



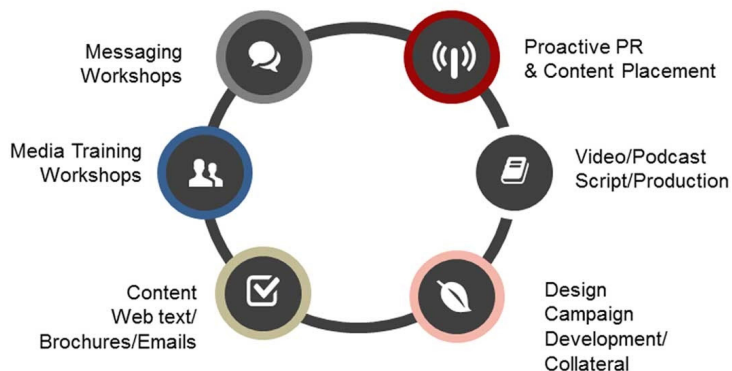
HOW TO GROW YOUR MUTUAL FUND: COMMITMENT, DEDICATION, AND A COMPREHENSIVE PR AND MARKETING PLAN

SunStar Strategic's Hibre Teklemariam, VP and Partner, addressed the Investment Company Institute's (ICI) Small Funds Committee in May 2017 in Washington D.C.

More than 30 fund company executives attended from firms of all sizes, to hear speakers on a range of topics relating to the financial industry.

Hibre's presentation, "Growth Strategies for Mutual Funds and Asset Managers," was well received and covered:

- Asset flow trends and growth characteristics for actively managed funds
- Marketing strategies for growth
- The role of PR and execution strategy
- Learning and knowing your firm messages
- Being proactive
- Leveraging results
- Social media



Following the presentation there was a robust Q&A session.

Q: Do you really need to commit to a comprehensive PR and marketing program? Can you just do a portion?

A: A comprehensive PR and marketing program is just that – comprehensive. It starts “at the beginning” by helping you uncover your firm’s key messages which can be used on your website and on all marketing materials. Your PR account executive will secure interviews on your behalf allowing you to share your firm’s messages. The media results, whether print, online or radio, can then be shared on your website or via email to clients or prospects. A comprehensive PR and marketing plan will allow you to get your message out consistently and with a much greater reach than if you simply did a single podcast or sent a few emails.

Q: What do I need to do to grow my fund?

A: First of all, you need to be committed to growth and, ideally, fit certain criteria.

Are your fund managers invested? Ideally they will either be personally invested in your fund or have long-term tenure.

How is your performance? It’s okay to have down periods as long as your long term performance is good. It’s important to be able to show potential shareholders that the fund can and has performed well. Your long-term

track record is of utmost importance and speaks directly to investors.

Are you dedicated to the process? To successfully grow your fund you need to be “all in,” those with “one foot in” won’t see the same success.

Q: How can I tell if my program is working?

A: The obvious answer is growth but, that won’t likely happen overnight. This process involves an ongoing cycle of “evaluate, update and repeat.” Together with your PR and/or marketing team, you should have solid transparent relationships. Working together as a team, you will evaluate the program at various intervals to see what’s working and what’s not and make any necessary adjustments. Your program should remain fluid and easy to adapt to changes that might arise in the markets. It’s crucial that you assemble a team, including your company and the PR/marketing firm, that works well together as partners.

Q: How important is having a defined message?

A: A concise and consistent message is crucial to your firm’s growth and success. Focus on what differentiates your firm from the many others like yours. Until you can articulate your differentiator you’re just like everyone else. The components of what make your firm unique and different are what will help you stand out from the crowd and help to leave a lasting impression.

Fine tuning your message can be difficult, so SunStar has developed a workshop to help our clients whittle through the clutter to focus on what makes them stand out. Once you’ve identified your key messages it’s imperative that fund managers and key personnel become well versed in articulating the messages. You want your message to be shared consistently regardless of who is telling it. That same message should be shared on your website and across all company materials.

Q: The content on my website is significantly out of date. Should it stay up as is? Be taken down completely?

A: In today’s digital society having a website with timely content is crucial. It’s often the first “face” of your firm so getting it updated with the current look, feel and messages of your firm should be a top priority. In the interim, all efforts should be made to post updated content. You can post a single page market outlook, or favorite stock pick or sector, etc. Do you have a fact sheet? Or a fund commentary? Update those quarterly and post them to your site.

The market is a timely business. If everything on your site is outdated it looks like you’re sitting idle. Posting updated content adds credibility and helps to position you as a thought leader. You’ve probably got something to say – let others hear it.

Q: If you come from a smaller firm with budget constraints would you recommend hiring a wholesaler, a public relations professional, or attend conferences?

A: If you were to compare all three options from a cost standpoint, hiring a public relations firm is most likely going to get you the most bang for your buck. PR executives target major news outlets like the Wall Street Journal, Barron’s, CNBC, etc.

If you were to purchase a quarter page ad in the Wall Street Journal it could cost thousands of dollars for an ad to run just one day, whereas if you hired a PR professional, it would be at a fraction of that cost and could potentially net you a feature or mention in the Wall Street Journal as well as other national or regional press coverage.

When hiring a wholesaler there is no guarantee the wholesaler will be successful obtaining new business.

Attending conferences is a great way to boost your visibility in your industry but again, there can be great expense in registration fees, conference materials, and time and costs for each individual to travel and attend. It’s a lot of guaranteed expense with unknown return.

When weighing all three options from a financial standpoint, hiring a PR firm is the clear winner to get the most for your money.

Are you ready to put your comprehensive PR and marketing plan together?
Give us a call at 703.299.8390 and let’s get started!



