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**Eaton Vance, Evergreen, and FRC on
"Communication Strategies for Good Times and Bad"**

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Mutual fund companies are ratcheting up their communications, as you might expect in challenging times. I learned some of their strategies from a panel on "Communication Strategies for Good Times and Bad" with speakers from Eaton Vance, Evergreen Investments, and Financial Research Corp. They spoke at NICSA's East Coast Regional meeting in Boston on January 15.

**Social media on the rise**

I was struck by how companies are using--or considering--communication tools such as webinars and social media that barely existed five years ago, back when I worked for Columbia Management Group.

Social media is impacting every brand and how firms need to communicate, said Stephen J. Barrett, chief marketing officer and managing director, Eaton Vance Distributors. He suggested that you search for your company name on Facebook. (By the way, when I searched "Eaton Vance," I found several people named "Vance Eaton," but also a number of people who might be Eaton Vance employees.)

Continue reading about [fund firms' communications strategies](#).

By the way, another NICSAs panel talked about "Collaborative Technology Solutions for a 21st Century Workforce." But they could have replaced "21st Century Workforce" with "Recession." Online tools such as wikis, webinars, blogs, and collaborative document creation and management seem tailor-made for an environment in which cost-cutting is important because they reduce the need for costly travel and on-site meetings.

### **Would you "robo call" your clients?**

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I wouldn't.

I winced when I saw "robo calls" among the crisis communications tools recommended by a marketer who shall remain anonymous. This person suggested using robo calls to invite financial planning clients to a quickly organized meeting or conference call at a time of crisis.

Robo calls. Those automated, pre-recorded phone messages that jam up my phone line even after I hang up. I don't care what their topic is. I do not want to be robo-called.

But is there a good alternative for speedy communication with many people?

Continue reading "[Would you 'robo call' your clients?](#)" Also, please answer the poll in the right-hand column of my blog.

"Carmen Reinhart on Lessons from Past Financial Crises"

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Digging ourselves out of the current financial crisis will likely take many years, according to a study of similar historical crises around the world.

In an interview with *Advisor Perspectives*, Carmen M. Reinhart, professor of economics at the School of Public Policy and the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland, who coauthored "[The Aftermath of Financial Crises](#)" with Harvard economist Kenneth S. Rogoff, says this crisis won't be any different.

According to the Reinhart-Rogoff paper, severe financial crises around the world, including all of the crises since World War II and the crises in Norway in 1899 in the U.S. in 1929, typically share several characteristics:

\* "Asset market collapses are deep and prolonged. Real housing price declines average 35 percent stretched out over six years, while equity price collapses average 55 percent over a downturn of about three and a half years."

\* "The aftermath of banking crises is associated with profound declines in output and employment. The unemployment rate rises an average of 7 percentage points over the down phase of the cycle, which lasts on average over four years. Output falls (from peak to trough) an average of over 9 percent, although the duration of the downturn, averaging roughly two years, is considerably shorter than for unemployment."

\* "The real value of government debt tends to explode, rising an average of 86 percent in the major post-World War II episodes."

Continue reading [my interview with Carmen Reinhart](#) in *Advisor Perspectives*.

## **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 Margaret Patterson's "[Creating Pitch Books without Losing Your Mind...A Sequel.](#)"

The question: How often do you customize your pitch books?

Results:

25%, I don't use pitch books

0%, Never, my pitch book is always the same

25%, Rarely

12%, Sometimes

37%, Often

0%, Always

You're intrigued by LinkedIn

Many of you seem intrigued by LinkedIn. Quite a few of you clicked on the link to [my LinkedIn profile](#) in the last issue of this newsletter. So here's a link to "[Three ways to leverage your professional network while job hunting](#)" on the LinkedIn Blog. But don't wait until you get laid off to get involved with LinkedIn. One of the key tips is to build your network before you need it.

Speaking of job hunting, I heard from a recruiter seeking a product marketing specialist for a financial services firm in Boston. I'd be glad to pass along the job description. The firm will only talk with people who have no more than three to five years of experience, according to the recruiter.

Website lessons from the Obama administration

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You can learn about good website design from the Obama administration.

Writer Matthew Battles explains how in "[Extreme makeover WhiteHouse.gov edition](#): How should we read the new Obama home page?" in the *Boston Globe*.

Some of the key lessons illustrated by the new [whitehouse.gov website](#):

- \* **Prioritize.** Put your most important information first. Remember the top half of your page will get the most attention.
- \* **Use active verbs.** They raise the energy level of your web page.
- \* **Use white space effectively.**

## Get your copy of *Investment Writing Top Tips 2009*

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As a "thank you" to you, my subscribers, I'm offering a free copy of my *Investment Writing Top Tips 2009* e-publication.



Investment Writing Top Tips 2009 contains practical communications tips that have appeared in this newsletter--or on my blog--during the past year. You'll get information you can use to improve your client communications, grammar, punctuation, and more.

If you'd like a copy of *Investment Writing Top Tips 2009*, please email me. I'll send you a link to the file.



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.

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