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InvesTrax

A Revolutionary Way to Track Your Mutual Fund Investments!

by Daniel J. Mittlesteadt, President of GLS Financial Consultants, Inc.

People don't plan to fail; they fail to plan! As President of GLS Financial Consultants, Inc., with over 10 years experience in all areas of investing, I have learned that this old adage is especially true for investors.

Recently, I was asked to review a new Windows 3.1 (and Windows 95 compatible) investment software tool called InvesTrax's. InvesTrax's was written to help you track the performance of your mutual fund investments. Tracking the performance of your mutual fund investments not only makes good common sense for planning purposes, it's the first step towards making good sound financial decisions with confidence.

Upon receiving the review copy, I was informed that it's the latest and greatest, and frankly the best way to track the performance of your mutual funds. I have seen a number of investment packages over the years, so naturally, I was a little skeptical. What could InvesTrax's do that would make it stand out among the rest?

If you're like me, Quicken is simply too much (I do not need a computerized checkbook) and setting up a complex financial spreadsheet in Excel is just too much work. At first glance, InvesTrax's seems to strike the right blend between providing the investor with the tools he or she requires, and not taking too much of their time to do it.

It's So Easy...

InvesTrax's user interface is well thought out. Simply clicking on one of the three tabs, located at the bottom of the screen, quickly moves you from your list of mutual fund transactions to graphing your investments, then finally to performance statistics about your investments. InvesTrax's also provides extensive on-line help to help you navigate through the program with ease. Helpful hints are always displayed at the bottom of the screen and pressing F1 brings up a complete on-line manual!

Smart Computer Software?

In the world of financial software, the smarter, the better. As a financial planner, it is critical that performance figures are exact! One small error, would destroy my financial review.

Most of the numbers you will enter into InvesTrax are entered through the transaction editor. This is the place where all your mutual fund account transactions are recorded. The transaction editor is surprisingly smart. Depending upon the type of transaction, it knows exactly what data to display for input and what data to hide. It does a great job checking for errors before the transaction is accepted.

InvesTrax's understands buys, sells, dividends, short and long term gains, and a special transaction type called NAV Markers. NAV Markers are unique, in fact, they do not represent transactions at all. NAV Markers are used to help track a fund even when no real transaction has affected your account. It appears to be most often used when you would like to continue tracking the performance of your investments long after you've stopped investing.

Color-Coded Graphs?

InvesTrax's graphing capabilities are first class. With a click of a button, share price variations or your

overall fund value can be seen at each point you have invested (or set as an NAV Marker). A clever visual aid called "color-coded fund transactions" adds a nice touch to its graphing capabilities. Each transaction plotted on the graph is colored to reflect the type of transaction it represents. For example, a blue point indicates a buy, red indicates sell, and green indicates a reinvested distribution. Double clicking on any of the points reveals more information about that transaction. Also, graphs can easily be cut and pasted into other applications.

Statistics Tell the Story

Graphs are an essential part of a financial presentation, however they can be misleading. If you are dollar cost averaging into a mutual fund, it's very difficult to evaluate the performance of your investments based solely on a graph. InvesTrax helps in this regard by providing two invaluable dollar cost averaging statistics. InvesTrax will calculate your cost per share as well as the average share price. InvesTrax also provides you with dollar totals such as; the total of all buys, sells, reinvested dividends, etc... But maybe the most ingenious aspect of the program lives in the Interest Wizard.

A Real Wiz

Consistent with the latest generation of software being produced these days, InvesTrax's offers a Wizard to do a task that's normally extremely difficult to do. To fully understand what a wizard does, it's useful to consult Webster. Wizard: 1. One who is extremely skillful or clever 2. A sorcerer : magician.

InvesTrax's Interest Wizard, without a doubt, was created by someone extremely skillful in writing computer software to solve complex financial mathematical problems. The Interest Wizard is capable of calculating the effective annual rate of return (interest) for all your mutual fund transactions. This is extremely difficult, accountants and mathematicians will appreciate the genius residing behind the scenes.

All the Interest Wizard requires is the current date and current share price (InvesTrax's uses the last transaction recorded as defaults). Click a button, and bingo, you know with confidence exactly how your funds are performing. You can easily change the date and share price information to perform what-if type calculations. This is no small feat! I have not seen a single piece of software, especially in this price range, perform this calculation!

Knowing the effective annual rate of return of all your mutual fund investments cuts right to the heart of the matter. This is how your investments are performing!

Future Account Balances

Lastly, the built-in Future Value Estimator. The Estimator is a tool designed to help you "estimate" future mutual fund account balances. You supply the starting account balance (InvesTrax uses your current fund value as a default), an effective interest rate (for financial planning purposes, a good conservative number would be 8%), the amount of money you plan to invest each month, and the number of years you plan to invest. Click a button and the Estimator will compute your future account balance. This feature is present in most good financial calculators, it is nice to see it integrated into InvesTrax.

The Bottom Line

What could InvesTrax do that would make it stand out among the rest? Without a doubt, one of the most satisfying attributes of InvesTrax's is its simplicity and professional feel. It's easy to navigate throughout the program and easy to input and check your account information. One of InvesTrax's most powerful attributes is the built-in Interest Wizard. Quickly and easily calculating the effective annual rate of return places this software on the forefront. Best of all, it does what it advertises, all at a reasonable price. I give it four stars! I know InvesTrax's will remain on my computer helping me make better, more informed

financial decisions for a long time to come!

Biography of Daniel J. Mittlesteadt

Mr. Daniel J. Mittlesteadt is president of GLS Financial Consultants, Inc., an independent consulting firm located in Columbus, Ohio; specializing in investments, financial planning, estate planning and insurance. Dan has over 10 years experience in all areas of investments and financial planning. Dan is a registered securities representative, general securities principal with the National Association of Securities Dealers and a registered investment advisor with the Securities and Exchange Commission. If you need any of the financial services just mentioned, contact Dan at GLS Financial Consultants, Inc., 1-800-891-7440.

References

Mr. Mittlesteadt has a rich financial background and lectured at the following companies.

- Ashland Chemical Company
- Ohio State Highway Patrol
- FBI
- Digital Equipment
- CompuServe
- American Chemical Society
- Kal Kan Foods

Disclaimer

The mutual fund data files included with InvesTrax are real. The transactions presented are taken from actual investments from one of our InvesTrax's users. Mr. Daniel J. Mittlesteadt in no way recommends or endorses the mutual fund companies used in the example fund files.

InvesTrax Demo Limitations

The demonstration version of InvesTrax will load all example fund files provided. It will not save any fund files.

InvesTrax Order Form

If you InvesTrax useful and would like to complete version of InvesTrax, please register (order) by paying the special purchase price.

Registered users will receive notification of the next release of InvesTrax.

You may register by sending the author an International Money order, a personal cheque from any bank that has a corresponding bank in the US. Be sure it is payable to: "Rising Star Technology", in US funds only. Please include a copy of the registration form with your cheque.

Rising Star Technology also accepts VISA, Master Card and Discovery credit cards. Please include your account number and credit card expiration date.

(Print this form on your printer by selecting "Print Topic" from the Help "File" Menu.)

Mail this form (with your check, money order in US funds or credit card information) to:

Rising Star Technology

P.O. Box 20038

Dayton, Ohio 45420

(513) 254-6423 Order/Info

(513) 254-7970 FAX

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:

Today's Date: _____

Company Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Evening Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address (if available): _____

Register InvesTrax for each machine on which the program is used.

Number of copies _____ x \$38.00 = \$ _____

(The remainder of this is optional, but we would like to know...)

Where did you get your copy of InvesTrax Demo?

Comments? Criticism? Accolades?

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

