

Pandemic Perspectives (Part 3) – Supporting Consultants During Coronavirus

April 8, 2020

With no sign of abating globally, the impact of the coronavirus is testing the support that asset managers provide to investment consultants.

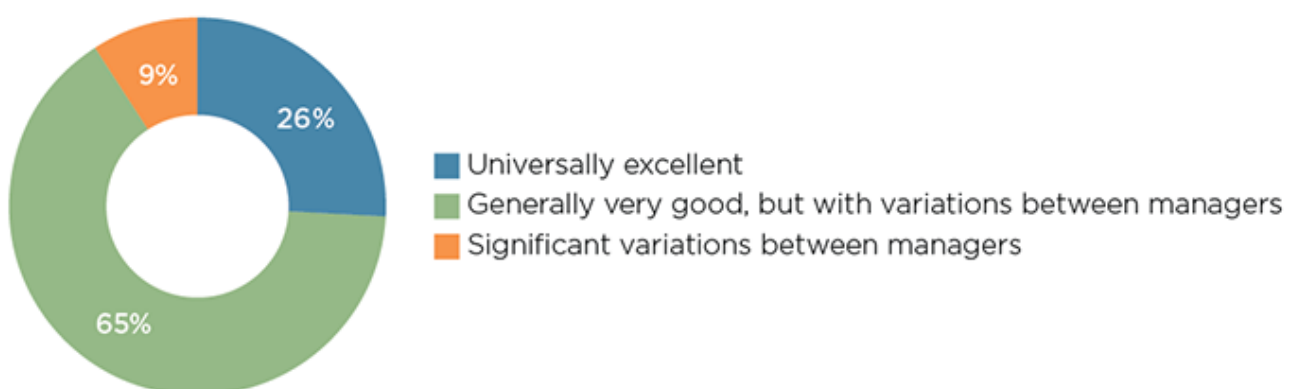
Asset managers' service and support of consultants becomes all the more important during times of stress, as the stakes and requirements increase.

Against this backdrop, we engaged field consultants from leading investment consulting firms in the U.K., U.S. and Canada to get their perspectives and advice on how asset managers can best support consultants and their clients in the current environment.

Consultant Perceptions of Servicing and Support

The good news is consultants' perceptions of the service and support that they have received from asset managers since the coronavirus outbreak has been very good to excellent. Approximately one-quarter of respondents said the support has been universally excellent, with another two-thirds indicating it has been very good.

ASSET MANAGERS' SERVICING AND SUPPORT SINCE THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



Source: Greenwich Associates Coronavirus Flash Study, March/April 2020

However, there is no room for complacency. Three-quarters of the consultants noted some variation in the support that they are receiving from asset managers, with a small percentage (9%) noting significant variation in asset manager support.

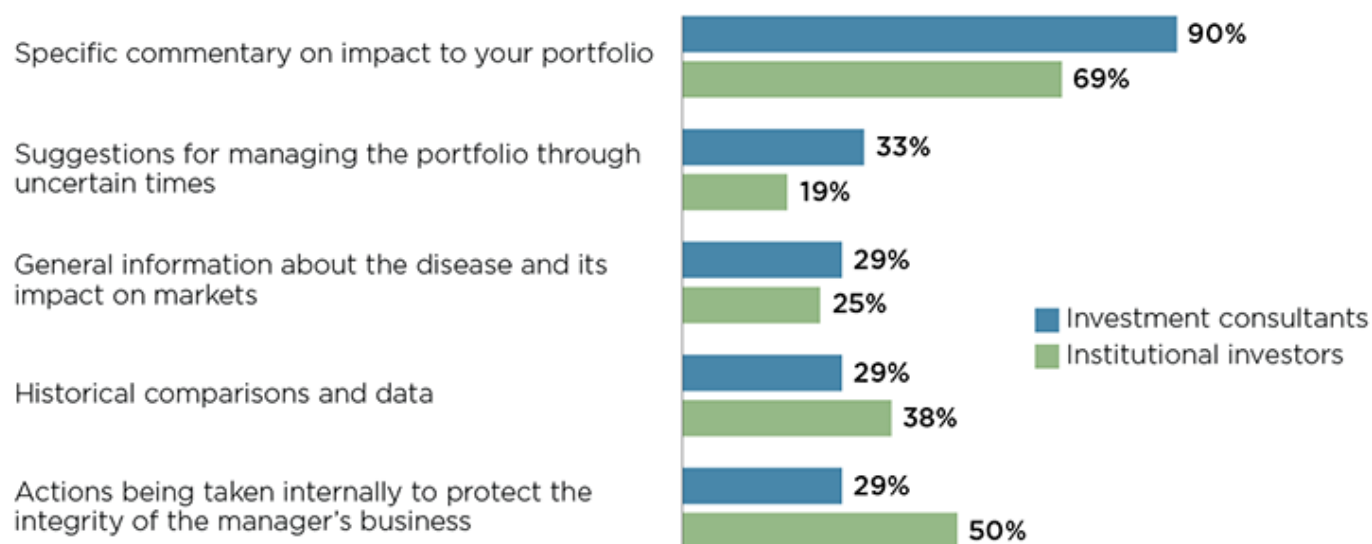
Given it has only been a period of weeks since the coronavirus fully affected global markets and elevated consultant servicing will be required for the foreseeable future, we expect greater variation in consultants' perceptions of managers over time. The coming weeks and months will test asset managers' responsiveness, communication, focus, and stamina.

Investment Consultant Expectations and Preferences

As asset managers work to maintain excellent relationships with consultants in the current environment, being aware of consultants' preferences and expectations is critical.

Consultants overwhelmingly name specific commentary on the impact of the coronavirus on clients' portfolios as the most useful information they receive.

MOST USEFUL INFORMATION FROM MANAGERS RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



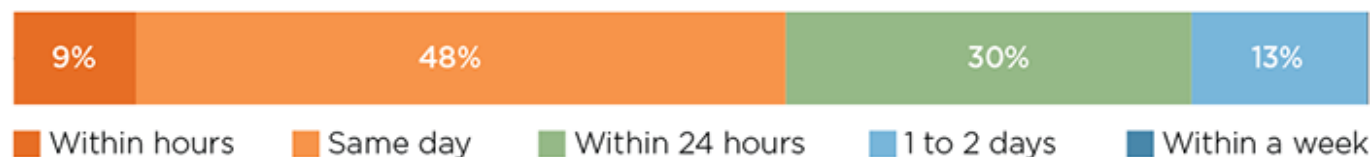
Source: Greenwich Associates Coronavirus Flash Study, March/April 2020

This has meaningful implications for asset managers with regard to the frequency and provision of attribution/client reporting.

Note also that consultants are less concerned than institutional investors about the actions that managers are taking to protect their businesses (i.e., business continuity); consultants tend to assess this factor more regularly and on an ongoing basis.

In terms of expected manager response times, 87% of the consultants said that they (and their clients) expect answers to their questions within 24 hours, with almost 60% indicating it should be the same day.

EXPECTED MANAGER RESPONSE TIME

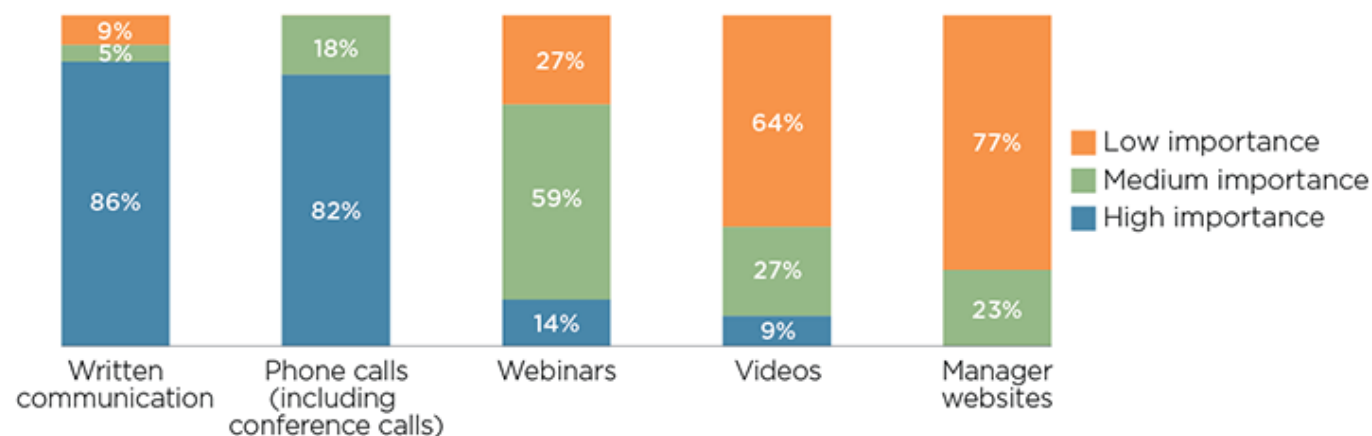


Source: Greenwich Associates Coronavirus Flash Study, March/April 2020

Excellence here requires that individuals across functions fully understand what is required to meet consultants' expectations and are geared-up to play their part—this is about much more than just the consultant relations team.

Given the consultants' focus on their clients' individual portfolios, written communication and phone calls (including conference calls) are their preferred methods/formats of delivery, with webinars the next most important.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION METHODS/FORMATS WITH ASSET MANAGERS



Source: Greenwich Associates Coronavirus Flash Study, March/April 2020

Key Actions for Asset Managers to Take

Given an extended and indefinite period of heightened consultant engagement, we asked investment consultants for their advice on how managers could best support them and their clients. Three key themes, all interrelated, emerged.

Proactively Reach Out: Consultants expect asset managers to be accessible and very responsive, as noted above, but also proactive. Asset managers need to remain present and not 'step back' or become internally focused.

"Many managers have provided a single update and they need to remember that as time goes on, so does the frequency of communication."

Openly Discuss Portfolio Performance and Positioning: Consultants advise asset managers to be

proactive, open and transparent about what has helped/hurt investment performance and to offer forward-looking thinking.

“Talk as openly as possible about how market conditions are affecting the portfolio and what they are doing about this.”

“Most clients appreciate a forthcoming discussion of what their losses look like and what their investment managers and consultants are doing about it. Thinking of ways to generate attractive go-forward, long-term returns is constructive and appreciated.”

Make Every Communication Count: Consultants are busy and many of their suggestions related to communication. While proactivity is required, balance is also needed, and consultant communication should focus on value-added information. Consultants advise managers to be selective, concise, consistent, and thoughtful in their communication.

“Quality is more important than quantity. Be thoughtful – don’t just spew out information every day – make every communication count.”

“Keep communications spaced and short and sweet. Everyone is overloaded with emails and webinars, so only push something if it obviously adds value.”

A carefully crafted and regularly updated consultant communication plan is required. Consultants recognize managers who get communication right and managers who do not.

Conclusion

The good news is that investment consultants’ perceptions of the support they’ve received from asset managers during the coronavirus outbreak have generally been very good to excellent. The important caveat here is that most consultants perceive variation in that support, and this will likely increase over time.

Consultants gave clear feedback and advice on what asset managers need to focus on in the current environment: being accessible and very responsive (24 hours); reaching out proactively; openly and transparently discussing portfolio performance, positioning and plans; and crafting and implementing a consultant communication plan that focuses on value-added information that is selective, concise, consistent and thoughtful.

Perceptions of asset managers who address these elements are much more likely to remain in the top echelon among the consultants they support.

Pandemic Perspectives Series

[Part 1 – Greenwich Investor Resilience Index](#)

[Part 2 – Lessons from the Past](#)

[Part 4 – Asset Manager Service Quality: Pre- and Post-COVID-19 Onset](#)

[Part 5 – Leading through Crises](#)

[Part 6 – Useful Content in Times of Crisis](#)

[Part 7 – Managers Adapting Through Crisis](#)

[Part 8 – Using Analytics to Transform Sales, Win New Assets](#)

www.greenwich.com | ContactUs@greenwich.com

Coalition Greenwich, a division of CRISIL, an S&P Global Company, is a leading global provider of strategic benchmarking, analytics and insights to the financial services industry.

We specialize in providing unique, high-value and actionable information to help our clients improve their business performance.

Our suite of analytics and insights encompass all key performance metrics and drivers: market share, revenue performance, client relationship share and quality, operational excellence, return on equity, behavioral drivers, and industry evolution.

About CRISIL

CRISIL is a leading, agile and innovative global analytics company driven by its mission of making markets function better. It is majority owned by S&P Global Inc., a leading provider of transparent and independent ratings, benchmarks, analytics, and data to the capital and commodity markets worldwide.

CRISIL is India's foremost provider of ratings, data, research, analytics, and solutions with a strong record of growth, culture of innovation, and global footprint.

It has delivered independent opinions, actionable insights and efficient solutions to over 100,000 customers through businesses that operate from India, the U.S., the U.K., Argentina, Poland, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

For more information, visit www.crisil.com

Disclaimer and Copyright

This Document is prepared by Crisil Coalition Greenwich, which is a part of Crisil Ltd, a company of S&P Global. All rights reserved. This Document may contain analysis of commercial data relating to revenues, productivity and headcount of financial services organisations (together with any other commercial information set out in the Document). The Document may also include statements, estimates and projections with respect to the anticipated future performance of certain companies and as to the market for those companies' products and services.

The Document does not constitute (or purport to constitute) an accurate or complete representation of past or

future activities of the businesses or companies considered in it but rather is designed to only highlight the trends. This Document is not (and does not purport to be) a comprehensive Document on the financial state of any business or company. The Document represents the views of Crisil Coalition Greenwich as on the date of the Document and Crisil Coalition Greenwich has no obligation to update or change it in the light of new or additional information or changed circumstances after submission of the Document.

This Document is not (and does not purport to be) a credit assessment or investment advice and should not form basis of any lending, investment or credit decision. This Document does not constitute nor form part of an offer or invitation to subscribe for, underwrite or purchase securities in any company. Nor should this Document, or any part of it, form the basis to be relied upon in any way in connection with any contract relating to any securities. The Document is not an investment analysis or research and is not subject to regulatory or legal obligations on the production of, or content of, investment analysis or research.

The data contained in the Document is based upon a particular bank's scope, which reflects a bank's data submission, business structure, and sales revenue Reporting methodology. As a result, any data contained in the Document may not be directly comparable to data presented to another bank. For franchise benchmarking, Crisil Coalition Greenwich has implemented equal ranking logic on aggregate results i.e., when sales revenues are within 5% of at least one competitor ahead, a tie is shown and designated by = (where actual ranks are shown). Entity level data has no equal ranking logic implemented and therefore, on occasion, the differences between rank bands can be very close mathematically.

The data in this Document may reflect the views reported to Crisil Coalition Greenwich by the research participants. Interviewees may be asked about their use of and demand for financial products and services and about investment practices in relevant financial markets. Crisil Coalition Greenwich compiles the data received, conducts statistical analysis and reviews for presentation purposes to produce the final results.

THE DOCUMENT IS COMPILED FROM SOURCES CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH BELIEVES TO BE RELIABLE. CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH DISCLAIMS ALL REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO THIS DOCUMENT, INCLUDING AS TO THE VALIDITY, ACCURACY, REASONABLENESS OR COMPLETENESS OF THE INFORMATION, STATEMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS, ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF ALL OR ANY OF THIS DOCUMENT. CRISIL COALITION GREENWICH ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE OF ANY KIND ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF ALL OR ANY OF THIS DOCUMENT.

Crisil Coalition Greenwich is a part of Crisil Ltd., an S&P Global company. ©2025 Crisil Ltd. All rights reserved.