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CASE STUDY

Rethinking the Advisor Transition Workflow

BY TOM VAN HORN



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FOR REGISTERED INVESTMENT advisors (RIAs) and RIA aggregators, growth increasingly comes from acquisitions and advisor transitions. Deal activity has accelerated; however, the operational process that follows often has not. For many firms, onboarding a new advisor’s book remains the constraint that delays revenue and limits how many transitions can occur at once.

The Operational Bottleneck

When an advisor joins a new firm, client information rarely arrives in a single, clean

format. It typically comes as spreadsheets, PDFs, account statements, system exports, and other files prepared over time. Data is inconsistent, incomplete, and structured differently across sources.

Historically, the home-office team must reconcile these inputs, scrub missing or conflicting fields, reformat information for multiple destination systems, load it into applications, and then return to the advisor to resolve gaps. This process often repeats across dozens or hundreds of client accounts.

As a result, onboarding can stretch from several weeks to several months. Because the work is labor intensive, firms often transition one advisor or one office at a time unless they increase staffing.

Moving to Exception-Based Operations

In this use case, the firm started working with TIFIN AXIS to put agentic middle-office workflows in place, aimed at reducing the friction that comes from managing multiple systems and operational handoffs during transitions.

FIGURE 1 Rethinking Advisor Transitions

Reducing onboarding time and operational strain through exception-based workflows with TIFIN AXIS

THE TRANSFORMATION		EXCEPTION-BASED WORKFLOW	KEY OUTCOMES
<p>Traditional Process 10-12 Weeks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconcile multiple data formats (spreadsheets, PDFs, exports) Manual scrubbing of missing or conflicting fields Reformat data for each destination system Load data manually into applications Return to advisor to resolve gaps Repeat process for hundreds of accounts Limited to one transition at a time 	<p>With TIFIN AXIS Days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files submitted incrementally as available Continuous automated processing (24/7) Data validated and structured automatically Records prepared for downstream systems Team receives morning summary of status Focus only on exceptions requiring review Multiple transitions in parallel, no added headcount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Eliminate manual data reconciliation ✓ Shift operations to exception management ✓ Scale acquisition-driven growth 	<p>How It Works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files Arrive → Data Ingestion Process → Auto Validation and Structuring Prepare → System-ready Records Review → Exception Review Only Complete → Advisor Live in Platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Days Typical onboarding time ↓ from 10-12 weeks 24/7 • Continuous processing • No business hours constraint Parallel • Multiple transitions • No additional headcount

Source: TIFIN

Most validation, formatting, and system preparation work now occurs automatically as data is received.

Advisors no longer wait to assemble a single, complete data package. Information can be submitted incrementally as it becomes available. As files arrive, they are processed continuously, including outside business hours. Client records are validated, structured, and prepared for downstream systems without requiring manual handling at each step.

The practical change is visible each morning. When the home-office team begins the day, they receive a summary showing which client accounts have been successfully prepared and which require review. Rather than starting with raw data and manual entry, the team focuses only on exceptions—the accounts that require clarification, missing documentation, or judgment.

This redefines the role of operations from repetitive setup work to oversight and exception management (see figure 1).

Advisor Experience and Time-to-Billing

The impact extends beyond internal efficiency. In traditional transitions, advisors often experience delays and limited visibility into progress. Readiness to fully serve clients in the new environment can take weeks or months.

Under this model, most client accounts are prepared quickly, with a small percentage flagged for follow-up. Advisors gain operational readiness sooner and have clearer insight into what remains outstanding.

In this RIA use case, onboarding timelines were reduced from 10 to 12 weeks to a matter of days for most accounts. Because the home office is focused primarily on exceptions rather than full manual execution, the firm can transition multiple books of business in parallel without adding headcount.

Shorter onboarding directly improves time-to-billing. Advisors can operate in the new environment sooner, and the firm captures revenue earlier in the transition cycle.

Operational Implications

For firms that grow through acquisitions and advisor recruitment, onboarding historically has acted as a capacity constraint. The volume of manual work determined how many transitions could occur at once.

By restructuring onboarding around continuous processing and exception-based review, the firm increased throughput without expanding staff. The result is a faster transition process, improved visibility for advisors, and greater scalability in an acquisition-driven growth model. ●

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