LPL RESEARCH

PORTFOLIO COMPASS

October 28 2015

NAVIGATING THE MARKETS

COMPASS CHANGES

- No changes.

INVESTMENT TAKEAWAYS

- We expect the fourth quarter stock market rally to continue and enable stocks to reach the low end of our 5–9% year-end S&P 500 return forecast for 2015.*
- We favor U.S. equities but suggest investors maintain modest emerging markets allocations despite the China slowdown.
- Recent weakness related to drug price regulation concerns has left healthcare valuations even more attractive.
- Expensive high-quality bond valuations argue for below-average interest rate sensitivity.
- Within fixed income, we emphasize a blend of high-quality intermediate bonds and less interest rate–sensitive sectors such as high-yield bonds and bank loans.
- High-yield bonds represent a pocket of value, as we still find default expectations among energy companies as too pessimistic.
- From a technical perspective, the S&P 500 price, if sustained above its 200-day simple moving average, increases the likelihood for a long-term bullish trend.

The *Portfolio Compass* provides a snapshot of LPL Financial Research's views on equity, equity sectors, fixed income, and alternative asset classes. This biweekly publication illustrates our current views and will change as needed over a 3- to 12-month time horizon.

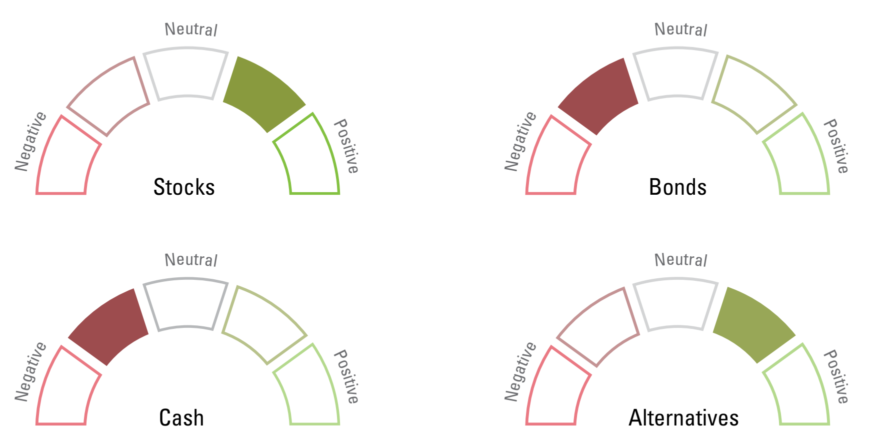
The top down is an important part of our asset allocation process. As a result, we have a new macro section including our views of the global economy and key drivers of those views, and a section on what we are watching that might change those views.

CONTENTS

All performance referenced herein is as of October 27, 2015, unless otherwise noted.

BROAD ASSET CLASS VIEWS

LPL Financial Research's views on stocks, bonds, cash, and alternatives are illustrated below.



* Historically since WWII, the average annual gain on stocks has been 7–9%. Thus, our forecast is in-line with average stock market growth. We forecast a 5–9% gain, including dividends, for U.S. stocks in 2015 as measured by the S&P 500. This gain is derived from earnings per share (EPS) for S&P 500 companies assuming mid-single-digit earnings gains. Earnings gains are supported by our expectation of improved global economic growth and stable profit margins in 2015.

MACROECONOMIC VIEWS

	Economic Factor	Outlook	Investing Impact
ECONOMY	**U.S. GDP Growth**	We expect 3% or slightly higher GDP growth in the second half of 2015.*	No recession or overheating in 2015 may support equity markets.
	Consumer Spending	Low oil prices, stock market and home price gains, labor market should help.	Supports consumer cyclicals.
	Business Spending	Priorities slowly shifting toward investment.	Industrials, technology most likely to benefit.
	Housing	Tight supply, years of underbuilding may help but consumers are still cautious.	A stronger turnaround could support housing/ financials stocks.
	Import/Export	Strong dollar weighing, but "know-how" service sectors and growing oil independence helping trade imbalances.	Supports technology, business services.
	Labor Market	Steadily improving. Early signs of wage pressure in a few fields.	Profit margins may begin to narrow; Fed rate hikes forthcoming.
	Inflation	Steady global growth pointing to normalization once commodities stabilize.	Interest rates likely to rise but process will be gradual.
	Business Cycle	Still mid-cycle but have likely moved into latter half.	Equity markets may have room to run, but expect more volatility.
	Dollar	Dollar remains strong, helped by foreign central bank stimulus.	Drag on foreign market returns, hurts U.S. profits.
	Global GDP Growth	Modest improvement in 2015 led by developed markets.	Supports multinational technology and industrials.
POLICY	**Fiscal**	Federal deficit has declined for three consecutive years.	Helps dollar, but high debt-to-GDP is a longer-term headwind.
	Monetary	Expect Fed tightening in late 2015 or early 2016.	Modest negative for bonds; manageable risk for stocks.
	Government	Republican leadership reshuffle increases uncertainty around funding measures, debt ceiling.	11th hour resolutions likely, but messy process could drive volatility.
RISKS	**Financial**	Outside of energy complex, most measures of financial stress are stable.	We still expect potential stock market gains in 2015.
	Geopolitical & Other	Monitoring Chinese economy, Islamic State.	May contribute to higher stock volatility.
OVERSEAS	**Developed Overseas Economies**	Japan and Europe looking a little stronger.	Favor U.S. equities; monitor developed foreign.
	Emerging Markets Economies	China's central bank adding stimulus but growth concerns creating volatility.	Faster growth outside China may help lift low valuations.
FINANCIAL CONDITIONS	**Corporate Profits**	Expect earnings growth to accelerate through year-end and into 2016.	Supportive of mid-cycle stock market gains.
	Main Street	Fed Beige Book depicts optimistic economic outlook despite concerns about energy, dollar.	Supportive of consumer cyclicals.

Source: LPL Research, U.S. Department of Energy, Haver Analytics 10/27/15

*This forecast matches the average growth rate over the past 50 years, and is based on contributions from consumer spending, business capital spending, and housing, which are poised to advance at historically average or better growth rates in 2015. Net exports and the government sector should trail behind

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

As we highlighted in our *Outlook 2015: In Transit*, the Federal Reserve (Fed) is watching a number of labor market indicators to help determine an appropriate timetable for interest rate hikes. We expect the Fed to begin its rate hike campaign in late 2015, but the pace of hikes will likely be gradual and reflect the progress in the various labor indicators listed here. Fed Chair Yellen's labor market indicators are making progress, but have not yet reached full health, providing support for continued monetary policy support from the Fed.

"*What We're Watching*" features indicators that are keys to the current LPL Research macroeconomic outlook. Economic and market dynamics will dictate featured topics and their durability.

	Description	Prerecession High	Recession Low	Current Reading	Percentage from Prerecession Levels	
Unemployment & Underemployment	Unemployment rate: % of labor force	4.4%	10.0%	5.1%	88.0%	
	Labor force participation rate: year-over-year change, % of unemployed	0.4%	-1.1%	-0.3%	53.0%	
	Part time for economic reasons: % of labor force	2.7%	6.7%	4.1%	66.0%	
	Long-term unemployed: 27 weeks or more, % of unemployed	15.9%	45.3%	26.6%	64.0%	
	Duration of unemployment: weeks	7.3	25.0	11.4	77.0%	
Employment & Work	Private payroll employment: millions	116.0	107.2	120.3	149.0%	●
	Government payroll employment: millions	22.6	21.8	22.0	29.0%	
	Temporary help employment: millions	2.7	1.7	2.9	121.0%	●
	Average weekly hours (production): hours	33.9	33.0	33.6	67.0%	
	Average weekly hours of persons at work: hours	39.7	36.2	36.8	17.0%	
	Wage rates: average hourly earnings, year-over-year % change	4.2%	1.3%	1.9%	22.0%	
Job Market Environment	Composite help-wanted: index	4250	2750	5280	169.0%	●
	Hiring rate: % of payroll employment	4.5%	3.2%	3.6%	31.0%	
	Transition rate from unemployment to employment: % of unemployment	29.6%	15.9%	24.6%	63.0%	
	Jobs plentiful vs. hard to get: diffusion index	11.4	-46.1	-3.6	74.0%	
	Hiring plans: diffusion index	19.0%	-10%	12.0%	76.0%	
	Jobs hard to fill: %	31.0%	8.0%	27.0%	83.0%	
Layoffs & Quits	Insured unemployment rate: % of covered employment	1.9%	5.0%	1.6%	110.0%	●
	Job losers unemployed less than 5 weeks: % of employment	45.4%	14.7%	32.1%	57.0%	
	Quit rate: % of payroll employment	60.0%	39.0%	57.0%	84.0%	
	Job leavers unemployed less than 5 weeks: % of employment	48.8%	17.5%	35.6%	58.0%	

● Have reached or exceeded their prerecession levels

Source: LPL Research, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Haver Analytics 10/27/15
The time frame for all data is the last 10 years: 2004–2014.

ASSET CLASS & SECTOR TOP PICKS

Below we provide our top overall ideas across the various asset classes and sectors covered in this publication, as well as our best ideas within the three disciplines of our investment process: fundamentals, technicals, and valuations. More details on these and other investment ideas can be found in subsequent pages.

Characteristics	EQUITY ASSET CLASSES	EQUITY SECTORS	FIXED INCOME
BEST OVERALL IDEAS	Large Growth	Healthcare Industrials Technology	High-Yield Bonds
Fundamentals	Large Growth	Healthcare Technology	Mortgage-Backed Securities Munis
Technicals	Large Growth	Consumer Discretionary Consumer Staples Technology	High-Yield Munis Preferred Stock
Valuations	Emerging Markets	Healthcare Industrials Technology	High-Yield Bonds Bank Loans

Characteristics	ALTERNATIVE ASSET CLASSES
BEST OVERALL IDEAS	Global Macro
Catalysts	Event Driven Global Macro
Trading Environment	Managed Futures
Volatility	Global Macro

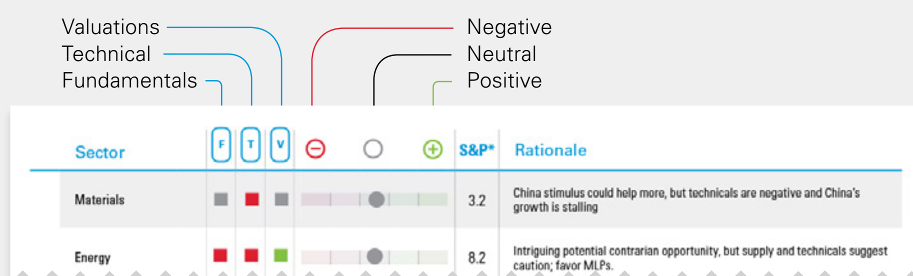
READING THE PORTFOLIO COMPASS

RATING	ICON	
Negative		
Negative/Neutral		
Neutral		
Positive/Neutral		
Positive		
Previous Position		

Fundamental, technical, and valuation characteristics for each category are shown by their blue icons below, and displayed as colored squares.

Negative, neutral, or positive views are illustrated as a colored circle positioned over the scale, while an outlined black circle with an arrow indicates change and shows the previous view.

Rationales for our views are provided on the right side.



Growth-oriented funds may underperform when value investing is in favor and growth stocks may be more volatile than other stocks because they are more sensitive to investor perceptions of the issuing company's growth of earnings potential.

Global macro strategy is a hedge fund strategy that selects it holdings primarily on the macroeconomic and political views of various countries, and is subject to numerous risks such as: geopolitical, derivative, commodity, volatility, currency, and regulatory.

EQUITY ASSET CLASSES

We continue to expect a late-year rally to get to the low end of our 5–9% year-end S&P 500 total return forecast, driven by improving economic and earnings growth. We favor U.S. equities but also recommend investors with modest exposure to emerging markets maintain those allocations, where appropriate. We have warmed up to developed foreign markets in recent months as data in Europe have improved, although Japan's economic performance has been mixed.

	Sector	F	T	V	Rationale
Style/Capitalization	Large Growth				Market performance indicates a transition to large cap leadership is occurring, which is consistent with our views for a maturing market cycle. Our cyclical sector preferences — including our positive technology and consumer discretionary views and cautious stance on interest rate–sensitive sectors — drive our preference for growth over value.
	Large Value				
	Mid Growth				Positive mid growth view reflects our preference for cyclical sectors, above-market earnings growth, and potential up-capture, as we expect stocks to finish 2015 strongly. Acquisition activity may continue to provide support with stocks back near the highs of the year. Mid cap valuations are slightly below their 10-year average relative to the S&P 500.
	Mid Value				
	Small Growth				Better U.S. economic growth and our positive stock market view are supportive of small caps, but the age of the business cycle (past the midpoint in our view) suggests taking opportunities to reduce small cap exposure when appropriate. Small cap (Russell 2000) relative valuations have fallen slightly below their 10-year average.
	Small Value				
Region	U.S. Stocks				We still prefer to focus equity portfolios in the U.S., but valuations suggest making room for EM, and economic momentum has picked up some in Europe.
	Large Foreign				Better recent economic data — partly due to quantitative easing (QE) — have caused us to warm up to Europe. A weak yen is boosting exports and the outlook for earnings for Japanese companies; but recent economic data out of Japan has been mixed, and we still have concerns about whether the country's stimulus programs will drive a sustained improvement in growth.
	Small Foreign				
	Emerging Markets				Technical deterioration suggests caution if considering adding EM exposure tactically, but attractive valuations and bold Chinese stimulus efforts (with more likely to come) may help offset Chinese growth risk, in our view, for the intermediate- to longer-term time horizon. Within EM, we continue to favor Asia for growth, financial strength, and stimulus/policy reform prospects.
REITs	REITs				Improved technicals drive recently upgraded view amid favorable U.S. economic backdrop; rising interest rates and valuations still give us some pause but yields remain attractive. Positive bias.
MLPs	MLPs				Although valuations are cheap and yields are attractive, U.S. crude oil production declines and technical weakness may lead to continued near-term volatility.

Investing in real estate/REITs involves special risks such as potential illiquidity and may not be suitable for all investors. There is no assurance that the investment objectives of this program will be attained.

Investing in MLPs involves additional risks as compared with the risks of investing in common stock, including risks related to cash flow, dilution, and voting rights. MLPs may trade less frequently than larger companies due to their smaller capitalizations, which may result in erratic price movement or difficulty in buying or selling. MLPs are subject to significant regulation and may be adversely affected by changes in the regulatory environment, including the risk that an MLP could lose its tax status as a partnership. Additional management fees and other expenses are associated with investing in MLP funds.

EQUITY SECTORS

We continue to favor cyclical growth sectors despite China growth fears and latest bout of market volatility. We believe the healthcare and biotech opportunities have become more attractive following the recent sell-off on regulatory concerns. Consumer discretionary continues to benefit from low gas prices and healthy consumer balance sheets. Lower for longer message from the Fed may delay benefit of higher interest rates for financials. Slow supply response to lower oil prices and mixed technical picture keep us neutral on energy.

	Sector	S&P*	Rationale
Cyclical	Materials	2.9	China's economic slowdown and transition to more consumer-oriented economy suggest continued caution.
Cyclical	Energy	7.0	Process of balancing supply and demand has taken longer than anticipated and is delaying oil's return to fair value, which we see as the $50–60 range.
Cyclical	Industrials	10.3	Earnings have been hurt by lower oil and a strong dollar; but we still see potential uptick in business spending, valuations are attractive, and technicals have improved.
Cyclical	Consumer Discretionary	13.1	Consumer still in good shape and lower gas prices help, but mixed performance record late in business cycles puts us on watch for potential lower view.
Cyclical	Technology	21.0	Solid earnings growth, attractive valuations, and our still optimistic business spending outlook are all supportive.
Cyclical	Financials	16.2	Lower for longer message from the Fed may delay benefit of higher interest rates, while tough regulatory environment remains and technicals have weakened.
Defensive	Utilities	3.0	Our negative view reflects interest rate risk, rich valuations, and our preference for cyclical sectors.
Defensive	Healthcare	14.3	Strong earnings, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), favorable drug development trends, and more attractive valuations have increased the attractiveness of healthcare and biotech amid drug price controversy.
Defensive	Consumer Staples	9.9	Still favor cyclical sectors but consumers are in good shape; developed international growth has improved, commodity input costs are low, and consumers' energy cost savings help.
Defensive	Telecommunications	2.3	Interest rate and business risks remain (saturation, capital outlays), while technicals are weaker, suggesting continued de-emphasis despite attractive valuations.

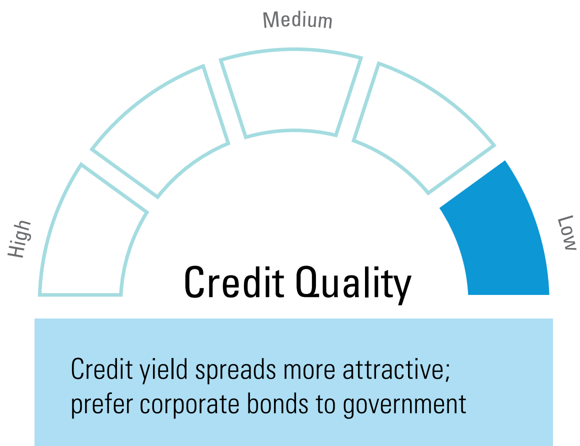
* S&P 500 Weight (%)

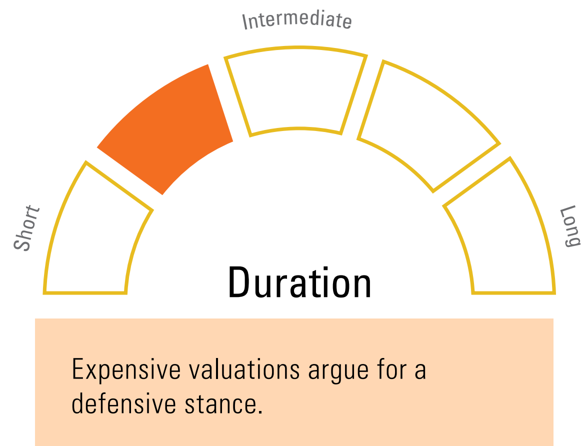
Because of its narrow focus, specialty sector investing, such as healthcare, financials, or energy, will be subject to greater volatility than investing more broadly across many sectors and companies.

There is no guarantee that a diversified portfolio will enhance overall returns or outperform a nondiversified portfolio. Diversification does not ensure against market risk.

FIXED INCOME

Market-friendly central bank activity in China and Europe created a favorable backdrop for bonds to start the fourth quarter of 2015. Corporate bonds, both investment-grade and high-yield, have rebounded from a difficult third quarter; but high-quality bond yields remain low and valuations are expensive, which keep upside potential limited. We remain vigilant against fundamental deterioration, but expensive high-quality valuations argue for a defensive stance on fixed income by maintaining a lower than average portfolio interest rate sensitivity. Municipal bond credit quality remains generally strong; problem issuers remain isolated and have not impacted the broader market.





Yield spread is the difference between yields on differing debt instruments, calculated by deducting the yield of one instrument from another. The higher the yield spread, the greater the difference between the yields offered by each instrument. The spread can be measured between debt instruments of differing maturities, credit ratings, and risk.

	Sector	F	T	V	⊖ ○ ⊕	Rationale
Tax-Free Bonds	Munis–Short-Term					Higher relative valuations and lower yields limit appeal.
	Munis–Intermediate-Term					Munis are likely to take cues from Treasuries. Valuations fair.
	Munis–Long-Term					Average yields are higher than comparable Treasuries.
	Munis–High-Yield					Potential interest rate sensitivity partially offsets above-average yield. Valuations are only fair.

Continued on next page.

For the purposes of this publication, intermediate-term bonds have maturities between 3 and 10 years, and short-term bonds are those with maturities of less than 3 years.

All bonds are subject to market and interest rate risk if sold prior to maturity. Bond values will decline as interest rates rise and are subject to availably and change in price.

High-yield/junk bonds are not investment-grade securities, involve substantial risks, and generally should be part of the diversified portfolio of sophisticated investors.

Municipal interest income may be subject to the alternative minimum tax. Federally tax-free but other state and local taxes may apply.

Corporate bonds are considered higher risk than government bonds but normally offer a higher yield and are subject to market, interest rate, and credit risk, as well as additional risks based on the quality of issuer coupon rate, price, yield, maturity, and redemption features.

FIXED INCOME (CONTINUED)

A low-return environment is likely to persist as opportunity remains limited. High-yield bonds represent a pocket of value, as we still find default expectations among energy companies as too pessimistic. For fixed income allocations, we emphasize a blend of high-quality intermediate bonds coupled with less interest rate–sensitive sectors such as high-yield bonds and bank loans for suitable investors.

	Sector	F	T	V	⊖ ○ ⊕	Rationale
Taxable Bonds – U.S.	Treasuries					Prices are near recent highs and valutions are still very expensive.
	TIPS					Implied inflation expectations remain low and the sector remains attractive, in the longer term, relative to conventional Treasuries.
	Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS)					Average yield spread is still hovering near one-year average of 0.7% above comparable Treasuries
	Investment-Grade Corporates					Sector improved to start the fourth quarter, but valuations are still cheaper compared to early 2015.
	Preferred Stocks					Additional price strength and low yields warrant caution, but fundamentals are firm.
	High-Yield Corporates					Average yield spread increased to nearly 7% before falling to 6.1% near mid-October, still a compelling yield advantage to Treasuries.
	Bank Loans					Lack of interest rate sensitivity and positive fundamentals are a plus. Much less energy exposure compared with high-yield.
Taxable Bonds – Foreign	Foreign Bonds – Hedged					Still high valuations and low yields warrant caution.
	Foreign Bonds – Unhedged					Lingering U.S. dollar strength, low yields, and unattractive valuations are negatives and require caution.
	Emerging Markets Debt					Valuations, as measured by yield spreads, are back below 4.0%, representing only fair valuation given lingering challenges from China and lower commodity prices.

Investing in foreign and emerging markets debt securities involves special additional risks. These risks include, but are not limited to, currency risk, geopolitical and regulatory risk, and risk associated with varying settlement standards.

Mortgage-backed securities are subject to credit, default, prepayment risk that acts much like call risk when you get your principal back sooner than the stated maturity, extension risk, the opposite of prepayment risk, market and interest rate risk.

Bank loans are loans issued by below investment-grade companies for short-term funding purposes with higher yield than short-term debt and involve risk.

Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS) help eliminate inflation risk to your portfolio, as the principal is adjusted semiannually for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)—while providing a real rate of return guaranteed by the U.S. government. Investing in foreign and emerging markets debt securities involves special additional risks. These risks include, but are not limited to, currency risk, geopolitical, and regulatory risk, and risk associated with varying settlement standards.

COMMODITIES & ALTERNATIVE ASSET CLASSES

Technical weakness and U.S. dollar strength keep us cautious on commodities broadly. Oil may remain range bound for the foreseeable future. Divergent central bank policy may lead to higher market volatility and more asset dispersion, creating a more fertile environment for macro strategies. Although the stock selection environment in both the long and short space has noticeably improved, we continue to favor more long-biased strategies, which is consistent with our positive equity market outlook.

	Sector	F	T	V	− ○ +	Rationale
Commodities	Industrial Metals					Lowered view reflects continued weak Chinese demand and resulting technical deterioration, despite bold policy reforms and monetary stimulus efforts.
	Precious Metals					A strong U.S. dollar, potential for rising interest rates, and our preference for riskier assets suggest caution, although technicals have improved and the recent pushout of Fed rate hike expectations help support the short-term outlook.
	Energy					Some progress has been made to balance oil markets; oil prices may remain range bound for a while, but we continue to believe fair value is closer to $60 than $50 or $40.
	Agricultural					Although recent data and forecasts have been mixed, agricultural commodities have found footing in the short term. China slowdown fears continue to weigh on the complex.

	Sector	TE	CT	VO	− ○ +	Rationale
Alternatives	Long/Short Equity					Improvement in both the long and short stock selection environment has made long/short equity more attractive. Continue to favor more directional strategies as opposed to lower net and market neutral–oriented funds.
	Event Driven					Recent volatility within the healthcare sector has led to losses in certain overcrowded equity positions, while energy exposure continues to be more correlated with commodity prices, rather than idiosyncratic events.
	Managed Futures					Expectation of rising volatility across currency and commodity markets may be beneficial, along with more persistent trends across asset classes. Long-term trend followers continue to benefit from short oil contracts.
	Global Macro					The potential for rising volaility and the ability to position portfolios ahead of market inflection points will be constructive events. Many managers have recently covered equity short positions; however, have increased short euro exposure on dovish European Central Bank tone.

LEGEND

CHARACTERISTICS	ICON	DEFINITION
Catalysts	CT	Potential for favorable macroeconomic and/or idiosyncratic market developments that may benefit the investment strategy.
Trading Environment	TE	Market characteristics present sufficient investment opportunities for this investment style.
Volatility	VO	The current volatility regime provides a constructive environment that an investment of this style can capitalize on.

Alternative strategies may not be suitable for all investors and should be considered as an investment for the risk capital portion of the investor's portfolio. The strategies employed in the management of alternative investments may accelerate the velocity of potential losses.

Commodity-linked investments may be more volatile and less liquid than the underlying instruments or measures, and their value may be affected by the performance of the overall commodities baskets as well as weather, geopolitical events, and regulatory developments.

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

All performance referenced is historical and is no guarantee of future results.

There is no assurance that the techniques and strategies discussed are suitable for all investors or will yield positive outcomes. The purchase of certain securities may be required to affect some of the strategies.

Stock and Pooled Investment Risks

Investing in stock includes numerous specific risks including: the fluctuation of dividend, loss of principal and potential illiquidity of the investment in a falling market.

Investing in foreign and emerging markets securities involves special additional risks. These risks include, but are not limited to, currency risk, geopolitical risk, and risk associated with varying accounting standards. Investing in emerging markets may accentuate these risks.

Bond and Debt Equity Risks

Bonds are subject to market and interest rate risk if sold prior to maturity. Bond and bond mutual fund values and yields will decline as interest rates rise and bonds are subject to availability and change in price.

Government bonds and Treasury bills are guaranteed by the U.S. government as to the timely payment of principal and interest and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and fixed principal value. However, the value of fund shares is not guaranteed and will fluctuate.

Alternative Risks

Currency risk is a form of risk that arises from the change in price of one currency against another. Whenever investors or companies have assets or business operations across national borders, they face currency risk if their positions are not hedged.

Long/short equity strategies are subject to normal alternative investment risks, including potentially higher fees; while there is additional management risk, as the manager is attempting to accurately anticipate the likely movement of both their long and short holdings. There is also the risk of "beta-mismatch," in which long positions could lose more than short positions during falling markets.

Event driven strategies, such as merger arbitrage, consist of buying shares of the target company in a proposed merger and fully or partially hedging the exposure to the acquirer by shorting the stock of the acquiring company or other means. This strategy involves significant risk as events may not occur as planned and disruptions to a planned merger may result in significant loss to a hedged position.

Managed futures strategies use systematic quantitative programs to find and invest in positive and negative trends in the futures markets for financials and commodities. Futures and forward trading is speculative, includes a high degree of risk that the anticipated market outcome may not occur, and may not be suitable for all investors.

DEFINITIONS

The simple moving average is an arithmetic moving average that is calculated by adding the closing price of the security for a number of time periods and then dividing this total by the number of time periods. Short-term averages respond quickly to changes in the price of the underlying, while long-term averages are slow to react.

Up-capture is a statistical measure of an investment manager's overall performance in up-markets. The up-market capture ratio is used to evaluate how well an investment manager performed relative to an index during periods when that index has risen.

The PE ratio (price-to-earnings ratio) is a measure of the price paid for a share relative to the annual net income or profit earned by the firm per share. It is a financial ratio used for valuation: a higher PE ratio means that investors are paying more for each unit of net income, so the stock is more expensive compared to one with lower PE ratio.

Beta measures a portfolio's volatility relative to its benchmark. A beta greater than one suggests the portfolio has historically been more volatile than its benchmark. A beta of less than one suggests the portfolio has historically been less volatile than its benchmark.

The Beige Book is a commonly used name for the Federal Reserve's (Fed) report called the Summary of Commentary on Current Economic Conditions by Federal Reserve District. It is published just before the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on interest rates and is used to inform the members on changes in the economy since the last meeting.

Quantitative easing (QE) refers to the Federal Reserve's (Fed) current and/or past programs whereby the Fed purchases a set amount of Treasury and/or mortgage-backed securities each month from banks. This inserts more money in the economy (known as easing), which is intended to encourage economic growth.

INDEX DEFINITIONS

All indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly.

The **Russell 2000 Index** measures the performance of the small cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. The Russell 2000 Index is a subset of the Russell 3000 Index representing approximately 10% of the total market capitalization of that index.

The **S&P 500 Index** is a capitalization-weighted index of 500 stocks designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.

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