



The emergence of the global pandemic Covid-19 in the first quarter of 2020 caused severe economic and capital markets shocks. Sharp price declines in equities markets – and spikes in volumes – clearly illustrated this volatility. U.S. equities closed the first quarter with their worst performance since the financial crisis: the S&P 500 closed down 21%, the DJIA down 24% and the Nasdaq down 15%. Meanwhile, the CBOE Volatility Index jumped 329% to 53.54 from just 12.47 to start the year, peaking at 82.69.

Amid this volatility – though markets remained open and functioning as intended - investors across the board were anxious to understand the short and long-term impact on their finances and portfolios. At the same time as financial advisors and their respective firms worked to provide this information, the pandemic presented a host of challenges for the industry. These included the need to quickly activate near universal and immediate remote access and the technical needs such a rapid adjustment required, as well as regulatory challenges and the necessary allowances to allow work to continue.

SIFMA's Private Client Services Committee recently conducted a survey assessing how our member firms are communicating with their financial advisors (FAs) and how, in turn, FAs are communicating with their clients to help them better understand market and economic conditions, and maintain continued connectivity during this period of unprecedented physical, emotional, and financial challenge.

Financial advisors perform a critical service helping investors successfully navigate complex financial challenges and studies proves that people who use a financial advisor outperform those who do not. This is magnified during times of extreme volatility.

Prior to the pandemic, individual investors were engaged with their FAs and firms through a variety of communication methods that had been growing for some time. Firms and FAs have built a holistic approach based on trust and regular communication with their clients. The advisor role is greater than simply financial advice: wealth management is about people and their financial goals. Firms and their FAs emphasize the need to build a culture focused on doing what is best for their clients, ensuring trust is the foundation of the relationship. These building blocks created a solid foundation as firms rapidly pivoted to address the current circumstances and adequately communicate to clients the impact on their investments.

In this report, we highlight some of the core findings of the survey, including the frequency, method, and type of information provided to clients, which we found to be substantial, as well as the top concerns voiced by clients. "Financial advisors play an important role in serving clients' financial needs, but they also perform a critical service in helping investors navigate complex and challenging financial markets. This is really magnified during times of extreme volatility like we've been through in the last 90 days. The implication of this work that they are doing is clients are able to remain focused on their long-term goals."

Ken Cella, Edward Jones

"Now more than ever, clients are looking for real conversations about their goals and the things they're worried about. They need to get that sense of "true north" from an advisor, which advisors can provide by being good communicators. That means staying focused on the client's goals, feelings and insecurities and being transparent, authentic and visible throughout this challenging time."

Evamarie Schoenborn, Northwestern Mutual

We surveyed a broad range of firms comprising 100,000 advisors

Highlights include:

- 1) 31 firms comprising more than 100,000 financial advisors participated in the survey. These firms represent a broad cross-section of the industry in terms of firm size, structure and location.
- 2) Excellent representation across firm size, based on FA headcount (13 greater than 7,500, 7 from 1,000 5,000 and 11 under 1,000).
- 3) All 31 firms noted direct outreach by their FAs to clients.
- 4) 27 of the 31 firms also noted direct outreach to clients by either the CEO or the head of PCG.
- 5) Most firms have communicated to clients on multiple occasions with most communication occurring on, at least, a weekly basis.
- 6) The primary method of communication was via email and social media. These communication methods often included recorded video.
- 7) 25 firms reported that 75-100 percent of their FAs, and Client Service Associates (CSAs), were working from home. To enhance remote work, firms reported providing their people with some or all of the following:
 1) real time IT support, 2) hardware (i.e. laptops or PCs, 3) remote desktop access, and
 4) enhanced wi-fi connectivity.

Information Provided to Clients	Topics of Concern Voiced by Clients (open ended question)	Impediments Encountered During the Crisis
 Firms provided clients with multiple layers of information, the most prevalent being: Market Overview Portfolio Review and Advice Holistic - Health and Well-being of the Client Additional information provided included: CARES Act Banking needs 	Most firms noted multiple topics voiced by their clients. The most common were questions related to: • market volatility • state of the economy • portfolio allocation/performance/ financial planning/sudden loss of account value. Other topics raised by clients included: • pandemic response • accessibility of SBA loans	 The most pervasive impediment noted included: "wet signatures," notary public requirements, medallion signature requirements manual processing (mail, forms, checks)
Pandemic ResponseUse of technologyHistorical Context	 health and safety issues in general concern for their respective FA's well being 	

In addition, the firms reported the following:

			Firm Size		
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000
Communication from	Total Count	27	11	6	10
Corporate Leaders	2-3x/week	4	1	1	2
(CEO or head of Private Client Group) to Financial	Daily	3	2	1	0
Advisors? (please check all	Event-driven	12	5	2	5
that apply) Live (Skype/ Zoom/Conference Calls	Weekly	8	3	2	3
etc.)	N/A	4	2	1	1
	Total Count	21	12	5	4
	2-3x/week	4	3	1	0
	Daily	0	0	0	0
Recorded Video	Event-driven	9	4	2	3
	Weekly	8	5	2	1
	N/A	10	1	2	7
	Total Count	9	7	1	1
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
	Daily	1	1	0	0
Recorded Podcast	Event-driven	4	3	0	1
	Weekly	4	3	1	0
	N/A	22	6	6	10
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
	2-3x/week	10	4	2	4
– 1	Daily	7	3	3	1
Email	Event-driven	6	1	1	4
	Weekly	8	5	1	2
	N/A	0	0	0	0
	Total Count	23	11	7	5
	2-3x/week	3	2	0	1
la buo a sh	Daily	9	3	5	1
Intranet	Event-driven	5	0	2	3
	Weekly	6	6	0	0
	N/A	8	2	0	6
	Total Count	17	10	6	1
	2-3x/week	2	1	1	0
Social Media	Daily	2	2	0	0
(Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook)	Event-driven	6	2	3	1
	Weekly	7	5	2	0
	N/A	14	3	1	10

		Firm S		Firm Size	Size	
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000	
Communication from	Total Count	15	6	4	5	
corporate leaders directly	2-3x/week	1	1	0	0	
to clients (CEO or Head of	Daily	1	1	0	0	
	Event-driven	11	3	3	5	
Conference or Individual	Weekly	2	1	1	0	
Phone Calls etc.)	N/A	16	7	3	6	
	Total Count	10	6	1	3	
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0	
	Daily	0	0	7 3 6 1 0 0	0	
Recorded video	Event-driven	9	5	1	3	
	Weekly	1	1	0	0	
ecorded Video ecorded Podcast mail framet point from porton from porporate leaders directly clients (CEO or Head of frivate Client Group)? (CEO or Head of frivate Client Group (CEO or Head of frivate Client Group)? (CEO or Head frivate Client Group (CEO or Head of frivate Client Group (CEO o	N/A	21	7	6	8	
	Total Count	8	6	2	0	
	2-3x/week	1	1	0	0	
Recorded Podcast	Daily	1	1	0	0	
	Event-driven	5	3	2	0	
	Weekly	1	1	0	0	
	N/A	23	7	5	11	
	Total Count	21	9	4	8	
	2-3x/week	2	2	0	0	
Empil	Daily	1	0	0	1	
EIIIdii	Event-driven	13	4	4	5	
	Weekly	5	3	0	2	
	N/A	10	4	3	3	
	Total Count	12	7	2	3	
	2-3x/week	1	1	0 0 0 3 1 1 3 1 1 0 0 1 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 1 1 0 3 1 1 0 3 1 1	0	
Intranat	Daily	1	0		1	
intrallet	Event-driven	7	3	2	2	
	Weekly	3	3	0	0	
	N/A	19	6	5	8	
	Total Count	14	7	4	3	
	2-3x/week	2	1	1	0	
Social Media	Daily	0	0	0	0	
(Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook)	Event-driven	8	2	3	3	
	Weekly	4	4	0	0	
	N/A	17	6	3	8	

			Firm Size		
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000
	Total Count	21	10	5	6
Recorded communication	2-3x/week	6	3	1	2
from Regional or Branch Managers to	Daily	5	4	0	1
Financial Advisors?	Event-driven	2	0	2	0
Live (Skype/Zoom/ Conference Calls, etc.)	Weekly	8	3	2	3
	N/A	10	3	2	5
	Total Count	9	5	4	0
	2-3x/week	2	2	0	0
Deserved a d Mindre	Daily	0	0	10531400232325420	0
Recorded Video	Event-driven	6	3		0
	Weekly	1	0	1	0
	N/A	22	8	3	11
	Total Count	5	4	1	0
	2-3x/week	2	2	0	0
Departed Dedepat	Daily	0	0	0	0
Recorded Podcast	Event-driven	3	2	1	0
	Weekly	0	0	0	0
	N/A	26	9	6	11
	Total Count	23	12	6	5
	2-3x/week	9	4	2	3
Email	Daily	8	6	0	2
	Event-driven	3	1	2	0
	Weekly	3	1	2	0
	N/A	8	1	1	6
	Total Count	13	8	3	2
	2-3x/week	1	0	1	0
Intranet	Daily	5	4	0	1
includet	Event-driven	6	3	2	1
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
	N/A	18	5	4	9
	Total Count	13		3	2
	2-3x/week	4	3	1	0
Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn,	Daily	1	1	0	0
Facebook)	Event-driven	7	3	2	2
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
	N/A	18	5	4	9

		Firm S		Firm Size	Size	
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000	
Communication from	Total Count	8	5	1	2	
Corporate leaders directly	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0	
to clients (CEO or Head of	Daily	0	0	0	0	
Private Client Group?) Live (Skype/Zoom/	Event-driven	6	3	1	2	
Conference or Individual	Weekly	2	2	0	0	
Phone Calls etc.)	N/A	23	8	6	9	
	Total Count	10	6	2	2	
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0	
Deserved and Mindae	Daily	1	1	0 0 1 0 6 2	0	
Recorded Video	Event-driven	8	4	2	2	
	Weekly	1	1	0	0	
	N/A	21	7	5	9	
	Total Count	8	6	2	0	
	2-3x/week	1	1	0	0	
Recorded Podcast	Daily	1	1	0	0	
	Event-driven	6	4	2	0	
	Weekly	0	0	0	0	
	N/A	23	7	5	11	
	Total Count	21	8	6	7	
	2-3x/week	1	1	0	0	
Freed	Daily	1	1	0	0	
Email	Event-driven	18	6	6	6	
	Weekly	1	0	0	1	
	N/A	10	5	1	4	
	Total Count	10	6	2	2	
	2-3x/week	1	1	1 0 0 1 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 2 0 2 0 </td <td>0</td>	0	
la tur a t	Daily	2	2		0	
Intranet	Event-driven	7	3	2	2	
	Weekly	0	0	0	0	
	N/A	21	7	5	9	
	Total Count	16	10	4	2	
	2-3x/week	3	1	2	0	
Social Media	Daily	0	0	0	0	
(Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook)	Event-driven	10	7	1	2	
	Weekly	3	2	1	0	
	N/A	15	3	3	9	

		Fi		Firm Size	
		Iotai	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000
	Total Count	9	4	1	4
Communication from	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
Managers directly to	Daily	1	0	0	1
clients? Live (Skype/Zoom/	Event-driven	6	2	1	3
Phone Calls etc.)	Weekly	2	2	0	0
	N/A	22	9	6	7
	Total Count	4	4	0	0
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
	Daily	0	0	0	0
Recorded Video	Event-driven	3	3	0	
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
ecorded Podcast ecorded Podcast ranet ecorded Podcast function from egional on Branch anagers directly to ients? Live (Skype/Zoom/) ponference or Individual hone Calls etc.)	N/A	27	9	7	11
	Total Count	3	3	0	0
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
Deserved Dedeast	Daily	0	0	0	0
Recorded Podcast	Event-driven	2	2	0	0
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
	N/A	28	10	7	11
	Total Count	11	4	3	4
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
Empil	Daily	1	0	0	1
LIIIdii	Event-driven	8	2	3	3
	Weekly	2	2	0	0
	N/A	20	9	4	7
	Total Count	4	3	1	0
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0
Intranat	Daily	0	0	0	0
Intranet	Event-driven	3	2	1	0
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
	N/A	27	10	6	11
	Total Count	8	4	3	1
Email Intranet Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn,	2-3x/week	1	0	1	0
	Daily	0	0	0	0
Facebook)	Event-driven	6	3	2	1
	Weekly	1	1	0	0
	N/A	23	9	4	10

		Takal	Total		Firm Size	
		Iotai	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000	
	Total Count	18	8	6	4	
Communication from	2-3x/week	7	2	4	1	
Economists/Market Strategists/Portfolio	Daily	1	1	0	0	
Managers to clients?	Event-driven	8	3	1,000-5,000 6 4	3	
	Weekly	2	2	0	0	
	N/A	13	5	1	7	
	Total Count	18	11	3	4	
	2-3x/week	4	2	2	0	
December 1 Vieles	Daily	0	0	2 2 0 0 4 1 5 0 2 4 9 4 1 1 2 0 4 2 1 1 2 0 4 2 1 1 2 0 4 2 1 6 0 3 1 0	0	
Recorded Video	Event-driven	7	4	1	2	
	Weekly	7	5	0	2	
ecorded Podcast	N/A	13	2	4	7	
	Total Count	15	9	4	2	
	2-3x/week	2	1	1	0	
Decorded Dedeast	Daily	2	2	0	0	
Recorded Podcast	Event-driven	7	4	2	1	
	Weekly	4	2	1	1	
	N/A	16	4	3	9	
	Total Count	24	11	6	7	
	2-3x/week	3	0	3	0	
Empil	Daily	3	1	0	2	
Email	Event-driven	11	6	1	4	
	Weekly	7	4	2	1	
	N/A	7	2	1	4	
	Total Count	16	9	5	2	
	2-3x/week	2	1	1	0	
Intranet	Daily	4	2	1	1	
Intranet	Event-driven	3	1	1	1	
	Weekly	7	5	2	0	
	N/A	15	4	2	9	
	Total Count	15	9	4	2	
	2-3x/week	5	2	2	1	
Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn,	Daily	1	1	0	0	
(Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook)	Event-driven	5	4	0	0 1 1 9 7 0 2 4 1 4 2 0 1 1 4 2 0 1 1 1 0 9 9 2 1	
	Weekly	4	2	2	0	
	N/A	16	4	3	9	

			Firm Size			
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000	
	Total Count	28	13	7	8	
Communications from	2-3x/week	2	1	1,000-5,000	1	
Communications from Financial Advisors to	Daily	20	10	6	4	
clients?Live (Skype/Zoom/	Event-driven	3	0	1	2	
Phone Calls etc.)	Weekly	3	2	0	1	
	N/A	3	0	0	3	
	Total Count	9	6	2	1	
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0	
Deserved Video	Daily	2	2	6 1 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 6 7 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 <td< td=""><td>0</td></td<>	0	
Recorded video	Event-driven	7	4	2	1	
ecorded Video	Weekly	0	0	0	0	
	N/A	22	7	5	10	
	Total Count	10	8	1	1	
	2-3x/week	0	0	0	0	
ecorded Podcast	Daily	2	2	0	0	
Recorded Poucasi	Event-driven	7	5	1 0 0 1 0 1 0 6 7 0	1	
corded Podcast	Weekly	1	1	0	0	
	N/A	21	5	6	10	
	Total Count	30	13	7	10	
	2-3x/week	0	0	6 1 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 4 7 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 <td>0</td>	0	
Empil	Daily	22	11	5	6	
EIIIdii	Event-driven	4	0	1	3	
	Weekly	4	2	1	1	
	N/A	1	0	0	1	
	Total Count	11	6	3	2	
	2-3x/week	1	1	7 0 6 1 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 5 1 0 1 0 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 5 1 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 1 0 3 0 1 1 1 1 <td< td=""><td>0</td></td<>	0	
Intropot	Daily	8	3		2	
Intranet	Event-driven	1	1	0	0	
	Weekly	1	1	0	0	
	N/A	20	7	4	9	
	Total Count	20	10	7	3	
	2-3x/week	3	1	2	0	
Social Media (Twitter, LinkedIn,	Daily	7	3	0 0 6 1 0 0 2 0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1 1 1 0 3 0 3 0 3 0 4 7 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 0 3 1 1	1	
(Twitter, Linkedin, Facebook)	Event-driven	8	4	2	2	
	Weekly	2	2	0	0	
	N/A	11	3	0	8	

			Firm Size		
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
Are you keeping track of Financial Advisor outreach	No	16	6	3	7
to their clients? - Selected	Yes	13	6	4	3
Choice	N/A	2	1	0	1
Is there a central point	Total Count	31	13	7	11
where client communication o Financial Advisors is	No	13	4	3	6
collected, analyzed, and	Yes	int 31 16 16 13 13 2 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13 14 13 13 14 13 16 14 16 2 14 16 2 14 16 2 14 11 8 16 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 30 14 11 30 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14 11 31 14	9	4	3
acted upon?	N/A	2	0	0	2
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
Deveentage of Financial	0-25%	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Financial Advisors proactively	25-50%	1	0	0	1
reaching out	50-75%	8	4	2	2
to clients	75-100%	22	9	5	8
	N/A	0	0	0	0
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
Type of information provided by Financial	Holistic - Health and well-being of client	28	13	7	8
Advisor to clients	Market Overview	31	13	7	11
(please check all that apply)	Other	6	3	1	2
- Selected Choice	Portfolio Review & Advice	30	13	7	10
	Total Count	30	12	7	11
	0-25%	0	0	0	0
What percentage of your	25-50%	2	1	1	0
Financial Advisors are working from home?	50-75%	3	0	1	2
	75-100%	25	11	5	9
	N/A	1	1	0	0
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
	0-25%	2	2	0	0
What percentage of your	25-50%	2	0	1	1
Client Service Associates are working from home?	50-75%	2	0	1	1
j i i	75-100%	25	11	5	9
	N/A	1	1	0	0
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
How do you provide	Hardware - Laptops, PCs, etc.	30	13	6	11
Financial Advisors/Client Service Associates with	Live/Real Time IT Support	29	13	6	10
resources/support? (please check all that apply)	Other	3	0	1	2
- Selected Choice	Software - Remote Desktop Access, etc.	30	12	7	11
	WIFI Connectivity	14	6	3	5

		Firm Size		Firm Size		
		Total	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000	
	Total Count	29	13	5	11	
	2-3x/week	6	2	2	2	
How are you engaging your Client Service Associates?	Daily	13	7	1	5	
Live (Skype/Zoom/	Event-driven	4	1	2	1	
Conference Calls, etc.)	Weekly	6	3	0	3	
	N/A	2	0	2	0	
	Total Count	13	10	3	0	
	2-3x/week	4	3	1	0	
	Daily	0	0	0	0	
Recorded Video	Event-driven	7	5	7 1 1 2 3 0 0 2 10 3 3 1 0 0 5 2 2 0 3 4 12 7 2 1 8 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 7 1 1 1 7 1 7 1 4 12 3 0 0 13 7 1 4 12 3 0 0 13 7 0 0 13 7 2 1 1 1 3 4 7 1	0	
	Weekly	2	2	0	0	
	N/A	18	3	4	1 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	
	Total Count	30	12	7	11	
	2-3x/week	5	2	1	2	
	Daily	20	8	4	8	
Email	Event-driven	3	1	1	1	
	Weekly	2	1	1	0	
	N/A	1	1	0	0	
	Total Count	31	13	7	11	
Direct Contact from Senior	No	7	1	4	2	
Management?	Yes	24	12	3	9	
	N/A	0	0	0	0	
	Total Count	31	13	7	11	
	No	0	0	0	0	
Direct contact from FAs	Yes	31	13	1,000-5,000 5 2 1 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 4 1 4 1 1 1 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 7 0 7 0 7 1 0 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	11	
	N/A	0	0	0	0	
	Total Count	31	13	7	11	
What perceptage of your	0-25%	5	2	1	2	
What percentage of your Client Service Associates	25-50%	3	1	1	1	
are engaged in direct client	50-75%	12	3	4	5	
outreach?	75-100%	11	7	1	3	
	N/A	0	0	0	0	
	Total Count	31	13	7	11	
Are Client Services	No	5	2	1	2	
Associates reaching	Yes	23	11	4	8	
out directly to clients? - Selected Choice	Total Count 31 13 0-25% 5 2 25-50% 3 1 50-75% 12 3 75-100% 11 7 N/A 0 0 No 5 2 Yes 23 11 If yes, please note how 13 5	2	6			
	N/A	3	0	2	1	

		Total G 31 3	F	Firm Size	
		Iotal	Greater than 5,000	1,000-5,000	Under 1,000
	Total Count	31	13	7	11
	Challenges in responding to clients' inquiries - technology related, time demand related	3	2	0	1
	"Manual processing of mail, forms, checks, etc."	18	7	4	7
What Impediments have your firms encountered	Medallion signature requirements	11	6	2	3
during the COVID-19 crisis (Please check all that apply) - Selected Choice	Notary public requirements	13	6	3	4
Selected Choice	Other	4	3	1,000-5,000 7 0 4 2	1
	Other "wet" signatures	18	9	4	5
	Regulatory constraints - work- from-home	4	3	0	1
	Technology to be able to work-from- home	12	5	3	4