

Case Study: Building an Enduring Asset Management Business

The Situation

Our client is a financial services firm with multiple business divisions that today oversees more than \$160 billion in combined assets. We began working with this firm in 2005, not long after the firm landed a successful investment team that managed a well-established institutional investment-grade bond business. After moving firms, the team started over, and its assets went down to zero.

The Lowe Group was brought in to generate publicity for the investment team as it rebuilt its assets. The team had a pristine reputation in the institutional space and was wary of being perceived as “marketers.”

The Approach

The Lowe Group was familiar with the investment team’s unique approach, thereby earning their trust from day one. The team positioned themselves as a “core of the core bond manager” focused on high-quality US dollar denominated investments across the duration spectrum. They were innovators in structured fixed income investing and took a conservative duration-neutral approach.

We developed a targeted strategy to communicate the team’s key messages to institutional and intermediary audiences. One of our initial projects was creating an annual investment outlook piece. It was widely leveraged and shared with key media after the firm’s institutional investment conference. Since then, we’ve created numerous “Portfolio Manager Perspectives” on key topics related to bonds.

We’ve been able to achieve regular placements for these articles, thereby positioning the team as a leading authority on credit and interest-rate risk.

Another important aspect of our approach was supporting our client’s relationship with *Morningstar*, which was—and continues to be—an important influencer for our client’s mutual fund business, particularly with advisors. The Lowe Group established regular visits and communication with *Morningstar* and helped the investment team to be accessible and build meaningful relationships with *Morningstar*’s bond analysts.

We’ve also helped our client react and capitalize on important industry events including upheaval in the industry due to the departure of a key industry leader and the resulting significant realignment of institutional and mutual fund fixed income assets that took place. Our client was well positioned during the turmoil and we worked with them to seek regular coverage and raise awareness as key institutional investors sought an alternative. We created content that reinforced their reputation for quality, and helped leverage that content via paid media placements with *Morningstar*, *Barron’s*, *P&I*, *Plan Sponsor* and *Investment News*.

The Result

We’ve seen our client’s asset management business grow to more than \$50 billion. Our client now has a Silver “Parent Rating” with *Morningstar* and several of its funds are now covered. Even when our client was not rated, *Morningstar* would regularly recommend or mention their funds in articles on core bond investing. *Morningstar Advisor Magazine* wrote two profiles on the investment team’s approach and the team’s lead portfolio manager was invited to participate on two different *Morningstar* conference panels. Perhaps the culmination of our efforts with *Morningstar* was our client being nominated for the prestigious “Morningstar 2016 Fixed-Income Manager of the Year Award” in early 2017.

The firm has also earned benchmark coverage in key publications including a Q&A in *Barron’s* and participation in an investment roundtable discussion in *Fortune*.

The investment team has maintained its prestigious reputation and is widely recognized as a leader in the core bond space.