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FINANCIAL & ESTATE PLANNING 2006

Insights from Leading Financial
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How to Bullet Proof Your Financial Future

A good way to secure your financial future is to compound a lot of money for a long period of time at high rates of return. While daunting, this can be done. Here are some pointers:

1) **Start early and be realistic.** Unless you are building significant assets that will have a terminal value or provide you with ongoing income, a prudent plan usually entails setting aside 15%-25% of your salary for retirement. The earlier you start, the easier it will be to build your nest egg.

2) **Focus on purchasing power – not principal.** A common mistake people make is to fixate on “principal and income” and in doing so, invest

too conservatively. Inflation and taxes can easily wipe out the majority of certain investment returns. To keep pace, you need to position your portfolio to grow by investing a portion in longer-term assets such as equities. This should enable you to maintain your standard of living.

3) **Stick with solid investments that are attractively priced and resist the temptation to sell during down markets.** Mentally prepare yourself for difficult markets by knowing they will come and that you will survive. Over 20 or more years, these periods should have minimal impact on your average return. To

help weather these downturns, don't invest money that you may need in the short-term in long-term investments.

4) **Modify your strategy as your lifestyle evolves and as opportunities emerge.** In general, your portfolio should be positioned to maximize growth when you are adding to it, and its asset allocation altered once you begin taking income. Likewise, be aware that the best investment opportunities may exist in the US market for a decade, but as valuations change, better risk/return prospects may surface elsewhere. It is critical to tailor your strategy to suit your personal situation, and to adjust your portfolio from time to time to position correctly for attractive long-term opportunities.

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