Open MIC is open for anyone.

9:00: AM Pacific Thursday 800 504-8071 Code is 5556463

Questions?

Anthony Owen at Tony@annuity.com

"The man who views the world at 50 the same way as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years". **Muhammad Ali**

13%

Percent of Americans on food stamps right now… over 40 million people.

I have had some comment about the links not clicking through, FYI..I test each one before notes are sent…sorry…BB

Hot News and Other Helpful Info

- **Reverse Mortgage Article NY Times:** http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/12/your-money/12money.html
- **AM Best Rating improve:** http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110307006362/en/A.M.-Special-Report-Gradual-Improvements-Rating-Trends
- **Variable Annuity Negative Article:** http://moneywatch.bnet.com/investing/blog/wise-investing/5-reasons-to-avoid-variable-annuities/2127/
- **Top 10 Hedge Fund Article:** http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/24193cbe-4433-11e0-931d-00144feab49a.html?ftcamp=traffic/email/content/premnl/editor/memmkt

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Hi there,

This is a banner for a farm and home show it is 4x8 ft. They have to add my state lic. number, correct a spelling error and add another 800 number.

Jeff

Our friend Jeff Rodd had this banner made for a Farm Show .....this is a terrific example of being transparent and our safe money approach in the forefront. Tell them what you do!

Great Selling Tips: Silence

1. *You don't have to talk as much as you think.*
2. *It's OK to pause before you respond to a question or request.*
3. *Silence is a powerful sales weapon when used at the appropriate time.*
4. *The person asking the questions controls the sales conversation.*

And…

"If you keep your pipeline full at all times, you seldom have to worry about reaching your targets and quotas."

Kelly Robertson

The Great Betty Arellano and Grandson

Using an assistant.

I was fortunate to find my perfect assistant, actually she is not an assistant, she was my marketing partner and now my business partner. I was never very good with the telephone; my failure with it is probably legendary, so early on I needed help with appointment setting etc.

My natural move was to find someone to help me and to run the office. (Actually I was in my big-shot mode at the time)

Betty Arellano came into my life 15 plus years ago to help me in my quest…quickly I learned her real value and the actual reason any of us should ever use an assistant…..to fill out paperwork?

No…to help me make sales.

How did she do that? She did it by extending and building relationships. Over the years our business became 2nd nature to us, we each did what we did and sold the living crap out of annuities.

In our small town (Olympia WA) we have sold well over $100,000,000 million in fixed annuities. If I would have had EIAs back then (Washington was very late to approve them) who knows how many we would have sold.

Our primary product was a 10 year annuity from Great American which paid about 4% for the first year and 3% for the remaining 9 years.

How did we do it?

We did it three ways:

- **We were fact finder based which means we used annuities to fulfill needs, we never sold yield or product, we sold the benefits they could enjoy based on their needs from the fact finder. (Bill)**

- **We did it by extending a relationship to the client beyond the sales process (Betty)**

- **We did it by having a nonstop flow of new and fresh leads, more leads than we could ever see, we only saw the folks who wanted to see us and would come to the office (marketing)**

Q and A for Betty:

Q. How much time do you plan for each client in a year?

Q. Do you call for policy reviews?

Q. Are service issues a problem?

Q. Does your client database call you or do you have to call them?

Q. How would you use the database to make additional sales?

Q. How much of the sales process is your responsibility?

Q. How much should an agent set aside for marketing?

Q. How much should an agent pay for a top level marketing assistant? Bonuses? Profit sharing?

Q. How do you find a capable assistant?

Q. Should you let the assistant sell annuities on their own away from the main business?

Q What advice would you tell an agent wanting to expand his/her production?

Q. Who was responsible for paying the bills in the office?

Q. How do you feel about the annuity business? The life insurance business and the health insurance business. Did you and Bill ever sell Long Term Care Insurance?

Q. Was Bill hard to work for?

Q. Any other advice?

We mentioned this last week...BB

Sale of Online Banking Pioneer ING Direct Said to Have Started

- Posted by JJ Hornblass on March 9, 2011 at 8:30pm
- View JJ Hornblass's blog

The sale of ING Direct USA, one of the first online banks to secure a sizable customer base, appears to have formally begun.

Dealbook, the New York Times blog, is reporting that it confirmed with ING NV officials that the unit is in play. ING told Dealbook that it is selling the online banking unit to "satisfy requirements imposed by the European Commission as part of the firm's 10 billion euro bailout in 2008."

The Dutch government has been on ING's case about its online bank since the height of the credit crisis. Back in 2008, the Dutch government told ING NV, the online bank's parent, that ING Direct is to be sold by 2013. That timeline appears to remain on track.

The New York Post first reported the most recent news about the sale. The Post claims that ING Direct "could fetch as much as $10 billion." The Post says CIT Group is a possible suitor.

Globally, ING Direct had about 22 million customers at the end of 2008, 7.5 million of those we believe we in the US. The overall ING Direct unit lost 1.2 billion euros that year.

I think I will stop posting Porter's thoughts because of the negative (or honest) spin he puts on things....but our target market sees this stuff in the news and making sure you as agents also are aware will help0 you in relationship development with them....I personally am not that negative and besides, what can I do about it except vote and pay taxes which I already do....

Sometimes when I see the politicians on TV I would just like to slap them....you?

BB

From Porter Stansberry

The federal government posted its largest monthly deficit in history in February... **$223 billion**. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the 2011 deficit will reach **$1.5 trillion** (we're up to $642 billion for the first five months of fiscal 2011). And today, the Senate will vote on competing spending cut proposals.

Surely, the proposed cuts will cover at least one month of the government's deficit... It takes sacrifice to make up a $1.5 trillion deficit. Well... Democrats already rejected GOP-backed cuts of more than $50 billion, and Republicans rejected the Democrats' cuts of less than $10 billion. Let's say, when Congress is all done, the cuts total $30 billion... That's less than one-seventh the February deficit. That **wouldn't even cover one month's interest payment on outstanding U.S. government debt.** (The government has spent $101 billion on interest through the end of February.)

If not by cost-cutting, how will the government make up the deficit? Taxes? If we doubled today's tax revenue, we'd still have a deficit. Half of U.S. citizens pay zero taxes. The half that pays would leave if you double its taxes.

News Flash…call Tony about the return of Annuity.com $45 leads….they are ready, more information next week…BB

Partners,

If you are not buying Qualified Annuity Leads, why not? We just got this lead.

First Name: Stephen
Last Name: W..
.

Investment Amount:
$1,000,000

Age:
Email: .....@gmail.com

Best Time To Call:
10am-Noon

Date of Birth: Fri, 04/../..

Phone: (303) 396-..

Investment Type: Fixed

Investment Term: 30

Alt Phone:

Location ; Denver, Colorado 80246 United States

spoke to Steve looking for quotes on life time fixed with 100% survivor ship for 1 mill money is non-qualified wants it in place this year call 10am-noon mst

Anthony R. Owen
Vice President, Eagle Shadow Financial, LLC
Co-Founder, Annuity Agents Alliance
Annuity Marketing Consultant, Annuity.com

Office: 303-284-3582

From a good friend of ours....I haven't been able to reach him yet so I removed his name.....but this paints a solid picture about how a hard working regular agent can use these leads. This agent works alone out of his house.

BB

Agent remarks....

Anthony we have purchased 17 we have not officially closed any, however last week I ran 3 and two of them called me this morning saying they wanted to go forward with the annuities. Assuming they close one is for $40,000 and the other is for $100,000. Scheduled to pick up $40,000 Tuesday and the $100,000 Wednesday. Personally I am feeling better about these leads all the time.

Not all agents sell tons of annuities, but having a continual flow of leads and knowing that the secret is "seeing the people" .... I think his remarks says a lot....BB

Senator Harkin is the best friend on politics our industry has....Iowa...how many insurance companies are there in Iowa? Hmmmm.....BB

Sen. Harkin: New retirement scheme hinges on advisers

Influential lawmaker envisions provident fund supplanting 401(k)s

A congressional leader sees a key role for investment advisers in his vision for reform of the retirement system.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, chairman of the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee, would like to create a new private retirement system that is based on professionally managed pools of retirement funds. He doubts that Americans on their own can cobble together nest eggs big enough to finance their post-work needs.

"Forcing people to manage their own retirement funds isn't working," Mr. Harkin said of the growing use of 401(k) plans by employers. "Most people don't have the background, the interest or the time. Instead, retirement dollars need to be pooled to take advantage of economies of scale and managed by professionals who carefully select and monitor every investment in a diversified portfolio."

Mr. Harkin spoke today at a conference in Washington sponsored by the National Institute on Retirement Security. After Mr. Harkin's address, the group released a survey showing that 84% of Americans are concerned that they won't be able to save enough for retirement and that most people believe they will only achieve a modest lifestyle after they stop working.

Last fall, Mr. Harkin launched a series of hearings focused on retirement security, which are continuing this year. He wants to rethink how retirement is financed.

"The root of the problem is that we've never had a coherent plan for a universal private retirement system," Mr. Harkin said. "We need to take a fresh look at the retirement system and see what we can do to make it work for everyone."

A new mechanism should be universal and automatic, provide a check for a certain amount every month for as long as a retiree lives, involve shared responsibility between employers, the government and individuals, and include a central role for professional money managers, according to Mr. Harkin.

Mr. Harkin said that advisers involved in the system would have a fiduciary responsibility and would have to operate transparently while investing retirement money in both Treasury bonds and private securities.

“I don't know how it would be structured,” he said after his speech. “I would be the first to admit I don't have a blueprint. That's why I'm holding these hearings.”

In a committee meeting last fall, Mr. Harkin raised concerns about conflicts of interest for advisers to defined-contribution plans sponsored by employers. He asserted that they have an incentive to push employees into higher-fee products like IRA rollovers, a point also made in a recent Government Accountability Office study.

“What you need to do is wring out of the system any sense that an individual or investment firm can make more profit by rolling these things over at the expense of people who put the money in,” Mr. Harkin said.

In 2009, the median balance in 401(k) plans was $59,381, according to a study by the Employee Benefits Research Institute. People are realizing that they may fall well short of the savings they need for retirement, according to the NIRS poll released today.

“Generally, Americans consider a secure retirement simply surviving or living comfortably (34%), paying their bills (17%) maintaining their pre-retirement lifestyle (11%), and paying health care and health insurance costs (8%),” states the report, which was based on nationwide telephone interviews of 800 Americans 25 or older.

The poll also showed that 80% believe that policymakers in Washington fail to understand the difficulties of saving enough money for retirement.

Adding to the dour sentiment is the fact that the financial crisis of 2008 lingers in the minds of many Americans and has shaken their confidence in the markets, according to Brian Perlman, a partner at Mathew Greenwald & Associates, which conducted the poll.

“People have redefined what retirement is,” Mr. Perlman said, “and they have lowered their expectations.”

(How much better could he have said he likes annuities without saying it?...duh....BB)

“Wall Street is Coming, Wall Street is Coming”....One if by Internet, Two if by Agent....

Shouts Annuity Agent Paul Revere.....

Oh my gosh...what will happen, will we be run out of business? Yikes...how can we compete?

Here are some questions and answers:

Q. I thought Wall Street didn't like EIAs?

A. Wall Street likes any product that they can create, control and make maximum revenue, take an EIA for example. They will design it, squeeze it for maximum profit and outsource the servicing to an existing insurance company (example AIG etc)

Q. I thought we disliked Wall Street?

A. No we dislike the SEC and their attempt to control our industry based on using the Broker Dealer system.

Q. If Wall Street gets in the indexed annuity business what will happen to me?

A. You will sell more annuities.

Q. How?

A. More and more people will know about EIAs and exposure will go up.

Q. Will I do business with a Wall Street firm?

A. No. They will do business with their intended market and only their intended market.

Q. Ok...what is their intended market?

A. Pensions and 401 (k) markets. They are big picture guys.

Q. Why wouldn't they do business with individuals?

A. They may do that with small sub marketing groups, but the real play is massive pension plans.

Q. Will they hire agents?

A. No, they will hire a "specialist" who works for a company who will implement the EIAs into the corporate and 401)k) world. Have you ever seen an employee at a bank selling annuities? They will be like that....meaningless agents barely earning a salary.

Q. Why? Why would they market that way?

A. Because it is cheap and efficient, the real sales will be made at the highest level....as an example. The VP of a large Wall Street firm plays golf with the VP in charge of XYZ manufacturing conglomerate. He explains the EIA and his playing partner says..."Have your people call my people" That is how they will be sold...at the highest level. One corporate sale and 300,000 employees become clients.

Q. What happens when the employee retires?

A. Duh....who do you think is there moving the money? The marketing who implements the EIA and the trail comp goes back to WS.

Q. How can this be good for me, a small single annuity producer in Olympia?

A. Simple, answer this yourself by asking a question. "How many peaks are there in Colorado higher than Pike's Peak?" Answer? 87. But when we think of peaks, do we think of them...no. We think of Pike's Peak....that is what will happen.

The **Golden Age of Annuities** is here...be proud and thank your lucky star.

How would you like the SEC as your business partner?...BB

SEC eyes crackdown on Wall Street bonuses

Agency wants to limit the kind of risk-taking that came before the financial crisis hit.

By Ben Protess
New York Times
Posted: Thursday, Mar. 03, 2011

Mary Schapiro, SEC chairwoman: "... We want to be very attuned to unintended consequences." Mark Wilson - GETTY

Lavish Wall Street bonuses, long the scorn of lawmakers and shareholders, have met a new foe: the Securities and Exchange Commission.

(how would you like the SEC to tell you that you make too much money selling annuities, isn't making money and being independent what America should be?...BB)

The agency is now proposing a **crackdown on hefty compensation** at big banks, brokerage firms and hedge funds - a move intended to rein in pay packages that encouraged excessive risk-taking before the financial crisis. The proposal would require Wall Street firms to disclose bonus figures to the SEC, which could then ban any "excessive" awards.

The plan was among several new regulations the agency proposed on Wednesday as part of the Dodd-Frank financial overhaul law. Other proposals included rules for derivatives clearinghouses and a measure to limit the influence credit rating agencies have on the financial industry.

The agency's commissioners, in a 3-2 vote on Wednesday, agreed to move forward with the Wall Street bonus rules. The proposal will now enter a 45-day public comment period, after which the commissioners must vote on a final version of the rules.

Read more: http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/03/03/2106040/sec-eyes-crackdown-on-wall-street.html#ixzz1G1p9GNrh

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A giant mistake you will be making if you think.....

"Your Business is on the minds of Your Clients.

Once you leave your clients, chances are they rarely think about you, your business and your services.

This is one of the most costly misconceptions many insurance agents have about their clients. They think their prospects and

customers will remember them when they are ready to buy or when their friends mention they are considering an insurance product..

If you want your prospects and clients to be on their minds then you must be aggressive with a consistent flow of noninvasive information offers. They must be simple and to the point and they must offer **VALUE.**

Reality Check: That annuity brochure you gave them is under a pile of unread magazines or in the garbage. While you thought you made a great connection when you spoke with that new prospect a month ago, chances are he barely remembers meeting you, let alone any details.

If you want your prospects and clients to remember you and your business when the timing is right for them to consider an annuity you must be proactive.

Drip simple messages offering value.

Look!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

If you have had any concerns about the power we have unleashed for you and your marketing set them aside.

We have been telling you for months to get on board. The reason this works? Simple....it is based on a tried and true system used for years (and still is) by The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NML). While it is different than the One Card System (OCS) it runs on the same premise....drip, contact, glean and sell.

Here is a recent non solicited email from a current user....Have a look

BB

Oh by the way....did you know that using our system (Retire Village) requires no effort on your part after the initial 10 minutes setup....we do it all for you.

March 13, 2011.....

Joe,

On Friday I completed my first sale generated by the ERMS system - $330,000 moving from mutual funds.

Bob had first heard the radio show in June, 2010, didn't want to meet, had interest, was thinking of retiring in about a year, would call me when ready to meet, and went on my newsletter drip list.

In September, 2010, he was laid off (financial analyst). Still didn't call me.

In early February, 2011, we put him on the RetireVillage email drip list. Two emails later he called me, and on our second meeting we did paperwork to open 4 accounts and move the $330,000! This system works!

This next week I expect to write my second piece of ERMS-generated business, an internet lead from October of last year who "just wanted information, no meeting" and then asked for contact after receiving two

emails from the ERMS system. We had our first meeting last week, and the plan is to move $150,000 this week from xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. There is about $400,000 that I know of (so far) that could eventually be moved as trust develops.

Thank you for your marketing expertise and tools. This ERMS tool is fantastic!

David D. Braun, ChFC, CLU, LUTCF
305 N. Second Ave., #202
Upland, CA 91786
Office: 800-303-8674
Mobile: 909-921-1661

What next?

Call Tony and grab the details....it is almost insane that an agent would not use this system...why? Because you get leads daily from people who know who you are!

Retirevillage.com

Here is an example of what the daily lead report looks like.

Dear [redacted],

Your daily website visitors and leads for yesterday:

Name	email	Page Viewed	Total Views
		http://nwsenio	6
Mit[redacted]	[redacted]wstadt.net	http://nwsenio	1
John [redacted]	[redacted]@comcast.net	http://nwsenio	1
Candace [redacted]	[redacted]@gmail.com	http://nwsenio	2
Candace [redacted]	[redacted]@gmail.com	http://nwsenio	1
E[redacted]	[redacted]niorresources.net	http://nwsenio	1
Betty [redacted]	[redacted]@comcast.net	pagename=5	1
John [redacted]	[redacted]@comcast.net	http://nwsenio pagename=5	1
Bob[redacted]	[redacted]3@msn.com	http://nwsenio pagename=5&sid=6580	1
B[redacted]	[redacted]@gmail.com	http://nwsenior pagename=58	1
Mitche[redacted]	[redacted]newstadt.net	http://nwsenior pagename=58	6
D[redacted]	[redacted].com	http://nwsenior pagename=58	2
Candace[redacted]	[redacted]mail.com	http://nwsenior pagename=58	1
[redacted]	[redacted]iorresources.net	http://nwsenior	4
Mitche[redacted]	[redacted]wstadt.net	http://nwsenior.retirevillage.com/frontpage	1
Canda[redacted]	[redacted]gmail.com	http://nwsenior.retirevillage.com/newsletter	1
Canda[redacted]	[redacted]gmail.com	http://nwsenior.retirevillage.com/newsletterview?id=4	1
Canda[redacted]	[redacted]gmail.com	http://nwsenior.retirevillage.com/planning	1
Mitch[redacted]	[redacted]ewstadt.net	http://nwsenior.retirevillage.com/userrequest	1

We drip on your database of clients and prospects twice per month. You will see exactly who is visiting your website to view the articles we drip for you. Been looking for a good reason to check in with your hot leads....well here it is.

You will know their interest level by the number of views and which pages they visit on your website.

The Other Side of the Table

…..it's all based on your view……

Sometimes it is how you look at things that can make the difference. The other side of the table is all about that….how you look at things!

I was going to make a big deal about this article and about how the tide is shifting from stock brokers to annuities as we the baby boomers move closer and

closer to the reality of our retirement.....but then I thought....you all know it already....so read, enjoy, copy and handout to everyone you know....also, I am aware of the pre0variabel annuity part at the bottom....that is no big deal, the big deal is that this is the Wall Street Journal and they are writing a pro-annuity article. That is the big news....BB

Great article in the Wall Street Journal Pro Annuity....BB

Here is the link also:
http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052748703954004576089761660773344-lMyQjAxMTAxMDAwODEwNDgyWj.html#

Making the Case to Buy an Annuity

Retirees may get more financial security by combining insurance products and mutual funds, some analysts say

By LAVONNE KUYKENDALL

Many investors approaching retirement think they have no need for annuities. But the lifetime-income guarantees offered by these insurance-company products can add security to portfolios that are mostly composed of stock and bond mutual funds.

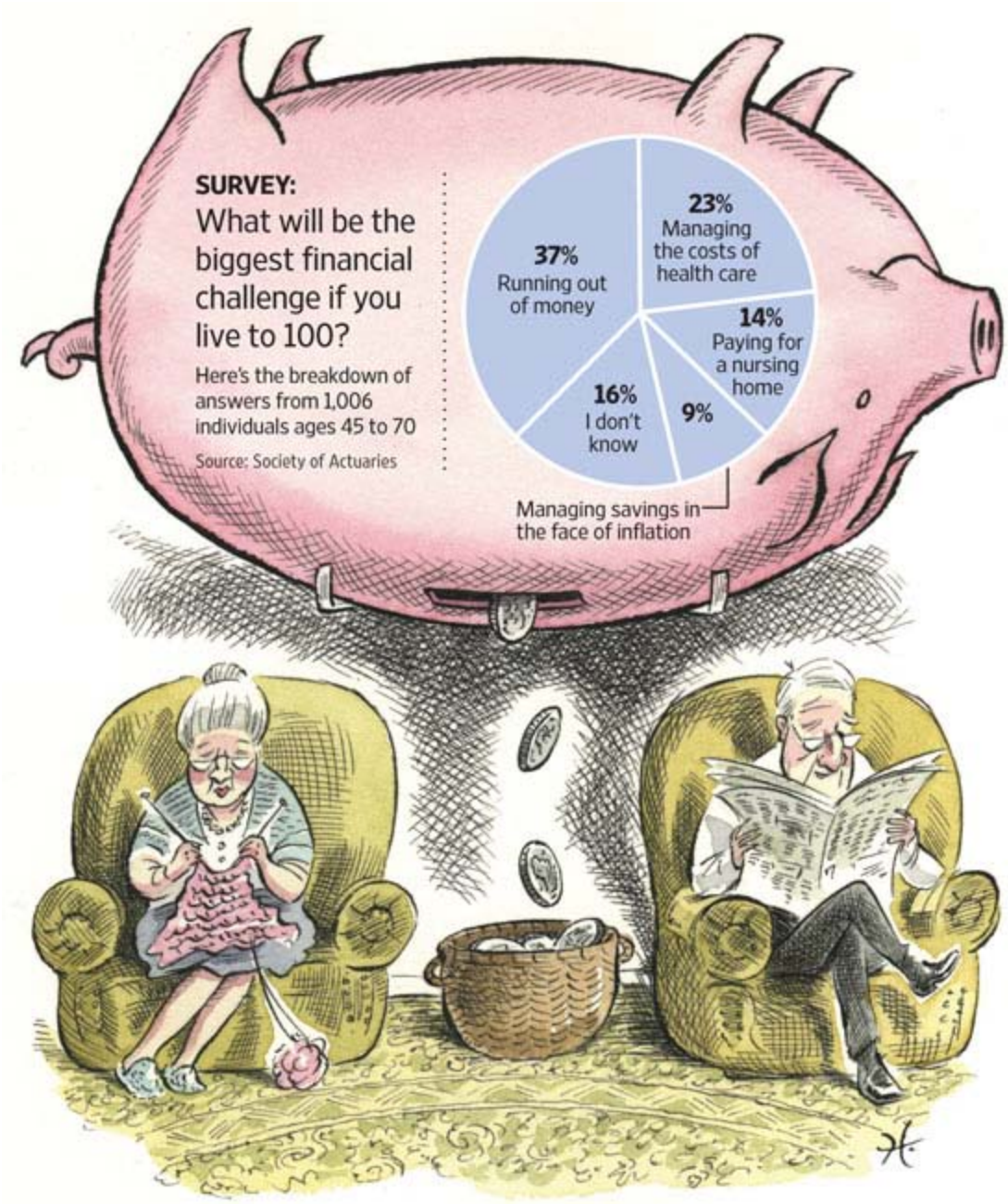
A market downturn that hits right before or early in retirement can leave even conservative investors with far less money to draw from than planned and little time to recoup the losses, increasing the risk they could run out. By putting a portion of their retirement funds in annuities, some investment researchers say, investors can arrange for a more dependable income stream for life.

"The longer we live, the greater stress that puts on our ability to pay for our retirement-income goal—an inflation-adjusted income stream that lasts as long as we do," says Tom Idzorek, chief investment officer at Morningstar Inc.'s Ibbotson Associates unit. "We need to go beyond the universe of mutual funds and exchange-traded funds and consider longevity-risk products."

According to Financial Research Corp., a Boston research firm, a 65-year-old retiree who withdraws an inflation-adjusted $45,000 annually from a $1 million portfolio of stock and bond investments has a 25% chance of running out of money before age 92. But if the retiree gets the same annual income by investing $400,000 in an immediate annuity and withdrawing the rest from $600,000 invested in stocks and bonds, the chance of running out of money drops to 6%, the research firm says.
To be sure, Ibbotson and a number of other companies and academics that have cited the benefits of annuities do consulting work or otherwise earn income from insurers that sell annuities. But they make a persuasive case, particularly in light of the two bear markets of the past decade.
An Annuity Fan

One believer is Bud Hebeler, 77, a retired Boeing executive who runs www.analyzenow.com, a retirement-planning website. He says annuities have made his retirement more secure, helping him avoid the problems that plague many retirees who rely primarily on their savings.

What will be the biggest challenge if you live to 100?



"People didn't think they would live that long, and they spent too much too early," Mr. Hebeler says. Low interest rates over the past few years have hurt, too. "Now, they are trying to ration a limited amount of savings."

According to actuarial mortality tables, a healthy 65-year-old man has a 33% chance and a healthy woman a 44% chance of living beyond 90. For a 65-year-old couple, there's more than a 50% chance that at least one of them will live beyond 90.

Mr. Hebeler has invested in "immediate" annuities in stages over three years—a strategy known as "laddering"—to take advantage of potentially rising interest rates. With an immediate annuity, investors hand a lump sum to an insurer and get a promise of regular payments that will last for as long as they live; when interest rates are low, as they are today, investors lock in payments that are smaller than they might get in other environments.

People in poor health or those with a family history of early death usually are advised to steer clear of annuities. But Mr. Hebeler says he hopes to live into his 90s like his parents did, which would make the annuities a great deal for him and allow him to leave more money to his children. He also says the protection provided by the annuities has enabled him to invest the rest of his portfolio more aggressively, with a larger percentage in stocks than he might have had otherwise.

Two Types of Annuities

Retirees may do best by augmenting their mutual-fund portfolios with both immediate annuities and a second variety—variable annuities that have lifetime-income benefits—according to both Ibbotson and Moshe Milevsky, a finance professor at York University in Toronto who has written extensively about the benefits of annuities.

With a variable annuity, investors typically invest in mutual-fund-like subaccounts—but have the option of buying income benefits that can reduce the risk that a market downturn during retirement will devastate investment values.

For an added fee, typically 0.5% to 1% a year, a rider promises the contract owner a set percentage of the original investment, typically around 5%, annually for life.

If the investments do well, the contract value and annual payout may step up to reflect the higher balance. Money not withdrawn in the holder's lifetime can be left to heirs.

On the negative side, variable annuities have long had a reputation as being too expensive and pushed by salespeople for large commissions.

In a paper written for insurer MetLife Inc. Mr. Milevsky explains that immediate annuities and variable annuities with guaranteed living benefits provide different advantages to a portfolio. He gives immediate annuities top marks for protecting investors against the risk of outliving their money, particularly if the investors live longer than expected. Variable annuities with lifetime-income benefits, meanwhile, help protect investments from "sequence of returns risk," or the hazard of a big downturn just before or after retirement.

Ibbotson has developed proprietary guidelines to make personalized recommendations on annuity purchases based on an investor's answers to typical retirement-planning questions. It has licensed the program to some insurers and investment managers, including TIAA-CREF, New York Life and Great-West Retirement Services, a unit of Great-West Life & Annuity Insurance Co.

In general, the guidelines recommend that older investors allocate more of their money to immediate fixed annuities to take advantage of the higher payout that is keyed to age at the time payments begin. A typical 65-year-old should put around 20% of his money in a fixed annuity and about 30% in a variable annuity, according to the guidelines. A 75-year-old should put around 35% in a fixed annuity and a little less than 30% in a variable annuity with a minimum withdrawal benefit for life, Ibbotson says.

Conservative investors should consider investing a little more in each than investors who are comfortable with market risk.

Invest Aggressively

Wealthy investors who face no risk of outliving their money probably don't need annuities at all, many advisers say. But retirees whose pensions and Social Security income fall well short of their needs may want to put a higher percentage of savings into a longevity product. For investors who want to maintain greater control of their assets, a variable annuity with a minimum withdrawal benefit for life should be favored over immediate annuities, some advisers say.

Ibbotson's Mr. Idzorek recommends that investors take advantage of the downside protection in a variable annuity by investing their subaccount funds as aggressively as their contract allows. The fee for the guaranteed-

minimum-withdrawal feature is typically the same no matter how the funds are invested.

Most investors buy variable annuities right around retirement. But it may be a good idea to start buying these products five to 10 years before retirement and spread the deposits over several years, rather than try to time the market with one big buy, according to Great-West Retirement Services.

Variable annuities are beginning to make an appearance in some 401(k) plans, and Great-West says it has gotten a lot of interest in its 401(k) annuity offering, launched last year.

Ms. Kuykendall is a former reporter for Dow Jones Newswires. She can be reached at reports@wsj.com.