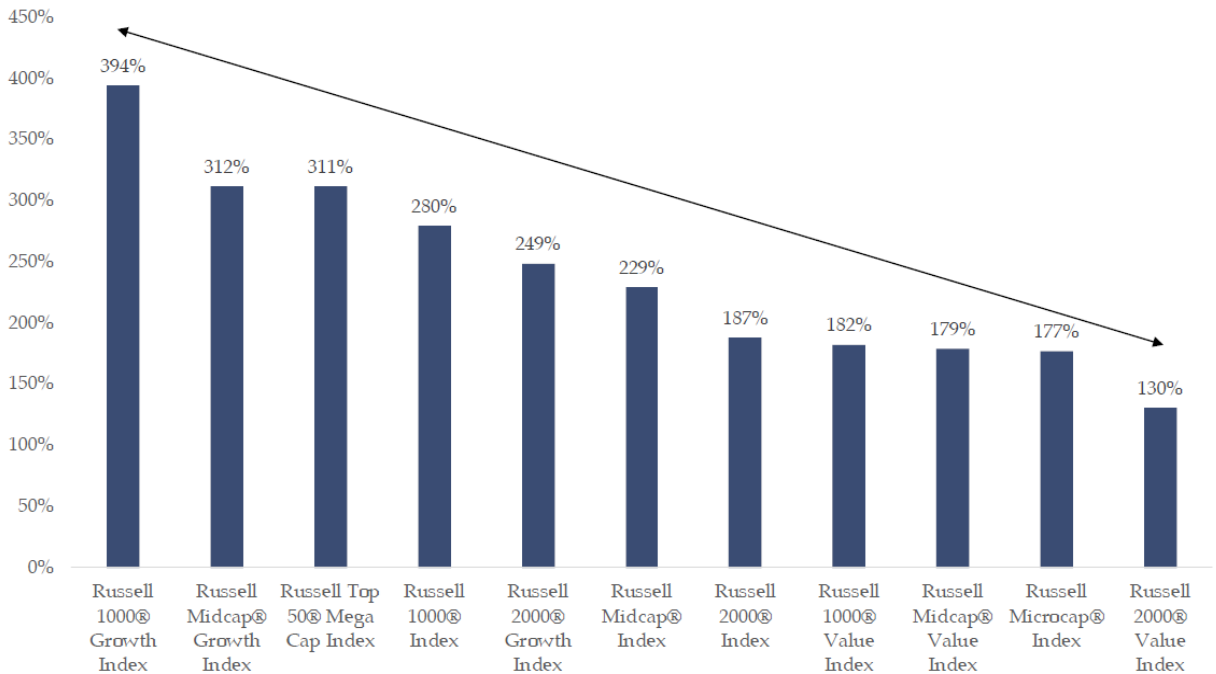




Value in Perspective

Ten Year U.S. Equity Performance by Size and Style (Aggregate Returns)



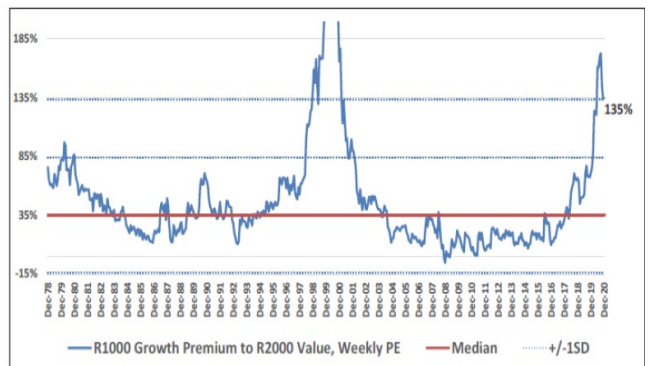
As of 11.30.2020. Source: FTSE Russell

Last year marked the 12th double-digit return for the Russell 1000® Index this century. How did we get there? Our colleague, Shawn Gallagher, who manages the Sterling Capital Stratton Mid Cap Value strategy, looked beneath overall market performance to highlight potential opportunities pertaining to disparities between growth and value as well as large caps and small caps, amidst some historic anomalies. We also point out these market dynamics to provide context in accessing investment manager performance in 2020, as performance differences can be explained in part by manager investment style.

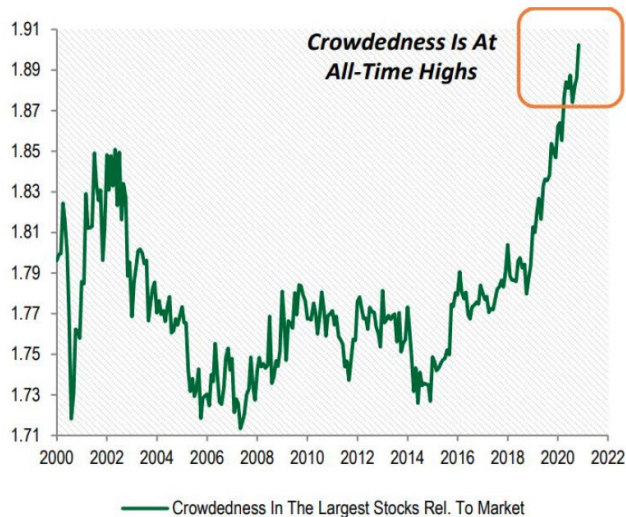
While the Russell 1000's total return was 21.0% in 2020, the Russell 1000® Growth Index returned 38.5%, yet the Russell 1000® Value Index generated only 2.8%, the widest disparity on record. While the outperformance of growth stocks relative to value stocks over the past 14 years is among the longest in terms of style cycles, the performance difference between large growth and small value is even more pronounced, as seen in the ten-year chart above.

The divergence in performance also led to similar extremes in terms of relative valuations, as seen in the chart below. If one believes that relative valuations will return to "normal" levels or mean reversion, there may be opportunities across styles.

Large Growth Versus Small Value Valuation



Source: Sterling Capital, FactSet



Largest stocks= sector-neutral top quintile of S&P market cap
Crowdedness=avg # of institutional owners in the largest quintile of each sector, relative to the avg # of institutional owners for the entire S&P 500

Source: Cornerstone Macro

The second factor driving the market is index concentration and the trend of many managers owning just a few of the largest stocks in the S&P 500® Index. It may surprise you that the largest five stocks in the S&P 500 account for a full 20% of the index (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook, and Tesla). The chart above shows that, at present, the largest stocks in the market are also saturated with institutional owners. At Sterling Capital, investors will find a measurement of “active share” in our equity marketing materials that quantifies

how we differ from our benchmark. With relatively low portfolio turnover in our fundamental equity strategies, and by owning stocks that differ from the benchmark, we adhere to processes that Empirical Research Partners suggests may enable investment managers to generate outperformance over time.

As always, thank you for your interest and trust in managing your investments.

Charles J. Wittmann, CFA®, Executive Director, joined Sterling Capital Management in 2014 and has investment experience since 1995. Chip is an equity portfolio manager. Prior to joining Sterling, he worked for Thompson Siegel & Walmsley as a portfolio manager and (generalist) analyst. Prior to TS&W, he was a founding portfolio manager and analyst with Shockoe Capital, an equity long/short hedge fund. Chip received his B.A. in Economics from Davidson College and his M.B.A. from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. He holds the Chartered Financial Analyst® designation.



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The volatility of an index varies greatly. All indices are unmanaged and investments cannot be made directly in an index.

S&P 500®: The S&P 500® Index is a readily available, carefully constructed, market-value-weighted benchmark of common stock performance. Currently, the S&P® Composite includes 500 of the largest stocks (in terms of stock market value) in the United States; prior to March 1957 it consisted of 90 of the largest stocks. The volatility of an index varies greatly; investments cannot be made directly in an index.

The Russell 1000® Index measures the performance of the large-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. It is a subset of the Russell 3000® Index and includes approximately 1,000 of the largest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership. The Russell 1000® represents approximately 92% of the U.S. market. The Russell 1000® Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the large-cap segment and is completely reconstituted annually to ensure new and growing equities are included.

The Russell 1000® Growth Index measures the performance of the large-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 1000® companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The Russell 1000® Growth Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the large-cap growth segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure new and growing equities are included and that the represented companies continue to reflect growth characteristics.

The Russell 1000® Value Index measures the performance of the large-cap value segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 1000® companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower expected growth values. The Russell 1000® Value Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the large-cap value segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure new and growing equities are included and that the represented companies continue to reflect value characteristics.

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. It includes approximately 2,000 of the smallest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership. The Russell 2000® is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased small-cap barometer and is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true small-cap opportunity set.

The Russell 2000® Growth Index measures the performance of the small-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 2000® companies with higher price-to-value ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The Russell 2000® Growth Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the small-cap growth segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true small-cap opportunity set and that the represented companies continue to reflect growth characteristics.

The Russell 2000® Value Index measures the performance of small-cap value segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 2000® companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. The Russell 2000® Value Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the small-cap value segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true small-cap opportunity set and that the represented companies continue to reflect value characteristics.

The Russell Midcap® Index measures the performance of the mid-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. The Russell Midcap® Index is a subset of the Russell 1000® Index. It includes approximately 800 of the smallest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership. The Russell Midcap® Index represents approximately 31% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 1000® companies. The Russell Midcap® Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the mid-cap segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true mid-cap opportunity set.

The Russell Midcap® Growth Index measures the performance of the midcap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell Midcap® Index companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The Russell Midcap® Growth Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer of the mid-cap growth market. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true mid-cap growth market.

The Russell Midcap® Value Index measures the performance of the midcap value segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell Midcap® Index companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. The Russell Midcap® Value Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer of the mid-cap value market. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true midcap value market.

The Russell Microcap® Index measures the performance of the microcap segment of the U.S. equity market. Microcap stocks make up less than 3% of the U.S. equity market (by market cap) and consist of the smallest 1,000 securities in the small-cap Russell 2000® Index, plus the next 1,000 smallest eligible securities by market cap. The Russell Microcap Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the microcap segment trading on national exchanges. The Index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure new and growing equities are reflected and companies continue to reflect appropriate capitalization and value characteristics.

The Russell Top 50® Mega Cap Index measures the performance of the largest companies in the Russell 3000 Index. It includes approximately 50 of the largest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership and represents approximately 40% of the total market capitalization of the Russell 3000. The Russell Top 50 Index is constructed to provide a comprehensive unbiased and stable barometer of the largest U.S. companies. The Index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure new and growing equities are reflected.