Private Bank **cîti**°

Legacy Insights

Harness The Power of Innovation in your Portfolio



Private Banking for Global Citizens

HARNESS THE POWER OF INNOVATION IN YOUR PORTFOLIO





We are living in an age of heightened innovation. Across the world, a select group of companies – many of which did not even exist a few years ago – are reshaping industries that had often seen little change for generations. Innovative products and services can now achieve tens of millions of users within a few weeks or months, instead of the years or decades it might have taken in the past. Citi Private Bank believes this latest era of innovation is still only in its early stages. If so, the implications for the global economy and for investment portfolios could be far-reaching.

While innovation is discussed almost constantly nowadays, it is not well understood. The term is often simply taken to mean new technologies, especially those in the digital domain. In truth, though, innovation extends far beyond the latest game-changing device or app. It can embrace business model enhancements, process refinements, and better ways of reaching customers via marketing and distribution. Innovation is also at work in industries well beyond high tech, even in more traditional industries such as construction, food processing, and textiles.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized our growing reliance on innovation. Thanks to digital innovators such as videoconferencing services, for example, entrepreneurs and employees in many countries have managed to work from home more effectively than ever before. Children and students are being educated remotely, and friends have resorted to throwing virtual parties during the lockdown. Online retailers have played a vital role in fulfilling basic needs, while cutting-edge entertainment services have kept spirits up amid the confinement and isolation. Ultimately, healthcare innovators will invent the vaccine that permits life to return to normal, and perhaps avert future pandemics.

While the pandemic is only temporary, we believe some parts of its legacy may endure. For example, the success of mass telework during the present lockdowns could alter future patterns of professional life – and economic activity. A change in the mix of on-site work, remote work, and business travel might permanently influence demand for space, accommodation, and transportation. At the same time, the preventative use of disease detection technology could become widespread in order to reduce the chances of future virus epidemics becoming pandemics.

So, why does innovation matter so much? At the macroeconomic level, innovation is a key driver of growth. Indeed, it may be the most important driver of all. Innovation can spark increased productivity, which leads to stronger growth and higher living standards. At the corporate level, innovative businesses tend to be more profitable. According to one recent study, companies whose employees generate a greater number of original ideas accepted by management for active development and implementation tend to enjoy greater profitability.¹

Innovative firms' potential to achieve greater profitability may in turn influence their investment performance. Perhaps most prominent example of this are the so-called FAANG stocks, the US tech giants that have helped power the bull market in US equities over recent years.²

¹ Are innovative companies more profitable? Dylan Minor, Paul Brook, and Josh Bernoff - MIT Sloan Management Review, December 2017

² Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. Real results may vary. The FAANG stocks are five prominent US tech stocks: Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Alphabet (previously Google.) This is neither a recommendation to buy nor sell equities of the companies mentioned. They are shown for illustrative purposes only.

Taking a broader view, we find that many of the top publicly traded companies with the highest research and development intensity - a likely marker of a corporate culture of innovation - have been outperforming numerous global equities.

Given innovation's potential to drive investment returns, we believe that portfolio exposure to related assets is not simply desirable but essential. The majority of this exposure should be built into your core portfolio. A core portfolio is a long-term, globally diversified, multi-asset class holdings that should make up 80% to 95% of your investment wealth. If you have high conviction in particular innovative companies or sub-sectors, you can build further short- or long-term exposure via a complementary opportunistic portfolio, containing 5% to 20% of your investment wealth

Within your core and opportunistic portfolios, we also recommend emphasizing select multi-year investment themes. These themes represent some of the major forces that we think likely to shape the economy and your wealth over the long term. Innovative trends, technologies, and behaviors are central to many of our themes.

In our Unstoppable Trends theme, for example, we make the case for exposure to cybersecurity, the fintech sector, alternative energy, Asian technology and urbanization, as well as novel treatments for illnesses amid rapidly aging population.³



³ https://www.privatebank.citibank.com/outlook/unstoppable-trends.html

Despite our advice, many clients lack sufficient exposure to innovation. In a recent study of almost 2,900 clients portfolios⁴, we found that 87% were underinvested in our Unstoppable Trends theme. As well as forgoing potential returns from innovative companies, such behavior also risks excessive exposure to the victims of innovation. For example, e-commerce has disrupted many traditional retailers as well as related real estate assets. We warn that the same could eventually be true for many fossil fuel energy companies, as the shift towards alternative energy sources progresses.

Of course, we recognize that selecting innovators and their likely victims is far from easy. Such is the diversity and pace of innovation that simply keeping abreast of developments can be daunting. Citi Private Bank's Innovation Office was established to help identify trends that we believe are likely to transform businesses and impact investments in those industries. As well as our own insights, we draw upon expertise from across Citi, including its institutional research analysts, its six Innovation Labs, and Citi Ventures – a Silicon Valley based investor in start-ups. We share this intelligence with you in white papers, at events, and in personalized briefings.

How well is your portfolio positioned for innovation? To seek the answer to this critical question, your first step should be to ask us for your personalized Outlook Watchlist report. This will compare your actual holdings to the allocation that we recommend for you, including exposure to innovators and their potential victims. Your relationship team can then recommend suitable investment ideas for bringing your portfolio into line. If you have very specific queries about allocating to innovation, our Global Investment Lab can then perform a customized analysis. Let us help you harness the power of innovation in your portfolio today.



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