



Berkshire

DIVIDEND STRATEGY

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"Casual Friday" Commentary

Casual Friday: Case For Banks? + "De-Clutter The Book" – January 22th, 2021

Dividend Increase

INTC: Intel hikes quarterly dividend by 5% to \$0.3475 - [Intel Financial Results](#)

With Rates This Low, How Can Banks Be Attractive?

- Levered "Reopening Trade"
- Fed has anchored short rates near zero, long rates could rise to pre-pandemic levels (1.5-2%) allowing potential NIM expansion
- Low rates could spur loan demand
- Better than expected credit quality
- Excess capital on bank balance sheets has banks pent up for:
 - Dividend Growth
 - Buybacks
- Attractive current yield (2.6-3%)
- Low valuation (11-12 times EPS)
- Other earnings levers:
 - Expense control
 - Wealth Management / Capital Markets / Trading
 - Other non-interest and fee income

Recent developments

- Strong December CCAR results – buybacks allowed
- Many banks releasing loan loss provision
- Strong beat on Q4 2020 earnings as a group

We believe banks are offering a combination on growth, low valuation and high yield to shareholders.
(Source: Bloomberg)

A common practice improvement advisors are working on to start 2021?

Inventory Management

Advisors' books of business are just like a garage... If you don't spend time cleaning it up once in a while, you end up with a bunch of stuff - half of it, you have no use for. And crazy market moves last year exposed practice inefficiencies for advisors not managing inventory:

- "I had way too much inventory on the books to react quickly enough for all clients"
- "Too much **non-discretionary** on the books - slowed me down"
- "Inconsistent performance due to incorrect / irregular asset allocation"
- "I need to create more scalability while maintaining customization and satisfied clients"

“Too Much Inventory”

Almost every advisor ends up at the same inflection point in their career. “How the heck did I end with so many tickers in my book of business!” Some may argue having a thousand tickers in a book of business is “customization”, but it’s likely not adding strategic “value” to your clients and it’s likely not adding value to your practice. In fact, when this occurs an advisor’s time and attention is often relegated to less impactful activities:

- “I have to re-study this fund or stock for my review because I’m not familiar with it”
- “How do I reallocate this position now to get this portfolio in line with my best thinking without hitting my client with huge cap gains taxes”
- “How do I create a broader and more consistent communication strategy with my clients when they’re all invested in slightly different ways”

Strict inventory management is one of the keys focuses of top financial advisors. They create a limited number of investment plans for **all clients**, culminate their best ideas and they stick to it with unwavering consistency. The benefits? They always go to market (prospects and clients) with intimate knowledge of their investment process, their conviction resonates with the client and they build enormous efficiencies in their overall practice. The challenge? It’s like quitting a bad habit...you will “get to it later” as other pressing matters get in the way.

Another challenge? Sometimes, appointing a money manager means capital gains taxes as the manager makes wholesale changes. To ease that pain, Berkshire has a program where our PM will harvest gains over a two year period - Call to discuss. We’ve helped a number of advisors think through the process and build out a plan for inventory management.

“Non-Discretionary / Advisor Traded” to Outside Mangers?

The biggest hurdle in transitioning a practice from advisor stock picking to outside money manager: “How do I justify this fee and investment change to my clients?” Over time we’ve helped many advisors think through this strategic decision: Shoot me an email or call to talk through Berkshire’s playbook.

Just as we see and use “specialists” for various issues/challenges in our lives, financial advisors can articulate the benefits of professional stock pickers to achieve better results and free up time to concentrate on bigger picture planning items. Advisor: “Instead of spending time deciding whether to buy Company A vs Company B or tech stocks vs. utility stocks, I will use that time to perform due diligence on a handful of money managers who do this all day, every day. We will likely achieve better results and I’ll have more time to help solve your major priorities: retirement income, insurance and estate planning.” Remember: **When you solve big problems you typically increase your probability to land big assets.**

Some other common analogies to make your point?

- Would a Primary Care Physician perform open heart surgery, or would the patient be referred to a cardiac specialist?
- Would a general contractor put the roof on a home, or would he delegate to a best-in-class subcontractor?

Technology Assembly Line for Consistency, Scalability and Customization: "UMA Crusader"

The business model of being both a financial planner and a "stock picker" has become very difficult to scale in practice. Clients expect advisors to solve bigger issues in insurance, retirement, estate, executive compensation, income, asset allocation, total balance sheet and niche planning... *This is often the customization and attention clients are seeking.* Clients are finding less value in an advisor’s ability to pick individual stocks and or individual funds to create "customization".

There's nothing wrong with saying - "Your investment strategy is built using a slight variation of the same investment strategies I use with all of my clients. They are my best and highest conviction ideas to help compound wealth over time."

The good news: As client expectations change and become more demanding, technology enhancements in UMA (unified managed account) has unleashed huge advisor productivity. Those deciding to adopt the structure in practice create vast efficiencies allowing time to add client value in ways far beyond portfolio management...

- Practice efficiency
 - Broad implementation of highest conviction ideas / asset allocations
 - Quick and efficient allocation changes across all accounts
 - Automated re-balancing
- Investment selection efficiency
 - Customization of broadly diversified asset allocation
 - Open architecture to hire best in breed for asset class
 - SMAs, Mutual Funds, ETFs and alternatives available in one account
- Reporting efficiency
 - Sleeve level performance to monitor performance of funds
 - Ongoing asset allocation monitoring
 - Overlay management

12.31.2020 Updated Marketing Material:

[Berkshire Dividend Strategy Guide 12.31.2020](#)

[Berkshire Dividend Strategy Scorecard 12.31.2020](#)

[Dividend Strategy Fact Sheet 12.31.2020](#)

[Berkshire 2020 4th Quarter Commentary](#)

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