

A DAY IN THE LIFE



Rachna Dhingra, CFP[®] Professional

Rachna Dhingra, CFP[®] – Never stop learning

With almost two decades in financial services across two continents, Rachna Dhingra, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER[®] professional, has lots of experience in her field. But she's the first to admit, as a professional financial planner, she's always learning.

Reflecting on her career with CIBC, Rachna says, "even after 14 years, I feel every day I learn something new".

A degree or designation has supported each step in Rachna's career. Continuous learning has made all the difference on her path to becoming a professional financial planner.

Designations have opened doors

Rachna's career as a financial planner has its roots in banking in her home city of Calcutta, India. Armed with a BComm and Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, she started out as a financial services representative (FSR).

Upon arriving in Canada, banking called to her again. Once more, her dedication to continuous learning made the difference. Thanks to her courses and certifications, she leaped over an entry position, to start her Canadian career as an FSR.

With every step forward, Rachna has always asked herself, "What's next?"

Rachna stayed with CIBC, progressing from FSR to financial advisor. She kept

learning and gaining new credentials along the way. As a financial advisor, she was gaining the experience to become a financial planner, but something was missing. The only way to move ahead was to get her CFP[®] certification from FP Canada[™].

With a young son at home and a demanding job, finding the time was the biggest challenge. However, Rachna studied hard and passed her CFP exam on her first try. Her official promotion to financial planner followed on January 1, 2021.

"You can give the best advice in the world, but if you're letting the little things slide, you're letting the client down. And it's all about how they feel!"

The CFP designation rounded out her hard skills with implementation smarts

Rachna's experience provided the theory she needed to do the job. The CFP designation added the know-how to implement it for various clients. "Even today, when my colleagues do their CFP certification, I tell them, it's not about the theory. We all know the theory; it's how you actually want to implement it for the client."

The soft skills matter too

Rachna asserts that, for anybody looking at financial planning as a career, it isn't just about financial smarts.

"Clients just want to know you're taking care of things. It's how you're making them feel and whether you were there for them when it mattered most."

- Rachna Dhingra

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- **Time management** is a big part of the job. Rachna's day starts with following up on email and voicemail inquiries before digging into the day's meetings. There are usually three or four meetings a day with clients.

She knows about 20 calls will come in during the day, many of which will need some immediate action. At the end of the scheduled workday, there's always more to do. You need to set priorities and have the flexibility to do the extra hours to keep clients satisfied.

- **A commitment to ethics** is another key characteristic for successful financial planning. "If something isn't right for the client, it will never work out for you."
- **Lastly**, she shares the best advice she ever received from a senior colleague: "Talk less and listen more."

It's not about the product; it's how you make the client feel

Rachna finds, in general, clients just want to know you're taking care of things.

It's how you're making them feel and whether you were there for them when it mattered most.

That was never more true than in the case of Chantal*.

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"I'm not sitting at home worrying about where my money is and what is it doing for me. The fact that I do know a little bit more, because Rachna's been so thorough at helping me through the process, makes me feel more confident."

Chantal, Client of Rachna Dhingra

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Chantal came to CIBC because she was impressed with the sound advice and care her elderly father gets from Rachna. With Rachna, Chantal and her husband did a full financial plan. And they needed it sooner than they expected.

When Chantal's husband became ill, thanks to their plan and Rachna's help, they knew he could retire early. Chantal was able to take time off work while he recovered, then retire with her husband. Chantal says "It was really comforting,

I couldn't have made that decision on my own."

Sadly, shortly into their retirement, Chantal's husband passed away. At a devastating time, the plan they'd made with Rachna simplified Chantal's journey.

Having a plan also meant some peace of mind for Chantal. "They've educated me."

Helping Chantal is another step in Rachna's continuous learning journey

Rachna underscores that, although you need the know-how in this job, that's not what gives it meaning. Making a difference to Chantal's life was one of the proudest moments of Rachna's career.

"This is why you're there; it's not always the investment plan. In this job, and I say this from the bottom of my heart, it's how you made that client feel. And that's what has kept me going."

"I think every day there's a learning; every client makes me learn something new."

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Certification

CFP® certification is the most widely recognized financial planning designation in Canada and throughout the world and is considered the standard for the financial planning profession. CFP® professionals have demonstrated the knowledge, skills, experience and ethics to provide holistic financial planning strategies and solutions at the highest level of complexity required of the profession, and work with their clients to build a financial plan so that they can **Live Life Confidently™**