

Sierra Update

Second Quarter 2015

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1996-2015



MARKET REVIEW

The U.S. economy gathered strength in the second calendar quarter following a weak start to the year. The labor market continues to improve with payrolls averaging an increase of 208,000 over the last six months. The more stable labor markets have helped households gain confidence. Gains in consumer spending exceeded 2.0% in each of the last four quarters despite the weather disruptions. Since household spending is the primary driver of growth in GDP, we have good reason to believe that the economy will maintain a healthy rate of growth through the end of the year.

Following mild downturns in mid-2014, there have also been noteworthy improvements to economic conditions in Europe and Japan in response to lower oil prices and a weakening of the euro and the yen. Europe and Japan are expected to achieve economic growth of 1.5%-2.0% in the second half of this year.

Domestic Equity

Thus far into 2015, our **Large Cap Intrinsic Value Equity (LCIV)** gross returns have been between the S&P and benchmark Russell 1000 Value indices as the market grinds. Our strategy slightly lagged the S&P and Russell 1000 Value last quarter because of the high growth bias investors had.

The largest changes to the portfolio were the 1.3% reduction in cash within our model to end at 2.3%, and the increase in exposure to the Financials.

Our U.S. **Concentrated Growth** Composite significantly outperformed its benchmark in the second quarter, the Russell 1000 Growth Index, earning 1.45% versus 0.12%. Positive

stock selection results, particularly in the Consumer Staples and Information Technology sectors, drove the strategy's outperformance of the Index during the quarter. Stock selection in Energy and an overweight to Health Care also contributed to benchmark-relative returns. We believe the strategy's portfolio is well-positioned should a more volatile market environment develop.

For the quarter, our **Small Value Equity** portfolio outperformed the benchmark Russell 2000 Value by 240 basis points (bps), delivering an absolute return of 1.2%. The portfolio continues to deliver solid long-term absolute and relative returns outpacing the benchmark by 230 bps year-to-date and returning 16.3% versus 15.5% for the trailing 3-year, 17.0% versus 14.8% for the trailing 5-year, and 10.1% versus 6.9% for the trailing 10-year. Performance was predominantly driven for the quarter by our financial and information technology holdings.

International Equity

Global/international equities experienced modest gains in the second quarter (in USD), despite the turmoil that enveloped Greek politics and Chinese equities in the final weeks of trading. In our **Global and Non-U.S. Value Equity** strategies, the composites have outperformed their respective benchmarks, the MSCI All Country World Index and MSCI All Country World ex-U.S. Index since the depths of the global financial crisis six years ago.

In **International and Global Growth Equity**, the MSCI World and MSCI All Country World indices were both up approximately 0.5% in U.S. dollar terms in the second quarter. The Telecommunications Services, Financials and Health Care sectors led the MSCI World Index.

MARKET REVIEW (cont.)

With global equity markets rather sanguine in the second quarter, we saw investors focus on fundamentals. As bottom-up stock pickers, our international and global growth strategies have historically performed better during periods where fundamentals are the focus and macroeconomic factors are less impactful. There is additional comfort in the fact that our strategies do not hold Greece-listed stocks and we believe our holdings should have minimal exposure to the Greek economy.

Fixed Income

In the **Fixed Income** market arena, longer-term interest rates (10-year Treasuries) which closed March yielding 1.93% rose 40 bps to 2.33% by second quarter's end. Shorter-term notes (2-year Treasuries) rose 8 bps, ending the quarter yielding 0.63%. While interest rates rose during the quarter, Corporate America continued to sell investment grade bonds despite a decline in investor demand. However, unlike in the first quarter, higher quality Aaa- and Aa-rated bonds outperformed. The large supply of new A and Baa corporate bonds contributed to their underperformance.

Similar to equities, **High Yield** spreads were reasonably firm throughout the quarter before widening in June as oil weakened and EU

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tensions increased. After having tightened by 15 bps during the first calendar quarter, high yield spreads widened by 16 bps during the second calendar quarter, ending at +493, virtually on top of where they began the year.

Our portfolios outperformed due to meaningful attribution from security selection, primarily within Metals and Mining. Security selection within Health Care and Paper also contributed. Attribution from sector allocation was essentially neutral during the quarter.

Thank You

We would like to extend our gratitude to the **Hawaii Electricians Annuity and Pension Funds** for additional contributions to Sierra's Concentrated Growth Equity product, to the **IBEW Local #481 Defined Contribution Plan and Trust, St. Paul Electrical Construction Pension** and the **St. Paul Electrical Construction Workers Supplemental Pension Plan** for additional contributions to our Non-U.S. Equity commingled fund, and to the **Hawaii Masons and Plasterers Annuity Trust Fund** for additional contributions to our Intrinsic Value Equity product.

We at Sierra Investment Partners, Inc. value each of our clients and are grateful for the opportunity to manage a portion of your assets.