

GO-TO STRATEGY

Be a curator of opportunity

By seeking protective diversification and scrutinizing investment opportunities, **Alexandra Horwood** and her team have steered clients' assets well

WHETHER BY nature or nurture, Alexandra Horwood has a well-developed aptitude for wealth management. As the daughter of two respected industry veterans, John and Rebecca Horwood, she received excellent guidance, advice and mentorship from a young age. After graduating with honours from the University of Waterloo and studying at Macquarie University in Australia, Horwood joined the family business in 2010 and quickly rose through the ranks.

Not one to simply ride on others' coat-tails, she started her own practice, Alexandra Horwood & Partners, five years later. By the end of 2018, Horwood had managed to push her practice to the \$242 million AUM mark. The 15% growth her business saw that year was a significant achievement, especially considering that she gave birth to her second child the same year.

"I am constantly being challenged by the lifestyle of a busy, entrepreneurial working mother of a three- and four-year-old, which I am feeling is much harder than managing a half-billion-dollar business," Horwood says.

Since then, her practice has continued to flourish, even in the face of adversity. Horwood has consistently been named among *Wealth Professionals*' Top 50 Advisors,

making her fifth straight appearance on the annual list at the beginning of 2021.

"We have continued an upward growth trend and nearly doubled the business in the past two years," she says.

The first quarter of 2020 brought a significant test for investors and advisors. Rocked by the initial impact of a once-in-a-century

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pandemic, North American equity markets saw a peak-to-trough decline of roughly 30% during February and March. At the same time, wealth management firms saw significant disruption as social distancing and public safety measures put an abrupt halt to in-person activities.

"We survived the global pandemic and kept our valued clients invested, while mobilizing our team to work from home quickly

with the proper technical support," Horwood says, adding that her clients' balanced and diversified portfolios put them in prime position to participate in the subsequent recovery of the market.

"Stay calm, stay invested" is how Horwood describes the philosophy she adopts in managing her clients' portfolios. "Try to

avoid watching the news, which is inherently negative, and be a contrarian by investing in market downturns to maximize participation in the recovery."

That patient investing philosophy helped Horwood and her team steer their clients' assets toward growth in 2020, and 2021 has been a fantastic year. That success has contributed to significant growth in the practice, which had north of \$450 million in



AUM at the end of August.

While being conservative is certainly a key pillar of the team's investing approach, that doesn't mean they don't keep promising investments on their radar. Over the past five years, Horwood says her practice has successfully gotten in on many highly sought-after pre-IPO opportunities in areas such as high-impact investments, ESG, climate technology projects and the future of food.

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As hard-hit as the global economy has been over the past year and a half, that hasn't stopped certain pockets of the investment world from surging, including SPACs, non-fungible tokens and cryptocurrency. While those opportunities might have a place in the strategies of more aggressive traders or speculators, Horwood approaches them with caution, as some might prove either too hot to be sustainable or too good to be true.

"Trendy sectors should be carefully

PROFILE

Name: Alexandra Horwood

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Practice: Alexandra Horwood & Partners

Firm: Richardson Wealth

Location: Toronto, ON

Years in the industry: 11

Certifications: CIM

researched and accessed in a conservative manner," she says. "For example, one of my clients recently lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in a cryptocurrency scam that was not shared with me, which would have allowed us an opportunity to discuss."

Certain clients might feel it's within their right to have an 'unadvised' sleeve of money to make exciting bets with as they see fit. But Horwood stresses that bringing up prospective investments with their wealth manager gives clients the chance to be informed by careful research and proper due diligence, as well as to discuss their financial goals and risk tolerance to measure whether the investments are suitable for them.

As a full-service wealth practice, Horwood and her team are able to provide value that goes beyond investment management. The team's tax planning services help clients ensure more of their investment income goes toward building their wealth and estate. They also offer enormous peace of mind to clients by ensuring their estate planning – including wills, powers of attorney, tax filings and charitable giving – is properly updated, with regular progress reviews.

"It's all about being as efficient, organized, proactive and thoughtful as possible," Horwood says.