

Keeping Your Account Secure

By *Ryanne Harmann, QKA*

I was recently married and went through the process of changing my last name on all of my personal accounts - everything from utilities and bank accounts to loyalty programs and social media. One of the more surprising things was the huge difference in what each entity required to make the change. In one case, I had to provide my marriage certificate and a notarized affidavit. For another, I only had to send a simple email request to customer service. Both of these examples were for credit card companies. Think about that—one of my credit cards agreed to change the name on my account with a simple email. As much as I was frustrated by the other more cumbersome processes, I realized I preferred that approach—it told me my accounts and my data were more secure.



I started asking myself, “Have I taken account security seriously enough for myself?” In this day and age of social engineering and identity theft, had I really done all I could to ensure my accounts were safe, including my retirement

account? Here is a list of things we all can (and should) be doing to help enhance the security of our retirement account (and many others):

1. Keep your account number in a safe, secret place. It is listed on the enclosed quarterly statement. For your protection, Customer Service will not be able to provide this number to you.
2. Keep personal contact information updated, including your home address, a valid email address that you check regularly, and your phone number (preferably cell).
3. Create a unique, complex and unusual user name and pass word, and change your password frequently.
4. Establish multiple security questions (up to ten) — making sure to use answers that aren’t publicly available via Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social media sites.
5. Carefully review statements and weekly account email updates for accuracy and any unauthorized transactions.

It might be inconvenient, but these practices can protect you!

Embrace Holiday Expenses

By *Debra Moran, QPA, QKA*

Planning for true expenses—including holiday expenses—is a must. (The holiday shopping season is now upon us!) I hope that we all have been setting aside money all year but if not, we have about two months to make the most of it!

This is a hectic time of the year and it seems like added holiday expenses catch many of us by surprise (after all, who would have thought that Christmas comes every December?). So, many of us turn to credit cards to help make up for any lack of cash.

Using BankRate.com’s debt calculator, if we put \$1,000 worth of presents on a credit card with an average APR of 18.9% and make only minimum payments, it will take us six years to pay off the debt. Ugh!

And not only will it take six years, by the time it is paid off, we will have paid more than \$511 in interest. That’s more than 50% of the original debt! Let’s take a moment to let that sink in! Now, how to avoid it...

Before figuring out *what* we are going to buy, it is important to first figure out *how much* we can afford to spend.

In order to determine how much we can spend on holiday extras, we will need to have a basic budget for essentials like housing, utilities, groceries, insurance and all other expenses. No budget? It is a good time to create one! After we subtract our basic budget from our projected income, we will know how much we can comfortably spend on fun and gifts over the next couple of months.

Then, let’s record our list of family/friends and assign a gift budget to each person. After that, its time to brainstorm presents for each person at (or below!) that price point.

Next, we start tracking prices. We research and have patience. Price tracking and comparison tools abound on the internet—which can make the process effortless.

Lastly, we stick to the plan! The final step is the most important, and clearly the hardest. We might complain that we can’t buy everything that our hearts desire, but in January we will be so thankful not to have the extra debt to pay off.



Ask URS

By Amy Crews, QKA

Q: What is a Glide Path?

A: According to Webster, an aircraft’s line of descent to landing is its glide path. In investing terms, the meaning is somewhat similar! Investopedia’s definition of a “glide path” is a formula that defines the percentage of stocks vs. the percentage of bonds in the mix of a target date fund based on the number of years to the target date. There are several types of glide paths, which differ by the investment’s stated goals and philosophy:

Declining Glide Path: This method gradually reduces the amount of equities (or stocks) in the allocation as it gets closer to retirement.

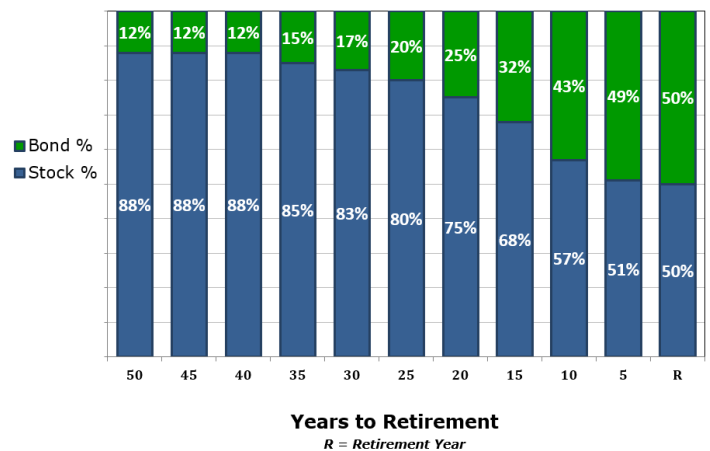
Static Glide Path: This version looks to keep the allocations the same, using periodic rebalancing to maintain a set rate of stock and bond percentages.

Rising Glide Path: This type starts with more bonds and less stocks, then as bonds mature the percentage in bonds decreases and the percentage in stocks increases.

The Ullico Target Retirement Allocations (UTRAs) are managed by the URS Investment Committee using a “Declining Glide Path” approach. Depending on your age, your mix of stock and bond funds will be different when you start but all of the UTRAs eventually end up with a 50/50 mix between stocks and bonds/cash by your target retirement year (we’ll call it the stock/bond split, for ease). One great feature of the UTRAs is that URS manages the glide path within the UTRA for you at no extra charge!

After the initial UTRA stock/bond split is set, whether we like it or not, we all grow older each year! As a result, the percentages of stocks/bonds that are appropriate at one age aren’t necessarily what is appropriate as time goes on. The URS Investment Committee evaluates the UTRAs annually and makes adjustments to the stock/bond split. Some adjustments are minor when you have many years to go, and some are larger as you get closer to retirement. The glide path is also maintained by quarterly rebalancing so the percentages won’t stray too far from the intended target stock/bond split.

The chart below shows the stock/bond split in each UTRA based on the number of years until your retirement year. (R):



Some target date funds continue lowering the percentage of stocks during post-retirement years. URS assumes that you are not going to use all 100% of your savings at once right when you retire, so the 50/50 stock/bond split keeps you partially invested in the stock market with the goal of outpacing inflation. If you are planning on taking more than a small percent out each year in retirement to supplement Social Security, or if you have questions about the UTRAs, you can always call URS to talk about your options.

Ullico Retirement Solutions was born from a *simple* idea:

“We believe that organized labor deserves a trusted partner, and labor should provide for the needs of labor.”

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