Wholesaler Quality Index™ Reveals Critical Drivers of External Sales Support

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., (December 14, 2010) – A new study by Cogent Research of Cambridge, Massachusetts concludes that mutual fund wholesalers who consistently provide compelling business-building support and can demonstrate breadth of product knowledge are seen as most effective in building advisor loyalty. This insight and many others is based on Cogent's Advisor Touchpoints 2010™ report which measures the effectiveness of mutual fund, ETF, and variable annuity provider marketing and sales support activities.

"For many years, we have seen that after investment performance, wholesaler support is a critical driver of mutual fund provider loyalty. This year, our research went deeper into the wholesaler 'touchpoint' to understand which elements of this interaction are most important to advisors" said Christy White, Cogent Principal. "Our analysis reveals that consultative-type selling that focuses on understanding the advisors' business trumps product-focused approaches in terms of building advisor relationships."

Among leading mutual fund providers, DFA, Fidelity, BlackRock, Russell Investments, and Franklin Templeton score in the top-tier in Cogent's Wholesaler Quality Index™. These firms not only performed strongly on business-building elements, but also on other attributes like demonstrating integrity and honesty, and providing timely problem resolution and support.

"We focus on helping advisors with all aspects of their business as the study results confirm," said Michael Winnick, managing director, U.S. Private Client Services, Russell Investments. "We have been working with advisors for more than 30 years, to help them grow their practices and create successful long-term relationships with their clients."

"We strive to be visible and responsive to financial advisors so they know they can always rely on us for the support and tools they need," says Peter Jones, president of Franklin Templeton Distributors, Inc. "As we emerge from an extraordinary period for global financial markets, financial advisors are clamoring for value-added services."

Interestingly and not surprisingly, the research reveals that traditional “no load” firms score lower perhaps reflecting their alternative or hybrid methods of providing external advisor support through internal staff or through a “key account” management structure.

2010 Advisor Touchpoint Wholesaler Quality Index™ Rankings

Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three	Tier Four
DFA	American Century	MFS	Columbia
Fidelity Investments	The Hartford	Eaton Vance	Janus
BlackRock	American Funds	Invesco	T.Rowe Price
Russell Investments	Putnam Investments	Legg Mason	Dodge & Cox
Franklin Templeton	AllianceBernstein	Oppenheimer	Vanguard
	PIMCO	DWS Investments	

About Cogent Research

Cogent Research helps clients gain clarity, obtain perspective, and formulate direction on critical business issues. Founded in 1996, Cogent provides custom research, syndicated research products, and evidence-based consulting to leading organizations in the financial services, life sciences, and consumer goods industries. Through quality research, advanced analytics, and deep industry knowledge, Cogent Research delivers data-driven solutions and strategies that enable clients to better understand customers, define products, and shape market opportunities in order to increase revenues and grow the value of their products and brands.

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