

## A Mid-Year Checkup On The Competitiveness of Your Fund's Marketing

By Bruce Frummerman  
Frummerman & Nemeth Inc.



*Bruce Frummerman is CEO of Frummerman & Nemeth Inc., a communications and sales marketing consultancy that helps financial services firms create brand identities for their organizations and develop and implement effective new marketing strategies and programs. He has authored many articles on the topic of marketing money management services and is a frequent speaker on the subject at industry conferences. He can be reached at [info@frummerman.com](mailto:info@frummerman.com), or by visiting [www.frummerman.com](http://www.frummerman.com).*

Earlier this year investment management consulting firm Casey, Quirk & Associates released its white paper *Competing for the 21st Century Investor* in which it addressed challenges asset management firms face today, growth prospects and key factors required for success in growing assets under management. Organic industry growth will slow, competition will increase and wealthy individuals rather than institutions will drive future revenue growth over the next five years, they reported.

The first success factor step that Casey Quirk said is required to out-market competitors today is to undertake a strategic initiative that demonstrates investment leadership. Money management firms need "a brand built on a clear investment philosophy supported by well-articulated process, macroeconomic worldview, and innovative thought leadership," Casey Quirk said.

What initiatives has your money management firm undertaken this year to deliver what Casey Quirk calls "innovative thought leadership, capably delivered to institutional investors and intermediaries for individuals?"

Consider this: a money management firm's thought leadership is based on its opinions, not its data. While having good performance is a 'must have' to attract and retain investors, performance, or any data for that matter, does not equal thought leadership.

Achieving a strong investment brand at a product-specific level is needed. This requires having people understand and buy into how you invest. This is vital to any asset raising effort, since your firm's opinions regarding investment strategy and approach are key considerations in investor due diligence. Furthermore, this is the very content around which you want to promote your firm's thought leadership.

For this your asset management firm first needs to have a cogent and compelling articulation of its investment beliefs and investment process in its written and verbal marketing content. When that is in hand you can decide which key selling messages to emphasize when pursuing public recognition for the intellectual acumen of management regarding its

approach to portfolio management either through participating in industry conferences or speaking with the financial trade press.

The success of your opinion-based communications marketing action plan is dependent upon what you say, how you say it, how you disseminate the communications content throughout the selling cycle (from verbal presentations to written marketing collateral and the answers to essay questions in RFPs) and how you get public recognition for the intellectual acumen of management regarding its approach to generating returns and managing risk.

Give your asset management firm a midyear communications marketing check-up by asking these questions:

- How well are we communicating a clear investment philosophy and well-articulated process?
- Is the philosophy and process story being effectively told, and in enough detail, throughout the selling cycle by our portfolio manager and sales people?
- How consistent is the story we deliver in all written and verbal communications?
- Have we figured out what steps to take to reduce the odds of a prospect incorrectly retelling our story to others, and how have we implemented this?
- How are we getting third-party endorsement for our investment strategy implementation through participation as a panelist or speaker at industry conferences and in the financial trade press?

If you cannot answer these questions in detail, including how you have taken action to achieve these objectives, rethinking your storyline for communicating the investment beliefs and investment process of your fund and the dissemination of that image-shaping information should top your To Do List.