

# Westwood Broadmark Tactical Growth Strategy Market Update

June 2024

# **Strategy Overview**

Westwood Broadmark Tactical Growth Strategy is designed to help investors sidestep market downturns, while participating in its growth via the continuous and active management of portfolio market exposure. The strategy seeks to manage risk and enhance alpha with the flexibility to be long, short or neutral on the market.

- The strategy is designed as a core investment for those who worry about losing money in equity market downturns but also want to participate in the market's upside. Using active market exposure management, the strategy moves in and out of the market incrementally based upon macro and technical factors.
- The strategy invests primarily in a diversified portfolio of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and instruments providing exposure to indices, sectors and industries based on its four-pillar process.
- Proprietary Volume/Breadth-Based Momentum models are used to determine optimal stock market exposure, including entry points, the amount of exposure, the type of exposure and exit points.

## **Market Review**

After advancing more than 5% through mid-May, the S&P 500 Index slid nearly 2% into May 30.¹ On the final day of the month, however, the S&P 500 jumped almost 1% on news that the Federal Reserve's (Fed's) favorite inflation indicator, the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index, came in at 2.7% year over year, which was about as expected.¹ This in turn triggered a decline in the 10-year U.S. Treasury Note yield to 4.55%.² Against this more volatile backdrop, investors have become increasingly concerned that the Fed would hold rates higher for longer. In addition, there is growing concern that consumer spending and economic activity might decline as a result. Evidence for this is that real disposable income is cooling, saving rates are at a 16-month low and more Americans are turning to credit cards to support spending.¹ Nonetheless, credit spreads remain narrow, indicating that credit conditions are not yet worrisome.

The technology sector continued to lead the way during the month, and the NASDAQ-100 Index gained 6.39%. Small cap stocks were also strong with the Russell 2000 Index up 5.01%. The S&P 500 gained 4.96%, and the more defensive Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 2.58%.

Valuation was little changed for the month. The S&P 500 median price-earnings (P/E) ratio continued in overvalued territory at 25.6x and is still near its highest level in a year.<sup>3</sup> Investor sentiment rose into negative territory in May with both our daily and intermediate models reflecting optimistic investor sentiment. The team's volume and breadth momentum models continued to be positive.

The team raised exposure during the month due to the strong momentum but rebalanced the portfolio by adding positions in the more defensive health care and utility sectors. The team would raise exposure further if our volume and



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bloomberg, as of May 31, 2024

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, as of May 31, 2024

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ned Davis Research, May 31, 2024

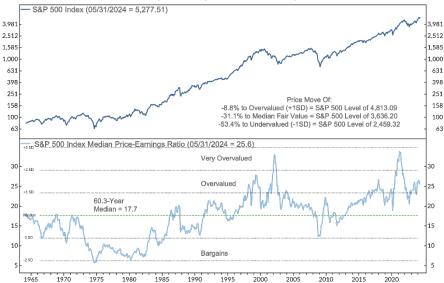
breadth momentum models continued to improve. The team would decrease exposure if interest rates rose, credit spreads widened and if volume and breadth momentum models weakened.

Our assessment of the four pillars of our investment process is as follows:

- 1. **Valuation:** The S&P 500 median P/E ratio (using trailing 12-month earnings) was 25.6x at the end of May. Valuations are still above the 60.3-year average of 17.7x (*Figure 1*). From a longer-term perspective, it appears that equity valuations are relatively high by historical standards.
- 2. **Monetary factors and credit conditions:** The 10-year U.S. Treasury Note ended the month with a 4.55% yield, down from the 4.63% at the end of April. Tight credit spreads tell us that credit and financial conditions remain healthy (*Figure 2*). On the other hand, the narrow credit spreads indicate strong economic activity, which is a headwind in the fight against inflation and make it more difficult for the Fed to cut interest rates. The Fed's "higher for longer" policy on interest rates, coupled with an inverted yield curve, could have a negative effect on consumer spending and economic activity.
- 3. **Sentiment:** Both our daily and intermediate sentiment measures rose into negative territory in May. From a contrary point of view, investor sentiment is indicating overly optimistic expectations (*Figure 3*).
- 4. **Momentum:** The team's measures of momentum continued to be positive in May. While the market's breadth remained positive, our breadth model did not rise in line with the new highs in the major market averages. The team will be keeping an eye on this divergence. If this divergence continues, it could indicate some future market weakness to correct this imbalance (*Figure 4*).

Figure 1.

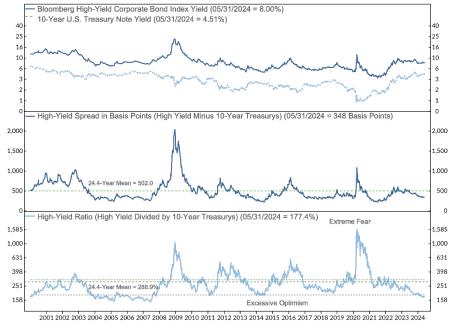
#### S&P 500 Median Price-Earnings Ratio (NDR Calculation)



Sources: Ned Davis Research (NDR), S&P Dow Jones Indices, S&P Capital IQ Compustat. Monthly data 03/31/1964 to 05/31/2024. SD = Standard Deviation. *Past performance does not guarantee future results. For illustrative purposes only.* 

Figure 2.

#### **High-Yield Corporate Spreads**

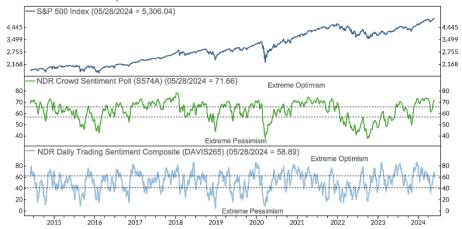


Sources: Ned Davis Research (NDR), Bloomberg Indices, Federal Reserve Board. Daily data 01/03/2000 to 05/31/2024. Past performance does not guarantee future results. For illustrative purposes only.



Figure 3.



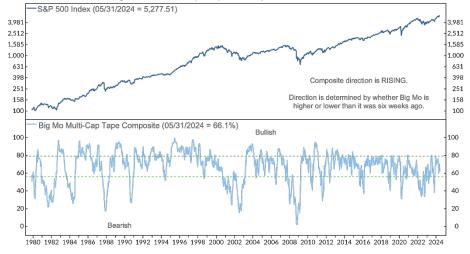


Sentiment Indicators	% Gain/ Annum	% c Tim
Both Optimism	-1.83	16.72
1 Optimism, 1 Neutral	0.78	21.09
Both Neutral	8.78	18.84
1 Neutral, 1 Pessimism	15.98	20.13
Both Pessimism	22.42	20.36
S574A Optimism, DAVIS 265 Pessimism	5.86*	0.39
S574A Pessimism, DAVIS 265 Optimism	-27.75*	2.45
Buy/Hold = 7.90% Gain/Annum		
* Cases less than one year are not annu		
,	ance	% o
*Cases less than one year are not anni S&P 500 Index Perform 06/03/2014 - 05/28/20 Sentiment Indicators	ance 024 % Gain/ Annum	
*Cases less than one year are not anni S&P 500 Index Perform 06/03/2014 - 05/28/20 Sentiment Indicators Both Optimism	% Gain/ Annum	23.2
*Cases less than one year are not anni S&P 500 Index Perform 08/03/2014 – 05/28/2  Sentiment Indicators  Both Optimism 1 Optimism, 1 Neutral	% Gain/ Annum 8.32 3.28	23.2
S&P 500 Index Perform 06/03/2014 — 05/28/2/ Sentiment Indicators  Both Optimism 1 Optimism, 1 Neutral  Both Neutral	% Gain/ Annum 8.32 3.28 13.14	23.25 23.11 17.88
*Cases less than one year are not anni S&P 500 Index Perform 08/03/2014 – 05/28/2/  Sentiment Indicators  Both Optimism 1 Optimism, 1 Neutral Both Neutral 1 Neutral, 1 Pessimism	% Gain/ Annum 8.32 3.28 13.14 17.08	23.25 23.1 17.85 18.65
*Cases less than one year are not anni S&P 500 Index Perform 06/03/2014 – 05/28/2!  Sentiment Indicators  Both Optimism 1 Optimism, 1 Neutral Both Neutral 1 Neutral, 1 Pessimism Both Pessimism Both Pessimism	% Gain/ Annum 8.32 3.28 13.14	% o Time 23.25 23.11 17.88 18.62 14.70
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Sources: Ned Davis Research (NDR), S&P Dow Jones Indices. Daily data 06/03/2014 to 05/28/2024. Past performance does not guarantee future results. For illustrative purposes only.

Figure 4.

S&P 500 Index vs. Big Mo Multi-Cap Tape Composite — Directional Mode Basis



S&P 500	Tape Is Rising Index Performance 979 – 05/31/2024			
Big Mo Tape Is:	% Gain/ Annum	% of Time		
Above 79.0	33.02	15.46		
56.0-79.0	12.28	22.24		
Below 56.0	4.90	8.30		
Buy/Hold = 9.15% Gain/Annum  Big Mo Tape Is Falling  S&P 500 Index Performance 12/28/1979 – 05/31/2024				
Big Mo Tape Is:	% Gain/ Annum	% of Time		
Above 79.0	19.77	8.84		
56.0-79.0	7.40	28.10		
Below 56.0	-19.08	14.53		
Returns Re S&P 500	= 9.15% Gain/Annum gardless of Direction Index Performance 979 – 05/31/2024			
Big Mo Tape Is:	% Gain/ Annum	% of Time		
Above 79.0	28.52	25.16		
56.0-79.0	9.68	51.60		
Below 56.0	-9.52	23.25		
Buy/Hold	= 9.15% Gain/Annum	1		

Sources: Ned Davis Research (NDR), S&P Dow Jones Indices, NDR Multi-Cap Institutional (Universe), S&P Capital IQ, MSCI, Inc (GICS). Weekly data 11/16/1979 to 05/31/2024. Past performance does not guarantee future results. For illustrative purposes only.

### **About Westwood**

Westwood Holdings Group, Inc. is a focused investment management boutique and wealth management firm.

Westwood offers high-conviction equity and outcome-oriented solutions to institutional investors, private wealth clients and financial intermediaries. The firm specializes in two distinct investment capabilities: U.S. Value Equity and Multi-Asset, available through separate accounts, the Westwood Funds® family of mutual funds and other pooled vehicles. Westwood benefits from significant, broad-based employee ownership and trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "WHG." Based in Dallas, Westwood also maintains an office in Houston. For more information, please visit westwoodgroup.com.

#### **Important Information**

The **Tactical Growth composite** seeks to produce above-average, risk-adjusted returns, in any market environment, while exhibiting less downside volatility than the market itself. The strategy is designed to evaluate potential long and short investments in an attempt to isolate those securities believed to be undervalued or overvalued relative to their intrinsic value and offer the greatest risk-adjusted potential for returns. The portfolio primarily invests in ETFs of securities and security indices that can represent long, short, levered long or levered short positions in general asset classes of both U.S. and overseas equity markets. For comparison purposes, the composite's benchmarks are the HFRX Equity Hedge Index and the S&P 500 Index. The HFRX Equity Hedge Index comprises private funds with strategies that maintain both long and short positions primarily in equity securities and equity derivatives. The S&P 500 Index consists of 500 stocks chosen for market size, liquidity and industry group representation. It is a market value-weighted index and one of the most widely used benchmarks of U.S. stock performance. On January 1, 2019, the HFRX Equity Hedge Index replaced the S&P 500 Index as the strategy's primary benchmark index because the new index more closely aligns to the strategy's investment methodologies. Prior to December 31, 2018, the Morningstar Long/Short Equity Index was the secondary benchmark. It is no longer shown as the HFRX Equity Hedge Index more closely aligns to the portfolio's investment strategies.

Separately managed account strategies may not be appropriate or suitable for all investors. There is no guarantee that the strategy's objective will be achieved. It should not be assumed that investments in this strategy have been or will be profitable.

Past performance does not guarantee future results.

Other than levered and inverse ETFs, leverage or derivatives are not used. The use of levered and inverse ETFs is anticipated to be infrequent and may not materially impact returns.

The risks associated with ETFs are detailed in the individual ETF's prospectus, which will be provided upon request.

The portfolio is sub-advised by Broadmark Asset Management LLC, an independent registered investment advisor.

Westwood Management Corp. ("WMC") is a wholly owned subsidiary of Westwood Holdings Group, Inc. (NYSE: WHG). WMC is an SEC registered investment adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. This information is being provided solely for educational purposes and is not an offer to sell or solicitation of an offer to buy an interest in any investment fund. Any such offer or solicitation may only be made by means of a confidential private offering memorandum or prospectus relating to a particular fund and only in a manner consistent with federal and applicable state securities laws.

#### **Westwood Investment Glossary**

10-year U.S. Treasury Note is a debt obligation issued by the U.S. Treasury that has a term of 10 years.

Alpha is a technical risk ratio that shows a fund's excess return relative to the performance of its benchmark index.

Basis point (bps) is a unit of measure that is equal to 1/100th of 1% and used to denote a change in the value or rate of a financial instrument.

**Bloomberg U.S. Corporate High Yield Bond Index** covers the USD-denominated, noninvestment-grade, fixed-rate, taxable corporate bond market. Securities are classified as high yield if the middle rating of Moody's, Fitch and S&P is Ba1/BB+/BB+ or below.

**Breadth** is a technique used in technical analysis that attempts to gauge the direction of the overall market by analyzing the number of companies advancing relative to the number declining.

**Buy/hold = x.xx% gain/annum** is a calculation that shows a period of time during which a buy/hold signal is in effect and the percentage of gain or loss during that period calculated on an annual basis.

Credit spread is the spread between Treasury securities and non-Treasury securities that are identical in all respects except for quality rating.

**Dow Jones Industrial Average** is a price-weighted average of 30 blue-chip stocks that are generally the leaders in their industry and are listed on the New York Stock Exchange.



Exchange-traded funds (ETFs) track an index but trade like a stock on an exchange.

Federal Reserve is the central bank of the United States that is responsible for regulating the U.S. monetary and financial systems.

Inflation is the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising, and, subsequently, purchasing power is falling.

**Momentum** is the rate of acceleration of a security's price or volume.

NASDAQ-100 Index is a modified capitalization-weighted index that includes the largest nonfinancial U.S. and non-U.S. companies listed on the NASDAQ stock market across a variety of industries, such as retail, healthcare, telecommunications, wholesale trade, biotechnology and technology.

NDR Big Mo Multi-Cap Tape Composite model uses trend and momentum indicators to provide a composite reading on the technical health of the broad equity market.

**NDR Crowd Sentiment Poll** is a composite reading based on seven different individual sentiment indicators designed to highlight short- to intermediate-term swings in investor psychology.

NDR Daily Trading Sentiment Composite use various measures of investor sentiment such as surveys, put/call ratios, etc. to define the levels of pessimism that are currently priced into equities.

Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index is a measure of the prices that people living in the United States pay for goods and services. The PCE price index is known for capturing inflation (or deflation) across a wide range of consumer expenses and reflecting changes in consumer behavior.

**Price-earnings (P/E) ratio** is a measure of the price paid for a share of stock relative to the annual income or profit earned by the company per share. A higher P/E ratio means that investors are paying more for each unit of income.

Russell 2000 Index measures the performance of the 2,000 smallest companies in the Russell 3000 Index. The Russell 3000 Index represents approximately 98% of the investable U.S. equity market.

S&P 500 Index is an unmanaged index of 500 common stocks chosen to reflect the industries in the U.S. economy.

Spread is the difference between the rate of volume demand and the rate of volume supply.

Standard deviation measures the degree to which a security's return varies from its previous returns or from the average of all similar securities.

Valuation is the process of determining the value of an asset or company based on earnings and the market value of assets.

Volume is the number of shares or contracts traded in a security or an entire market during a given period of time.

Volume/Breadth-Based Momentum Model is a proprietary model used by Broadmark Asset Management to determine optimal market exposure.

Yield is the interest or dividends received from a security and is usually expressed annually as a percentage based on the investment's cost or on the U.S. Government's debt obligations.

Yield curve is a line that plots the interest rates, at a set point in time, of bonds having equal credit quality but differing maturity dates.

One cannot invest directly in an index.

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