

LANDSCAPE MONITOR

STASH INVEST



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INDUSTRY	COMPETITIVE	CUSTOMERS	MEDIA
Policy discussion about the upcoming fiduciary rule is heating up. Establish a point of view and name recognition to build brand trust.	Add WiseBanyon to competitor monitoring and develop brand differentiation talking points.	Continue millennial targeting, but consider the possibility of a targeted campaign toward women millennials.	New blogs targeting women in investing are taking off. Follow the trend with targeted outreach and messaging.

JANUARY IN CONTEXT

December’s announcement of Series B funding for Stash illustrated the enthusiasm of venture capital and industry watchers toward robo advisors and mobile investing firms, but despite these gains, consumers remain largely unaware of these investing options. Consumer oriented content in January continued the trend of focusing on defining the industry rather than offering brand differentiation.

NerdWallet’s [profile](#) of mobile investing apps and PCMag’s [tricks](#) for reaching financial goals are exemplary of this introductory content, showcasing multiple brands with only brief overviews of each. The challenge for brands in these stories is standing out from the crowd. Even established brands Wealthfront and Betterment struggled in January to break into consumer facing content.

One brand that had no trouble making this transition to the mainstream was [Ellevest](#). The women oriented robo advisor launched its first significant marketing campaign by providing a compelling narrative about the gender gap in investing. The resulting buzz is a strong example of how to generate brand recognition in an emerging industry by focusing the conversation on customer needs and gaps rather than technical details.

The Ellevest case study could benefit Stash in terms of outreach to women millennials as well as generate ideas for a similar campaign around its core audience: millennial investors.

INDUSTRY	UPCOMING EVENTS
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Financial firms have been preparing for over a year to comply with a Department of Labor regulatory change set to take effect in April. The “fiduciary rule” requires that financial advisors put client interests ahead of their own. President Trump’s post-inauguration [regulatory freeze](#) placed the rollout of the fiduciary rule in question, and the administration has [signaled](#) plans to explicitly delay implementation.



Robo advisors stand to benefit from the debate over the fiduciary rule, whether or not it is implemented. If the rule change proceeds, traditional financial advisors may abandon smaller accounts, leaving these consumers shopping for new investment advisors. Robo advisors are well suited to serve these small accounts.

Even if the fiduciary rule is abandoned at this late stage, consumer awareness about the lack of protections has grown and could

April 10, 2017
Fiduciary Rule implementation
 Unless the Department of Labor moves to delay or repeal, the fiduciary rule will be implemented in April.

April 26-27, 2017
Finovate Spring
 San Jose, CA
 Opportunities to demo and network with fintech companies, venture capitalists and industry analysis.

June 26-28, 2017
Future of Fintech
 New York, NY
 Speaking panels emphasizing emerging trends and the future of financial services.

convince investors to move their money anyway. Robo advisors may be an appealing alternative in that climate.

To build brand recognition ahead of these regulatory decisions, Stash may want to consider entering the conversation now, providing a clear point of view and establishing its commitment to consumer protections.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Wealthfront and Betterment both announced portfolio diversification moves in January, with Wealthfront offering a stock selling option and Betterment adding human advising. Although Betterment received a few mentions in consumer publications, neither brand managed to fully break out of traditional business publications.



In addition to known top competitors Betterment, Robinhood and Wealthfront, Stash is increasingly being mentioned in relation to WiseBanyon, Acorns, Metromile, Cadre, and Quapital.



WiseBanyon, in particular, rose as a brand to watch this month. In a [Fast Company](#) article on millennial investing tools, it edged out Stash as the preferred app,

espousing a narrative of design simplicity and passive investing toward life goals.

Stash should continue to monitor WiseBanyon and be prepared to address questions about differentiation with this emerging competitor.

CUSTOMERS

Stash continues to successfully appeal to first time millennial investors. The social referral campaign "Want Cash? Get Stash" resulted in new users announcing their enrollment on Twitter, with one customer referring to her sign up as #adulting. Additionally, the previously mentioned [Fast Company](#) profile highlighted Stash as one of the top choices for millennials.

Despite these positive signs, the millennial investing space is already crowded. Stash may want to consider additional customer segments that either overlap or compliment the millennial target audience.



One customer segment that is increasingly receiving attention from traditional investment firms is women. Robo advisor Ellevest made waves this month with its first significant marketing push, rolling out a [TV ad](#) titled "Invest Like a Woman" and promoting founder Sallie Krawcheck's new book, "Own It," in [MarketWatch](#), [Vogue](#), [Forbes](#), [Bustle](#) and elsewhere.

Ellevest is only one of several robo advisor and investment management firms emerging to directly target women. As millennial women enter their 30s and become more acutely aware of the gender pay and investing gap, tools that speak more directly to women may edge out traditional investing platforms.

MEDIA

NEWS CYCLES

January 20, 2017

Wealthfront announces stock selling tool

The announcement was positioned as a diversification of Wealthfront's portfolio in response to demand from employees at large firms. Media interest in the announcement was minimal but noted the brand's need to diversify to remain competitive.

January 31, 2017

Betterment adds human investment advising option

The service, described as a "premium" plan, is available only for Betterment's largest customers but includes annual planning calls and ongoing advising. The company positioned the offering as a response to customer demand, particularly among its older and wealthier users.

CUSTOMER VOICES



MEDIA TO WATCH

Among Stash and competitor content, more than two out of three stories in January were targeted at a business or financial audience. Even the consumer oriented publications covering robo advising or micro investing tend to be either technology publications such as Mashable or consumer finance outlets like Nerdwallet. Neither Stash nor its competitors are successfully engaging with millennial oriented media at this time.

One potential entry point for this audience are an increasingly popular set of personal finance sites such as [The Penny Hoarder](#). In addition, a new segment of personal blogs by women millennials includes [Career Girl Daily](#), [Financially Fit and Fab](#) or [Hustle to a Million](#). These sites all benefit from a personal tone and relatable personal finance stories geared toward younger consumer audiences. While readership is relatively small, the readers are more aligned with Stash's target audience than traditional business media. Establishing credibility with these sites early may provide Stash with an edge as readership grows and interest in women in investing rises.

FINANCIALLY
FIT & Fabulous

Hustle to a Million

CAREER GIRL DAILY

 The PENNY HOARDER

PREPARED BY: OWL RESEARCH PARTNERS