efficiency -** Continued automation of routine tasks will allow advisors to focus on relationship building:

   - Streamlined administrative processes
   - Automated document management
   - Intelligent meeting preparation
   - Proactive client monitoring

3. **Improved Decision-making -** AI-enhanced analytics will support better planning outcomes:

   - More sophisticated scenario analysis
   - Enhanced risk modeling
   - Better behavioral insights
   - More accurate predictions

Success in this evolving landscape requires a balanced approach to implementation. Leading firms are already showing the way, focusing first on high-impact applications while preserving the human elements essential to financial advice.

> The future of financial planning lies not in choosing between human advisors and artificial intelligence, but in a strategic integration of both to create superior outcomes. Firms that successfully navigate this transformation will be well-positioned to thrive, delivering greater value to clients while maintaining the personal connection at the heart of financial planning.

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