The Impact of Active Management on Cash

Actively managing cash can generate real alpha for clients

Summary

Many studies have tried to determine whether active management of equities can generate outsized returns relative to a stock market index. But what about cash? **Can a more active approach to managing bank accounts generate higher returns?**

We conducted research to back-test the performance of Max, our award-winning cash management platform, to see whether dynamic reallocation of cash to higher-yielding accounts could generate true alpha. The research revealed that active cash management *delivers real 'alpha' on cash.*

For investors holding cash, Max delivers not only its long-known benefits — higher interest rates, broader FDIC coverage, and streamlined account opening — but also Max's monthly optimization (or rebalancing) of funds delivers measurable incremental alpha on cash.

Methodology

With more than eight years of operating history, we wanted to answer a simple question. It's obvious that Max, with its market-leading rates, can easily beat the paltry yields offered by traditional bank and brokerage accounts or money market funds. But how would Max's cash optimization algorithm (which helps clients allocate their cash to the highest-yielding banks) compare to the historical practice of opening a single account at a nationally advertised online bank?

We studied how Max performed relative to a basket of nationally advertised online banks (Ally Bank, American Express, Barclays, and Marcus) over the past 1, 3, and 5-year periods, starting with a principal balance of $250,000.[1]

Results

Over the past 1- and 3-year periods, Max outperformed the leading online banks by 21 basis points (0.21%). Over the past 5 years, the outperformance was 16 basis points (0.16%). Max's outperformance can be attributed to a combination of preferential rates offered exclusively to Max members and the incremental yield generated by active rate following / optimization of accounts.

Annualized Return on $250,000 of Cash	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Max	1.32%	1.84%	1.57%
Online Banks			
Ally Bank	1.10%	1.61%	1.39%
American Express	1.14%	1.62%	1.41%
Barclays	1.07%	1.63%	1.41%
Marcus	1.13%	1.67%	1.45%
Average	1.11%	1.63%	1.41%
Max Advantage vs. Online Banks	**+0.21%**	**+0.21%**	**+0.16%**

Conclusions

The data demonstrates that helping clients actively manage cash can generate real alpha. In a study covering multiple time periods**, Max far outperformed the leading U.S. online banks individually, and as a group, by a wide margin.** Max has helped clients generate more yield than they could have earned on their own, even net of Max's annual membership fee of 0.08%, all while keeping funds FDIC-insured and same-day liquid in clients' own bank accounts.

For advisors who follow the fiduciary standard or who are subject to the best interest rule, earning more on cash while staying FDIC insured is arguably as important as maximizing returns on any other asset class for clients.

Finally, with inflation emerging as a topic of greater discussion and concern these days, it's even more important for clients to protect their assets from the risks of inflation. Keeping on top of the best savings rates can help.

Get Started Today

Given the compelling evidence of the benefits of active cash management, it makes sense to look at what your clients could be earning on cash. Prior to the pandemic, Max delivered a rate as high as 2.72% APY. Given recent comments by the Federal Reserve, we expect rates to return to this range in the coming years.

Contact advisors@maxmyinterest.com to schedule a call or demo to see what Max can do for your clients, or get started today at MaxForAdvisors.com

[1] Note: Gross returns for 1-, 3-, and 5-year periods calculated through 12/31/2020.