



## FROM SELLING TO TELLING

### MARKETING 'CONTENT', NOT 'CLAIMS'

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## THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING A BRAND DIRECTLY FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

Founded in Dundee in 1888 to provide a vehicle for Scots to invest in North American railroads and ranches, Alliance Trust PLC has evolved to manage c. £3 billion on behalf of almost 10,000 investors. It invests worldwide in a wide selection of stocks and shares to offer investors long term growth potential and income with 47 years of rising dividends.

Despite this, the brand has a relatively low profile amongst private investors for a variety of reasons:

- Investment Trusts in general are a particular niche amongst the many types of investment fund. Less than 200 Investment Trusts exist in the UK (excluding venture capital trusts) against a total of over 2000 Unit Trusts or OEICs.

*“Even though investment trusts have thousands of small investors, they’re relatively unknown compared with other funds such as unit trusts and OEICs”.*  
(Guardian Money 2013)

- In addition, Alliance Trust has a very particular structure which meant that regulatory restrictions prohibited it from advertising directly until 2014 – placing it at a disadvantage relative to most other asset managers who have been able to advertise.

A final challenge was the fact the Alliance Trust investor base contains many long term and retirement age investors so there was a need to target a new and younger generation.

The overall campaign objective was therefore to build the brand in a way that could help attract the next generation of investors while staying true to the company vision of becoming the most trusted investment and savings brand.



Think  
big.



## DEVELOPING A VERY DIFFERENT STRATEGY

### We had to out-think the competition

With lower budgets, the brand had to use innovation, creativity and tight targeting – not weight of spend. Spend analysis by Nielsen shows brands like Fidelity have a media budget over ten times larger.

### Marketing content, not claims

Investing is a big decision. Investors want to do their homework and feel comfortable with choices. Selling and persuading off the page is a tough ask, especially since many brands make similar sounding claims in advertising. We believed a traditional advertising approach which made claims about the brand could feel superficial and be lost in the noise.

Instead, a very different strategy was developed – a content-led approach. In essence, promoting something consistent, ongoing and useful to investors to drive awareness and brand perceptions. Doing this builds trust and then investment itself is a smaller step – whether investing directly or when Alliance Trust is recommended by peers, commentators or advisors.

### Brand Mission in action

Crucially, the approach was also a natural fit with Alliance Trust's culture and brand mission as an exceptionally investor-focused business. Brand mission statements can often be mere words. In the case of Alliance Trust, this paper shows there is real substance behind their words:

*"...we aim to stand out as a business that builds customer and investor loyalty through being closer to their needs and serving them in a more engaging way.....We build trust by earning it, not asking for it. Understanding customers' and investors' needs and then delivering."*

### Developing a branded content 'proposition'

Marketing content would also be stronger if an engaging content proposition existed to link it all together. The brief was that it had to be a genuine source of useful content and ongoing brand engagement, not a superficial lure into a hard sell. Something positioned slightly apart from the parent – akin to an educational/informative initiative from Alliance Trust.

### Building the content strategy on research – what are investors actually seeking?

The final strategic element was to seek additional research insight into investors and the kind of content approach that could engage them.

We did this through partnerships with The Telegraph and FT Remark. Both conducted quantitative research studies and we also conducted a series of paired depth interviews using HOME research.



Knowledge  
is power.



Ignorance  
is bliss.



## BRINGING A MULTI-FACETED STRATEGY TO LIFE

Armed with a strategic plan that we felt had logic, insight and brand fit on its side, we developed a multi-faceted campaign.

### Creating the Investment Focus hub

The Tangible digital team, sister agency Blonde and the internal team at Alliance Trust developed and launched Investment Focus – the information and education website hub at the heart of the campaign. It offered a range of useful investor content but also promoted the Alliance Trust brand through branding cues, a good proportion of content authored by Alliance Trust experts and links to other Alliance Trust websites - allowing for more direct enquiry and engagement.

Investment Focus was optimised for all platforms and the wealth of creative and original content aided SEO.

### Populating the hub with a series of investment themes

We created a series of 6 topic themes – from ‘just starting out’ to ‘investing for children and grandchildren’. Adding a new theme every two weeks built up a comprehensive investment resource to retain investor’s interest and stimulate re-visiting.

# INVESTMENT • FOCUS

## SMART INSIGHT FROM ALLIANCE TRUST





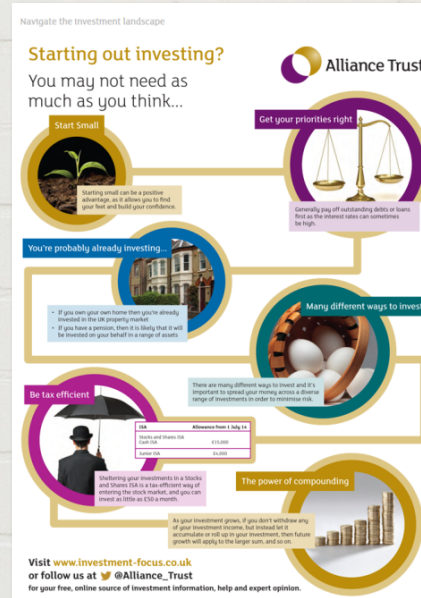
## A range of flexible content to meet differing investors needs

With over 50 content items in the launch campaign phase and many more added since, we could appeal to different investor lifestages, interests and knowledge levels. Content formats included articles, investor case studies, blogs and richer formats such as videos and interactive tools.

## Data capture to allow for dialogue and ongoing engagement

Data capture was another feature – capturing investor details and insight in return for an email programme informing subscribers of new content on the hub.

## Infographics



## Jargon and terminology guide

### Glossary

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

#### A

##### Active management

Active management refers to a style of portfolio management where the manager makes asset allocation decisions with the aim of outperforming an investment benchmark index. This is the opposite of passive management.

##### Acquisitions

Purchase of a business or a business line from another entity.

##### AGM

See [General Meetings](#).

##### Alpha

Alpha represents fund performance factoring in the risk due to the specific security, i.e. the excess return of the security relative to the return of the benchmark index is called the alpha.

##### Alternative Investment Market (AIM)

A junior market compared with the main London Stock Exchange with less onerous listing requirements so it tends to attract smaller companies that have been trading for a short period of time.

## 3rd party expert views

From the experts  
25 February 2014

### IFA views – an inexperienced investor

Feeling nervous and don't know where to start? We asked a panel of financial advisers to give us their take on the following investor scenario.

**ASSET Investment Management Ltd**  
wealth management specialists

**andid financial advice**  
bringing down the cost of advice

**sbnwealth management**

### Meet James - our inexperienced investor

James is a successful, self-employed graphic designer from London, aged 40 and recently married to Sarah. He has no pension arrangements, but recognises the need to save for the future and has consistently put away a sizeable chunk of his income for a number of years in cash based deposits.

The couple rent currently, but James feels that he would like to get onto the housing ladder over the next few years and move to a house that would be big enough to raise a family in the future. James feels that he

## Case studies

# Meet Sean Duffy

Sean entered adulthood with a broad financial plan 'Get in debt in my 20s, get out of debt in my 30s and save in my 40s'.

> **Case study: Meet Sean Duffy**

## Video

### Nobody's perfect: why we all make irrational decisions

The fact that many of us make irrational decisions when it comes to our finances is widely debated and is often referred to as behavioural finance. In this short video we talk to Professor Phyl Johnson, Consultant Psychologist and Visiting Professor of Executive Education at Strathclyde Business School, about why this is and more importantly about what we can do as individuals to avoid it.

Nobody's perfect: why we all make irrational decisions



## A creative look and feel that integrates the whole campaign

A powerfully simple creative look and feel developed by Tangible built on the twin circles and the colours of the Alliance Trust brand identity. A distinctive and ownable graphic treatment for visuals within the circles was also developed.

Twin circles creative wasn't just a strong brand cue. It offered a brilliant vehicle for Problem:Solution or Question:Answer style messaging. Ideal for the kind of advertising needed to attract different types of investor and promote a wide variety of content.

## Print & online advertising across key publications and target sites

A rolling offline and online launch campaign was one of the primary drivers of traffic to the hub – with adverts messaging evolving every 2 weeks to mirror each new topic theme being added to the hub.

## Media partnerships – Alliance Trust/Telegraph 'Investment Garden' & FT online Q&A event

We partnered with The Telegraph in creating a similar website hub within their personal finance site which provided a stepping stone for the Telegraph audience towards Investment Focus.

Two live online events were staged in partnership with the FT allowing investors and experts to discuss and debate topical investment issues.

## Content distribution networks and social media

With such a great bank of content, we exploited online content distribution networks such as Outbrain to place links to Investment Focus on relevant content sites – as well as social media distribution.

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When it comes to investing, it pays to be farsighted. And at Alliance Trust we've been looking ahead since 1888. Our new Investment Focus hub is full of online information and expert opinion. It will provide you with the big picture – and help you home in on the details that matter.

On the Investment Focus hub you'll find information that will help with everything from your first steps, to understanding global diversification. Please remember that investments can go down as well as up and investors may get back less than they originally invested. For valuable insight from Alliance Trust, visit Investment Focus today.

Introducing your free, online source of information, help and expert opinion.  
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Alliance Trust



# BREAKING NEW GROUND TO BUILD THE ALLIANCE TRUST BRAND

Investment Focus broke new ground in many ways. It was a first step into direct promotion to investors for Alliance Trust but also a very innovative and ambitious approach. There was no precedent or previous campaigns to benchmark against or build on.

## Exposure and reach

Advertising and partner promotion reached 33% of the investor target audience and 16% of all UK adults (source: Ptarmigan Media Analytics).

## Advertising engagement

A click through rate of 0.11% was almost double the asset management sector industry benchmark average which produced by Ptarmigan Media.

## Hub engagement

From a standing start, 57,000 unique visitors visited Investment Focus during the 12 week launch campaign.

Two live online Hub Q&A events in association with the FT attracted 1470 live viewers and an additional 5000 replays.

451 visitors signed up to receive ongoing emails from Alliance Trust Investment Focus.

Google Analytics confirmed we had attracted that 'next generation of investors'. Almost 90% of visitors were under 65 and a majority was under 44.

Investment Focus has helped Alliance Trust build up a growing following of c.500 investors on social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn.

## But did we drive brand awareness and engagement?

Tracking by Millward Brown (MB) amongst investors and by The Telegraph amongst readership shows how successful a relatively short launch campaign was at building brand profile:

- Prompted awareness increased by a fifth from 28% to 34% (MB)
- Awareness increased by 16% (Telegraph)

Positive perception measures tracked by Millward Brown jumped dramatically:

- 'a trustworthy and helpful brand' – doubling from 8% to 16%
- 'purchase intent' doubling from 7% to 14%
- 'helps me to plan my future' – rising from 8% to 15%
- 'modern and relevant' increasing by a factor of 128% (MB)
- 'different from other investment providers' – up by two thirds from 6% to 10%

All in all, a clear endorsement of the strategy to build the brand on content not claims.

## A final word of thanks

This campaign was a huge team effort. Tangible and Alliance Trust would like to thank Ptarmigan Media and Blonde Digital for their superb input.



From  
launch  
to the  
stars