

TOP 1,200

## Helping Women Achieve Financial Independence Amid Market Volatility

By Karen Hube

Ann Marie Etergino, founder and managing director of RBC Wealth Management's Etergino Group in Chevy Chase, Md., has learned that the more she reveals her own vulnerabilities and fears to her clients, the more willing they are to divulge about themselves—and this give-and-take makes her an effective advisor.

"I used to focus on numbers, but now I realize that the most important asset in my business is authenticity," says Etergino, who manages roughly \$1.6 billion—half for nonprofit organizations and half for families and individuals—with a focus on women.

**Barron's: How did you come to specialize in working with women?**

**Ann Marie Etergino:** I grew up with a lot of financial instability. My father was an alcoholic and lost his job frequently, and my mother didn't work out of the home, so we were always worried about money. I learned that if you don't know about money, you're vulnerable. This made me want to help other women achieve financial independence.

**Is there an example of how your candidness helps you connect with clients?**

About five years ago, I was competing for a \$10 million account. I was the only woman, and the prospect was a woman. After a presentation, I asked her what she was most afraid of, and she said running out of



Ann Marie Etergino, RBC Wealth Management  
Photography by Greg Kahn

money. I said, "I get that. I've always been afraid, too." When you're honest, people know it, and you can form a powerful connection. We got that account.

**How are your clients coping with recent volatility?**

We tell them to stay disciplined, stay patient, and stay invested. We have to help them stay the course and remind them that we've constructed portfolios that are well positioned, no matter what happens. We're overweight stocks versus bonds, and with in stocks, overweight U.S. large-cap with a

barbell between growth and value. We're underweight international and don't own any emerging markets. On the income side, we're split between short- and intermediate-term bonds and have an allocation to floating-rate preferred stock. We have an alternative bucket that includes agriculture commodities, precious metals, and energy, and an infrastructure fund to participate in all of the money being allocated under President Joe Biden's infrastructure bill.

Thanks, Ann Marie.

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