

# AllianzGI reshuffles marketing, distribution leadership



The \$605bn fund manager is hiring a US marketing head after adding dedicated RIA, Latin America sales channels

[Ben Strack](#) February 12, 2020, 5:28 pm

**Allianz Global Investors** is combining its US marketing efforts under one leader to unify promotional outreach to clients across its growing number of distribution channels.

The \$605bn fund arm of Munich-headquartered **Allianz** revealed it was searching for a head of marketing for the Americas in [a job listing](#) on **LinkedIn**. Focusing primarily on the US, the executive will report to **Doug Eu**, CEO of AllianzGI's US business.

While marketing remains tied to the distribution organization, the hiring will shake up reporting lines that were overhauled at the end of 2016. AllianzGI moved responsibility for marketing under distribution at that time, separating its marketing and distribution along retail and institutional channel lines, [Fund Intelligence previously reported](#).

The new marketing head will oversee marketing content and campaign strategy and execution across both US retail and institutional distribution channels, the posting indicates. The executive will work closely with senior staff across the firm, including the US distribution leadership, other regional marketing heads and the global marketing and communications team.

Before the 2016 marketing reorganization, **William Grau** was chief marketing officer for the Americas. His role, which was eliminated, was separate from distribution. Although Grau's [LinkedIn page](#) still indicates he holds the CMO title, he is listed as an employee at **MJ Lilly Associates**, according to the strategic communications consultancy's [website](#).

**Shivaun Prendergast** and **JP Vicente**, who lead US retail marketing and US institutional marketing, respectively, have reported directly to their respective distribution channel heads – currently **Kate Thompson** and **Aiden Redmond** – over the past three years. The marketing executives will remain in their roles, a firm spokesperson confirmed, but report to the new marketing head instead.

AllianzGI's US business has developed new distribution channels to expand its reach across growing client segments and geographies, the representative noted. In addition to retail and institutional, the firm now also has distribution channels targeting registered investment advisers, financial institutions and Latin America.

**Andy Wilmot** became AllianzGI's head of US financial institutions in November 2017, according to [his LinkedIn page](#). [The firm also hired Will Abbott](#) from **WisdomTree Investments** in August 2018 to lead the development of its distribution strategy for RIAs.

Most recently, **Alberto D'Avenia**, the asset manager's former head of business development for Southern Europe, was tapped to lead the AllianzGI US arm's non-resident business and Latin America channel. He stepped into the role last March, [his LinkedIn profile](#) shows.

“To address these growing demands adequately, we have decided to combine marketing efforts in the US under a single head of US marketing,” a firm representative noted. “This new structure will allow for an even more unified approach across the region and greater agility in supporting our expanded channels.”

While the search for the new marketing head continues, teams in the division are reporting to Eu.

**Dan Sondhelm**, CEO of marketing consulting firm **Sondhelm Partners**, said strong collaboration between sales and marketing heads is critical to ensure the two units are balanced within an asset management organization.

“Often firms are sales heavy and as a result value bodies over brand,” Sondhelm told *Fund Intelligence*. “When marketing and public relations are done correctly, they can be responsible for a stronger brand, more visibility, more qualified leads, [and] new investments that come in independent of sales.”

## An evergreen message

Though a firm spokesperson did not reveal plans of any new, US-based marketing campaigns or advertising campaigns, AllianzGI will continue highlighting its commitment to active management.

The firm [unveiled its “Active is” slogan in 2018](#) as a way to differentiate its active management principles from the industry’s passive players, which have gained market share in recent years. The tagline is paired with sentiment from employees on what active management means to them.

“The ‘Active Is’ initiative remains very much ingrained in our value proposition,” the firm representative said. “Our client proposition will continue to be centered on how and where we deliver value as an active investor.”

A recent example shared on the fund manager’s **Twitter** account was the slogan, “Active is: Sharing insights,” which is attached to a post authored by AllianzGI global strategist **Neil Dwane** about what tensions between the US and Iran means for investors. Another post, called “Active is: Keeping an eye on capital markets,” features senior investment strategist **Stefan Rondorf**’s views on earnings recovery amid the coronavirus.

The slogan “Active is: Investing Sustainably” was also displayed on a sign at AllianzGI’s second Sustainability Forum in San Francisco last week. Dwane posed with the poster in a photo promoted on AllianzGI’s LinkedIn page.

The event, attended by about 70 people, was meant to inform financial advisers about sustainable investing and the fund group’s active approach to ESG ratings and corporate engagement. A range of AllianzGI investment professionals, including executives, product specialists, analysts and portfolio managers, focused on sustainability shared their views.

Getting US clients face time with portfolio management teams can be challenging for European fund groups, Sondhelm noted, but is important to growing sales.

Former AllianzGI CEO **Andreas Utermann**, who [retired at the end of the year](#), previously said “establishing the firm as a leader in sustainability” was among his proudest accomplishments. **Tobias Press** replaced him in the role. The company also [appointed \*\*Beatrix Anton-Groenemeyer\*\*](#) as chief sustainability officer in May.

As of November, AllianzGI had \$171bn in strategies [that were fully ESG integrated](#), and its entire platform has access to ESG research. Among its US sustainable offerings are the \$701m AllianzGI Global Water Fund (AWTAX), the \$172m AllianzGI Global Sustainability Fund (ASUAX) and the \$36m AllianzGI Green Bond Fund (AGBFX).

“We will continue to prioritize educating investors about ESG beyond our own water, sustainability and green bond strategies, but also about the importance of sustainable investing and how to address this topic more effectively for a positive outcome,” an AllianzGI spokesperson said.

The investment group has seen annual net outflows for its US open-end funds each year since 2014, according to **Morningstar Direct**, peaking at \$5.6bn in 2017. The fund group bled \$867m last year, about half of what it hemorrhaged the year before.

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