

AFA National Conference 2008

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2008 – ISSUE 1

Fox wins Rising Star of the Year Award

Michelle Baltazar

Brad Fox of Total Financial Solutions beat 32 nominees to scoop the AFA 2008 Rising Star of the Year Award.

"This is a great honour...the support we're getting in this profession is outstanding and I hope you continue to provide that," he said.

Fox acknowledged his fellow finalists and said they are all deserving of the award as much as he is. He also praised the AFA for championing the cause of the next generation of advisers, particularly by fostering mentor relationships within the association.

He moved many of the audience to tears when he thanked his wife for supporting him in his chosen career especially when work takes him away from spending time with her and their two young children. Fox's thank you speech gave a glimpse to the sacrifice many advisers make when running their practice.

While Fox is fairly new to the industry and was for eight years the Victorian general manager for the Brisbane Lions Football Club, he is already making his contribution felt in his role as the national chairperson of the AFA GenXt initiative.

He was joined onstage by an equally impressive shortlist of



advisers, namely Mary Benton (AMP Financial Planning), Suzanne Miskell (Total Financial Solutions), Sarah Riegelhuth (Synchron), Ryan Watson (Synchron) and Aaron Zelman (Apogee Financial Planning).

Zelman said he can empathise with what Fox said about what it takes to be a professional adviser. "To be at the top of the game requires a lot of effort. Hopefully, we're building prosperity for our clients and also for ourselves so that we can get that life-work balance right in the future."

But the tradeoffs are worth it, said Benton, Miskell and Watson.

Riegelhuth, who became a full-time adviser ten months ago, said that entering the industry in

these markets can only make her a better adviser.

"The most important thing right now for us to do as advisers is to be there for our clients and to encourage them that it is important for them to stick to the original path they set out on, despite these volatile times."

Bad markets or not, the wealth management industry should always support its up-and-coming professionals.

"This award is about promoting best practice so it is fundamental to our philosophy that we award and acknowledge the most talented new entrants to our profession," said Mark Vilo, head of dealer groups at ING Australia, the award sponsor fourth year running. ■

FINANCIAL STANDARD HOTLINE

1300 884 434

info@financialstandard.com.au

www.financialstandard.com.au

Journey's just rewards

Michelle Baltazar

Film director Khoa Do inspired conference delegates with his heartfelt tale of life as a Vietnamese refugee who defied the odds by rising above poverty and later winning awards that recognised his phenomenal success in the film industry.

Do spoke about how persistence pays, a lesson he learnt as a young teenager who badly wanted to play first-grade football. It was only after countless rejections and an (un)fortunate mishap that he fulfilled his dreams. But even that life-changing moment was just one of many.

Do went on to make a film that not only became a blockbuster in its class but transformed the lives of those around him.

He said that life has taught him one thing. "It's during the toughest times in your life that you will face the greatest obstacle...and you will receive the greatest opportunity." ■



Next generation income protection

Talk to your Asteron Business Development Manager or call **1800 221 727**.

This information is for adviser use only and is not to be given to customers. Information provided is a brief overview only. You should refer to the current Asteron Lifeguard® Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) for full details of the policy features, benefits and conditions. Policies can only be effected after completion of a current application form that is provided with the PDS. The Asteron Lifeguard® Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) is available from the issuers Asteron Life Limited ABN 64 001 698 228 AFSL 237903 and Suncorp Portfolio Services Limited ABN 61 063 427 958 AFSL 237905 RSE Licence No. L0002059. You should carefully read and consider the PDS in deciding whether to acquire or continue to hold the product.

Life Solutions | Wealth Solutions



 **asteron**

AT YOUR FINANCIAL SERVICE

2009 the year of recovery

Alex Dunning

Petrol's up, the dollar's down, the stock market's gone to pieces. Yet as tumultuous as 2008 looks, there will be recovery, it will be sweet and you should not let your clients miss out on it, said independent economist Dr Don Stammer at the conference's opening plenary session.



Dr Don Stammer

Stammer said to have confidence in the inevitable recovery we should remember the Australian recessions of 1952, 1961, 1974, 1981 and 1991 and how we bounced back and now see them as simply inevitable corrections.

"When you've been around for a while you acquire a lot of bruises but every bruise, if used properly, is an asset," he said.

This historical perspective helps us appreciate why at the top of the economic cycle everyone ignores risk while at the bottom everyone is obsessed about it, which is precisely where the seeds of new investment opportunities lie, said Stammer.

We should also discard notions that the investment markets today are akin to the depressions of the

1890s and 1930s. "In those days, central banks as we know them now, didn't exist and governments didn't intervene," said Stammer as he contrasted these times with the behavior of today's central banks doing "whatever it takes" to restore confidence and liquidity into the markets.

Stammer said the extent of the current crisis and how it's already been priced into stocks signals that we've most likely already passed the bottom for credit markets and are nearing the bottom for stock markets.

Stammer said this sets us up for 2009 to be the beginning of the recovery in world sharemarkets.

"Watch for signs that credit default swap spreads are narrowing, US house prices are stabilising and that banks are beginning to lend again."

For advisers and their clients, it means unhedged international equities could present significant opportunities as they take advantage of the much lower Australian dollar.

"Anyone who quits now runs the risk of missing the first cut of the recovery," he said. ■

Be credible, be visible

Michelle Baltazar

Financial advisers need to stand out and develop a specialty to succeed in their field, said David Avrin, US-based visibility coach.

Avrin, who has successfully pitched stories to *Oprah*, *Good Morning America* and *The Wall Street Journal*, gave conference delegates his proven recipe on how advisers can build their business by building their brand.

His key message was that "the markets celebrate specialisation", meaning advisers need to find that singular area of expertise that could then become their competitive edge over their rivals.

"I'm not saying you have to be outrageous but that you have to be

different," said Avrin.

He recommended that advisers should strive to be remarkable so that their clients see them as the "go-to professional" or their dealer group as the "go-to firm".

It also helps if an adviser has a clear plan of action on where to take the business because when they do, it becomes easy to say 'no' to projects that won't help them reach their goals.

But even these strategies are useless without promotion, promotion, promotion.

Avrin said advisers need to talk about their business in a very public way. "Without promotion, you're winking in the dark...you know what you're doing but nobody else does." ■

AFA Foundation launched

The success of the AFA charity partnership with MS Australia has prompted the AFA to go one step further and establish its own Foundation.

"AFA members have already given over \$200,000 to MS Australia, but the relationship was never meant to be exclusive as we want to be involved with more charities," said Richard Klipin, AFA chief executive.

The money raised has so far led to the direct sponsorship of several research scholarships, which is already reaping significant scientific benefits for the wider community and the AFA members who service them.

Creating the Foundation has to be done properly, explained Klipin, and so they tendered out its management, with legacy and foundations expert Dr Rob Musgrave of Musgrave Financial Group appointed to look after its establishment and introduction. ■



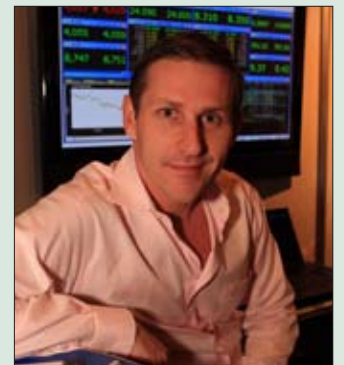
Brad Fox, Esther Althaus and Chris Browne



David Avrin



Meryl Davison and Keri Campbell



Michael Bogoevski of CMC Markets



Michael Kinens, Johann Koch, Todd Yarrow and Glenn Boyes of IRESS



Fiona Navarro, Chris Unwin, and Annick Donat

Harmony in times of discord

Michelle Baltazar

Delegates stretched their vocal chords to rockstar proportions after singing the chorus of the song popularised by no other than Queen (the English rock band, not the English monarch).

Stomping their feet, clapping their hands and channeling the glorious days of the late 70s, those who packed the auditorium for the AFA welcome and opening ceremony were treated to the musical stylings of Vocal Works and - to everyone's enjoyment - those of their friends and colleagues.

But perhaps even more fitting to the current markets, Vocal Works also asked the audience to harmo-

nise to the song 'Lean on Me'.

The lyrics, 'if we are wise, we know that there's always tomorrow', was the perfect segueway to the keynote speech of economist Dr Don Stammer who reminded the audience that the markets will recover - just as they did in previous cycles.

Continuing the theme of camaraderie, AFA chief executive Richard Klipin told delegates that the conference was a great way for advisers to connect and, over the next three days, to challenge their thinking.

"2008 is arguably the hardest year in our profession for the last 18 years...but people will always need good advice, especially now." ■

AFA Race around Melbourne

Luke Sheehan

In a first for the AFA conference, the GenXt Race Around Melbourne was run on Saturday.

In typical Melbourne sunshine, four teams set off comprising the 'serious' Synchron and TOWER racers and the 'light-hearted' MLC and combined PIS/NAB.

After navigating their way through a few brain teasers, all teams set off on foot to gather as many of the photo opportunities as

they could in the allotted three hours.

For some, the temptation of a cold beverage proved all too overpowering with the MLC team requiring a horse and carriage rescue. The race then finished with a BBQ by the Yarra and a few hours rest.

Congratulations goes to Team Synchron for their close victory over TOWER. For the others, just finding the finish was a victory in itself. ■

Modern consumers, traditional values

Alex Dunnin

Instant messaging, mobile phones and fax machines have changed the world but the people within it are just the same as they've always been, with the same values and goals people have always had.

As we communicate with our customers in this new world, service them, and meet their needs through the products we provide, we should never forget the fundamentals of human interaction, said Michael Harrison, director of Strategies Plus.

Sure, the communications technology and tools we now use are different, but not the people we are trying to reach, he said.

Harrison said the tremendous opportunity is that creative use of modern technology enables us to reach these people in ways we never thought possible, because while "people buy from us because of the perceptions they have of us and it's our relationship with them that keeps them with us."

Reinforcing the potential is that as products have commoditised, it



Michael Harrison

is our services and communications that will help us stand out from our competitors, explained Harrison.

Even better, the strategies to enable us to do this can be achieved at very low cost. For example, we can use a range of technologically based communications approaches. Blog-

ging, e-books and SMS messaging can be used to share ideas and thoughts with our clients and reach new ones through these relationships.

Harrison said you also don't need to think of new things to say using these channels because most of us are already experts in our fields. "Think about what you know and what you can communicate with them as they want to know what you think regarding what is going on."

"When things are going bad, we have to think harder about how to be visible because the need for insurance and financial advice hasn't changed," and technology can give you this visibility if we harness the multiple connection points that are now on offer, said Harrison. ■



Winning team of the GenXt race: Synchron



Julia Canella and Cameron Blunt



Rob Musgrave and Dugald Mitchell (past AFA president)



Rachel Michelson and Heba Kanjo of MLC president



Laura Relph, Tenille Treloar and Simone Kerr



GenXt Race Around Melbourne

Next generation income protection

Since 1992, Asteron's 10 Hours definition has made income protection more flexible, and more relevant for your clients.

Now Asteron Lifeguard's® Income Advantage 10 Hours Plus definition gives your clients the benefit of both 1 duty and 10 hours – offering greater flexibility at claim time.

Talk to your Asteron Business Development Manager, or call **1800 221 727** to be put in touch with one.



This information is for adviser use only and is not to be given to customers. Information provided is a brief overview only. You should refer to the current Asteron Lifeguard® Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) for full details of the policy features, benefits and conditions. Policies can only be effected after completion of a current application form that is provided with the PDS. The Asteron Lifeguard® Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) is available from the issuers Asteron Life Limited ABN 64 001 698 228 AFSL 237903 and Suncorp Portfolio Services Limited ABN 61 063 427 958 AFSL 237905 RSE Licence No. L0002059. You should carefully read and consider the PDS in deciding whether to acquire or continue to hold the product.