

ADVISORCONFIDENTIAL

BY KANUPRIYA VASHISHT,
a Toronto-based financial writer

MAILI
WONG
CFA, CFP

OFF THE CUFF

I'M READING:

The Signal and the Noise by Nate Silver

A DREAM THAT HASN'T COME TRUE:

Becoming a doctor

I DRIVE:

a Mercedes GLK

TITLE VP and Portfolio Manager, The Wong Group, CIBC Wood Gundy

CITY
Vancouver

IN THE BUSINESS
13 years

BOOK SIZE
200+ households

PHILOSOPHY We complement traditional stocks and bonds with options, structured notes and market-neutral funds that can protect the downside.

In fixed income, we're focused on corporate, high-yield and convertible bonds. In equities, we like consistent dividends, such as Packaging Corp., Cineplex Inc. or Community Bank Systems, a U.S. regional bank that's raised its dividend annually for 20 years. We also like companies that provide growth and capital gains. For example, small-cap Avigilon, a Canadian-based high-definition surveillance systems maker, has a good track record of putting money back into the business. Bigger companies like MasterCard also fit the bill.

I like when company managers hold similar share classes to their shareholders, as opposed to having special voting rights. That way, everyone's on level playing fields.

SURPRISE THEM When I started my career in my early 20s with Merrill Lynch in New York, many

people underestimated me. I took that as a challenge. I asked more questions, eagerly sought mentors, took up accounts no one else wanted, came in early and left late. When one of my senior colleagues left the firm, I asked my manager if I could handle some of that colleague's accounts. Haven't looked back since.

FEAR FACTOR One week after I joined Merrill Lynch, the Twin Towers fell. That tragedy changed my outlook; I learned to face chaos. In 2008, I told clients what my father tells me: "If the world ends, we have nothing to worry about. If it continues, we must plan for that." That's how we helped clients stay invested when everybody else was fleeing.

We organized a seminar in March 2009—one of the few at that time—with some big-name PMs. We talked about market opportunities and more than 200 people attended. We picked up 20 to 30 clients because people felt we showed leadership, and their investments have since grown. ^{AE} **VASHISHT**

MARK COHENE