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## Beware of the "Sneak Peak"

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If you're stumbling around in the dark trying to figure out which countries' markets will perform best in 2007, rest easy. I have seen the light.

Guiding me to the answers was an emailed invitation from the editor of Forbes magazine to join other "serious investors" and take a "sneak peak into 2007".

Following the link, I was led to a [web page](#), containing columns by Forbes writers and video interviews with "leading" analysts, on the likely trends for the coming year in markets, industry, the world economy and just about everything else.

The first item to grab my attention was an invitation to "run with the bulls". This led me to a brightly lit and sunnily hosted video interview with an analyst who tipped the Dow to rally 20 per cent this year to 15,000. This call was based on 2007 being the third year of the US presidential cycle.

"Alright! That makes sense," I thought to myself. "Time to take some money out of Australia and load up on US shares."

But no sooner had this cheery segment finished than another more somberly lit and presented video started up. This segment featured a less televisual host, who invited me to watch an interview with an economist who sees a US recession in 2007 as all but inevitable.

This man's grim forecasts of a housing collapse and an impotent Federal Reserve soon had me ditching the plan to switch into US equities. Now I was confused. It was time to look for inspiration elsewhere.

Next was 'Invest Like a Billionaire'—a segment where a "renowned money manager and billionaire" told me about his new book, which says that getting rich boils down to asking yourself "The Three Questions That Count."

"That's what I need," I told myself. "Three Questions. How hard can it be?"

Well, either Mr Billionaire wasn't explaining himself too well or I'm more stupid than I feared, because his questions may as well have been phrased in Klingon, or some other obscure language from an outer galaxy.

The three questions for profitable investment, and I quote directly, are:

- "What do I believe that's actually false?" Ah . . .wait a minute . . .no.
- "What can I fathom that other people find unfathomable?" Ummm . . .
- "What the heck is my brain doing?" (I kid you not).



the Swedish boom of the following two years. By 1984, Italy was one of the worst performers, with a gain of just under 3 per cent.

Likewise, Singapore was one of the top performing markets for a three-year period in the early 1990s. But three years later, it was at the bottom of the table.

The lesson is that timing markets and countries is a mug's game. That's why you stay diversified and disciplined. It's also why you should treat purely as entertainment those media supplements on the year ahead in markets.

Oh, and kept a record of them. They become even more entertaining a year later.