

# Innovations in Finance

## Conventional Wisdom circa 1950

"Once you attain competency, diversification is undesirable. One or two, or at most three or four, securities should be bought. Competent investors will never be satisfied beating the averages by a few small percentage points."

Gerald M. Loeb, *The Battle for Investment Survival*, 1935

Analyze securities one by one. Focus on picking winners. Concentrate holdings to maximize returns.

Broad diversification is considered undesirable.

## The Role of Stocks

**James Tobin**  
Nobel Prize in Economics, 1981

Separation Theorem:  
1. Form portfolio of risky assets.  
2. Temper risk by lending and borrowing.

Shifts focus from security selection to portfolio structure.

"Liquidity Preference as Behavior Toward Risk," *Review of Economic Studies*, February 1958.

## Single-Factor Asset Pricing Risk/Return Model

**William Sharpe**  
Nobel Prize in Economics, 1990

Capital Asset Pricing Model:  
Theoretical model defines risk as volatility relative to market.

A stock's cost of capital (the investor's expected return) is proportional to the stock's risk relative to the entire stock universe.

Theoretical model for evaluating the risk and expected return of securities and portfolios.

## Efficient Markets Hypothesis

**Eugene F. Fama,**  
University of Chicago

Extensive research on stock price patterns.

Develops Efficient Markets Hypothesis, which asserts that prices reflect values and information accurately and quickly. It is difficult if not impossible to capture returns in excess of market returns without taking greater than market levels of risk.

Investors cannot identify superior stocks using fundamental information or price patterns.

## The Birth of Index Funds

**John McQuown,**  
Wells Fargo Bank, 1971;  
**Rex Sinquefeld,**  
American National Bank, 1973

Banks develop the first passive S&P 500 Index funds.



## Diversification and Portfolio Risk

**Harry Markowitz**  
Nobel Prize in Economics, 1990

Diversification reduces risk.

Assets evaluated not by individual characteristics but by their effect on a portfolio. An optimal portfolio can be constructed to maximize return for a given standard deviation.

## Investments and Capital Structure

**Merton Miller and Franco Modigliani**  
Nobel Prizes in Economics, 1990 and 1985

Theorem relating corporate finance to returns.

A firm's value is unrelated to its dividend policy.

Dividend policy is an unreliable guide for stock selection.

## Behavior of Securities Prices

**Paul Samuelson, MIT**  
Nobel Prize in Economics, 1970

Market prices are the best estimates of value.

Price changes follow random patterns. Future share prices are unpredictable.

"Proof That Properly Anticipated Prices Fluctuate Randomly," *Industrial Management Review*, Spring 1965.

## First Major Study of Manager Performance

**Michael Jensen, 1965**  
**A.G. Becker Corporation, 1968**

First studies of mutual funds (Jensen) and of institutional plans (A.G. Becker Corp.) indicate active managers underperform indices.

Becker Corp. gives rise to consulting industry with creation of "Green Book" performance tables comparing results to benchmarks.

## Options Pricing Model

**Fischer Black,**  
University of Chicago;  
**Myron Scholes,**  
University of Chicago;  
**Robert Merton,**  
Harvard University  
Nobel Prize in Economics, 1997

The development of the Options Pricing Model allows new ways to segment, quantify, and manage risk.

The model spurs the development of a market for alternative investments.

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## A Major Plan First Commits to Indexing

New York Telephone Company invests \$40 million in an S&P 500 Index fund.

The first major plan to index.

Helps launch the era of indexed investing.

"Fund spokesmen are quick to point out you can't buy the market averages. It's time the public could."

Burton G. Malkiel, *A Random Walk Down Wall Street*, 1973 ed.

## The Size Effect

**Rolf Banz, University of Chicago**

Analyzed NYSE stocks, 1926-1975.

Finds that, in the long term, small companies have higher expected returns than large companies and behave differently.

## Multifactor Asset Pricing Model and Value Effect

**Eugene Fama and Kenneth French, University of Chicago**

Improves on the single-factor asset pricing model (CAPM).

Identifies market, size, and "value" factors in returns.

Develops the three-factor asset pricing model, an invaluable asset allocation and portfolio analysis tool.

"Common Risk Factors in the Returns on Stocks and Bonds," *Journal of Financial Economics* 33, no. 1 (February 1993): 3-56.

## International Size Effect

**Steven L. Heston, K. Geert Rouwenhorst, and Roberto E. Wessels**

Find evidence of higher average returns to small companies in twelve international markets.

"The Structure of International Stock Returns and the Integration of Capital Markets," *Journal of Empirical Finance* 2, no. 3 (September 1995): 173-97.

## Integrated Equity

**Eugene F. Fama and Kenneth R. French**

Increasing exposure to small and value companies relative to their market weights and integrating the portfolio across the full range of securities may reduce the turnover and transaction costs normally associated with forming an asset allocation from multiple components.

"Migration," CRSP Working Paper No. 614, Center for Research in Security Prices, University of Chicago, February 2007.



## Database of Securities Prices since 1926

**Roger Ibbotson and Rex Sinquefeld, *Stocks, Bonds, Bills, and Inflation***

An extensive returns database for multiple asset classes is first developed and will become one of the most widely used investment databases.

The first extensive, empirical basis for making asset allocation decisions changes the way investors build portfolios.

## Variable Maturity Strategy Implemented

**Eugene F. Fama**

With no prediction of interest rates, Eugene Fama develops a method of shifting maturities that identifies optimal positions on the fixed income yield curve.

"The Information in the Term Structure," *Journal of Financial Economics* 13, no. 4 (December 1984): 509-28.

## Nobel Prize Recognizes Modern Finance

Economists who shaped the way we invest are recognized, emphasizing the role of science in finance.

William Sharpe for the Capital Asset Pricing Model.

Harry Markowitz for portfolio theory.

Merton Miller for work on the effect of firms' capital structure and dividend policy on their prices.