Thank you for downloading Investor Inspiration's Most Inspiring Trading Strategies eBook. Investor Inspiration's top market experts have come together to share their strategies that can only be found within these pages. Read along as Joshua Martinez shares his Active Zone and Dead Zone Trading Strategy, Christopher Irvin details his Strategy for a Scheduled Options Payday Each Quarter, and Barry Burns shows you how to avoid choppy markets.

We hope you enjoy the eBook and please be sure to register for one of our upcoming live webinars by clicking here!
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STRATEGY 1

JOSHUA MARTINEZ

Active Zone and Dead Zone Trading Strategy
The Active Zone takes place between 2:00 AM and 12:00 PM ET, the Dead Zone follows from 12:00 PM to 2:00 AM ET. Using these two zones you can judge when it could be a good time to enter into a trade and when to stay out of the market.

In the Active Zone you have the most directional movement of the day, this is where you will see the low to high and high to low pushes. In the the Dead Zone you will see more sideways movement.

The Active Zone is shown below making high low to the high/high to low movements along side the choppiness of the Dead Zone.

For example, the GBP/NZD is on its way towards a D extension at 7:00 PM ET and you have 70 pips left, more than likely from 7:00 PM to 2:00 AM the market will drift bearish towards the D extension and at 2:00 AM it will hit the D extension and the next day the market will run bullish (fast and aggressive). During the Dead Zone it took 7 hours (7:00 PM to 2:00 AM) for the market to hit the D extension, however during the Active Zone it would take 3 hours to cover the same distance in the market.

So what causes this to happen?

The zones are created by volume and directional movements stemming from the 3 major trading sessions.

- **At 5:00 PM ET - 7:00 AM ET**, the Asian Session opens. It includes Japan, China, Asia and the pacific rim of New Zealand and Australia.

- **At 3:00 AM ET – 11:00 AM ET**, the European Session opens. It overlaps Asia from 3:00 AM ET – 7:00 AM ET.

- **At 8:00 AM ET – 5:00 PM ET**, the US Session opens and overlaps Europe from 8:00 AM ET – 11:00 AM ET.
The majority of directional Forex transactions take place during the European session. When the Euro session opens the banks begin to process bulk transactions which causes a push in the market creating the Active Zone.

The image below shows the Active Zone in green and the Dead Zone in red. The movements shown in green illustrate the volatility that takes place in the Active Zone as compared to the sideways movement in the Dead Zone.

During the 4 hour window when the European and US session are overlapping one another (8:00 AM to 12:00 PM) you are going to see a lot of volatility from the large volume of transactions taking place.
The previous image shows the green and red markers from the previous image. In this side-by-side comparison you can see how steep the Active Zone movements are compared to the Dead Zone.

When the European session ends at 12:00 PM ET leading into the Dead Zone, we begin to see that the volume and directional movements are beginning to enter a pull back.

With this information and knowing when to expect the volatility you have the advantage of planning your trading day and knowing when to stay out of the market.

**Best currency pairs to use for this?**

- EUR/AUD
- EUR/CAD
- EUR/CHF
- EUR/GBP
- EUR/JPY
- EUR/NOK
- EUR/NZD
What type of trader would this be best for?

Trading during the Active and Dead Zones is perfect for the type of trader that is looking for immediate profits up front. Scalper, Swing, Intra and Day traders would benefit from the higher volatility.

Beginning traders will love this because it is important to having winning trades when they are first starting out which will provide the confidence needed to take the next step in their trading career.

Position traders would not typically trade off of the Active and Dead Zones seeing as they will not be concerned about the drawn down and will hold a negative position for a month and then look to be positive in their trade.

CONCLUSION

The Active Zone is faster, you can time your trade from it, you can judge whether you have a push up or down as well have higher confidence in your trades. Several automated trading systems work well in this zone as opposed to the Dead Zone.

The Dead Zone is where you will see false signals, you are holding much longer trades and it is not as accurate.

PUT THIS STRATEGY TO WORK

Activate your 7-day trial of Market Traders Institute’s Ultimate Charting Software.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Director of Student Success for Market Traders Institute, Joshua Martinez, is an active trader in the Forex market, where he’s known as the FX Pathfinder, and has been featured in Trader Planet’s Digital Journal, the MoneyShow Media Library, and FX Street among many other financial publications.

Josh made a name for himself with his London Daybreak strategy and trading feats such as doubling his trading account in a single month and earning 35,000 pips in 2016 with his personal trading strategies. As a course creator, mentor and active instructor with MTI, you can find Josh in MTI client classes, live training sessions and MTI’s free webinars that are open to the public.
STRATEGY 2

CHRISTOPHER IRVIN

The Strategy for a Scheduled Options Payday Each Quarter
Four times each year, stock and equity options traders’ ears perk up.

Like clockwork, their gears start to turn and they type away at the keyboard, looking for the earnings season schedule of big-name companies like Google, Apple, Netflix, Tesla… The list goes on. It's like an appointment for profits.

Each earnings season, the stock market sees a spike in volatility, in profit potential, for traders with a weather eye on the horizon. As stock traders take to the charts, equity options traders do the same, looking to take advantage of stock movements for pennies on the dollar and get a little piece of the pie.

**What if you could do the same?**

What if each quarter, you set aside a handful of hours to execute a few options trades where you could potentially profit 25-30% overnight?

It happens, and more frequently than you might think. I've been trading for more than 15 years and I've not only seen it happen through my students’ successes at Market Traders Institute, I've watched it happen in my own account too. The beauty of it is that no matter what time of year it is, you could be preparing for earnings season.

This is the precise strategy that I use each and every quarter.

**What is the Earnings Season?**

**Earnings Season:** The time around the beginning of each financial quarter when publicly-traded companies release earnings reports for the previous quarter.

**The Catch**

Despite what some traders will tell you, as an equity options trader, the actual earnings number is not the issue. I really don't even care if the company makes money or loses money. What counts is how investors react to the news.

What is the important part? **The knee-jerk reaction of investors.**

Because investors assign a positive or negative emotion to those numbers, the stock can jump, or dump. These moves can make for great opportunity if you know how to play the move.

I focus on the reaction that the stock's price has to the earnings number.
That's what will drive the intrinsic value in my options, and therefore the profitability in the trade. The intrinsic value of an option is the component of the options price that is DIRECTLY affected by the movement of the underlying stock. If the stock goes up $1.00, the intrinsic value goes up $1.00. That is why we need the stock price to move big. In order for a straddle to work, intrinsic value needs to take off.

The other day, Netflix (NFLX) had its earnings announcement. The company made $0.06 per share, but the bigger story to me was that the $100.00 stock moved approximately $17.00 the next day. That is the type of move that we are after. The total cost of the straddle in this situation was on $12.80 per share. Since the underlying stock moved $17.00, the intrinsic value boosted the trade to a profit. Like I said, I don't care about the $0.06. I care about the $17.00 and what that move will do for my options.

One of the great things about a straddle trade is that I really did not even care if the stock moved up $17.00 or down $17.00. I would profit either way. That is correct – I do not have to choose a direction. It’s just one more way that this strategy takes the stress out of your trades.

**THE 4-STEP EARNINGS SEASON PROFIT PLAN**

**The Straddle Trading Strategy**

An options straddle blows some traders’ minds. You don’t pick the stock’s direction. Truly, your only concern is that the stock moves. Period.

Not a bad strategy, right?

**Volatility:** The amount of market action. Also known as “the spread” in the market’s waves or the price fluctuations a stock experiences.

Typically, if you’re buying a call option, you’re looking for the stock price to go up.

If you buy a put option, you are looking for the stock’s price to move down.

In an options straddle, you buy a call and buy a put simultaneously.

When you place these orders, you just want the stock to react to the earnings announcement. **The bigger the reaction the better.** Positive or negative does not matter, we just want it to move dramatically.

**Options Straddle:** When you buy a call option and buy a put option at the same time, you straddle the market price so that no matter which direction the stock moves, you could profit.
Why Trade In Both Directions?

So you might be thinking, if I’m trading in both directions, won’t the trades cancel one another out? Or worse, won’t that mean that the market will inevitably go against me?

Yes and no.

When the market moves big in one direction, one of your options, either the call or the put, will increase in value. The other decreases in value. You will be losing money in that negative trade, but the objective is to have the winning trade outweigh your losing side. This is where you start to see profit. The profit of the winning trade should be much larger than the loss in the losing position. As a matter of fact, your loser may get crushed into oblivion. The good news is that when you buy options, your risk is limited to the cost of the option, and your reward is unlimited. So if your winner increases by more than the cost of the total loser, we have a winning straddle.

HOW IT WORKS

The key is buying equal numbers of “at-the-money” calls and puts prior to the announcement. This is why having the announcement release date on your calendar is so critical. When you buy an equal number of at-the-money calls to puts, you are creating a “delta neutral” strategy. At-the-money call options will have deltas of .50, and at-the-money put options will have deltas of -.50. When these deltas are added together, we end up with a delta of “0”, or delta neutral.

**Delta:** Stemming from the Greek word diaphora, which means “difference”. This number tells you how much you will profit based on a $1.00 move of the stock e.g., if a trader buys an option with a 0.75 delta, and the underlying stock moves $1.00, the option will increase in value by $0.75.

**Delta Neutral:** Puts always have a delta from -1 to 0 and calls from 0 to 1, so when you buy a put with a delta of -0.5 put and a call 0.5 delta, your deltas will cancel each other out and you will be left with a delta neutral position.

You are dealing with two deltas in this case.

Let’s say that we get into a straddle trade where the call option has a delta of 0.50 and the put option has a delta of -0.50. The earnings are released and the stock gaps up in the pre-market. This causes the call options to increase in value, and along the way the delta is ratcheting up, 0.50, to 0.55, to 0.60, to 0.65 eventually moving up to 0.85. This means that my call option is now making me $0.85 every time the stock move up $1.00. That is great!
But what about the put positions? The put delta will start moving in the opposite direction; -0.50, to -0.45, to, -0.40, eventually falling to -0.20. The put, being on the losing side of the trade, is actually losing money slower. In this case, at this level, the put option is losing $0.20 for every $1.00 the underlying stock price moves up. Here is the great thing about the current state of our hypothetical trade. We are making $0.80, with our call option, for every $1.00 move of the underlying stock, while we are losing $0.20 for the same move with the put. The net result is a $0.60 profit. That is why straddles work!

**PRO TIP:** The Ultimate Stock and Options Course teaches to buy options with deltas between 0.5 and -0.50 for straddle trades during earnings season. (The trade is not a straddle if you use options with deltas other than 0.50 and -0.50.)

### When to Straddle the Market

It’s simple really. The straddle strategy allows a trader to take advantage of a known event that has a high probability of causing the stock to move 10% to 15%, regardless of direction. This is why it’s a perfect strategy to master when trading earnings announcements.

### The Key to the Straddle

Understand this: a straddle is not an ideal strategy for every stock at earnings. The reason is that not every stock has the potential for the required move it will take to put the trade into a profitable position. For this reason, you will need to do your homework before placing a straddle.

Now, let’s explain the top five ways to judge whether or not a particular trading opportunity is a good pick for an earnings season straddle trade.

### 5 STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL OPTIONS STRADDLES

#### Step 1: Stalk Your Prey

First and foremost, you’ll need potential stock shares that you’ll want to monitor. All of the following steps require that you have particular companies in mind, access to their current share prices and, preferably, have an idea of when their earnings reports will be released for the coming quarter.

#### Step 2: Look to the Past to Profit in the Future

Now that you have several stocks in mind, you’ll want to look back on the historical data for the stocks in question, be it Apple, Google, Netflix, Tesla, whichever stock you’re looking to profit from.
To do this, you want to look back on the stock charts and identify the four most recent earnings report release dates. Once you have found them, check out the price fluctuations in that company’s stock price following each announcement.

You’ll want to answer three questions:

- What was the closing price prior to the announcement’s release?
- What was the opening price the day after the announcement’s release?
- What was the peak or valley before turn price – after the announcement’s release?

**Peak or Valley Before Turn Price:** The price the stock hits, before its first reversal, after the report’s release.

The measurements from close to open, and close to peak/valley can give you an indication as to whether the stock has moved substantially in the past at earnings announcements. If the cost of the straddle is less than the historical movement at earnings releases, you may have a potential straddle candidate.

**Example:**
Let’s take a look at an older example of this for the sake of clarity.

Below are four consecutive earnings report numbers for Netflix (remember that you’ll always want to pull the four MOST RECENT earnings numbers for judging your potential straddle trade):

**Earnings Report from 7/18/16**
- Pre Earnings Close - $98.81
- Post Earnings Open - $85.43 ($13.83 move or 13.54%)
- Post Earnings Low - $13.83 ($13.83 move or 13.54%)

**Earnings Report from 4/18/16**
- Pre Earnings Close - $108.50
- Post Earnings Open - $99.49 ($9.01 move or 8.3%)
- Post Earnings Low - $85.74 ($22.76 move or 21%)

**Earnings Report from 1/19/16**
- Pre Earnings Close - $107.89
- Post Earnings Open - $108.91 ($1.02 move or .09%)
- Post Earnings Low - $79.95 ($27.94 move or 25.9%)

**Earnings Report from 10/15/15**
- Pre Earnings Close - $110.13
- Post Earnings Open - $103.77 ($6.36 move or 5.7%)
- Post Earnings Low - $96.26 ($13.87 move or 12.06%)
In these examples, you can see that the two most recent earnings releases caused the stock’s price to move between 18% and 30%. If we were looking at a straddle that hypothetically cost 15% of the current cost of the stock’s price, the trade would have potential.

What’s the Magic Number?

Unfortunately, there is no magic number and there’s no holy grail. In the past, I have looked for stock price fluctuations between 12-15% minimum. That often creates enough movement to produce a profitable trade in a straddle situation. The only way to truly make a sound judgement is to determine the current price of the straddle and compare that price against the average price movement over the past four earnings releases. If the cost of the straddle is greater than the average move, the trade probably will not work. If the average move is greater than the cost of the straddle, the trade has a good chance of working.

Step 3: Let the Big Dogs Weigh In

Now, this is a dangerous one if you’re not careful. While we want to consider what key analysts are projecting, we don’t want to trade the news, we want to trade the moves. At the same time, once you have your stock picked out in step 1, it’s good to check in on the analysts’ insights.

You want to focus in on the highest analyst price target. When the cost of the straddle is added to the current value of the stock, you arrive at a number that is less than the analyst target, indicating that your straddle has the potential of working out.

**PRO TIP:** Don’t pay attention to the earnings estimates. Instead, look to see where the analysts have set their highest price targets for the stock. This is what they think that the stock is worth. Traders like to drive prices up to the analyst targets and stop, so if the straddle profit target is lower than the analyst price target, the straddle should be in good shape.

Step 4: Don’t Forget the Fibs

The Fibonacci sequence is an old mathematical golden ratio you probably learned in some middle school or high school math class and quickly forgot about it, dismissing it as something you couldn’t possibly, ever in a trillion years use... That is, until you began to trade the markets.

The next step (the decision-making process) for your trade is to draw out the Fibonaccis.

In this instance, you want another point of confirmation. You’re looking to be able to say that the stock has the potential to make the range of movement you’re after within the current extension or retracement. If it is not, then your technicals do not match up with what you require to be profitable in your trade. While this may not be a 100%, sure-fire way to decide whether or not to avoid the trade, it is a critical component many traders take into consideration in passing up a trade.
See what the Fibs look like on the charts:

![Volatility Chart Image]

**Step 5: Give the Volatility Charts a Vote**

Have you ever seen a volatility chart? These charts help options traders determine whether an option is overpriced or underpriced. This is a wonderful gauge for seeing if the options are priced at a level that is just too expensive to place the straddle.

The chart is very visual, and simple to read. The chart will have two lines. One shows the historic volatility and the other represents the implied volatility. If the implied volatility line is higher than the historic volatility line, the options are thought to be expensive. If, on the other hand, historic volatility is higher than implied volatility, the options are thought to be inexpensive.

What we really want to see is just how expensive our options are. What you’re looking for is the skew between the historic and implied volatility. The closer these two numbers are together, the smaller the skew. The smaller the skew, the less expensive the options and the better your chances will be of covering the cost of the straddle. The wider the skew, the more expensive the trade becomes and your chances of covering the straddle cost goes down.

**Skew:** A fancy math term for the difference or distance between two numbers.

**Historic Volatility:** Gauge of how much the stock's price has flopped around and moved based upon past data.

**Implied Volatility:** Representation of the average analyst sentiment as to what they believed the volatility will be in the future. (This directly ties into step 2!)
CONCLUSION

Earnings season trading is as close to appointment-style trading as you can get. With just one strategy, the options straddle strategy, you could have a payday scheduled for every quarter.

Do you want to get more hands on experience with this strategy?

THE SPECIAL OFFER

Check out one of our live webinars. Your ticket is on me, just RSVP here:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Irvin is a real trader. Over the past 15 years, he's traded stocks, options, futures and currencies. For him, trading is more than being your own boss; after all, he's been an entrepreneur since 1996. He knows that trading is a way to take control of your life. For him, being able to rely on himself is true freedom. Recognized for his trading skills in 2011 by TradeKing and being an expert contributor in publications such as Invezz, Chris has put his trading knowledge to use in developing training materials and teaching traders across the globe since 2004. Now, after joining MTI in 2012, Chris continues to actively trade and teach others how to do the same without going through the school of hard knocks like he did.
STRATEGY 3
DR. BARRY BURNS
How to Avoid Choppy Markets
Most trading methods do make money when trading in perfect trending conditions, but then give back those same profits during periods of consolidation. So if you could learn to avoid consolidating markets, you could profitably trade many sound trading methodologies.

This Special Report from Top Dog Trading is designed to help you avoid choppy markets.

Although most traders spend years seeking new price patterns and indicators to help them know when to get into the market, professional traders spend most of their time working on filters to keep them out of the market!

I’m sure you don’t need me to convince you of that fact and give you a lot of background, statistics and paper-filler, so let’s jump right into the practical stuff.

There are 5 things I’m always watching that help me determine the “condition” of the market. Some apply only to day trading and others apply to swing trading and investing as well.

**CONSOLIDATION SIGNAL #1: FLAT 50 SIMPLE MOVING AVERAGE**

The teacher of my very first Futures course taught me this. He said as simple as it is, it would be the best thing anyone ever taught me.

When the 50 simple moving average is FLAT, that means the market is flat, and that means your position should be flat!

“If it’s flat, be flat, it’s as simple as that!”

Below is a 2 minute chart of the S&P emini. You can see that when the 50 MA (the red line) goes flat, it’s a clear indication that there is no trend in the market.
The 50 MA will have to be flat for a few bars when the trend is changing. Therefore this rule only applies when it has been flat for an entire cycle (use your favorite oscillator for measuring cycles).

**CONSOLIDATION SIGNAL #2: USE TICK CHARTS**

Most people use time charts, meaning that each new bar is created after a certain period of time: 2 minutes, 5 minutes, 1 day, etc.

“Tick” charts are charts that create a new bar after a certain number of TRADES are executed. A 100 tick chart starts a new bar whenever 100 trades go through and the 101st trade comes in.

During consolidation, volume tends to drop. Minute charts will continue to form new bars every minute, thus giving you long periods of consolidation on your chart and creating price patterns and indicator patterns you may be tempted to trade.

Tick charts, however, print fewer bars during periods of low volume consolidation because they only print new bars when the designated number of trades are executed through the exchange. Therefore you don’t see as much consolidation on your chart, thus removing some false signals and some temptation!

Below is a comparison of the exact same 2 hour period as it looks on a 2 minute chart and a 500 tick chart of the eminis.
CONSOLIDATION SIGNAL #3: FLAT ADVANCE/DECLINE LINE

One of the indicators you should always be watching, in my never-to-be-humble opinion, is the Advance/Decline line.

This is the difference between the Advancing and Declining issues. There’s one measurement for the NYSE and another for the NASDAQ.

Use whichever one (or both) that relates to the market(s) you trade.

The bottom line on this indicator is simple. Much like the 50 MA, when it goes flat, keep your account flat. It’s an indication that there is no clear direction in the market.

So the market may be trending, but if the Adv/Dec is flat, your “trending” market could change direction or simply go flat at any moment.

For day trading I use a 2 minute chart of the Advance/Decline line.

When I say “flat,” that is a relative term, as it is with the 50 MA. With the 50 MA I’m looking at the angle of the line, but with Adv/Dec I’m plotting price bars and looking for a clear trend of higher highs/ and higher lows.
CONSOLIDATION SIGNAL #4: FLAT UP/DOWN VOLUME

Here’s another one of my favorites, and I don’t know many people who use this. Hint: that’s called an “edge” for you and me!

It’s the up/down volume. It measures the difference between the up volume and the down volume, as opposed to the difference between the number of issues up versus down. Again, it’s available for both the NYSE and the NASDAQ.

The key is to watch the relationship of the bars to the zero line (I draw it in as a horizontal line on my chart).

If the bars simply hover around the zero line, that’s an indication that there isn’t any strong commitment of traders in either direction today, and therefore you may have a choppy, trendless market or a trend that is in place is less likely to continue following through.

Sometimes the Advance/Decline line will be trending, but if the Up/Down Volume is not trending, then be careful! There may be more issues going up than down, but there isn’t volume to support the move!

There’s no commitment of volume in either direction this morning. This indicates “choppy weather conditions” on the sea of trading.

To twist a quote out of context: You don’t have to be a ‘rocket surgeon’ to figure out what the low-risk trading direction is during this volume activity!
CONSOLIDATION SIGNAL #5: INTER-MARKET BIFURCATION

The final sign of a potentially choppy market is when the major indices get out of alignment. If you’re trading the DOW, or a DOW stock, and it’s trending up nicely, but the NASDAQ is negative for the day, the NASDAQ may have a negative pull on the DOW and hinder its ability to continue trending.

You want to watch to see if the markets are splitting any of the following levels:
1. Yesterday’s Close
2. 50 MA
3. Central Pivot

“Splitting” any of these 3 levels, means that one of the four markets is above and another is below. For example, if the S&P is above its close from yesterday, but the NASDAQ is below its close from yesterday, then the overall market condition would be considered “bifurcated.”

Another example: If the DOW is above its Central Pivot, but the S&P is below its Central Pivot, then the overall market condition is considered “bifurcated.”

Although one market will always be stronger than another market, the strongest trending days usually occur when all 4 of these markets are clearly bullish or bearish. When the markets all move together, they move more freely and tend to follow-through more... sometimes trending in one direction for the entire day.

I like to have a quote screen with the following markets at the top:
- S&P
- Russell
- DOW
- NASDAQ
- NDX
- ES
- ER2 (or AB)
- YM
- NQ

On the quote screen I include a column for “Net Change” from yesterday’s close. This allows me to see in an instant if the markets are aligned with yesterday’s close.
- If they’re all red, then they’re all below yesterday’s close.
- If they’re all green, then they’re all above yesterday’s close.
- If some are red and some are green, then the markets are bifurcated.

In the quote window to the right, all the markets are aligned to the downside, with all of them below their respective “yesterday’s lows” for both Cash and Futures.
CONCLUSION

As a Special Bonus for those who read this article, you’re entitled to get one of my Mini-Courses for free. It’s entitled: “Make Money by Breaking Every Trading Rule You Ever Learned” ... and you can get it free at this link:

http://www.topdogtrading.com/free.html

Happy Trading,

Barry Burns
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Barry Burns is a business man who has owned several small companies. His business background had taught him to focus on the bottom line, so his study of the financial markets was for one purpose only: to make profits.

He started his study of the markets under the direction of his father, Patrick F. Burns, who became independently wealthy through trading and had over 70 years of trading experience before passing away in 2005.

Barry Burns furthered his education by reading over 100 books on trading and investing, and spent over $50,000 in trading courses and education. In addition, he hired three professional traders to mentor him personally. He even flew to Chicago to work with a former floor trader at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. All of this research and study resulted in insights which eventually led to the development of his own methodology.