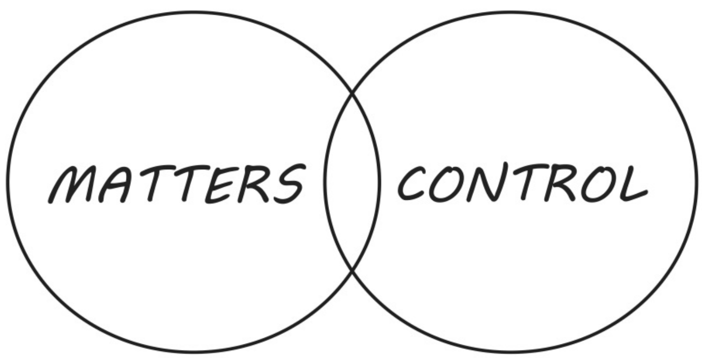
Let’s Shoot Your Trailer

Have you created a trailer of your overall philosophy, planning strategy and process? If not, what follows is a step-by-step guide to building your own consistent, congruent communication that positions you as a consultant with a process rather than a salesperson with a quota.

Hollywood promotes a movie using a brief trailer to get your attention, whet your appetite and leave you wanting more. What do you say in the three or four minutes at the beginning of a meeting with a prospective client to define your value to them?

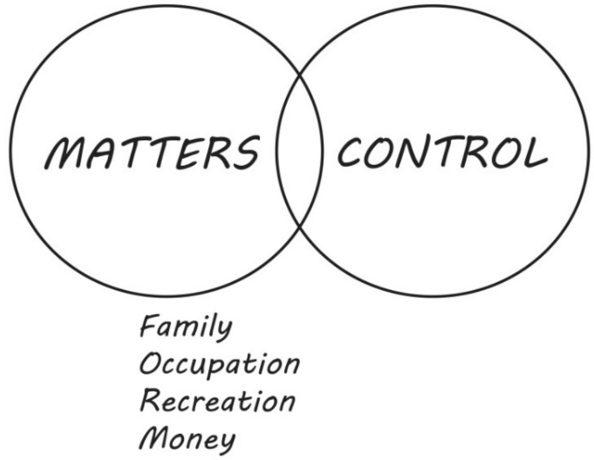
The following is an exercise that will help focus your prospective clients. It will concisely tell them why they want to work with you as you’re having your initial meeting. It will make you unforgettable and indispensable.

It starts with a basic Venn diagram. In your meeting, turn your agenda over and draw two circles about the size of hockey pucks that just intersect. Label the left one “Matters” and the right “Control”.



You can introduce the graphic by explaining why you’re doing it. For example, “The beauty of our process is that it ensures we never lose sight of two essential elements to achieving financial independence.”

These two elements are what matters and what you can control.
Start with what matters to your client. Vertically, jot down the following letters below the “matters” circle: F, O, R and M. Walk the client through each.



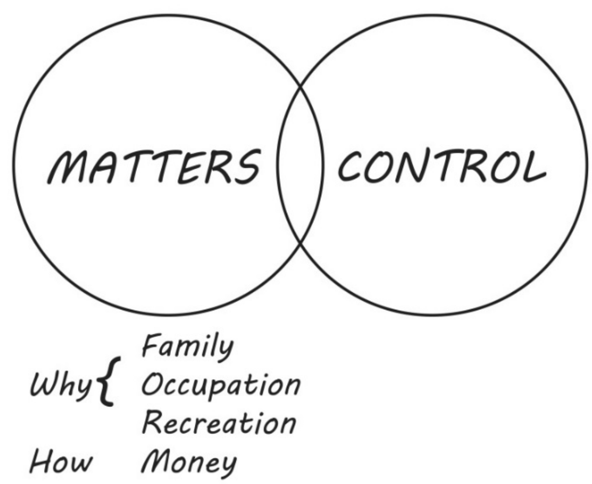
F is family – The number-one concern to your client – the thing that matters most. You can touch on concepts like the family investment legacy, but the basic truth is that clients want to work with you if they know you understand that their family matters. Punctuate it by saying "We never lose sight of that."

O is occupation – The client may aspire to a work-optional lifestyle or they may want to retire completely and be confident of their ability to do so without outliving their money, but whatever their focus, their occupation, past or future, is on their mind. Again, punctuate it by saying "We never lose sight of that."

R is recreation – We all have a bucket list, things we want to do, places we want to see, and having the time and security to do them is something we all understand. We want to face the future with anticipation. And again: "We never lose sight of that."

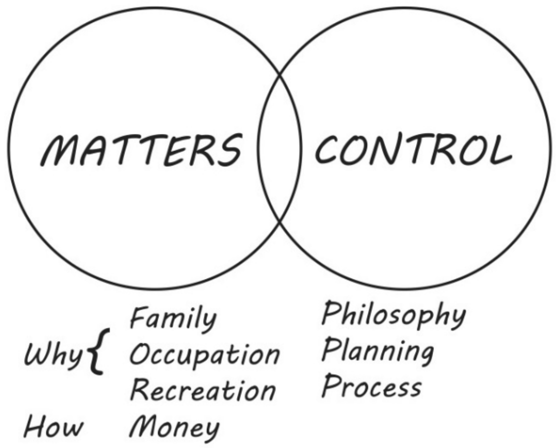
Connect those three with a bracket and jot down "WHY" beside them. You've just defined why your client wants a professional with a stewardship mindset to work with them.

For M – Write "money" and, beside it, write "HOW". Money is how you accomplish the previous three vital matters. I'll say it again: The more emphasis you place on why financial independence is important to your client, the more value they will place on how you get them there and, in the process, you differentiate yourself, become indispensable and de-commoditize your value.



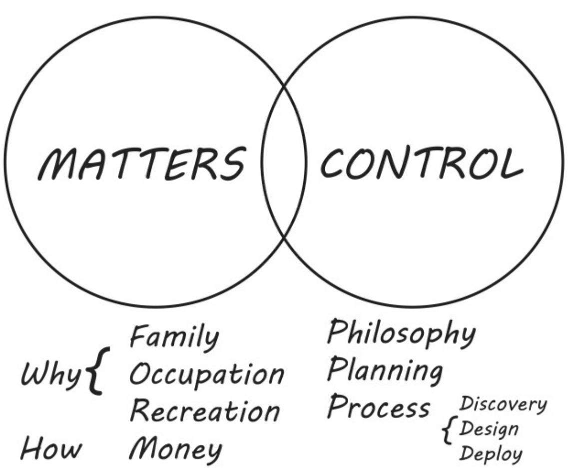
Now jump to the right-hand “Control” circle.

You can say something like the following: “In life, there are many things that are out of our control and, frankly, I don’t spend a lot of time worrying about them. Instead, I focus on the set of your sail rather than the direction of the wind.” Jot down three vertical “Ps” and fill each out in order.



The first is **Philosophy**. Express your understanding of the importance of panoramic wealth and risk management, of dealing with the puzzle that is the intersection of your client’s needs and the forces around him, your role in stewardship and not salesmanship – these are your points when discussing your philosophy.

The second P is **Planning**. You have a strategy. You don’t jam square pegs in round holes – you craft a strategy that addresses the client’s needs and brings clarity to their situation – more on this, shortly. You implement all this through the third P: **Process**. Everything you do is driven by a process, set to sync with the client’s future pace as their life and needs unfold – and that process, in turn, is driven by three Ds:



Step One - **Discovery**: Which gives us clarity.

Step Two - **Design**: Which gives us comfort.

Step Three - **Deploy**: Which gives us confidence that all the pieces of the puzzle are in place, clearly understood and focused to address the needs of the client, driven by what matters - their why. This gives us a complete picture.

That overlap in the middle? That's where you can best serve their needs. That's the point of "fit" – that's the part where your service as a steward matters – so take your pen and color that section in for your client. Tell them "that's where we live." If you want, sweep your pen over that sideways "8" repeatedly to make an infinity symbol and say "that's why I have second and third generation clients."

Be a broken record as you work through the diagram– "this is a step in our process – we have developed and refined in our process – there is a process in place…" It's not what you say, it's what they hear within their frame of reference. With the way you've cast yourself in this "trailer", you make sure that other messages don't stand up in comparison. Others sound like they have one year of experience 18 times while you sound like you have invested the past into the future and have cracked the code.

Don't use jargon. Don't bore them with the technical and the detailed about "how" you do your job. Jargon is endemic to every industry, and if you use it you will be lost in the crowd. This approach elevates you from the pack. Be clear, brief and direct. Let the client reveal to you how much more detail they need on your process. Some people want to know how to build a watch, others just want to know the time.

What will also differentiate and elevate you in the client's eyes is if you listen. Listen to the client's concerns and desires and understand their "why". Learn what is important, and use that when talking to other clients. You'll show them you are a professional with a process that values communication.

Listen to learn, not to buy time to think about your reply.

Tie your trailer in with your symbol and your unique value proposition to give it personality. Facts tell, stories sell.

Most importantly, this approach resonates immediately and it stays etched in their minds when they walk out the door. It's when they aren't in front of you – while they are driving home from the meeting - that the value of this impacts a relationship and makes you stand head and shoulders above the rest.