



The great reassessment: The advisor edition

January 14, 2021 | by [Billie Joan Christiansen](#)

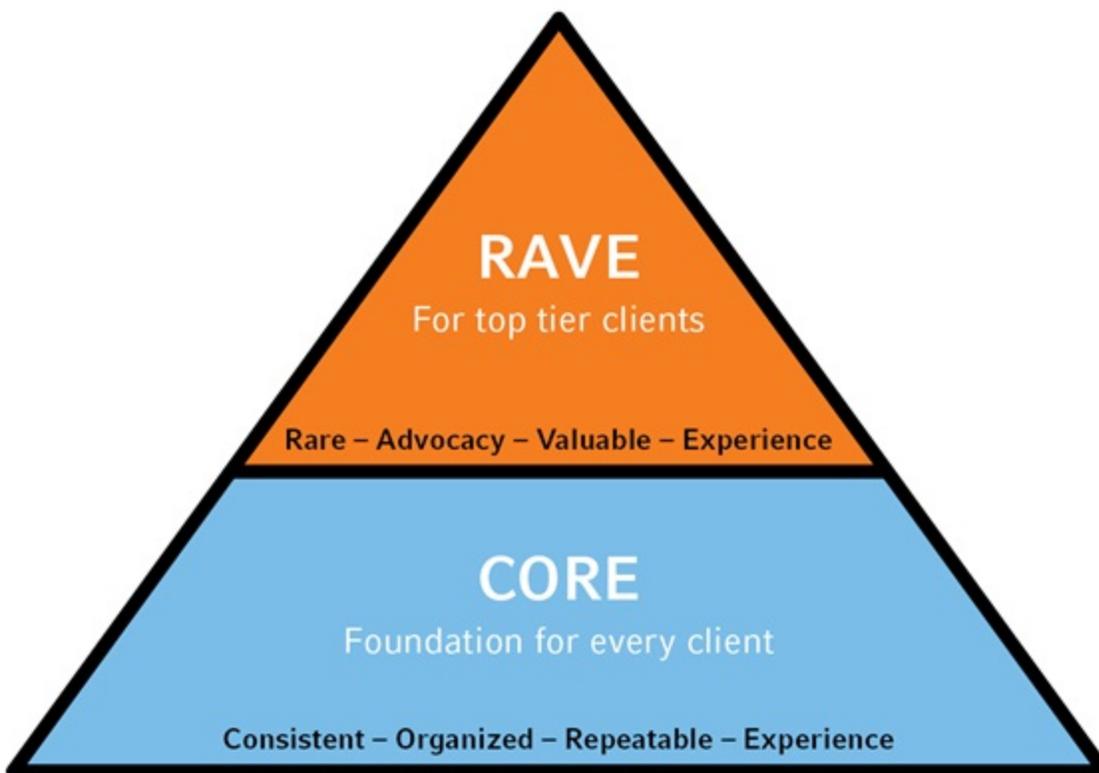
The hiccups experienced in 2020, which felt more like earthquakes for some, were a definite test on all who work in the financial industry. With an interesting vantage point, wholesalers like myself checked in and had countless conversations with our advisors throughout the year. With a global pandemic breathing down their necks and the health and safety of those they loved in potential jeopardy as COVID-19 cases spiked—coupled with the transition to working (in most cases) from makeshift home offices—2020 shed a whole new light on what it meant for advisors to persevere. All of this, in fact, has created [the great reassessment](#).

As you're doing this [rediscovery process](#) with your clients, an exploration on what's important within your own practice makes sense right now. Whether you find the practice needs a rebirth, rebranding or simply fine-tuning with a walkthrough of the steps outlined, your practice should have a client service model that's more [sustainable](#) and allows for a ripple effect of growth from a more manageable process. Additionally, this period of great reassessment creates a potential opportunity for growth within an advisor's practice.

Two items to reassess and realign your practice for growth in 2021

Item #1: Is your team in sync?

This first item relates directly to how your team has aligned your client segmentation and client service model.



Assess

your business using these questions:

- Is there a clear team plan on how your clients are serviced? This means having clear roles and responsibilities on your [team](#).
- Have you created the exceptional **RAVE** experience for your top-tier clientele? This is where I'll remind you of the 80/20 rule (the top 20% of your clientele generates roughly 80% of your revenue). These clients should have a differentiated experience when they reach out to your team than other client segments in your book of business. Many advisors getting [referrals](#) right now—and leveraging this referral system to grow their practice—have created a client service model that gives their top clients an experience that they want to share with their friends and their family.

So, what is a RAVE experience?

1. Is what you do for your top tier clients **RARE** and hard to imitate by competitors?
2. Are you building **ADVOCACY** among these clients to attract and win more clients just like them?
3. Are you delivering what they **VALUE** the most and measuring what they value?
4. Is the **EXPERIENCE** of working with your team so memorable that they will talk about it to others?

Here are some ideas to convert your top client service into a RAVE experience:

- Faster turnaround times for any questions they have or information they need.

- **Personalize events** you offer based on the in-depth knowledge you have about the client. Instead of just taking them out to lunch, take them out to their favorite lunch spot.
- Don't just send them flowers for their birthday, unless they love receiving them. Show them how well you know them by sending:
 - Golf balls to the avid golfer
 - Chocolates from their favorite chocolatier
 - Vegan candies if that's what they prefer
 - A bottle of their favorite wine
- Capture their attention by sending a handwritten note with a personalized token after your meetings. If they've just talked about spending more time outdoors hiking, send them a portable first aid kit they can take with them. You can do this even if the meeting is remote!

To create this type of client service model with the necessary amount of time, effort and energy devoted to the top 20% of your business, you must have the rest of your book of business in order, otherwise you haven't created a **sustainable** client service model.

Item #2: Clean the dirty laundry

When was the last time you revisited the lower end of your advisory business that exposes you to the most risk? If you're familiar with the **5/50 rule**, you know the bottom 50% of clients tend to make up about 5% of your revenue. How much time do you truly spend with this segment and how much is it detracting from the top 50% of clients in your book? Identifying these clients, reviewing their accounts and having a streamlined process in place are a crucial part of getting your capacity back in line with more room for growth.

This is what we call having a **CORE** approach:

1. Have you considered each client relationship in terms of opportunity and risk, and made a deliberate decision to keep those clients?
2. Do you have a formalized contact schedule? (e.g., how frequently will client touches be done?)
3. Have you created a systemized one-to-many service model?
4. Have you simplified investment options to meet your clients' unique needs while also making it manageable (i.e., transitioned to advisory)?

This can be the most intimidating of all tasks for advisor teams. There is a depth and scope here that takes extreme focus. This process of relationship reassessment along with rediscovery that's needed to revisit the investment options can take weeks, months or longer depending on how quickly your team is able to move through these conversations. To be honest with you, even getting mentally prepared for this task alone can be daunting. The most important thing here is to not overthink it—remember it's a speedbump, not a mountain. Harvest the data that's already available by enlisting the help of someone in your home office or one of the partners you work with: We've walked countless advisors through our **transition services**.

The benefits of tackling this are trifold:

1. It allows capacity for a RAVE experience for your top-tier clients
2. It gives you more time for prospecting and accelerating your business with the referrals

3. It helps check all the boxes in our 15-question [Regulation Best Interest readiness assessment](#)

Have a good plan and stick to it

Once you've gone through the painstaking work of creating a synchronized team that delivers a RAVE experience for your top-tier clients and cleaned up the messiness you found at the bottom of your dirty laundry basket, you've reached the maintenance phase. Sounds simple, right? With a team moving along at full, optimal capacity, there is no room for error. Team meetings must be a top priority. Accountability is key for this one, no matter where the team members are working.

The new year gives all of us a chance to revisit all of the factors that build into having a strong practice capable of surviving in an industry that has historically thrived in face-to-face human connection and interaction. 2020 demonstrated that how quickly teams were able to transition to running their businesses in a virtual environment was a telltale sign of the strength of the team.

The bottom line

2020 has taught us many life lessons, both personally and professionally. Advisors and clients alike have found that through the global pandemic, what we do with these lessons is crucial for us to keep up in an ever-changing environment. While we hope that warmer weather may mean getting closer to normalcy, the truth is our working environment and how we interact with our coworkers and with our clients may never truly look the same as it did in the past. Let the great reassessment be the time for your practice to not only be ready for what life throws at it, but get it moving—like a steam engine building enough steam—to propel it into a well-positioned future.

Stepping into 2021, we can help your practice have what it takes to not only maintain but thrive. Connect with us.

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