

This UNF class on investing has happy following



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Provided by Hank Swiencinski

Hank Swiencinski teaches "The One Minute Guide" to investing at UNF's department of continuing education.

Earlier this summer just before the stock market swooned and began bouncing up and down, Karen Grider did what a lot of people later wished they had done.

"I sold out," she said, adding she plans to buy stocks again, when the time is right.

Grider, 59, is relatively new to the world of investing, following a successful career in marketing. She managed the family checkbook but had "zero" involvement with investments prior to her divorce.

Later, at about the time she was growing dissatisfied with her financial advisor, she took a course titled "The Professor's One-Minute Guide to Stock Management" at the University of North Florida's department of continuing education.

That was less than two years ago. Now she handles her own investments, trafficking in short sales and ETFs, among other things.

"I love it," she said. "I find it extremely fascinating."

Grider, who says she seldom loses on trades, credits that UNF course for her success.

"He has demystified what the average person may have trouble understanding," said Grider of the instructor. She is not alone in her praise.

"It is incredible," said Pete Tinnesz, 63, a retired chemical engineer who holds an MBA in finance. He has been handling his own investments for 40 years and was "pretty much a buy and hold guy" until he took the course nearly two years ago. Now he is more active and with considerable success.

The "professor," Hank Swiencinski, is a graduate aeronautical engineer who has handled his investments for 35 years. Before retiring from a civilian career with Department of the Navy, including time as director or research and development for the Marine Corps, he enjoyed helping Iwork colleagues with their investments.

He began teaching the "One Minute Guide" after a UNF administrator heard about his presentation to a local country club group and invited him to teach the course.

Of all the 930 courses taken by 13,000 students in UNF's robust continuing education program, this is the only one to involve a black-tie social for its cult-like followers. That was the case in May when nearly 100 former students got together to share success stories.

So what's his approach? You will have to sign up for the three classes of two hours each to get all of the details. But essentially he guides students through some basic investing tools to select stocks and then to monitor them. A key, at the heart of Swiencinski's discipline, is spotting signals for when to sell. Once trained, it takes only "one minute" each day to monitor a portfolio.

Some basic understanding of the stock market is recommended, but those with the most elementary knowledge can handle this.

Based on what I observed while sitting in on one class and dropping by the social event, this may also appeal to more sophisticated investors looking for some new tools.

Best of all, he isn't selling anything. And he never recommends a stock.

"The One Minute Guide is designed to take the mystery out of trading the markets and money management," he said. "I start by telling my students that there are no Wizards. Stop looking for them, and learn to do it yourself. "All we're trying to do is give folks a few indicators, that are available free on the Internet, so they know when to be in or stay out of the market," he said. "It allows folks to manage their own money with a very simple methodology."

For those who have completed the basic course, he offers a "Position Trading Course," and occasional refresher classes. He also provides additional information and guidance online.

One student liked the basic course so much that he took it twice. Javid Sayer, 30, chief engineer at Sayer Enterprises, had never actively managed his 401k or other investments until he took the course.

"The methodology has a scientific basis to it," said Sayer, a civil engineer with degrees from Jacksonville University and the University of Florida. After starting slowly he said he gets more active each quarter.

"It's the best thing I've done outside of my day job," he said. "I am making money on the side."

The next class begins Wednesday, Sept 7, at 6:30. Those interested should call (904) 620-4200 or go to www.learnjacksonville.com to register or to learn more.

Caution: This is not a recommendation (and all that boiler plate about past performance is not an indicator of future success and so forth). It is a disclosure, however, that for \$79 tuition at UNF, the several students I talked to were energized about what they learned about investing.