The Bucket

By Editorial Staff *Thu, Jan 17, 2013*

Brief or late-breaking items from Nationwide, Neuberger Berman, Symetra, and Phoenix Marketing.

Nationwide enhances spousal payouts of lifetime income rider

Recognizing a growing need among Boomers for joint-and-survivor annuity contracts, Nationwide Financial has increased the joint payout rates for the lifetime income rider (Nationwide L.inc) on its Destination Series 2.0 variable annuities, which offers a 7% simple roll-up during the accumulation period.

Lifetime payout rates for Nationwide L.inc with joint option will increase by 0.25% for most age bands, the company said in a release. For example, payouts for someone starting income at age 65 will be 4.75% instead of 4.5%. On a contract with a $500,000 benefit base, that would translate into $1,250 a year or about $104 a month, before taxes.

In addition to Nationwide L.inc with the joint option, Nationwide's spousal protection feature delivers a guaranteed death benefit covering either spouse, regardless of who passes away first, even on IRAs where there's a single owner.

Neuberger Berman introduces 'Dynamic Real Return Fund'

Neuberger Berman Group LLC has launched the Neuberger Berman Dynamic Real Return Fund (tickers: NDRAX, NDRCX, NDRIX), a mutual fund that invests in multiple asset classes in an attempt to "deliver attractive risk-adjusted returns in various inflationary environments," according to a release.

The actively managed fund will invest in inflation-sensitive asset classes such as commodities, global TIPS, high-yield bonds, leveraged loans, U.S. and emerging markets equities, master limited partnerships (MLPs), and real estate. The fund managers also employ a dynamic overlay designed to capitalize on short-term changes in inflation expectations.

The Fund's lead portfolio managers are Andy Johnson, chief investment officer for investment grade fixed income, and Thanos Bardas, global head of sovereigns and interest rates.

Symetra proposes SPIA instead of early Social Security

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Symetra Life Insurance Company now offers financial advisors a web-based retirement planning toolkit as part of an education campaign that tackles the question: "Does it pay to delay Social Security?"

The education campaign features collateral pieces and a public-facing website, www.symetra.com/itpaystodelay, which will be refreshed monthly through March. It provides links to a variety of resources, presentations and strategy-supporting material from respected industry experts and organizations.

January's theme is "Does It Pay to Delay Social Security?" The site features a marketing flyer and presentation illustrating specific examples of how delaying Social Security benefits can create more income in the long term. February's theme — "Have Your Retirement … and Income, Too" — will outline a strategy that gives clients the ability to replicate their Social Security income from ages 62–70 through a period-certain single premium immediate annuity (SPIA).

Phoenix Marketing offers study of social networking by advisors

Almost 60% of financial advisors use social networking platforms to interact with clients, colleagues and firms, according to a new study by Phoenix Marketing International, which has added a "social networking module" to its syndicated study programs for the financial services industry.

Phoenix also found that more than 80% of those who have adopted social networking consider their proficiency to be "above average," and 30% of non-users plan to start in the next six months. Advisors tend to be less concerned about inability to use social networking than about regulatory issues.

Conducted among financial advisors in the US this month, the new Phoenix social media study also answers:

- To what extent have financial advisors (FAs) adopted social networking?
- Does adoption vary by FAs' role, $AUM, annual production, tenure, age, or gender?
- Which devices and social networking platforms do FAs use?
- What are FAs' concerns about integrating social networking as a business practice?
- Are they governed by a social networking policy or guidelines?
- Why do FAs use social networking?
- What are specific firms doing in terms of social networking "best-practices"?

A full report on how advisors utilize social networking is available for purchase from Phoenix, which provides competitive information on the attitudes and behaviors of individual investors and financial advisors and how they assess specific brokerage firms and their ROI from multi-media brand advertising.

Firms queried in this study include American Funds, Ameriprise, BlackRock, Charles Schwab, Columbia Management, Franklin Templeton, iShares, Jackson National, John Hancock, Lincoln Financial, MetLife, Nationwide, Oppenheimer, PIMCO, PowerShares, Prudential, Scottrade, State Street, Transamerica and Vanguard.