

Trading Up

Trading coach Mirriam MacWilliams made her millions through her stock market investments. Here's what you can learn from her

YOU NEED NOT be a financial whiz to profit from trading in stocks. But neither should you approach it as an easy way to make fast money. People often take unwise risks, especially when they get carried away by the thought of how much they could potentially earn from investing in shares. When the returns are high, so are the stakes.

Even a success story like corporate high flyer Mirriam MacWilliams, 49, who made enough money in the stock market to give up her six-figure salary, has won her success at a price. The former Vice-President of Investor Relations of the largest Coca-Cola bottling company outside the USA lost money in the stock market for two years before she started seeing her trading efforts pay off in the third year.

Although she had a very comfortable income and lifestyle, Mirriam, who is married, started investing in stocks because she saw it as the path to financial freedom. "Financial freedom

means that I can do as I choose, when I choose to do that," she explains. "It means being able to have an early dinner with my husband, or going to the movies in the afternoon. Financial freedom means giving my time to my family, instead of to my job."

It has been nine years since Mirriam started investing. Her initial capital of US\$10,000 (S\$18,000) has grown in two years to US\$2 million, so she is officially a millionaire. She now trades for a living and has found a new career as a trading coach, teaching people how to invest profitably in the stock market. Here, she shares the lessons and strategies she has learned.

1 Learn from an expert

If you are new to investing in stocks and shares, Mirriam believes the best way to learn is from someone who knows how to do it, or take a course in investing. There are many such courses around. Before you sign up, ask what is the investment capital you need to pay upfront for the course. On top of the registration and tuition fees, some courses slip in other fees in phases, for instance, for proprietary software and website subscription.

Her first experience was with such 'extras'. Enticed by the amazing testimonials, she put down thousands of dollars before she could accomplish the most basic step – opening a brokerage account. Beware of courses which impose such