



Q&A with Dr Stefano Cavaglia

Dr. Stefano Cavaglia
Head of Investment Research, Findex

Stefano brings to the firm an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience that he has gained across the globe including Australia, North America and Europe spanning top tier organisations in the private, public and academic sectors. Importantly, Stefano has actually managed significant investment funds (global equity quantitative long/short fund for UBS O'Connor, USA) as well as working in advisory positions to substantial organisations including the OECD and some of the world's largest pension funds.

What are you most looking forward to in the role?

Findex is a firm that has great values and a culture that echoes my character: they want to innovate and they are not ashamed to say they want to be best in class. They promote a congenial, professional, and compliance conscious work environment. The employees are proud to be there, and the business likes to say "we hire people who want to be successful and we help them be successful". I look forward to helping build a firm that will bring state of the art products and solutions to 'Joe Taxi Driver'.

What are your biggest goals for the next 12 months?

We need to integrate the asset allocation framework and the funds of portfolios across all organisations within the group. Additionally, I want to make sure the systems that will support client portfolios are of hedge fund standards - namely second to none in efficiency and robust to any Tsunami.

I think all this is a tall order but our hearts and souls are committed and that makes us fearless. Moreover, that means our footprint will be eternal.

Having worked in international roles, do you find cultural differences a significant factor in your leadership style for different regions?

I embrace diversity and all it brings - the key here is respect. My French elementary school education was essential in teaching me respect for my fellow human beings first and foremost. Respecting what any one person brings to the table - no matter how different - is, for me, the best way to start engaging.

What is one of the best pieces of advice you've ever been given?

"Every minute counts."

My father was the CFO of Unicef. When I was 7 they were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. There were many 'celebrations' for this event... we travelled to Dublin and my father took me to one of their representative offices. There was a large display window and a big clock. He stood me there; together and in silence we watched a minute tick by; at the end he told me that for every minute that goes by a child dies of diarrhoea or malaria and that Unicef was trying to stop this.

I have never forgotten the clock... and in many ways I have tried to live by it and honour it with my particular skills.

What was your very first job?

I was 13 and I was the Gardener of Mrs Benson - the maid of J.D. Rockefeller in NY. I earned \$2 (total) for 8 hours of work, but I was the one who became 'rich'.

Do you have a secret skill/hidden talent?

Gardening and landscaping has taught me how to deal with life's most heart wrenching issues. I started a book when I was 22 which is about all the secrets you learn working the soil and how this can help you understand so many stages of one's life.

It's clearly not the type of stuff that would meet the standards of the Journal of Finance, so I keep it tucked away.

Is there a particular charity or cause that you support?

I learned statistics when I was 15. My teacher was Pavel Litvinov, a Russian dissident who had spent time in Siberia for having protested on Red Square during the Czech invasion of 1968. He introduced me to Amnesty International; their work is outstanding.

