

thinkorswim Sharing

TD AMERITRADE, INC. AND AFFILIATES

Website: www.thinkorswim.com,
www.mytrade.com

Email: support@thinkorswim.com

Product: Social media sharing
tools and online community for
thinkorswim users

Price: Free for TD Ameritrade
account holders

by Donald W. Pendergast Jr.

Once an individual makes the important decision to pursue the goal of becoming a successful trader, chooses a stock/option/forex/commodity broker, and funds his account, he may then find himself faced with some vital questions that, for many newer or struggling traders, could take years to get answered — if at all. In the meantime, new traders may lose so much trading capital that they could end up quitting in disgust and frustration. Some of these vital questions could be along the lines of:

- “How can I shorten the learning curve so I can eventually trade successfully?”
- “Who can help teach me the key charting, systems, scanning, analysis and trading workflow routines that can help me toward consistent profitability — thus saving me lots of trial and error?”
- “How/where can I find other traders to interact with; those who are willing to share the acquired wisdom and trading procedures that have helped them become successful?”
- “Are any/all of the above resources available to me in a convenient, easy-to-access venue, and free of charge?”

SHORTENING THE LEARNING CURVE

Traders who use thinkorswim as their broker and trading, charting, and analysis platform might just find that all of those pertinent questions — and more — can be answered within the thinkorswim/MyTrade section of this comprehensive analysis and trading platform. The platform already offers a myriad of unique technical, analytical, and forecasting tools for serious traders and investors. Experienced traders using the thinkorswim/MyTrade tools will have an eager audience of newer and maturing traders with whom they can freely share their trade ideas, charts, scans, watchlists, and chart layouts. The exposure that up-and-coming market participants get to the nonstop stream of meaningful market-related content has the potential to dramatically shorten their learning curve. Here, newer traders may be able to:

1. Learn the operation of the charting, scanning, and analysis tools within the platform
2. More effectively analyze simple to complex option trades
3. Gain access to prewritten trading strategy code for backtesting
4. Learn more about order entry tactics and position management
5. Analyze charts and other visual forecasting tools to identify promising trade opportunities
6. Maintain a productive trading mindset; the social interaction with skilled traders can be vital for traders just starting on the sometimes arduous pathway to success in the markets.

Before we continue, I'll provide a quick primer for some of the terminology related to the thinkorswim/Sharing tools

found both within the thinkorswim platform and the thinkorswim web-based trading platform:

- thinkorswim is the actual trading and analysis platform; a web and mobile version are also available
- thinkorswim/Sharing is the broad, descriptive name that encompasses all of the sharing features linked to thinkorswim
- thinkorswim/MyTrade is a website and section within the thinkorswim platform where user-posted trades, ideas, and charts are distributed to other MyTrade users
- thinkorswim/MyTrade is subdivided into four sections: Think Share, Dashboard, My Page, and People. The Dashboard allows complete customization so you can organize all of your charts, watchlists, quotes, company links, stock headlines, and RSS/blog feeds. The People section lists those you follow on a single web page. I'll discuss the Think Share and My Page features a little later.

BASICS

For this review, I used thinkorswim in its paperMoney demo version (a live, simulated trading account offering all the same features that thinkorswim live trading accounts have) and its MyTrade features on my Windows 8 64-bit notebook computer equipped with an Intel Core I7 processor and 8 MB of RAM; my Internet connection was a standard DSL line. After downloading the software, installation was fast and trouble-free and the real-time datafeed operated flawlessly, as did every feature I subsequently used within the platform. Although thinkorswim is a desktop computer application, users can also log into a convenient web-based platform that allows all of their basic trading and

order entry processes; mobile users are also afforded the same kind of access. The desktop version obviously has many more features, one of which is the thinkorswim chat room; however, anyone with web or mobile access who is following others in MyTrade can still receive all of the same trades ideas and charts as those using the desktop version.

Since MyTrade makes use of Twitter, Facebook, and email, web and mobile users can always stay abreast of what's going on with the financial instruments and markets they choose to analyze and trade. MyTrade is integrated within thinkorswim; users can also log in at the website at <http://www.mytrade.com/thinkshare/>.

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

The MyTrade section of the platform provides thinkorswim users with a continuous stream of fresh trading ideas, complete descriptions of trade setups, charts, market commentaries, and other useful information that keeps thinkorswim/MyTrade users abreast of what's moving in the markets, along with practical ways to trade the related setups. Users can also link their Twitter accounts to their MyTrade page, along with the RSS feed from their personal blogs. Users also have access to the thinkorswim chat room, which opens up yet another way for traders to share and discuss trade setups, charts, scans, watchlists, and code in greater depth. Users can opt to receive all content or only content from those they follow, and there's tons of it in a never-ending flow. Posts from users appear under the Think Share tab, with data organized into two main categories:

- Trades
- Ideas and charts

A filtering feature enables you to opt to receive *all* posts in both categories or to only receive content from those sharers you choose to follow. Alternatively, you can search for specific content on a particular keyword or ticker. For example, let's say you are interested in trading Apple Inc. (AAPL); just type "AAPL" into the search box on the Think Share page, and a plethora of



It's a terrific, easy-access venue in which traders with a solid track record and top-notch trading skills can get noticed.

cells containing content related to AAPL will populate your screen within a few seconds. Once you locate a trade setup you like — all of them provide detailed buy/sell information, and some even come with a descriptive video clip — simply click the *copy trade* icon to the right of the trade and then hit the *paste* icon at the top right corner of the page. The same exact trade will appear in your order entry screen within thinkorswim. You can modify it in any way you like (quantity, buy/sell, option strike price, and so on) if needed, and then you can send the order in to be executed by thinkorswim. You can elect to have your trade shared on your MyTrade page, and any thinkorswim users who are following you via Twitter will instantly be alerted to your latest (and hopefully greatest) trade. If you choose not to share trading setups, advice, charts, scans, and watchlists but simply prefer to follow those who do, the process works the same way, only in reverse.

Let's say you're a very talented chartist and technical analyst; you've visually identified an attractive chart pattern, trading signal, or breakout move on your favorite stock and you want to share it with your followers. Once you've detailed

your chart with your studies and/or trading strategy, just hit the *share* button and your chart will be ready to share with others via your MyTrade page, Twitter, Facebook, and email accounts. Your followers will get the chart and will be able to use it as-is or tweak and adjust it to suit their own trading biases or needs. Meanwhile, if you're a follower, you can do the same with the charts that your MyTrade feed sends your way. Your followers can also save your exact workspace study and trading strategy parameters for future use, thus saving time and "trial-and-error" misadventures that can eat up valuable trading capital.

MY TRADE BECOMES YOUR TRADE

I decided to visually scan through daily charts of key S&P 500 index (SPX, SPY) stocks and I located a very promising buy opportunity in shares of Autodesk Inc. (ADSK); the stock staged a sharp, wide-range, big-volume rally on Friday July 18, 2014 after having tested several significant support levels. It only took a moment to draw the linear regression channels on the chart (Figure 1), and then I applied the thinkorswim Long-Haul filter by clicking on the *charts* tab



FIGURE 1: A PROMISING OPPORTUNITY. Once a thinkorswim MyTrade user has detailed his chart with buy/sell signals, trading strategies, drawings, and other visuals, simply clicking the *share* icon will launch the next step of the sharing process.

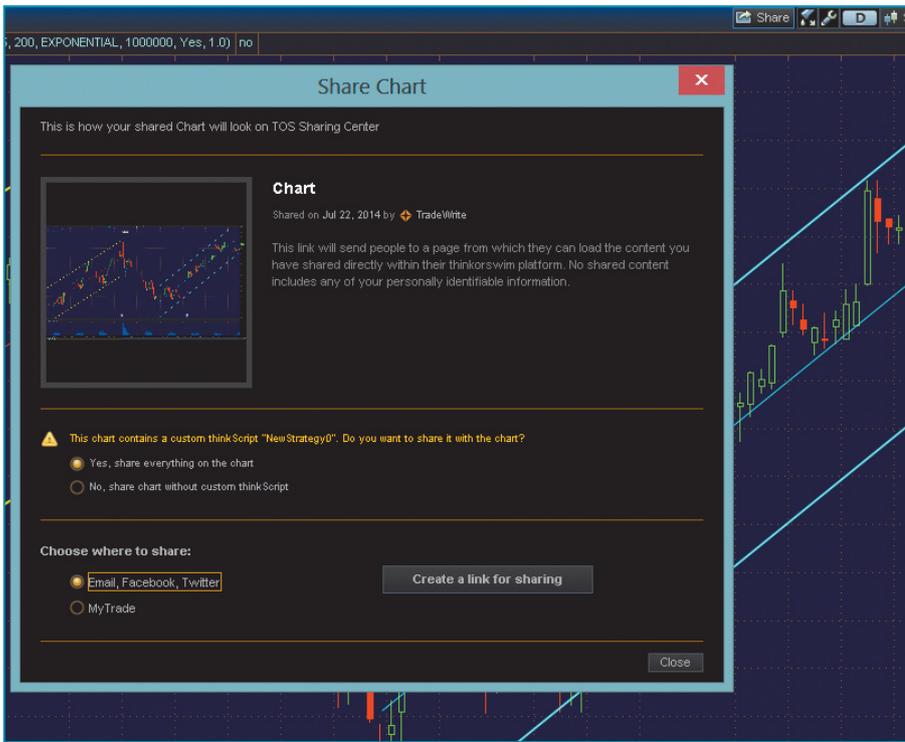


FIGURE 2: SHARING A CHART. The next step in sharing a chart from within the thinkorswim sharing window is deciding whether to send it via email, Facebook, and Twitter or to have it posted directly to your MyTrade page.

in thinkorswim and then following this pathway:

Studies/Add Study/Stocks and Commodities Magazine/A-R/LongHaul Filter

The LongHaul Filter is a basic visual alert for potential buy opportunities in trending stocks (the little blue/white light bulb icon near the bottom of the chart identified the last four signals). This filter is based on a complete trading strategy that I described in my article that ap-

peared in the 2014 Bonus Issue of this magazine (“A Trading Method For The Long Haul”). The actual strategy code for the thinkorswim LongHaul Filter (as well as many other code listings) can be accessed via the thinkScript Strategy webpage at <http://tos.mx/fIH5JZ>.

Once I had detailed and annotated my ADSK chart to my liking and saved it to my computer’s drive, I wanted to share it with the rest of the thinkorswim sharing community, which was very easy to do, once I was logged into MyTrade at <http://www.mytrade.com/thinkshare/>.

www.mytrade.com/thinkshare/. I clicked the Think Share tab and then the *share a chart* link on the top right side of the page. A small window popped up and I entered the ticker symbol (ADSK) and a title for my post before clicking *browse* so I could upload my ADSK chart from my drive to MyShare (Figure 2). Once it’s ready to be uploaded, a small preview image of the chart will appear in the popup window. All that was needed now was for me to add my trade-detail comments for the chart (Figure 3). When I was satisfied with my chart and comments, I simply hit *submit* and everything appeared at the top of the *ideas and charts* column in the Think Share portion of MyTrade.

A much larger version of my chart and comments also appeared in the My Page section of MyTrade; this is the area where sharers can post their social media contact information, a photo and a brief biography (Figure 4). Sharers need expend little effort to distribute their content within thinkorswim MyTrade, and it’s a terrific, easy-access venue in which traders with a solid track record and top-notch trading skills can get noticed by the rest of the thinkorswim sharing gang.

LESS CAN BE MORE (USEFUL)

Given the enormous amount of content being posted, tweeted, and emailed via thinkorswim/Share, here are some ideas on how to streamline your daily workflow within thinkorswim/MyTrade, especially if you are new to the world of trading:

- Limit your trading focus to a small, specific, diversified group of stocks and ETFs (or forex or commodity markets)
- Trade the same time frame for each portfolio you construct. If you work at a day job, then trade end-of-day (daily or weekly charts) only
- After reviewing the final trade results of those you follow within MyTrade, boot those with marginal or losing track records and then focus on the two or three sharers whose trading approach produces winning outcomes and whose methodologies most



FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTING CONTENT. thinkorswim users can also share directly from the MyTrade website at <http://www.mytrade.com/thinkshare/>. After clicking *share a chart*, this popup window appears for entering a description and comments. A thumbnail image of the chart is also displayed. Hitting *submit* sends the chart and text to the user’s MyTrade page.

closely resonate with your own trading psychology (Figure 5)

- Use a thinkorswim paperMoney simulated trading account to paper-trade the output of your favorite sharers before you put real money on the line in the markets; when you're satisfied with the simulated results, begin trading with just a small fraction of your trading capital.

SUMMARY

The thinkorswim/Share concept may just be the ultimate fulfillment of the trader's dream of a "one-stop shopping" venue for financial market participants, one where dedicated traders and educators can meet, learn, research, analyze, test strategies, share trades, charts, ideas, and then place trades with a higher degree of confidence than ever before. Thinkorswim has always been one of the preeminent option analysis/trading platforms, and the new sharing features elevate this already first-rate platform to an even higher level for retail traders.

Donald W. Pendergast Jr. has contributed articles and reviews to this magazine since 2008. A trader, market technician, and system developer, he is a consultant who offers stock-specific trading signals and customized analysis. He can be reached at puertoricool@yahoo.com and via his website <http://ezstocksignals.sitespawner.com/>.

FURTHER READING

- Pendergast Jr., Donald W. [2014]. "A Trading Method For The Long Haul," *Technical Analysis of STOCKS & COMMODITIES*, Volume 32: Bonus Issue.
- ____ [2013]. "Swing Trading With Three Indicators," *Technical Analysis of STOCKS & COMMODITIES*, Volume 31: December.
- Peterson, Dennis [2012]. "Thinkorswim.com," product review, *Technical Analysis of STOCKS & COMMODITIES*, Volume 30: May.

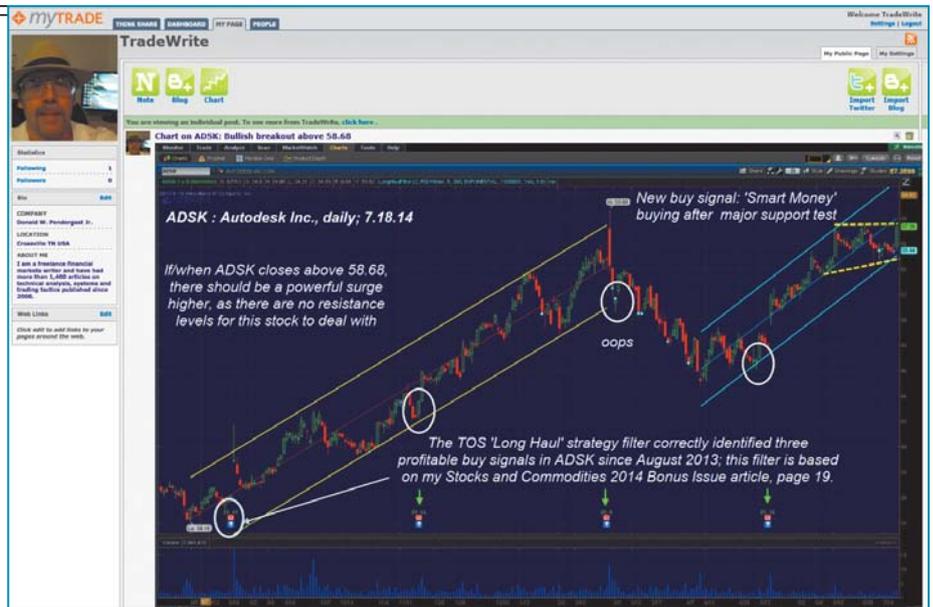


FIGURE 4: SHARING ACCOMPLISHED. I posted this chart and commentary to the MyTrade website on July 19, 2014. It was also shared to the Think Share and My Page sections within the thinkorswim trading platform, as well as to my Twitter account. Sharers can list a brief biography of themselves, their location, and other contact details on the MyTrade website.

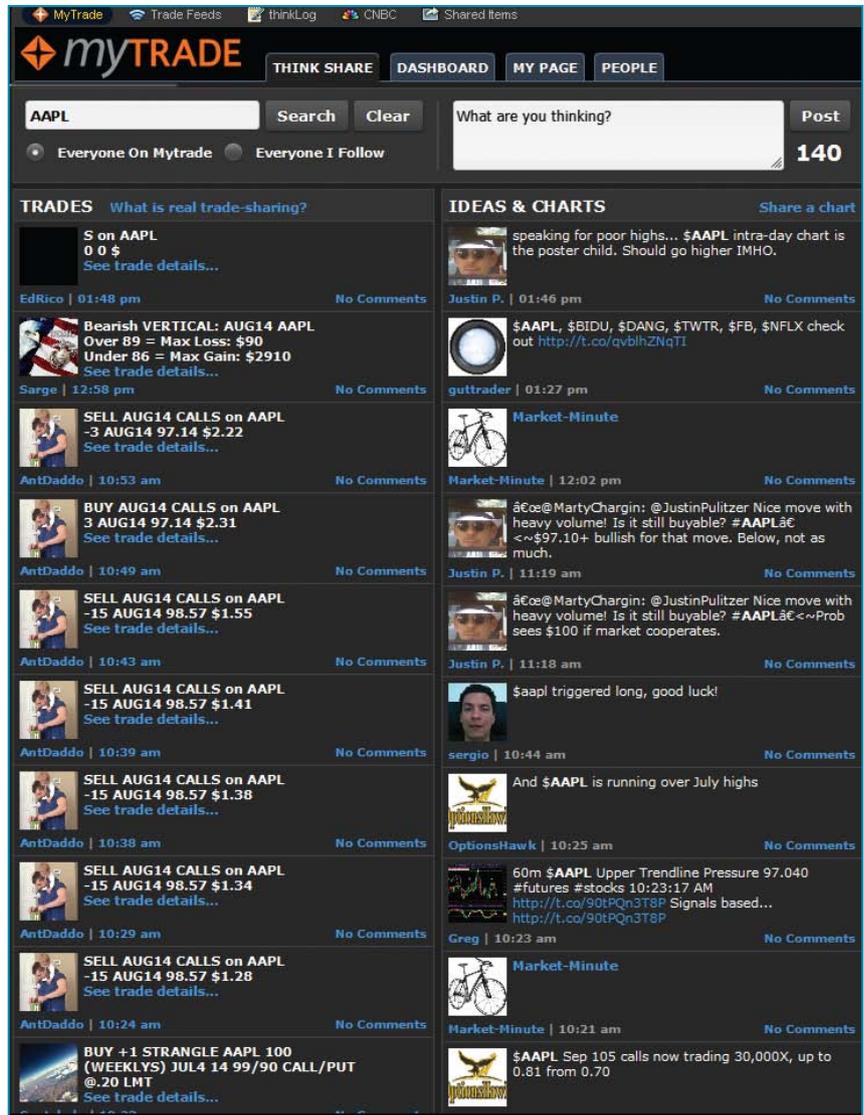


FIGURE 5: MANY WAYS TO SHARE. Here is a small sampling of the MyTrade/Think Share content for Apple Inc. (AAPL) on July 23, 2014.