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Susan B. Weiner  
**Investment Writing**

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"Institutional investing" isn't as great as you think

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That's what Van Kampen Investments discovered when it researched how to name a new retirement income product.

"Institutional" means expertise to financial services professionals, but it makes individuals think of hospitals and prisons, said Andrew Scherer, managing director, Van Kampen Investments, in his comments to the Managing Retirement Income conference on Feb. 10.

Van Kampen named its new product "Retirement Strategy Funds" and adopted the tag line "helping you build a better plan" under the influence of research showing that

1. "'Retirement' resonated better than 'Freedom,' 'Target,' 'Lifetime' and others."
2. "'Strategic' tested better than 'automatic,' 'institutional,' or 'customized.'"
3. "Positive messaging resonates, fear-based does not."

Can you think of other words that mean different things to you and your clients? I think "risk" is one of them.

I heard some other interesting ideas at the Managing Retirement Income conference:

\* [Notable quotes from the Managing Retirement Income conference](#), including "Retirement will turn out to have been a twentieth century phenomenon"

\* [Highlights from the Managing Retirement Income conference](#)

### **Funds using alternative investment strategies gain steam**

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Alternative investments that are less correlated to major market indexes are gathering momentum in the advisor community. Two trends are fueling the movement. First, the sharp market declines since September 2008 have boosted the attraction of strategies that don't dive along with stock market. "This year, people are looking to dial down risk in their portfolios," says Bill Harding, director of research at Morningstar Investment Services in Chicago. Second, these strategies are increasingly available to those who don't qualify as accredited investors (with investable assets of \$1 million or more).

Continue reading "[Against the Grain](#)," my article in the March 2009 issue of *Financial Planning* magazine (free registration may be required for access).

Also, here's some information that didn't make it into the article. It's the list of funds used by the advisors whom I interviewed.

- Absolute Opportunities
- Absolute Strategies
- Arbitrage
- Diamond Hill Long-Short
- Direxion Commodity Trends
- Gateway
- Highbridge Statistical Market Neutral
- Hussman Strategic Growth
- Merger
- Nakoma Absolute Return
- PIMCO CommodityRealReturn Strategy
- Robeco Boston Partners Long/Short Equity
- Rydex Managed Futures Strategy

"James Grant: A Positive Lesson from the Great Depression"

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Great price tags on a number of investments are the silver lining of the current recession, according to James Grant, founder of *Grant's*

*Interest Rate Observer.*

Grant shared his "Thoughts on the Financial Markets and the Current State of the Economy" with the Boston Security Analysts Society (BSAS) on February 11. He spoke at length about the virtues of value investing, as exemplified by the Depression era strategies of Floyd Odlum of Atlas Corporation. Today's investors can learn from Odlum's strategy of underpaying for assets, Grant said.

Continue reading "[James Grant: A Positive Lesson from the Great Depression](#)," my article in *Advisor Perspectives*.

By the way, at the same BSAS dinner, Harry Markopolos was awarded a whistle by the society for his efforts to inform the SEC about the implausibility of Bernie Madoff's investment returns. The audience gave Markopolos a standing ovation. "60 Minutes" was there to film his award.

### **To "dear" or not to "dear" in your email**

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What salutation should you use to start a business email?

- * Dear?
- * Hello?
- * Something else?

Continue reading "[To 'dear' or not to 'dear' in your email](#)" and answer the poll on my blog, if you've got the time.

I was surprised by how this topic sparked strong feelings among my friends and colleagues. Here's a response from one investment professional who was kind enough to comment.

"I always start emails the way I would start a conversation when entering someone's office. I would never start such a conversation by jumping into my opening line and I would never start by saying Dear. Hi seems nicely in the middle."

--Jeff Brown, Highstreet Asset Management

Following up last month's newsletter

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### **Reader poll results**

Here are the results of last month's poll on my blog, which was a follow-up to "[Would you 'robo call' your clients?](#)"

The question: How often would you "robo call" your clients? Nobody was keen on robo calls.

Results:

- 100%, Never
- 0%, Only with client's okay
- 0%, Rarely
- 0%, Sometimes
- 0%, Regularly

If you're looking to increase the frequency of your client contact without resorting to robo calls, you may wish to revisit these posts:

- \* [Boost readership of your e-newsletter with powerful subject lines](#)
- \* [Print newsletter vs. e-newsletter](#)
- \* "[Stop Sending 'Dear Valued Client' Emails](#)"

### **Career corner: LinkedIn status lines, blogs, MPN, ASJA**

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Leaving your job? Consider announcing it to the world using your LinkedIn status line, suggests "[Status? Say 'Hello' to My New Job](#)" on the LinkedIn blog. One advantage of the LinkedIn status line over an email is that you can easily delete or update your status line. An email lasts forever and may be viewed as spam by some.

Developing your own blog can help you find a job, as Max Gladwell says in "[Out of Work? Need a Job? Start a Blog. This is Resume 2.0.](#)" Another author describes how social networking worked for him in "[How I Used Inbound Marketing to Find a Job in a Recession.](#)"

Boston-area marketers may wish to participate in the [Marketing Professionals Network \(MPN\) event](#) on March 11. It will feature recruiter Ted Chaloner. I'm a lapsed member of MPN.

If you're developing a consulting or freelance business, you may enjoy reading the blog posts quoting "Prospecting for Corporate Clients," my cover article for the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) newsletter. See "[How to Start Writing for Corporate Clients](#)" and "[Breaking into Corporate Writing.](#)" Aspiring writers may enjoy the

[ASJA's annual conference in April](#). Discounted fees available until March 15. I'm an ASJA member and enjoyed the three conferences I've attended.

Documenting the quarterly portfolio performance report process

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I've been writing quarterly portfolio performance reports for an institutional client. It's a matter of interpreting attribution analysis on the portfolios and dropping the right data from the right reports in the right place. Not a heck of a lot of writing skill is required. It's more about managing details accurately and quickly.

My client recently lost a key employee, so I've been helping them document the performance reporting process. It's satisfying to know that I'm making things easier for the next person who'll tackle this project.

I enjoy my mix of clients for projects ranging from the detail-oriented performance reports to the articles and white papers that emphasize writing persuasively. Thank you for continuing to send me your projects and referrals!

By the way, **if you missed my offer last month to send you a link to my free report, *Investment Writing Top Tips 2009***, then simply email your request to me. I appreciate your continued readership.

Please help me spread the word. Use the "Send to a Colleague" button to forward this newsletter with your personal note to your colleagues whom it would interest.

Thank you!

**Having trouble with this newsletter's links?**

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Are you having trouble when you click on this newsletter's links? The solution might be to re-subscribe using your personal email address.

Many of the links in this newsletter go to my Investment Writing blog. Some companies block employee access to blogs, even if the content is work-related.

If you're having this problem, you can subscribe online using your personal email address or email me, so I can add your personal email address.

Quick Links...

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**Contact Information**

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phone: 617-969-4509

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