

Wealth Watch

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So What is Your Business Saying??

by Mary Grace Musuneggi, CLU, ChFC, CFS, RFC



Recently a few new businesses have opened in the area near our office. One beautiful afternoon, my business partner and I decided we would venture out for a walk and visit these shops.

The first one we came to had a name that would have indicated that it was a store where they sold decorative household items. But on entering the store, we discovered it was a women's accessories store. As we looked around no one greeted us, and the woman we perceived to be the owner stayed behind the counter and was talking to her friend about plans they were making for the weekend.

Feeling ignored, we finally left still not having been acknowledged, and with the message that customers were really not important there.

The next store we went to was a flower shop and the door way was block by a small gate. We peaked over the gate and did not see any sales person or owner. But we did see two small dogs who were running around - obviously the reason for the gate. Although I had to assume the owner was trying to keep the dogs in and not customers out, the message she was sending was just the opposite.

I called out "Hello" and she finally came out from the back of the building. She told us to move the gate or step over it and come in. As I did, one of the dogs managed to jump onto my leg with his nails digging into me and my pantyhose. The owner's response was a small laugh and a comment about how the dogs thought they owned the store. From all indications obviously they did. To say the least, we left, with plans of not to return.

That afternoon I needed to call another company to place an order for a piece of equipment. When the phone answered the recording on the other end said that no one was available to take the call, but to press 0 if you are in need of immediate assistance. I pressed 0 only to hear a recording that said that 0 was not an option. To say the least I didn't bother to call them back, but instead I called a totally different company.

So in less than 24 hours I managed to attempt to do business with three companies who clearly were not interested in doing business with me, or anyone else for that matter.

In working with small business we often hear from those that are struggling, that they are suffering with a bad economy or they can't seem to find enough customers. But maybe, instead it is the message that they are sending. Maybe their business is saying "We don't want to make it easy for you to do business with us," or "We don't want you to think you are important to us."

If they want to rise about the competition they need to do things to attract those buyers. On a recent trip to a nearby dress shop, I was greeted very cordially by the owner who told me her name, asked what my size was, showed me a few things in my size to ask if these might suit my style, and then she left me alone to explore the rest of the dresses she had for sale. On a recent business trip I was in a hotel where I was trying to find the restaurant. When I asked someone at the front desk for directions, instead of pointing the way, she actually walked me to the entrance of the restaurant.

These little extras give customers the feeling of being special and wanted. As customers, we love that and we should never settle for less. If we all had those expectations it would raise the quality of service we received everywhere.

But as business owners it should be standard procedure, business as usual, and no bad economic news, or competitor could stand in the way of our success.

Christopher Musuneggi Participates in 2008 Dunham Advisory Board for Professional Education and Training

Christopher Musuneggi of The Musuneggi Financial Group, LLC has attended the 2008 Dunham Advisory Board Meeting. The Dunham Advisory Board ("DAB") is comprised of financial advisors who are considered industry leaders within the financial advisor community with a proven commitment to their clients and who view Dunham as a core strategic alliance partner in their practice.



The mission of the DAB is to provide a structure and opportunity to its Board Members to expand their practice and enhance the level of service provided to their clients. This is accomplished by bringing together leading financial advisors in an effort to provide advanced discussions concerning the industry, Dunham as a primary services provider, and to offer innovative education, training, and practice management tools. The DAB endeavors to become a resource for its Board Members in several key aspects of their businesses.

The Dunham Advisory Board is committed to providing advisors with timely and relevant best practices training and education with topics including:

- **Asset Management and Preservation**
- **Cash Management and Fixed-Income Alternatives**
- **Wealth Protection and Transfer Strategies**
- **Client Interaction, Communication, and Servicing**
- **Overview/Discussion: Recent Events and Proposed Legislation Affecting the Financial Markets**

Hosted by Salvatore M. Capizzi, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Dunham & Associates Investment Counsel, Inc., the event was an intensive, one-day interactive session that featured industry notables who helped shape the curriculum and provided training and instruction, including:

Steve Barger, Founder, The Barger Group

Jeffrey A. Dunham, Founder and CEO, Dunham & Associates Investment

Joseph J. Strazzeri, Attorney and Principal, Strazzeri Mancini LLP

"The Dunham Advisory Board is yet another way that help some of today's top financial advisors hone their wealth management skills so that they can in turn, pass this expertise to their clients as beneficiaries, stated Salvatore M. Capizzi. He continued, "The Dunham Advisory Board is a 'By invitation only' membership," and the annual forum is designed to deliver some of today's most effective asset management and preservation techniques and wealth protection and transfer strategies to advisors whom we believe are the 'cream of the crop' in the industry." Jeffrey A. Dunham added, "We believe that to stay on top of their game and add value to clients, financial advisors must both broaden and deepen their cadre of skills and endeavor to serve as true wealth managers, and the Dunham Advisory Board is another means by which some of today's top-tier financial advisors can successfully accomplish this."

Dunham & Associates Investment Counsel, Inc. is the host of the Dunham Institute and is a Registered Investment Adviser and Broker/Dealer. Member FINRA/SIPC.

This event is for financial professionals and Broker/Dealer representatives only. It is not open to the general public.

Up 100. Down 300. Up 200. Down 500.

by Rosalind Frazier-Francis, CRC, RFC



Just like gray is the new black, it seems like 300 point movements for the DOW are the new 30. Why the volatility? Hundreds of possibilities, dozens of theories, numerous ideas. Seems like every economist or investment manager has a different opinion; and none of them has a crystal ball that is any clearer than yours. But we do believe that there is something happening right now that will have an impact on the market over the next few months.

Money managers do not place all their emphasis on what the DOW is doing on any given day. And they don't really care what the DOW is at 3:23pm on October 22nd. As investors, we may be having heart palpitations at 1:27pm on any given day, but they are not. And our feelings about the world economy may change at 1:34 pm on the same day, but theirs do not. Money managers manage based on their objectives, their insight of the market, their understanding of trends, their knowledge of cycles, and their attempt to beat their benchmarks. Although we may get caught up in some small period of time and react emotionally to it, they do not.

But they do care about their performance on a year to year basis. And December 31, 2008 will be an important date for them. Their performance for this year will be determined on that date, and that date alone. Their 3 year, 5 year, and "since inception" returns will be impacted by their annual return on that date.

With that being said, some financial guru's believe that on those days where the market is up dramatically at 3:00, and then seems to freefall, is a result of profit taking on the part of money managers to improve their bottom line by the end of December.

Although this is just one thought, if it is true, what does it mean for you? Well, hopefully your money managers are doing all they can do to participate in any upside of the market while doing all they can do to protect you from the downside of the market. That is what they are paid for.

But because they are being paid to do a job over a period of time, judging their performance on a day-to-day basis doesn't really make any sense. What we need to do is review how they have performed over a significant time frame in relation to their benchmarks. Significant is not a day, a week, a month. At the least it is 3, 5 or 10 years.

Too many money managers have performed extremely well on a yearly basis, and then underperformed over the longer term. Some have had slower years on the short term, but have put together an impressive long term history.

If common sense has kept you in the market, and you have re-evaluated, rebalanced and restructured as need due to the current market conditions, then we only need to allow the managers to do the job we anticipate they can do. And look to better times.

If you have any questions, let us know. We are here.



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The Musuneggi Financial Group is a financial services group whose focus is planning and service. The integrity of our group is based on the philosophy that all financial advice should be in a client's best interest. We provide clients with an objective and independent approach to their planning needs.

We are able to choose from a broad array of financial resources. In doing so we take a holistic approach to a client's planning needs, bringing together new ideas, professional expertise and knowledge to work for the benefit of the client. We believe that our independent objectivity can mean a world of difference when planning for your future. Go to the "Our Services" section on our website to see how we can help you.