

DATA TRACKING: BEFRIENDING THE UNCOOL KID

Here's why data deserves a seat at the cool kids' table.

Erica Pauly is the founder of Track That Advisor, a data analytics company founded in 2015 that provides analysis on over \$1 billion of new annuity and assets under management each year for independently owned advisory offices across the nation.



BY ERICA PAULY
FOUNDER OF TRACK THAT ADVISOR

Data tracking can feel like a chore. It can be daunting and uncomfortable. It can seem like the uncool smart kid in school who jabbers on about things you don't understand. You take one look at them coming down the hall and immediately make a U-turn.

You're salespeople and CEOs, not nerds. Advisors are the cool kids.

And yet, I've sat across from hundreds of advisors who say the same thing: "If it can be done right, and I can trust the data as well as understand what it's saying, then I know it could help me take back control of this ever-changing, ever-moving bus I'm steering."

The good news is that I'm a data nerd, the awkward smart kid jabbering about metrics and trackers and stick rates and benchmarking. My company, Track That Advisor, exists to help you, the cool kids. And this article will help you implement tracking and analytics within your office.

So put on your glasses, and let's get started.

GETTING ON TRACK

First, let's debunk a few myths:

- 1 Tracking doesn't require a new hire or full-time person. When done correctly and efficiently, tracking takes 20 to 30 minutes a day for most back-office support staff (for most offices, up to roughly \$100 million in production).
- 2 You don't need to track all the things. There are about 10 to 11 things to track on the marketing side and about seven on the new business side. This doesn't need to be over-complicated to get great intel.
- 3 You don't need a robust CRM or workflow system. You can start right now with a simple Excel sheet.

The best news here is that you, the advisor, are not involved in 90% of your company's tracking, nor should you be. Your staff are the ones interacting with the data needed, and therefore they should be the ones to input the data. You, the advisor, come in later.

WHO SHOULD DO THE TRACKING?

- The person responsible for hosting events should track the initial information, including event type (educational, dinner seminar, etc.); topic; number of mailers sent; mailer cost; number of households who RSVP'd, attended, scheduled and kept appointments; etc.
- The person setting, confirming and rescheduling appointments should track client experience data, including which marketing funnel brought in the client; which appointments were set and kept; current client status; etc.
- The person responsible for filling out and submitting applications should track the new business

information, including which marketing funnel brought in the client; type and amount of new business; status (funded, pending); dates apps were signed and business issued; etc.

- Someone should be delegated to "scrub" the data once per month. They should have good attention to detail and understand marketing and new business.
- Someone should be responsible for gathering the data into monthly or quarterly reports.

WHEN SHOULD TRACKING TAKE PLACE?

My father has a quote that I've lived by: "How do you make a small job big? You procrastinate." The longer a team goes without data entry, the more the data set becomes inconsistent and incorrect. Tracking should be done daily, weekly at the very least. Any longer and your reports will likely suffer, and everyone will be frustrated.

If team members are telling you it takes too much time, it is usually one of two problems:

- The tracking you are having them do is superfluous; it's too much and needs to be cut down.
- They don't understand the sheets/trackers/systems you are using. They may hesitate to begin for fear it won't be good data when you look at it later.

Once you've simplified your tracking and your support staff clearly understands the process, the teammate designated the "auditor of the data" will comb through the marketing sheet and new business sheet to confirm what the data story is saying about each prospect and client.

Does the marketing source on the marketing sheet match what the new business sheet is saying? If marketing is saying Sally Smith became a client, can she be found with

correct totals on the new business sheet? This should take your team member one to two hours per month.

WHICH REPORTS ARE MOST IMPORTANT?

Once the data has been entered and scrubbed, the person charged with creating reports should gather the clean data into comprehensive reports for you to analyze and then make data-driven decisions.

Here are the top 12 reports I suggest you track:

- YTD Issued Business
- YTD Pending Business
- YTD Issued + Pending Business by Marketing Channel
- YTD Issued + Pending Business by Advisor
(if you are a multi-advisor office)
- Stick Rate by Marketing Funnel
(# kept 1st appointments/# set 1st appointments)
- Stick Rate by Advisor
- Close Rate by Marketing Funnel
(# new clients/# kept 1st appointments)
- Close Rate by Advisor
- Average Case Size by Marketing Funnel
(New business only, not including existing client money)
- Average Case Size by Advisor
- Days Between Appointments by Advisor
- Total average days from application submitted to issued for annuity sales

WHAT'S NEXT?

Review each of these reports monthly. Now, here is where it gets fun. Even if you hate data and make fun of those of us who were born for it, you are the driver of your firm. You get to make the big decisions. With good intel in front of you, you can see what is happening and feel confident about what's next.

At www.trackthatadvisor.com, you'll find more than 100 benchmarks. Do they all pertain to every office? Nope. But are they a good place to start while learning to understand the data within your company? Absolutely. Benchmarks are a launching point giving you direction, not rules to be followed.

Once you understand basic benchmarking, you can choose to diverge from any of your benchmarks because you know it's the right call for your company. You understand your company and the story the data is telling because you are a part of writing it. It isn't happenstance and flying by the seat of your pants. It's strategic and methodically orchestrated. It allows you to steer the bus wherever you want to go.

And that's why data deserves a seat at the cool kids' table. I encourage you to not run from it because it feels like too much. Take these simple steps to implement tracking within your company. Keep it simple. Delegate 90% of the work, and then write your own story.

FIND YOUR BENCHMARKS

**Track That Advisor has free tools and resources for benchmarking available upon request.
Visit the Resources Page at www.trackthatadvisor.com to find some of them.**

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