
The Bucket

By Editorial Staff *Wed, Sep 28, 2011*

Brief or late-breaking items from DST, New York Life, CEIBA, and Putnam.

New web strategy for DST Retirement Solutions

DST Retirement Solutions, a provider of ASP (Application Service Provider) and BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) defined contribution solutions, is deploying a new strategy to help clients improve participant and plan websites.

Enhancements aimed at improving the “relevance, visual value and directness” of plan sponsor and participant websites include “video capabilities and increased levels of customization, including user preferences to drive tailored content to individuals,” DST said in a release.

The new strategy is built around a framework that includes:

- Enriched user experiences
- Content management
- Customization based on user preferences
- Security administration
- Collaborative processing
- Monitoring and measuring
- Information targeted to specific audiences

DST Retirement Solutions has engaged Makibie, a web consulting firm, to participate in the project. Makibie will focus on retooling sites to provide “a simplified model to clients that will help them differentiate, improve speed to market and provide consistency across all audiences.”

New York Life Retirement Plan Services reorganizes

New York Life Retirement Plan Services has announced a new service model that “aligns service teams into core industry practices,” the company said in a release.

Joan Driscoll, a 24-year industry veteran with 18 years of experience at New York Life, has been promoted to lead the new effort as managing director of client strategy and is a member of the firm’s 11-member senior leadership team, reporting to David Castellani, CEO of New York Life Retirement Plan Services.

The new structure organizes service team practice groups into four industry segments with the following directors and retirement practice leads, all reporting to Driscoll:

- Taft-Hartley, led by James Byrne.
- Technology, led by Michelle Morey.
- Finance and professional services, led by Joseph DeStefano.
- Manufacturing, materials and retail, led by Scott Francolini.

Each practice will have its own team of relationship managers, communications consultants, investment specialists, and ERISA consultants. The practice model maintains New York Life's dedicated service team approach with plan sponsors while creating a core industry knowledge and expertise base within the practice models.

With offices in Westwood, Mass., Parsippany, N.J., and San Francisco, New York Life Retirement Plan Services offers bundled retirement plan solutions and defined contribution investment only products throughout the United States. A division of New York Life Investments, it administers \$39.2 billion in bundled retirement plans as of June 30, 2011.

New executive director named at \$1.3 trillion pension group

The Committee on Investment of Employee Benefit Assets (CIEBA), which represents more than 100 of the largest corporate pension plans with more than \$1.3 trillion in plan assets and 16 million, has appointed Deborah Forbes as its executive director.

Forbes will represent CIEBA to government agencies, Congressional committees, and private organizations involved in issues affecting CIEBA members. She was previously Legislative & Policy Counsel for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, Pension Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and an associate at Covington & Burlington. She replaces the late Judy Schub.

Forbes also will represent CIEBA in public forums, develop conference programs for members, lead the group's research activities, and handle membership recruitment.

CIEBA's chairman is Ralph J. Egizi, who is also Director, Benefits Finance & Investments, Eastman Chemical Company. The organization serves as a forum for corporate pension plan sponsors on fiduciary and investment matters. It is the voice of the Association for Financial Professionals (AFP) on employee benefit plan asset management and investment issues.

Putnam's new advisor website allows "open architecture portfolio modeling"

Putnam Investments has launched a new web site, www.putnam.com/advisor, that offers "advanced, open-architecture portfolio modeling" designed to help advisors create investment plans for their clients using either Putnam or non-Putnam products.

The new site builds upon Putnam’s proprietary analytical tool, FundVisualizer, which can model entire investment portfolios from a universe of over 11,000 mutual funds and ETFs, as well as continue to provide product comparisons.

The site will also offer access to the next version of Putnam FundVisualizer, “allowing them to choose and package a virtually unlimited number of potential fund holdings, assign specific weightings and adjust time periods as desired, to gain insight into the performance behavior and importance of risk-return trade-offs of uniquely constructed portfolios and their underlying components. Additionally, advisors can compare separately created portfolios of their own design,” the company said in a release.

Advisors can use the new site to join conversations on Putnam’s existing social media sites, including those on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/putnamtoday>) and Facebook, (<http://www.facebook.com/PutnamInvestments>).

A feedback component will also be available: advisors visiting the site will be able to rate much of its content, such as portfolio manager commentary. Also, the new web site will provide advisors with a sense of what their peers are viewing most on the site, including what investment issues and client-related topics are of most interest - displayed through a visual “tag cloud.”

The Putnam site will also provide advisors with an array of practice management and thought leadership resources to help in their day-to-day and long-term planning work with clients. Advisors will be able to:

- Explore an extensive Client Planning section, with detailed guidance for advisors working with clients who are saving for retirement, college and other life goals—including presentations and seminars that advisors can download and use with their own clients.
- Access a content-rich “Our Perspectives” section, featuring articles and videos by Putnam strategists and portfolio managers discussing their investment outlook, providing timely insights on events that are shaping the global markets and discussing investment and savings strategies.
- Receive access to a wealth of fund data that allows them to gain a deeper product understanding, in a format that can be communicated directly to their clients;
- Review a Fund Playbook to see how any given fund can help clients pursue their goals, such as reducing the volatility in their portfolios or addressing the impact of rising interest rates on various mixes of funds;
- Use the new “My Putnam” feature to store their favorite content and set alerts for automatically e-mailed updates.
- Chat live with a personal support team at Putnam dedicated to their practice, to identify customized solutions and explore business-building resources, practice management tools and continuing education courses.

FundVisualizer is part of an ongoing series of Putnam initiatives designed to provide advisors with transparent content delivered through leading technology. The dynamic tool provides portfolio modeling and side-by-side comparisons of multiple products, including Putnam funds, as well as choices from over 11,000 funds across all categories, including ETFs.