



**THE
EMERGING
MANAGER
GROWTH
SHOW** WITH
GUI COSTIN

EPISODE 43

Pensions

Emerging Manager Growth Show #43

Agenda

1. Opening Remarks from Gui Costin, Founder & CEO
2. Who is Dakota?
3. The Dakota Way & Be Kind. Books
4. The Dakota Way Allocator Conference
5. Key Insights for Emerging Managers
6. Fundraising Roundup: Pensions
7. Upcoming Emerging Manager Conferences
8. Fundraising Best Ideas
9. Closing Remarks

The Dakota Way & Be Kind Books

- The Dakota Way is available now on Amazon in both Kindle and softcover. The book outlines Dakota's four core principles of investment sales:
 1. Set Expectations
 2. Know Who to Call On
 3. What to Say
 4. Execute a Killer Follow-Up System
- **Be Kind:** the sister book, was released February 11, 2026. It covers leadership lessons learned and explores whether you can build a high-charging, high-performance culture while leading with kindness — and proves that you can.
- To receive a signed copy of either book, email gui@dakota.com with your mailing address.

The Dakota Way Allocator Conference

- Monday, May 18th at Pier 60, New York City — one day, direct access to the allocators you need to reach.
- 17 allocators, 10 minutes apiece, interviewed live on where they're allocating capital. Unbelievable networking and content, with substantive coverage of sales techniques throughout the day.
- Dakota will be on-site all day — accessible for questions and introductions.
- Register at dakota.com — click “2026 Conference” in the top right corner.

The Dakota Way Allocator Conference



- Monday, May 18th at Pier 60, New York City — one day, direct access to the allocators you need to reach.
- 17 allocators, 10 minutes apiece, interviewed live on where they're allocating capital. Unbelievable networking and content, with substantive coverage of sales techniques throughout the day.

- Dakota will be on-site all day — accessible for questions and introductions.
- Register at dakota.com — click “2026 Conference” in the top right corner.

Key Insights for Emerging Managers

- The fundraising market is active across the board — activity levels are high and the face-to-face, in-the-boardroom model is back.
- Dakota is seeing wins across both traditional and alternative strategies, including two long-only equity managers (one value, one growth) gaining significant traction, plus private fund 3 and fund 4 launches already in pre-marketing for first closes next year.
- On the traditional side, dispersion across growth/value, US/non-US, and developed/emerging markets is creating real search activity — including a meaningful pickup in active ETF conversations with long-only partners.
- On the alts side, wins are spread across private equity, real estate, credit, and hedge funds.

The fundraising market is active — but you have to get face to face to raise capital.

Fundraising Roundup: Pensions

Public pensions are establishing and evolving Emerging Manager Programs (EMPs), each with unique parameters for what qualifies as an emerging manager. Below are the key myths to debunk and the considerations to weigh when calling on pensions with EMPs.

Debunking the Myths

- ▶ **Myth 1:** I need 3 years of track record and a certain AUM threshold before marketing to public pensions. Many EMPs have no minimum track record or AUM requirements.
- ▶ **Myth 2:** It's a waste of time to call on public pensions because consultants are the decision-makers and everything is search-driven. Many pensions have internal teams that source ideas independently.
- ▶ **Myth 3:** If my strategy isn't approved by a pension's consultant, it's a waste of time to reach out to that pension directly. Internal teams often bring new ideas — especially emerging managers — to their consultants.
- ▶ **Myth 4:** Public equity exposure is all managed internally at public pensions. Many pensions allocate public equity to external emerging managers through their EMPs.

How Pensions Define Emerging Managers

- Pension EMPs have different program guidelines for how they define emerging managers — typically based on track record, vintage, and AUM.
- Guidelines tend to set maximums (rather than minimums) — often capping vintage to first, second, or third funds, or capping firm AUM.
- Parameters are usually found in the pension's annual report or website (all pulled into Dakota Marketplace).

Examples of EMPs Without AUM or Track Record Minimums

- **CalPERS:** No track record requirement for global equities; PE and RE must be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd vintages. No firm AUM cap for PE, but global equities and RE emerging managers must have less than \$2B and \$1B in firm AUM, respectively.
- **Maryland State Retirement:** No requirements for traditional investments; private markets have specific criteria to qualify for the EMP.
- **New York State Common:** Very specific detail in Dakota Marketplace.
- **Texas Teachers:** Defined EMP program with no firm minimums.

Examples of Low AUM Minimums

- **LA Fire & Police:** Public market minimum of \$30M; real estate minimum of \$100M.

Consultant Usage

- Some pensions or asset class teams underwrite ideas on their own; others bring ideas to their consultant and work in tandem.
- Some outsource a full sleeve of the portfolio to a consultant to run their EMP with discretion.
- Some use consultants but maintain discretion (or use consultants only for operational due diligence while underwriting investments themselves).

Examples of Varying Consultant Usage

- **Texas Teachers:** Dedicated analyst in Austin from Grosvenor (Charles Phippen) works with the internal team led by Kirk Sims and Tommy Heitz.
- **Maryland Terra EM Program:** Hybrid model — the pension has discretion but uses consultants as a reference point and for due diligence support.
 - Public Markets (Maryland) sources through three consultants across four mandates:
 - US small cap — Attucks
 - International developed — Attucks and Leading Edge
 - International developed small cap — Xponance
 - Fixed income — Attucks
 - No specific parameters for AUM or ownership.
 - Private (Maryland): Works with Hamilton Lane to source emerging PE managers. Less than \$2B AUM, fund size up to \$500M, three or fewer funds.

Diverse/Women & Minority-Owned EMPs

- Some EMPs are exclusively focused on diverse-owned emerging managers; others are more general but maintain a target allocation to diverse managers within the program.
- Most programs define “diverse” as at least 50% ownership by minorities, women, or persons with a disability — though some go as low as one-third.
- **Illinois Municipal Retirement System:** Requires 51% or more ownership by minorities, women, or persons with a disability. AUM requirement of at least \$10M but less than \$10B.
- **Texas Teachers:** Diverse manager threshold set at 33% of the firm’s economics.
- **State Universities Retirement System of Illinois:** Dedicated contact Alex Ramos; hosts a Diverse Manager Week annually (held in August this year).

Key Considerations

- Get to know the analyst teams at the pensions — internal teams often bring new emerging manager ideas to their consultants.
- Call on the right consultants for the right asset class — pensions often use different consultants for different asset classes, and those may differ from their general or alts consultant.
- Just because two pensions use the same consultant does not mean their EMP guidelines are the same — guidelines are typically set by each pension’s board.
- Differentiate between EMPs that focus on minority/women-owned managers and those that allocate to small/new managers more broadly.
- EMPs are a way to get on a pension’s radar and build brand awareness — but they should not be your primary source of capital. RIAs should remain the primary target market for emerging managers.
- Fees will be negotiated heavily — on a 100 basis point long-only product, expect to be hammered down significantly in exchange for size and access to additional pools of capital.

Emerging Manager Conferences

5/12/26 - SaaStr Annual 2026

SaaStr, Inc.

6/22/26 - BIO International Convention — San Diego

Biotechnology Innovation Organization

New conferences will continue to be added to Dakota Marketplace.

Fundraising Best Ideas

► City Scheduling

- Keep 5 cities active on your calendar at all times — make it a game, and always be scheduling.

- Size up your market, know exactly who fits your strategy and product structure, and let product structure drive channel focus.
- For emerging managers, the primary channels are RIAs, family offices, and select consultants. RIAs and family offices have the discretion to invest early — pensions and consultants have more hurdles, thresholds, and AUM minimums.
- If you're in the Northeast, you're in a lucky spot — Boston, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Philadelphia are an enormous TAM accessible by car or train.

▶ **Email Creation**

- **Subject line:** Meeting Request, [Date]
- **Body:** 1–2 sentences on who you are, what you do, and why they should care.
- **Close with a clear call to action:** “Can you meet at 9:00 AM on May 4th?”
- It's a low hit rate, but it works over time with discipline. It has never not worked with a good strategy behind it.

▶ **Pro Tip: Use Claude for Call Notes**

- The game has changed. Claude, OpenAI, or Copilot can take the hardest part of being a salesperson — typing call notes — off the table entirely.
- Discipline: don't leave the lobby until you dictate your call notes.
- Open the Claude app, ask Claude to create call notes for the meeting. With Gmail connected, Claude will pull all the attendees. Then dictate what happened, the key takeaways, and what you expect next.
- Copy and paste into your Slack investment sales meeting notes channel — or, if set up properly, push it directly into your CRM.
- Use Claude to run a weekly review of your call notes: key takeaways, highlights, products most featured. Train yourself to extract patterns and insights from your own activity.
- It takes 2–3 minutes max and produces call notes 100x better than you've done before.

▶ **The Quarterly Webinar**

- Emerging managers are uniquely well-suited for quarterly webinars because they typically have one strategy — easy to script, easy to package.
- Keep it tight: 10 to 15 minutes, a couple of questions, walk through the slides, tell the story of the quarter.
- Send 3–4 emails per cycle (save the date, join us today, replay) = at least 12 brand touchpoints per year.
- Replaces a meaningful portion of one-on-one client update calls — saving your PM significant time.
- Deliverables per webinar: replay + transcription + summary = three pieces of content for your website and sales team.
- Allocators doing due diligence will ask for the last four quarters of webinars — they want to know if your philosophy or process has evolved and whether what you said four quarters ago played out.
- An ebook covering the full quarterly call playbook is available in the show notes.

▶ Leverage the Power of a CRM

- Treat your distribution function like a big company — build a CRM, even simply, to house all of your activity.
- Three core uses of the CRM:
 - Track meetings scheduled.
 - House your call notes (use Claude — 2–3 minutes per meeting).
 - Generate opportunity pipeline reports.
- Sit down with your boss for 5 minutes a week to review progress against your sales plan — back to core principle #1: setting expectations.
- A CRM keeps you honest. You'll never show up to a sales update empty-handed.

Next Show:

Join us for the next Emerging Manager Growth Show



Episode #44 airs Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 1 PM EST.

Thanks for joining us. See you next month!

– *The Dakota Team*