

Is This Your Advisor's First Rodeo?

Written by Rob Copeland

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The last stock market crash, in 2008, is becoming more of a distant memory every day.

Since the spring of 2009, we've been in a market that has gone increasingly higher. And in periods like last year, it did so with very few significant dips along the way. This year, however, volatility has returned. And while that doesn't mean a bear market is around the corner, market experts say it's just a matter of time.

The biggest thing investors need to be wary of, however, isn't the market. It's the experience level of those who are guiding you through it. Think about it: If your advisor is under 30, he or she has zero experience navigating through a serious market downturn. If they're under 40, it's likely they've only been through that one downturn and then a long period with the wind at their back.

Robo-advisors, too, have yet to be tested. They were all created during the current bull market, so they've benefitted from easy conditions the entire time. And if you're a DIY investor using a discount brokerage, chances are the nearly decade-long market rise has made you a little complacent.

I feel strongly about this topic, because as a two-decade veteran of the business, I've learned what it takes to succeed in different market conditions—and I know that many investors and advisors are simply unprepared.

If you might be flying through rough weather, you want a captain who is a seasoned navigator. That's almost always a human financial advisor, who should be:

- An industry veteran who has been through multiple market cycles
- A competent and ethical professional
- A true advisor, rather than a stockbroker presenting himself as an impartial guide.

[BrokerCheck](#) will give you a snapshot of a broker's employment history, regulatory actions, and

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investment-related licensing information, arbitrations and complaints.

The Securities and Exchange Commission's [public disclosure site](#) can provide you with background information on a financial advisor and details about the practice and what kinds of clients they typically serve. It's always best to work with an advisor who's experience in serving people that fit your financial profile.

Please contact us if you'd like to discuss how to prepare your investment portfolio for changing market conditions.