



## A Foolish Message

### Description

We've been up and running with Fool.ca here in Canada since the beginning of the year or so, and for the most part have kept our posts on-topic by transcribing market related items that cross the screen on a day-to-day basis.

The message below however is a little different. It was produced by my Australian colleague Scott Phillips, and provides a great summary of what the Motley Fool is truly about.

At our core, we are an organization that is here to help the world invest. Better. And we have been doing just that for almost 20 years.

Our U.S. based services have an enviable track record of not just producing market beating returns, but educating and amusing their members at the same time. And best of all, this Foolish formula is beginning to spread around the world!

We've been in the U.K. for a number of years and our Australian operation has been up and running since early 2011. We've also opened up shop in Singapore.

It's still early days for Fool.ca but over the course of 2013, we'll be ramping up to provide a similar, membership based service here as well. There is already a sizeable collection of Foolish Canadians and we look forward to serving you, as well as all newcomers, with our special brand of investing advice!

Briefly, in the message below, Scott is drawing from the company's recent annual gathering (known as Foolapalooza) that took place at a resort in Maryland (head office is in Alexandria, Virginia – a short drive from Washington D.C.). I can vouch for every word of the following passage being absolutely true as I too attended. It was a wonderful experience! Take it away Scott.....

### A Merry Band of Fools

The Motley Fool isn't amazing because of the lovely location of the conference, or the nice hotel we stayed in, nor because of the Alice in Wonderland-themed party after dinner.

Don't get me wrong — they were great — but Foolapalooza is notable because of the passion The Motley Fool has to serve investors better.

Both of our co-founders, David and Tom Gardner, spoke eloquently about the opportunity our company has to change the investing world by bringing our own brand of Foolishness to more people such as yourselves, to better educate our members and to continue to bring you market-beating share recommendations.

We believe, as an article of faith, that investors the world over are being under-served and over-charged by many in the finance industry. Not all, mind you, but there are far too many people paying far too much for far too little. We aim to change that.

Of course, as a business, we want to make a profit. We don't shrink from that. But as Tom Gardner said, we aim to co-create value with our members. If we do that, we believe that not only will we be successful as a business, but our members will be much better off as a result.

### **Just happy members**

The term 'win-win' gets bandied around a lot, and has become something of a term of derision and mockery because of the way it is applied. In our case, however, that's exactly what we spend every day trying to achieve.

Our very business model relies on it — no commissions, no brokerage, no kickbacks... just the membership fees of happy members. If we don't create value, you won't stay with us. It's a pretty simple approach, and one we think should be far more common than it is.

### **Poetry? From a company co-founder?**

To give you a sense of how wonderfully different our company is, we must be one of the few (if not only) places where one of the business' co-founder's speeches includes poetry. It might be unconventional, but it's a fantastic insight.

David Gardner recited — from memory — the first part of *Ode* by Arthur O'Shaughnessy:

*We are the music makers,*

*And we are the dreamers of dreams,*

*Wandering by lone sea-breakers,*

*And sitting by desolate streams;—*

*World-losers and world-forsakers,*

*On whom the pale moon gleams:*

*Yet we are the movers and shakers*

*Of the world for ever, it seems.*

Apparently it is from this poem that the phrase ‘movers and shakers’ comes, but David’s point is that his vision for our company is that we have much work to do to bring Foolishness to more members, and more fully to our current members — and to be around forever.

### **A sacred trust**

I also wonder how often you’d hear this at other finance company meetings:

*“When our members join us, they bring their net worth to us — everything they’ve accumulated in life up until that point... everything they’ve ever earned in their lives, less their costs. It is a sacred trust”*

As I wrote this piece, I was concerned that it might seem like a convoluted advertorial. I considered not writing it, in case it was received as being self-serving or irrelevant.

In the end, I decided to include it, motivated by a video that was shown at the meeting, in which three US Motley Fool members talked candidly about the company. They were pretty positive, but also had some honest criticism for us. Tom’s response? “I can’t wait to put this up on our website, even with the criticism included.”

### **A member, not just a customer**

We aim to be as transparent and member-focussed as we possibly can, and it’s important to us that you are not just a customer, but a member — and important to us that you feel the same. The difference, at least in part, to my mind is that you know what you’re a part of.

Bringing you a little bit of Foolapalooza is my way of trying to do that. I hope it’ll come across in that spirit. Quite frankly, Foolapalooza was also a wonderful example of why I love working for the company, and I wanted to share that with you, too.

**.....Back to Canada. To be sure you’re up to speed with all future developments with Fool.ca, simply add your e-mail address to the box below. Fool on!**

### **CATEGORY**

1. Investing

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### **Date**

2025/09/26

### **Date Created**

2013/05/02

**Author**  
tmfohcanada

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