The best of 2020

Amanda White  December 22, 2020

One of our defining characteristics, and main objectives, at Top1000funds.com, is to provide behind-the-scenes insight into the strategy and implementation of the world’s largest investors. In 2020, as the world and global economies changed so dramatically, we were on our toes to innovate our media and event offerings in a bid to give you what you needed to navigate a changing world. We pivoted to a digital event offering, introduced podcast series and created a COVID-19 research hub. All of this in addition to our regular insights into global investors’ asset allocation, industry innovation on fees, new investment opportunities and organisational design.

This year, we have delivered more than 300 investor profiles and other analytical and research-driven pieces on the global institutional investment universe, and we now have readers at asset owners from 95 countries, with combined assets of $48 trillion.

We are also pleased to say that our readers, are spending more time on our site and there are more people visiting, so thank you to all our interview subjects, readers and supporters over the last year. Below is a look at the most popular stories of 2020.
over-significance of work to realising work-life balance, and from globalization to nationalisation. In this article the authors argue the COVID-19 pandemic is an inevitable result of globalisation and that the pandemic, in turn, has seriously threatened the world's globalization. Disrupted the international world order: legally, socially, politically, and economically. It does however conclude that the pandemic's adverse effects on globalization is temporary.

We also turned our attention to how large institutional investors were allocating as the equity market gathered pace on its rollercoaster. A series of interviews with CIOs looked at how investors were weathering the storm, and in one of those we went on the journey with the State of Wisconsin Investment Board which in the space of February to April moved its portfolio from "defensive" to "offensive" as it "leans into the opportunities" presented by the coronavirus crisis.

For the first time we also launched a two podcast series: Sustainability in a time of crisis, in conjunction with the PRI and Robeco; and the Fiduciary Investors Series, which is an extension of our event series.

In one of the more popular discussions, Professor Cameron Hepburn, Professor of Environmental Economics, and the director of the economics sustainability programme, at the University of Oxford discussed some of the more recent energy innovations; and the ideal price on carbon; as well as what is needed to move to a net-zero carbon economy. Importantly he looked at the role of finance and the need to recognise that both the finance and climate environments are complex adaptive systems, and that backward-looking analysis is not appropriate for adequate risk management.

“We need to get out of the old paradigms,” he says. “Even the concept of the Black Swan, doesn’t really help us to capture the fact these distributions are not bell shaped, or fat tailed or non-normal distributions. These are interactions between parts of the economy that are shifting the distribution altogether. So these things that are supposed to be a 1 in 10,000 event become the mean because you’ve shifted the distribution.”

He ends by offering some advice to institutional investors on how they should be including climate risks and opportunities into their investment decision-making, and the best way of doing that.

Our digital events also delivered plenty of incredible content with speakers this year including: Ray Dalio, Larry Summers, Esther Duflo, William Nordhaus and the CIOs from CalPERS, APC, TCorp, and many others.

Remembering back to the pre-COVID days at the beginning of the year, before the crisis changed everything, readers were interested in the pace of technological change and advances in machine learning, which Campbell Harvey, Professor of Finance at Duke University said will result in a “shake out” in investment management.

We also looked at the rising influence of the sovereign wealth fund with a look around the world of their influence and the spate of new funds setting up.

And in an area that has been an ongoing investigation for Top1000funds.com we revealed new research that showed the Canadian model, revered world over for its supreme pension management, is not low cost despite that being one of its oft-described traits, rather these funds are cost efficient, rather than being low cost.

Lastly, but certainly not least, investors were interested to learn about the specific climate activities of some of the world’s leading asset owners, with only a handful of pension funds committing to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and developing an approach to achieve that goal.

2020, COVID, Covid-19

White is responsible for the content across all Conexus Financial’s institutional media and events. In addition to being the editor of top1000funds.com, she is responsible for directing the bi-annual Fiduciary Investors Symposium.
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Portfolios but 20 per cent consider inflation is unlikely.

term and laments its misuse. So why does the finance industry continue to be ignorant or unable to look beyond traditional finance models in assessing global risks?

the US under President Biden. But the path to get there is not so easy.

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