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## US Equity Strategy | North America

## Weekly Warm-up: Thoughts from the Road

Clients largely agree bottom-up EPS estimates are too high, but are generally more optimistic than we are on earnings; there's less agreement on our call for ERP expansion, and there's reluctance to embrace the bearish view because of recent positioning-driven squeezes.

**Thoughts from the road...**We spent this past week marketing our views with clients in London which provided a fresh reaction to our earnings cuts and feedback on how best to trade them. As [detailed last week](#), our base case point estimate for 2023 S&P 500 EPS is now \$212 which is 13% below bottom-up consensus. We think the buy-side is closer to \$225 on '23 EPS. The bulk of the disagreement centers on the argument that inflation will protect nominal profits for many companies, while we point out that we expect margins to be the primary driver of downside to EPS. We continued to get pushback on our call for equity risk premium expansion with some arguing that we're in a new, lower ERP regime due to higher inflation. Finally, we fielded the most questions on Energy, Financials and Consumer, while there was generally a lack of questions on Tech.

**We recently published another wave of our [AlphaWise Consumer Survey](#)...**The majority of consumers surveyed continue to say they are likely to cut back on spending over the next 6 months because of inflation, albeit this is trending down from the peak in mid-July (64% vs. 65% last month and 69% mid-July). Consumers have continued trading down in order to save money. Overall, 70% of consumers continue to report at least some trading down to their typical shopping and eating out preferences. Consumers report having, on average, 4-5 months worth of expenses in savings; this skews higher among the upper income cohort. Even with most consumers reporting to have at least some savings, the amount of savings tends to be lower compared to 2019 for 44% of consumers.

**Our recurring meeting with lead industry analysts across US research...**We focused the session around inventory, cost pressures, pricing and the health of the consumer. At a high level: e-commerce has help up better than expected but we are seeing trade down; the ad market has been choppy with relative strength coming through in experience-related spending; enterprise tech demand is slowing as companies call out a difficult macro environment; nominal consumer spending is elevated while real spending is slowing; hardlines/broadlines/food retail companies saw a better late July/August than June driven by back to school though inventories remain extended; specialty retailers and brands have seen sequential top line deceleration over the last several months; demand in the industrials space remains more stable; for restaurants, the availability of labor is now better- expect less onerous wage increases through year end.

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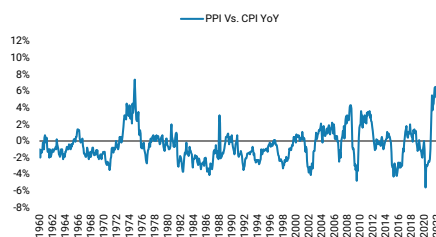
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## What to Focus on This Week

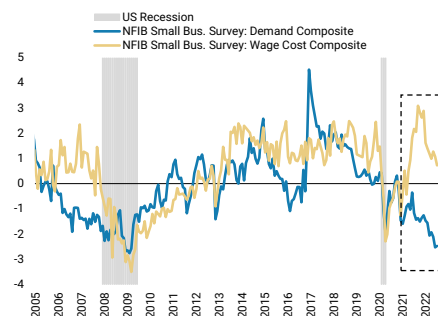
### Thoughts From the Road

Last week, we published meaningful cuts to our earnings forecasts that leave us 13% below the bottom-up consensus for 2023 S&P 500 EPS in our base case. While we have been more bearish than most all year on growth, we waited to make these cuts until a week ago to try and time when these forecasts are likely to begin falling in earnest. In our experience, getting too far ahead of the actual cuts isn't all that helpful as the market typically will not trade big earnings revisions until they actually begin. As we noted last week, we think that risk is now particularly elevated as we enter 3Q earnings season. We also noted that it may take until October for stocks to trade lower because more investors now share our view on growth going into a busy conference season and are somewhat positioned for it.

We spent this past week marketing our views with clients in London which provided a fresh reaction to our earnings cuts and feedback on how best to trade them. First, on the earnings cuts, most clients agree the consensus numbers are too high. That said, there is a wide range of views on how much the estimates need to come down. As noted, our base case point estimate for 2023 is \$212 for S&P 500 EPS which is 13% below the bottoms up consensus. Based on our meetings, that is lower than what most are currently thinking. Without taking a formal survey, we think the buy-side is closer to \$225 on '23 EPS or about half as bad as our forecasted cut. The bulk of the disagreement continues to be centered on the argument that inflation will protect nominal profits for many companies and lead to smaller downward EPS revisions than what usually happens during a meaningful earnings correction. As a result, we spend much of our meetings discussing our view that inflationary periods do lead to higher operating leverage but that operating leverage cuts both ways. Most importantly, given the fact that costs are now rising faster than end point pricing, that operating leverage is now starting to work against profitability, and so there is a good chance the higher inflationary world we live in could lead to worse profit erosion than normal, not better ([Exhibit 1](#) and [Exhibit 2](#)). This is probably the key differentiated view we have based on our interactions with clients, and many were more in our camp after our meetings.

**Exhibit 1: PPI Continues to Outpace CPI at a Historic Rate...**

Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research.

**Exhibit 2: Small Businesses Reporting a Wide Gap Between Worsening Demand and Still Elevated Wage Costs-- Margin Pressure**

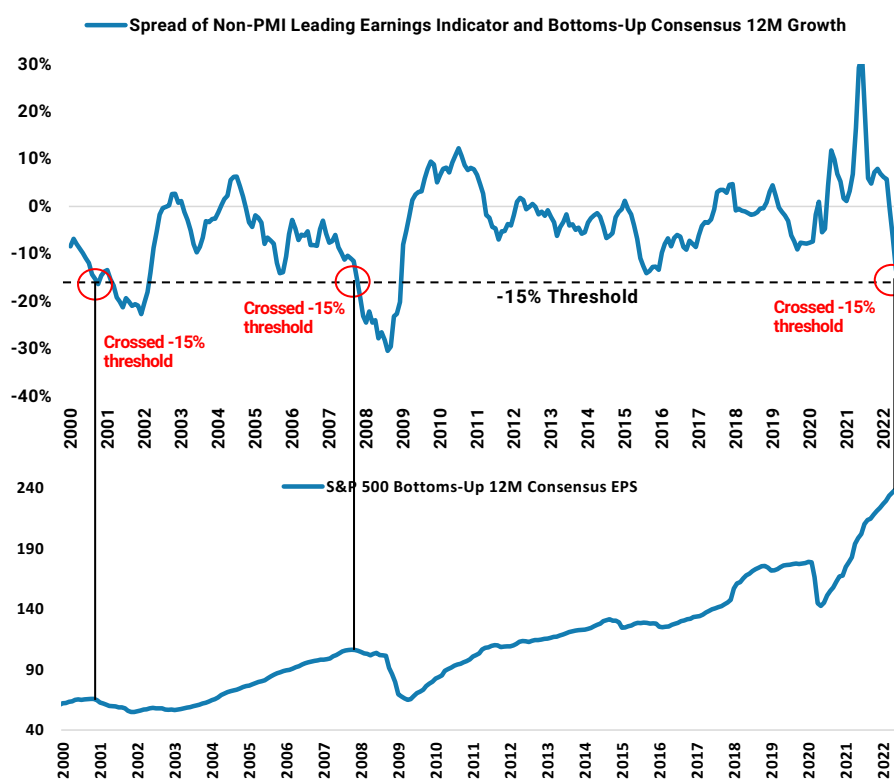
Source: Haver Analytics, Morgan Stanley Research, NFIB. Demand=Avg. z-score of economy to improve, higher real sales, higher earnings, raising prices. Wage Cost=Avg. z-score of planning to raise worker comp and cost of labor is most important problem.

After the discussion around earnings trajectory for the S&P 500, the focus then typically turned to how to trade it. Here, we have some sympathy for the view that markets may potentially hold up very tactically until the EPS cuts actually happen. As already noted, conference season is upon us and investors are ready for some bad news at least with regard to how 3Q is progressing. However, the degree of that deterioration is more debated now given the recently announced \$500 billion student debt forgiveness and extended moratorium on loan payments until December, combined with the energy subsidy announced this past week in the UK to help consumers through the winter. Both of these are rather large fiscal stimulus packages that could keep the "tone" of company commentary less bearish than feared, and potentially delay the eventual cuts. Nonetheless, we have high conviction that EPS cuts will play out in earnest over the next 2-3 months, and as a reminder from our note last week, mid-September through October is a particularly challenging seasonal period for EPS revisions.

Valuation also remains an important topic in our meetings, but not to the extent it was when we visited Europe in May. This lines up with our recent calls and meetings with US investors as well. Like us, most equity clients feel like the Fed is largely priced into multiples via higher back end rates. This leaves equity risk premium as the key variable that will determine P/Es until earnings are reset. Here, we ran into more push back to our view the ERP is too low and that it's likely to reset higher as the earnings risk becomes more imminent. Truth be told, this is the single biggest miss for us this year. Part of our P/E compression call was predicated on a higher ERP, not just rates; and that has yet to happen. Instead, the ERP has actually fallen this year, and last week's rally has left the S&P 500 even richer on this basis than it was at the highs in August. More specifically, the ERP is now 252bps which is ~10bps lower than it was in August when the S&P 500 topped at 4,325. Not only is the ERP ~150bps below the average of the past 15 years, but this is occurring at a time when our forward NTM EPS model is at one of its largest spreads to the consensus forward estimates ([Exhibit 3](#))—i.e., a time when the ERP should be elevated. The bull case here is that the S&P 500 ERP may be entering a newer lower range given the higher inflation most expect going forward. The argument is that stocks are a better asset to own than bonds in such a regime and therefore deserve a lower risk premium. While we agree with the premise of that argument and, in fact, used that exact statement to go all in on stocks in late March 2020, we don't think it's an appropriate rationale today if one believes we are entering a significant cyclical downturn for earnings forecasts (our view). Further, we note that it's

typically margin compression that's the early/more material driver of EPS downside in periods of negative earnings growth, not nominal top line which could be aided by higher inflation (a view that's reflected in our forecasts). Nevertheless, until proven otherwise, stocks may hold up until it's no longer deniable we are entering a steep earnings contraction. Another driver of lower ERPs for the S&P 500 is that virtually every other equity market is in a worse cyclical backdrop, and so it will likely continue to garner a lower risk premium until either the rest of the world offers a better alternative or the S&P disappoints materially on growth. Once again, markets often need the engraved invitation.

**Exhibit 3:** Spread Between Our Non-PMI Leading Earnings Model and Bottom-Up Consensus Forward 12-Month EPS Growth Is Near Historic Lows--ERP Should Be Higher to Reflect this Risk; Further, A Breach of -15% in this Spread Typically Marks Major Fwd. EPS Tops



Source: Haver, Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

Finally, from a sector standpoint there was less conviction than usual. Compared to US investors the disparity on Tech was palpable. 75% of our interactions did not involve one question on leading Tech stocks. In fact, very few conversations centered around Tech at all, whereas in the US, 75% of all meetings still involve heavy discussion of Tech stocks with strong opinions. Suffice it to say the love affair with Tech we still see in the US is not present in London, and the investors we spoke with were US market focused for the most part. Instead, we got more questions on Energy, Financials and consumer sectors with more interest in the first two and less in the latter.

The bottom line, we remain laser focused on earnings as the key driver of stocks from here. While the Fed is important, it will likely not be the main driver of stocks on either the downside or the upside given the narrow path of options it has, in our view. We remain highly convicted that our well below consensus EPS forecasts for the S&P 500

will prove to be correct and possibly even optimistic as our models may be underestimating the negative operating leverage. Having said that, our experience suggests stocks can stay elevated until the out year numbers come down and that may not begin in earnest until October. But make no mistake, with every point the index rises from here, the risk-reward gets worse, not better on a 3-6 month horizon.

## Macro Meets Micro

We held our monthly meeting with lead analysts across US research and our economists/strategists to better connect macro and micro data points. We focused the session around inventory and the health of the consumer. One theme that came up repeatedly was weakness broadening out from low income consumers to middle income consumer although high income consumers have continued to hold up.

- **Internet:** Online ecommerce has held up better than expected and the consumer has held in across the board especially for AMZN. The ad markets are not great but holding in. It sounds like August was better than July and 4Q is shaping up to be better than 3Q even though the comp is harder. This comes despite trade down.
- **Media:** DIS said ad market has remained choppy – seeing strength in experiential advertising. Consumer spend on entertainment remains robust across our coverage and in general, commentary from companies does not point to slowing spend from the consumer side yet. Theme park spend continues to outpace expectations on per caps and attendance. Comcast’s Universal parks delivered record ebitda despite international tourism to the US parks in FL and CA still at half of pre-pandemic levels. At Disney, domestic parks continue to deliver record revenue and margins with no signs of a slowing consumer. 70% of guests who have purchased Genie+ and Lightning Lane are saying they’re buying again when they come back; current trends from 2q earnings remain robust; have seen more advanced booking on international dates coming back, not yet back to historical though so more opportunity there. Consistent with results we’ve seen elsewhere in premium live experiences, EDR highlighted return of concerts, comedy touring driving outperformance while Live Nation, bookings are up over 30% and fan attendance grew 13% over '19 levels at operated venues. August box office came in ahead of expectations. The main message within cable/move activity here is that move activity continues to be below pre-covid levels and continues to generally be very low but seasonality has started to come back into the business; Charter has called out that voluntary churn was flat YoY and in-line with lowest levels ever seen; move and non-pay churn continue to be below covid levels.
- **Software:** We have seen a deceleration in IT spending growth intentions. Software companies are calling out the more difficult macro environment. The dynamic we are seeing is not what investors expected. You would expect small businesses to see it first and for nice to have projects get cut first while large enterprises hold in. What we have actually seen is deal cycle elongation for the biggest/most expensive projects. This is a step one response to a more uncertain environment. There is probably another shoe to drop and for IT budgets to actually get cut. You are likely to get indications on that when companies set 2023 budgets in Oct/Nov.
- **Semiconductors:** There is still an idiosyncratic supply disruption problem within semiconductors. Even though companies are seeing capacity freeing up, we are still seeing shortages from China lockdowns and substantial double ordering. That being said, with the current pace of supply and demand corrections, we will probably be done talking about shortages by Q4.

- **Tech Hardware:** Tech hardware companies had a challenging 2Q – consumer segments did poorly and guided down results for the remainder of CY22 while enterprise results were more mixed but started to show cracks in demand. We have already seen discounting occurring on the consumer side – those discounts are accelerating and now starting to bleed into the enterprise side, with Dell and HP recently highlighting PC demand deterioration in commercial markets could drive more aggressive pricing. We saw significant margin compression in 2Q. We are seeing a slowing in spending/hiring - we aren't seeing hiring cuts yet, but slowdown across the board and widespread opex management (i.e. cost cuts) as demand worsens.
- **Banks:** Consumer spend running at about 10% YOY. REAL spending is coming down but nominal is high. Wages have kept up with spend requirements so losses remain low with prime customers but sub-prime is having trouble. Loan growth is running at 11% while deposit growth is running at 3% due to QT.
- **Hardlines/Broadlines/Food Retail:** June was a very bad month for consumption but mid to late July and August back to school spending helped bail these companies out. Some of the momentum is likely to slow but companies feel a bit better now. Companies are seeing pressure and trade down at both the high AND low end. Inventories are still enormous and yet companies are saying this is not a problem. We think there is about one to two standard deviations of too much stuff. We haven't seen promotions come back with a vengeance YET. The consumer is okay and hanging in but the risks are higher than the opportunity.
- **Specialty Retail:** In 2Q22, the vast majority of retailers & brands missed topline & gross margin estimates. This reflected a sequential monthly topline deceleration, with May the peak followed by a material step-down in 2H June that only remained depressed or worsened in July & into August. And perhaps even more telling, retailers did not offer positive back-to-school commentary, unlike many in Simeon Gutman's space. We also saw consumer pressure expand into the middle income group in 2Q22, suggesting weakness is no longer isolated to lower income consumers. However, luxury has held in. Additionally, we have not seen any trade down benefit yet, as evidenced by the Off-Pricers' still-pressured results. However, we continue to expect this materializes, though the timing is the key debate. Moving down the P&L, revenue softness only exacerbated the inventory problem we've been highlighting all year, leading to broad-based 2Q22 gross margin misses as retailers increased their promotional & discounting levels in an attempt to clear through extremely bloated Spring/Summer inventory stock. We think inventory will remain elevated through year end, making for an incredibly competitive promotional/discounting environment, which doesn't bode well given there is no pricing power in this industry (as evidenced by the collapse in AUR this year). Finally, retailers & brands were able to partially offset some of this revenue & GM pressure by taking another look at SG&A expenses & implementing a variety of actions – hiring freezes, less store payroll hours, headcount reductions, among others. The good news is cost pressures are abating as retailers lap LY's high wage & freight expenses.
- **Electrical Equipment/Multi-Industry:** We're entering a key seasonal point for working capital and inventory positioning into year end. Inventories appear to be higher in the channel after mostly sitting in manufacturing WIP for the past several quarters. Improving supply chain should start to convert WIP to finished inventory and then drive the decision process on order vs. cancel over the next several months. Overall, demand across markets looks resilient, including in Europe, and

we don't expect negative updates for another month or two as the final ingredients for a short-cycle slowdown come together. Capex, productivity, infrastructure, and efficiency spending remain solid demand drivers while price/cost is starting to be a major tailwind for names with high exposure to metals (e.g., steel).

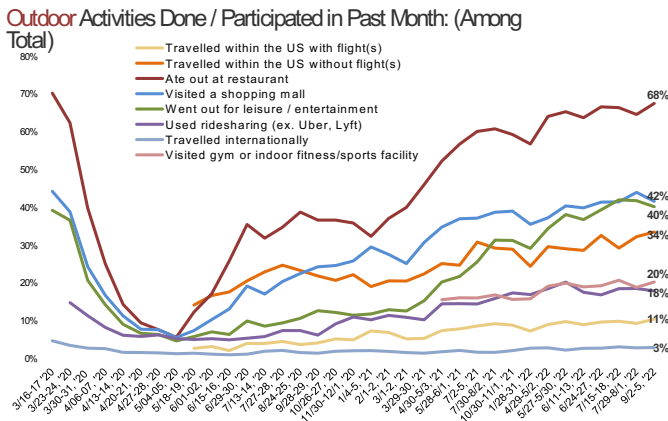
- **Restaurants:** Restaurant sales decelerated this summer, but it wasn't that bad on a 3 year stack. This has been a strange summer- some of this change is because seasonality is going back to normal. [Food inflation is running about mid teens](#) and is generally being viewed as peak inflation. We won't get into deflation but expect the rate of inflation to fall. The availability of labor is good but labor is expensive. Wage increases should be less onerous in back half of the year.
- **Packaged Food:** [Pricing has been up](#) low double digits to mid teens. Volume elasticity has been better than expected. In 2Q volumes were only down 3%. However, consumers are starting to trade down more within packaged food. Private label started gaining share in March. Private label hasn't raised prices to the same degree as brands. Food companies realize cost inflation on a 6 month lag.



# What Are Consumers Telling Us?

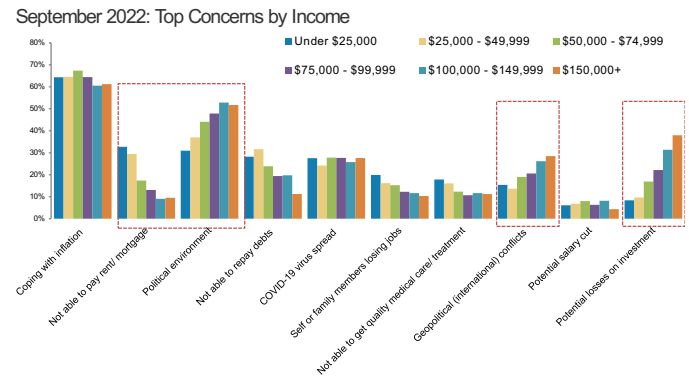
We recently published another wave of our [AlphaWise Consumer Survey](#). Consumers' primary concern is still inflation but the proportion of consumers listing it as their top concern is down slightly vs the last wave (64% now vs 67% mid-July) ([Exhibit 4](#)). This lines up with what is likely to be the peak in inflation. Apart from inflation, low-income consumers are generally more worried about the inability to pay rent and other debts, while upper income consumers over index on concerns over investments, the political environment in the U.S. and geopolitical conflicts ([Exhibit 5](#)).

**Exhibit 4: Consumers' Top Concern**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

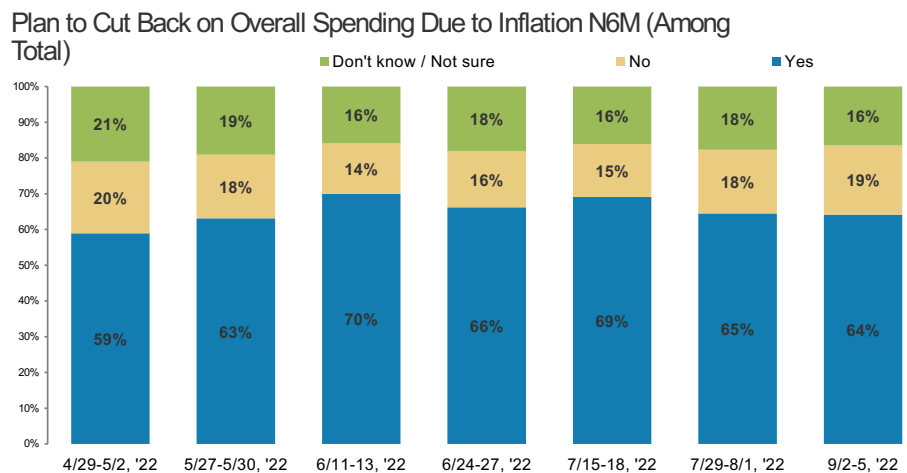
**Exhibit 5: Concerns by Income**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

The majority of consumers surveyed continue to say they are likely to cut back on spending over the next 6 months because of inflation, albeit this is trending down from the peak in mid-July (64% vs. 65% last month and 69% mid-July) ([Exhibit 6](#)). Only 19% of consumers say they are not planning to cut back on spending.

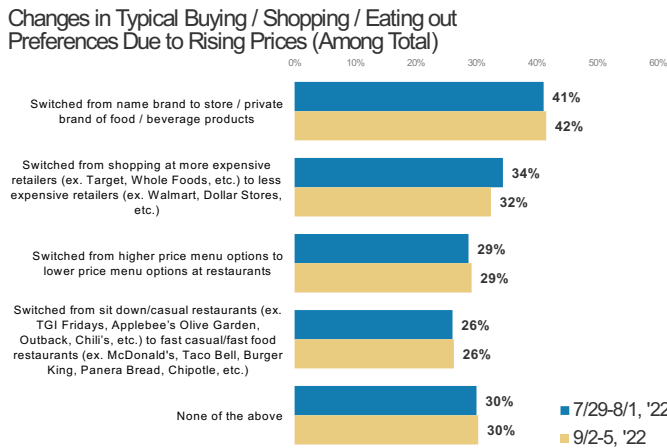
**Exhibit 6: Spending Plans**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

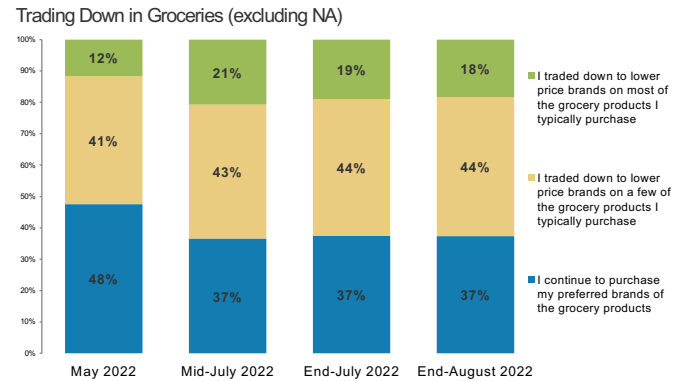
Consumers have continued trading down in order to save money. Overall, 70% of consumers continue to report at least some trading down to their typical shopping and eating out preferences. Switching from name brands to private label brands (42%) and from more expensive to less expensive retailers (32%) is most common (Exhibit 7). Switching from higher priced menu options to lower ones was also a popular way to save money with 29% of consumers engaging in this behavior. Consumers continue to be price conscious when shopping for groceries. In-line with the previous wave, consumers tend to pay more attention to prices when grocery shopping, use coupons/offers, and shop at retailers with lower prices (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 7: Trade Down in Shopping/Dining**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

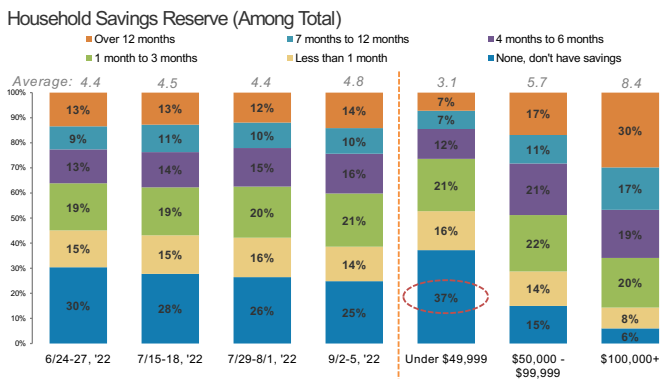
**Exhibit 8: Grocery Trade Down**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

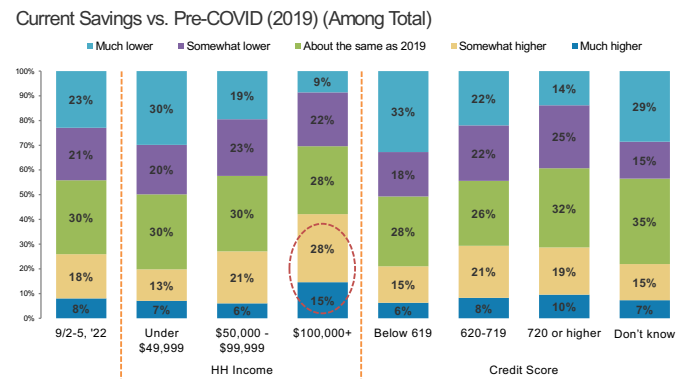
Consumers report having, on average, 4-5 months worth of expenses in savings; this skews higher among the upper income cohort (Exhibit 9). Even with most consumers reporting to have at least some savings, the amount of savings tends to be lower compared to 2019 (pre-COVID) for 44% of consumers (Exhibit 10). Overall, a third of consumers report a missed or late payment on any bill/loan in the past three months, skewing higher among lower income. Cell phone and mortgage bills tend to be paid on time more compared to personal and student loans (Exhibit 11).

**Exhibit 9: Household Savings Reserve**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

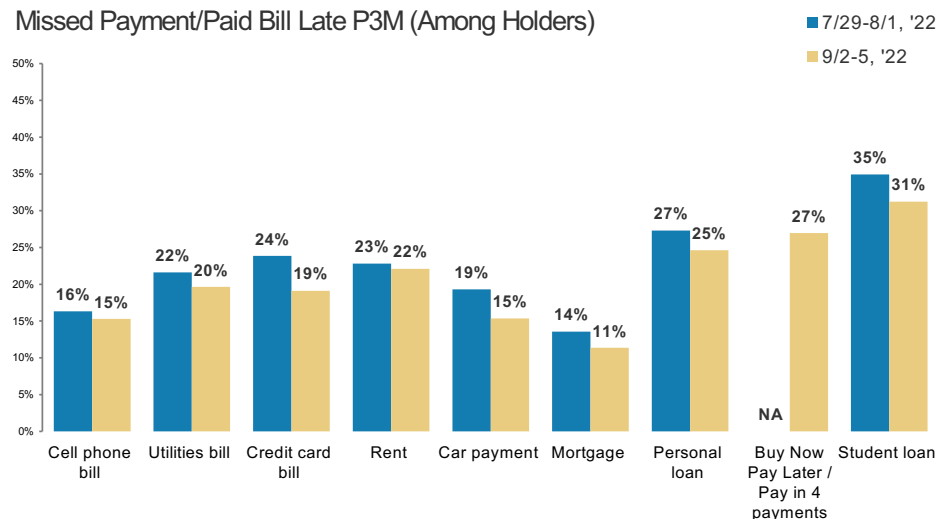
**Exhibit 10: Current Savings vs Pre COVID**



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

**Exhibit 11: Missed/Late Bill Payments**

Missed Payment/Paid Bill Late P3M (Among Holders)



Source: AlphaWise, Morgan Stanley Research

### Factor Update

We select a few key factors to monitor in [Exhibit 12](#) and [Exhibit 13](#) to help study market drivers from a factor standpoint. These Exhibits focus on factors within the US Top 1,000 by market cap universe. Some key takeaways on performance in the last month:

- Quality has outperformed Junk (+1.3% relative return) and the overall market (+0.8% relative return versus the overall Top 1,000 universe).
- Value has outperformed Growth (+2.4%) and the overall market (+0.9% relative return).
- Cyclical are down -1.8% in absolute terms, underperforming Defensives (-0.1%); but that performance spread widens when we exclude Energy from Cyclical, which has seen recent outperformance; Cyclical-Ex Energy have underperformed Defensives by -1.0%.
- High Momentum stocks have outperformed low momentum stocks (+4.1% relative return), and the overall market (+1.8% relative return).
- Small Caps have underperformed Large Caps.

Exhibit 12: Top 1,000 Factor Returns

Factor	1 Week			1 Month			YTD Ret	12M Ret
	Ret	1W Chg	1M Chg	Ret	1M Chg	3M Chg		
Quality / Junk	0.6%	↑	↑	1.3%	↑	↑	9.2%	14.7%
Quality	2.1%	↑	↑	-1.1%	↓	↓	-8.9%	-3.4%
Junk	1.4%	↑	↑	-2.4%	↓	↓	-18.2%	-18.1%
Value / Growth	0.1%	↓	↑	2.4%	↑	↑	18.6%	24.6%
Value	1.8%	↑	↑	-1.0%	↓	↓	-6.4%	-1.7%
Growth	1.7%	↑	↑	-3.3%	↓	↓	-25.0%	-26.3%
Cyclical / Defensive	-0.3%	↑	↓	-0.1%	↓	↓	-4.4%	-3.9%
Cyclical	1.5%	↑	↑	-1.8%	↓	↓	-15.2%	-12.0%
Defensive	1.8%	↑	↑	-1.8%	↓	↓	-10.8%	-8.1%
Cyclical xEnergy / Defensive	0.1%	↓	↓	-1.0%	↓	↓	-9.1%	-9.8%
Cyclical xEnergy	1.9%	↑	↑	-2.7%	↓	↓	-20.0%	-17.8%
12M Momentum	-0.6%	↓	↑	4.1%	↑	↑	1.8%	6.7%
High Momentum	1.5%	↑	↑	0.0%	↓	↓	-16.2%	-14.3%
Low Momentum	2.0%	↑	↑	-4.2%	↓	↓	-18.0%	-21.0%
Size (Small / Large)	-1.3%	↓	↓	-1.8%	↓	↓	-2.3%	-7.6%
Small Cap	0.7%	↓	↓	-3.2%	↓	↓	-16.1%	-16.9%
Large Cap	2.0%	↑	↑	-1.4%	↓	↓	-13.8%	-9.3%

Source: ClariFi, Morgan Stanley Research

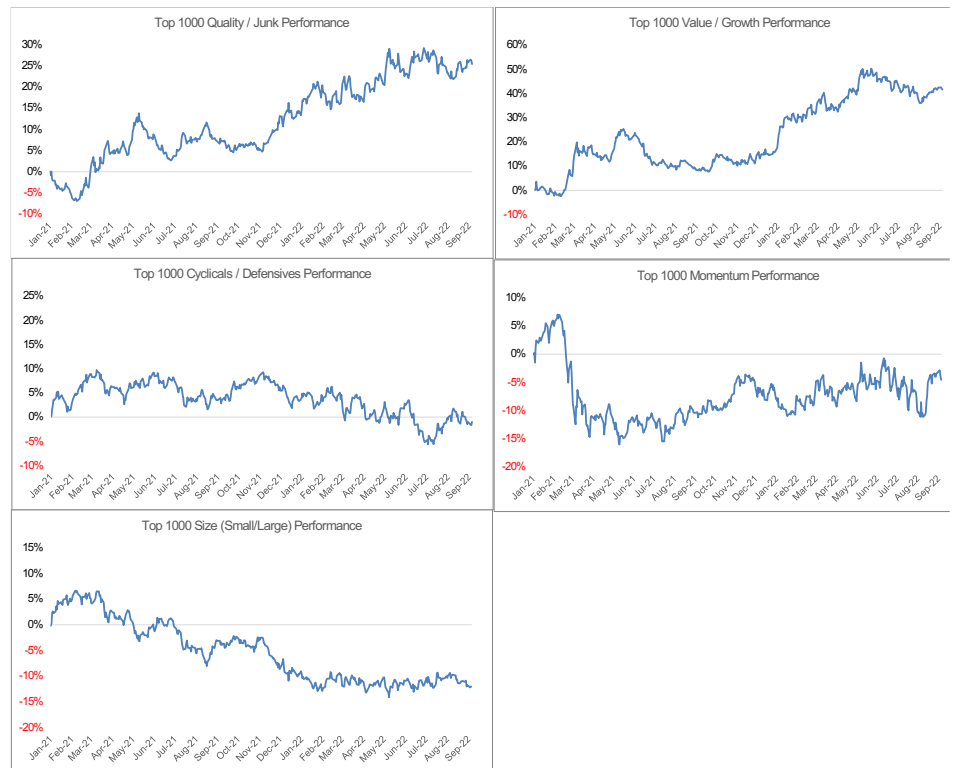
Exhibit 13: Excess Return Versus Broader Top 1,000 Universe

Factor	1 Week			1 Month			YTD Ret	12M Ret
	Ret	1W Chg	1M Chg	Ret	1M Chg	3M Chg		
Quality / Junk								
Quality	0.5%	↑	↑	0.8%	↑	↑	5.8%	9.5%
Junk	-0.2%	↓	↓	-0.5%	↓	↓	-3.4%	-5.2%
Value / Growth								
Value	0.2%	↓	↑	0.9%	↑	↑	8.4%	11.2%
Growth	0.1%	↑	↓	-1.5%	↓	↓	-10.2%	-13.4%
Cyclical / Defensive								
Cyclical	-0.2%	↑	↑	0.0%	↓	↓	-0.4%	0.9%
Defensive	0.2%	↓	↑	0.1%	↑	↑	4.0%	4.8%
Cyclical xEnergy / Defensive								
Cyclical xEnergy	0.3%	↑	↑	-0.9%	↓	↓	-5.2%	-4.9%
Momentum								
High Momentum	-0.1%	↓	↑	1.8%	↑	↑	-1.4%	-1.4%
Low Momentum	0.4%	↑	↓	-2.3%	↓	↓	-3.2%	-8.1%
Size (Small / Large)								
Small Cap	-0.9%	↓	↓	-1.3%	↓	↓	-1.3%	-4.0%
Large Cap	0.4%	↑	↑	0.5%	↑	↑	1.0%	3.6%

Source: ClariFi, Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 14 shows performance of these pairs in time series graph form.

Exhibit 14: Cumulative Factor Performance Since 2021



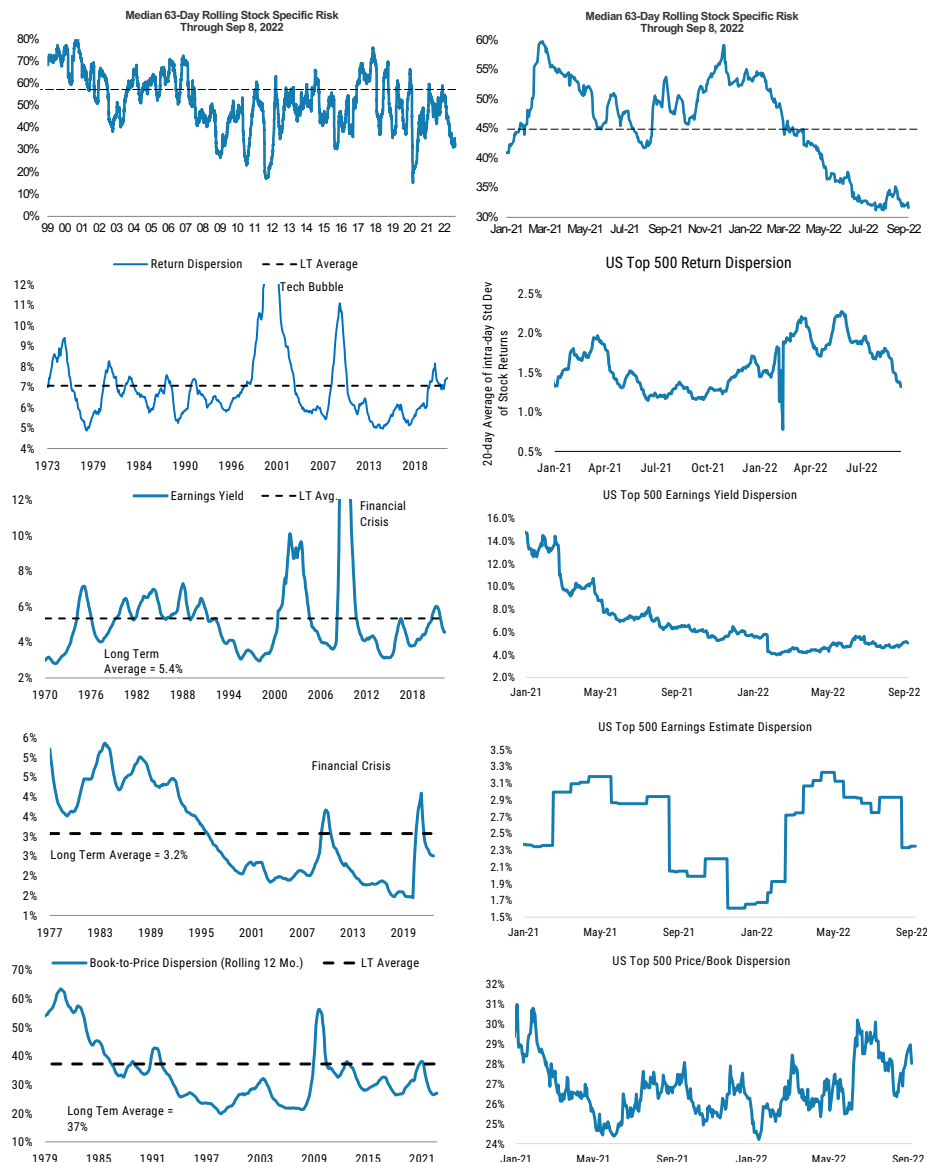
Source: ClariFi, Morgan Stanley Research

We include an extensive list of factors and their returns in Exhibit 15. We break down the factor spread return by their long and short portfolio and display the top and bottom performing portfolio legs last month in Exhibit 16.



In [Exhibit 17](#), we monitor a number of dispersion metrics on a long-term and short-term basis. For most forms of dispersion, 2021 marked a local peak with these measures now back at or below long-term averages. Stock specific risk has rebounded slightly post 2Q earnings but remains historically low (7th percentile) as geopolitical uncertainty and macro risk continue to weigh on equities broadly. Return dispersion remains elevated relative to the post-GFC cycle but has ticked lower since mid-year. Earnings estimate dispersion remains elevated as forward guidance from 2Q earnings is baked into forecasts.

**Exhibit 17: US Top 500 Dispersion Metrics: Long-term and Short-Term**



Source: Clarifi, Morgan Stanley Research

We also monitor these dispersion metrics on a percentile basis relative to history ([Exhibit 18](#)). Return dispersion is near historical average levels while earnings yield dispersion is slightly above. While S&P 500 dispersion metrics remain close to median levels, industry groups show wide variance among the various metrics. There's high dispersion in Food, Beverage & Tobacco, BioPharma, and Media & Entertainment while lower dispersion

Levels in Household & Personal Products and Utilities.

**Exhibit 18:** Historical Dispersion Metrics by Industry Group

	Return Dispersion	Earning Yield Dispersion	Book/Price Dispersion	Earnings Estimate Dispersion
<b>S&amp;P 500</b>	53%	68%	42%	67%
Energy	73%	73%	32%	45%
Materials	66%	93%	58%	55%
Capital Goods	52%	75%	68%	21%
Commercial & Professional Services	35%	36%	23%	71%
Transportation	41%	70%	24%	87%
Automobiles & Components	68%	85%	79%	66%
Consumer Durables & Apparel	40%	89%	97%	89%
Consumer Services	17%	85%	18%	52%
Retailing	12%	82%	14%	51%
Food & Staples Retailing	62%	90%	98%	56%
Food, Beverage & Tobacco	86%	71%	55%	94%
Household & Personal Products	14%	30%	17%	10%
Health Care Equipment & Services	53%	47%	47%	26%
Pharma, Biotech & Life Sciences	66%	83%	91%	73%
Banks	59%	58%	44%	63%
Diversified Financials	29%	87%	52%	56%
Insurance	6%	72%	34%	74%
Software & Services	47%	78%	86%	58%
Technology Hardware & Equipment	16%	79%	88%	12%
Semiconductors & Semi Equipment	58%	68%	85%	11%
Telecommunication Services	12%	63%	35%	32%
Media & Entertainment	66%	59%	85%	84%
Utilities	65%	26%	28%	4%
Real Estate	73%	44%	69%	61%

Source: Clarifi, Morgan Stanley Research

# Fresh Money Buy List

**Exhibit 19: Fresh Money Buy List - Stats & Performance**

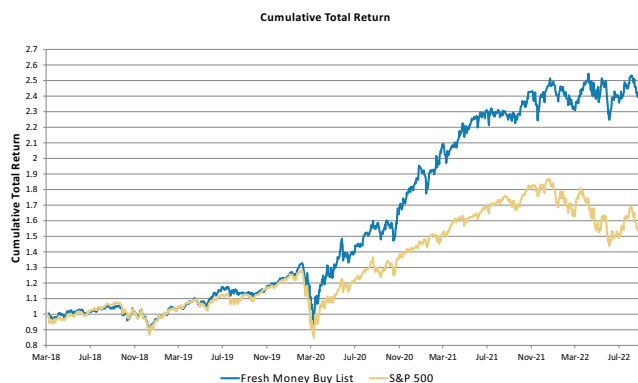
Company Name	Ticker	MS Rating	Sector	Market Cap (\$Bn)	Price	MS PT	% to MS PT	MS Analyst	Date Added	Total Return Since Inclusion	
										Absolute	Rel. to S&P
AT&T, Inc.	T	Overweight	Communication Services	\$121.0	\$16.99	22.00	29.5%	Flannery, Simon	12/20/2021	(0.8%)	10.6%
CenterPoint Energy Inc	CNP	Overweight	Utilities	\$20.6	\$32.71	34.00	3.9%	Arcaro, David	3/21/2022	13.8%	22.4%
Coca-Cola Co.	KO	Overweight	Consumer Staples	\$268.7	\$62.13	74.00	19.1%	Mohsenian, Dara	3/28/2022	1.7%	11.9%
Exxon Mobil Corporation	XOM	Overweight	Energy	\$399.1	\$95.75	113.00	18.0%	McDermott, Devin	2/22/2021	96.8%	90.7%
Humana Inc	HUM	Equal-Weight	Health Care	\$61.6	\$486.70	494.00	1.5%	Ha, Michael	7/19/2018	57.8%	3.3%
McDonald's Corporation	MCD	Overweight	Consumer Discretionary	\$190.4	\$258.83	285.00	10.1%	Glass, John	10/18/2021	9.2%	17.4%
Mondelez International Inc	MDLZ	Overweight	Consumer Staples	\$83.8	\$61.18	70.00	14.4%	Kaufman, Pamela	7/19/2021	(2.6%)	2.2%
SBA Communications	SBAC	Overweight	Real Estate	\$35.5	\$329.18	361.00	9.7%	Flannery, Simon	6/7/2021	6.3%	8.8%
Simon Property Group Inc	SPG	Overweight	Real Estate	\$33.9	\$103.53	131.00	26.5%	Kamdern, Ronald	2/16/2021	3.6%	(1.8%)
<b>Current List Performance</b>											
Average (Eq. Weight)				\$135.0			14.8%			20.7%	18.4%
Median				\$83.8			14.4%			6.3%	10.6%
% Positive Returns (Abs. / Rel.)										78%	89%
% Negative Returns (Abs. / Rel.)										22%	11%
Avg. Hold Period (Months)											16.5
<b>All Time List Performance</b>											
Average (Eq. Weight)										31.3%	15.9%
Median										15.1%	10.6%
% Positive Returns (Abs. / Rel.)										76%	62%
% Negative Returns (Abs. / Rel.)										24%	38%
Avg. Hold Period (Months)											14.5

Performance returns shown above and below represent local currency total returns, including dividends and excluding brokerage commission. Returns are calculated using the closing price on the last trading day before the date shown in the "Date Added" column through close on the last trading day prior to publication of this report for stocks currently on the list and through close on the day of removal for stocks formerly on the list. These figures are not audited. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

++ Rating and other information has been removed from consideration in this report because, under applicable law and/or Morgan Stanley policy, Morgan Stanley may be precluded from issuing such information with respect to this company at this time.

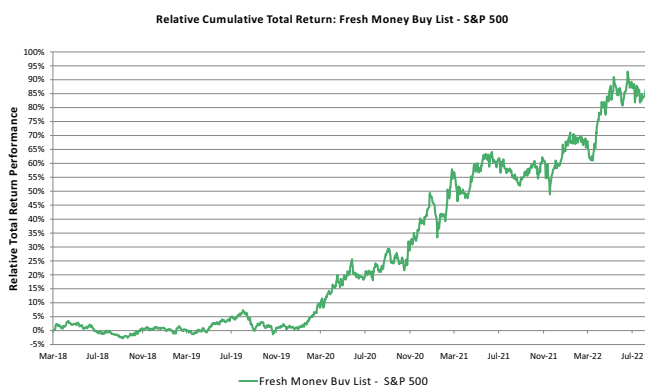
Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research estimates.

**Exhibit 20: Fresh Money Buy List & S&P 500 Cumulative Total Return**



Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research.

**Exhibit 21: Fresh Money Buy List / S&P 500 Cumulative Relative Return**



Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research.



**CenterPoint Energy (CNP), David Arcaro**

- **Highlighting four key themes** that will drive utility value creation: 1) We see underappreciated renewables growth driving further upside for developers and utilities with ambitious decarbonization plans. 2) Climate risk will be a persistent source of discounts for companies in challenging regions. 3) Attractive Independent Power Producer (IPP) cash flow is stronger and lower risk than appreciated, offering appealing investment cases and financial flexibility across the group. 4) Combination of bill affordability + regulatory backdrop will together be important factors influencing growth prospects.
- **Regulated utilities.** We divide our Overweight ratings into three categories that frame the thesis: Core holdings where we see above-average, low-risk growth and constructive regulation at an attractive price — ATO, CNP, DTE, EXC. Renewables plays where solar, wind, storage, and hydrogen growth are poised to accelerate further on the heels of the Inflation Reduction Act — AEP, AES, NEE. Discount names with a path to recovery — FE and PEG.

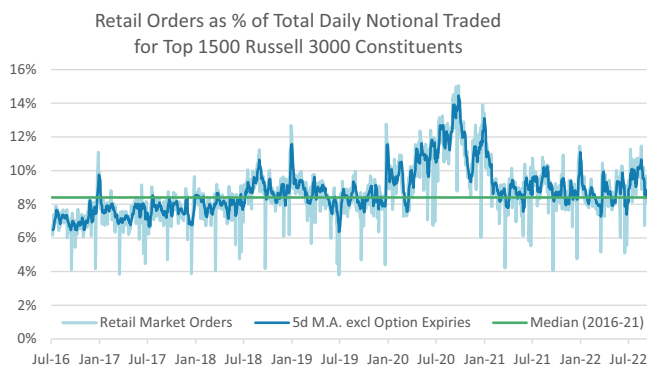
# What's Retail Doing?

Our Quantitative Equity Strategy team recently introduced a novel way to track the activity of retail traders using publicly available data. We provide a few updates and key observations on the retail trader using this approach.

A few key observations:

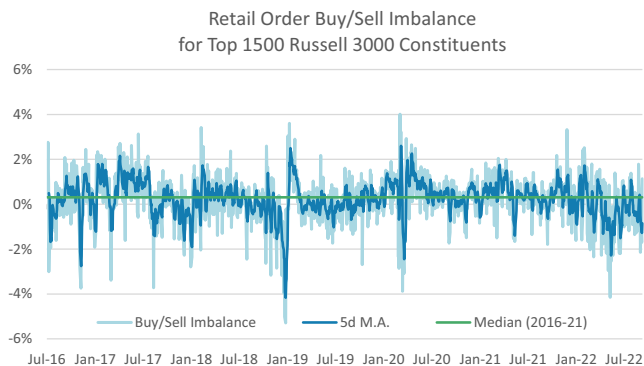
- Retail participation is currently at 8.8% of the total market volume, and at 63rd %ile relative to the last 5 years.
- Order imbalance remains negative last week. It currently sits at -0.9% or 7th percentile relative to the last 5 years.
- Imbalance is negative on sector level, except Industrials. It is most Negative relative to history in Tech (3rd %ile). Staples and Real Estate is muted.

**Exhibit 22:** Retail orders as a % of notional traded above median



Source: Morgan Stanley Research, Morgan Stanley Quantitative and Derivative Strategies, Compustat

**Exhibit 23:** ... and negative in order imbalance



Source: Morgan Stanley Research, Morgan Stanley Quantitative and Derivative Strategies, Compustat

Exhibit 24: Retail's buy/sell imbalance is most negative in Tech

Sector	Retail Participation			Buy/Sell Imbalance		
	2016-22 Median	Current	p-tile	2016-22 Median	Current	p-tile
Energy	6.8%	8.2%	0.80	-0.28%	-1.0%	0.29
Materials	5.6%	5.3%	0.37	0.5%	-0.7%	0.14
Industrials	6.6%	5.1%	0.02	0.0%	0.2%	0.59
Consumer Discretionary	11.3%	12.4%	0.69	0.6%	-0.3%	0.12
Consumer Staples	6.0%	4.4%	0.04	-0.5%	0.0%	0.61
Health Care	5.9%	4.0%	0.03	-0.4%	-0.5%	0.48
Financials	5.6%	5.2%	0.30	0.0%	-0.7%	0.29
Information Technology	10.9%	12.3%	0.82	0.5%	-1.4%	0.03
Communication Services	9.0%	10.3%	0.60	0.3%	-0.7%	0.19
Utilities	3.8%	3.2%	0.18	-1.2%	-0.3%	0.71
Real Estate	3.5%	3.0%	0.15	0.5%	0.0%	0.39
<b>Model Universe (Top 1500)</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>0.07</b>

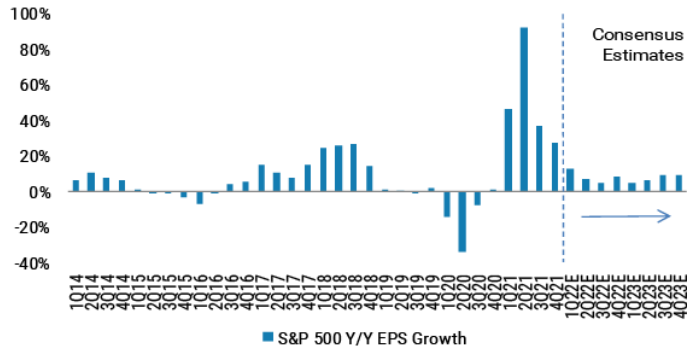
Source: Morgan Stanley Research, Morgan Stanley Quantitative and Derivative Strategies, Compustat

For more on the methodology, please see [Quantitative Equity Research: The Rise of the Retail Trader \(30 Jun 2021\)](#).

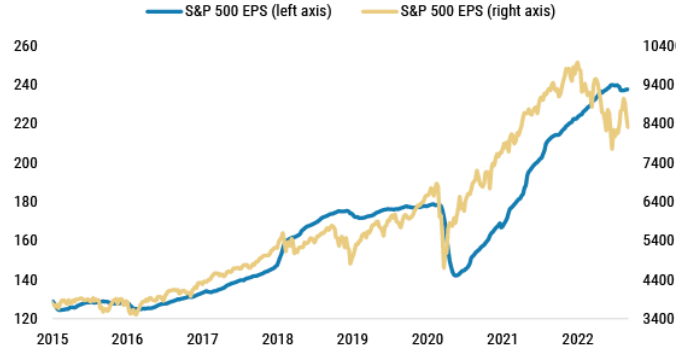
# Weekly Charts to Watch

## Exhibit 25: US Earnings Snapshot

S&P 500 Y/Y EPS Growth



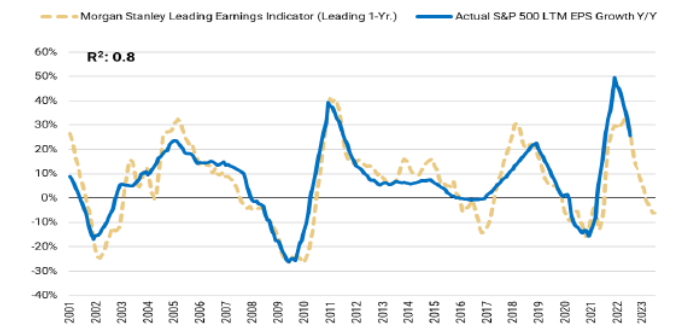
S&P 500 NTM EPS vs. Total Return Level



S&P 500 Earnings Revisions Breadth



US Leading Earnings Indicator



Source: Refinitiv, FactSet, Morgan Stanley Research. Top and bottom left: As of September 9, 2022 Bottom right As of August 1, 2022. MS Leading Earnings Indicator is a macro factor based earnings model that leads actual earnings growth by one year with a 0.7 12-month leading correlation. Note: S&P 500 fundamental data used post March 1993; Top 500 by market cap data used before 1993. LTM equity risk premium average is since 1920. ERP based on forward earnings yield and 10-year Treasury Yield.

## Exhibit 26: S&P 500 Price Target

### Morgan Stanley S&P 500 June 2023 Price Target

Landscape	Earnings	Multiple	Price Target	Upside / Downside
Bull Case	\$244	18.2x	4,450	9.4%
Base Case	\$220	17.7x	3,900	-4.1%
Bear Case	\$205	16.3x	3,350	-17.6%

Current S&P 500 Price as of: 9/9/2022 4,067

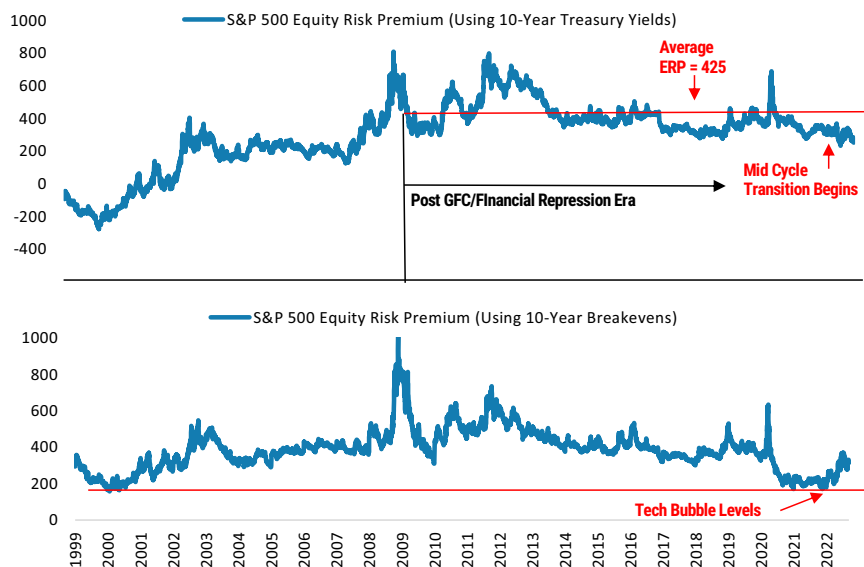
Note: We use June 2023 forward earnings to project our price target which takes into account our June '24 earnings forecast (currently \$220 base case). Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 27: Sector Ratings

Morgan Stanley Sector Recommendations			
Overweight	Utilities	Health Care	Real Estate
	Comm. Services	Energy	Industrials
Neutral	Materials	Staples	Tech ex Hardware
	Financials		
	Discretionary	Tech Hardware	
Underweight			

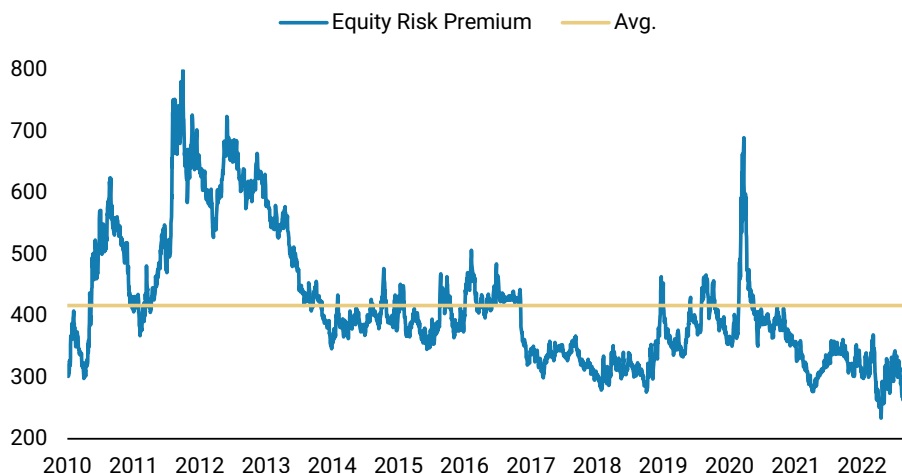
Source: Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 28: S&P 500 Equity Risk Premium using Nominal Rates and Breakevens



Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research. As of September 9, 2022

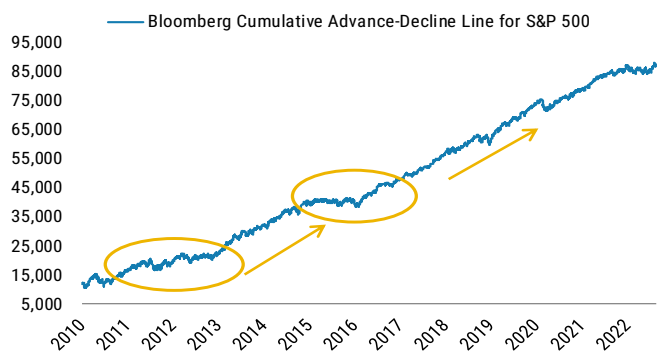
Exhibit 29: Equity Risk Premium is Below Post-GFC Average



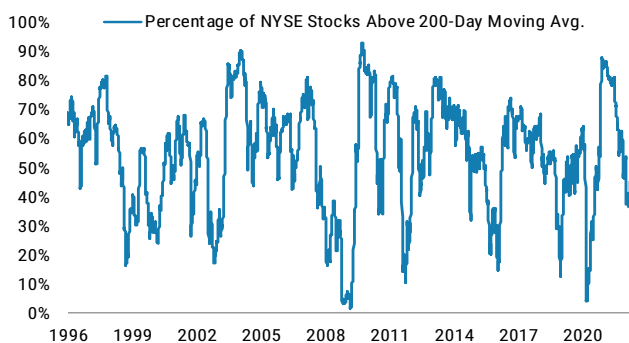
Note: Equity risk premium is calculated as the S&P 500 forward 12M earnings yield minus the nominal 10-Year Treasury.  
Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

Exhibit 30: US Equity Market Technicals and Financial Conditions

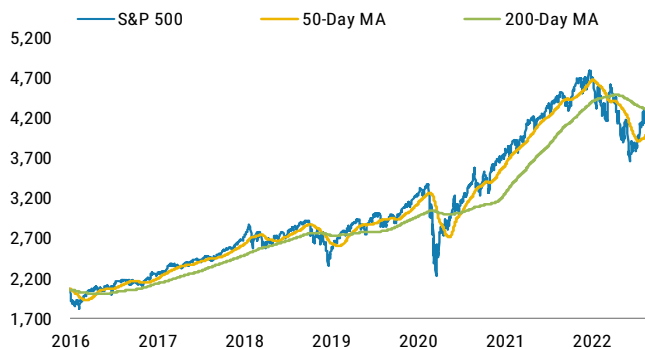
S&P 500 Cumulative Advance-Dcline



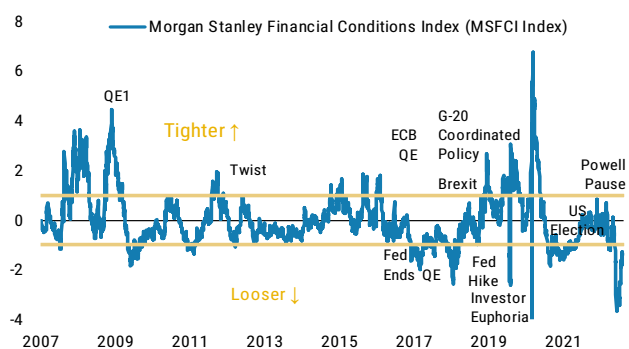
S&P 500 Percent Members Above 200-Day Moving Average



S&P 500 with Moving Averages

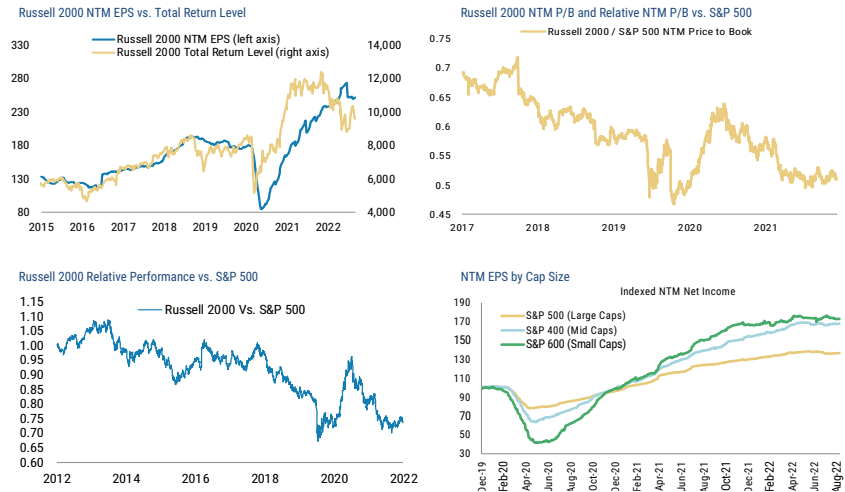


Morgan Stanley Financial Conditions Index



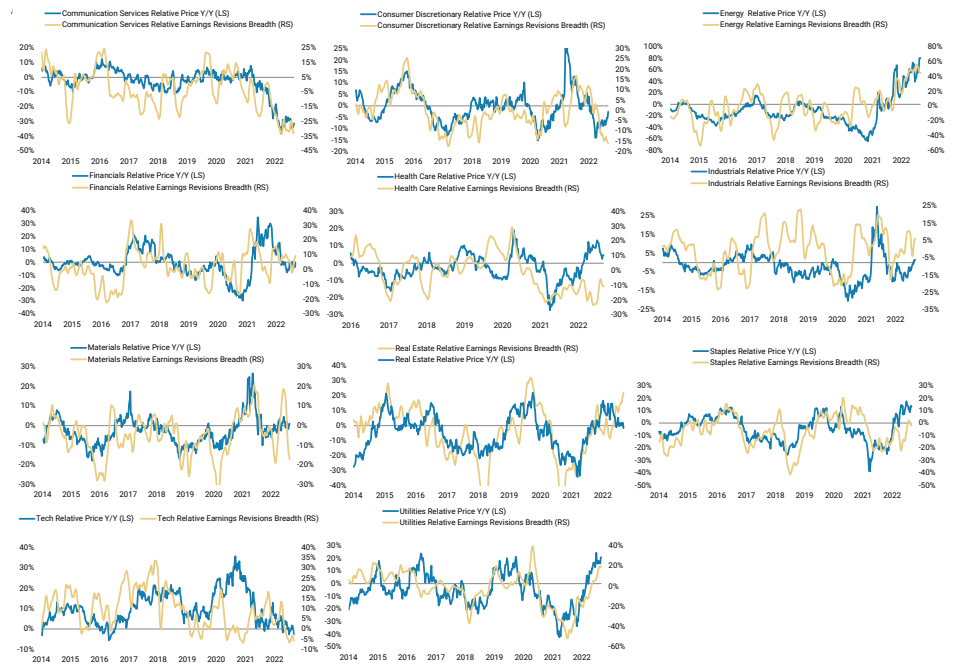
Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research. All: As of September 9, 2022

**Exhibit 31: US Small Cap Equities**



Source: FactSet, Morgan Stanley Research. As of September 9, 2022

**Exhibit 32: Earnings Revisions Breadth vs YoY Performance**



Source: FactSet, Morgan Stanley Research. As of September 9, 2022

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(as of August 31, 2022)

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Not-Rated to hold and Underweight to sell recommendations, respectively.

STOCK RATING CATEGORY	COVERAGE UNIVERSE		INVESTMENT BANKING CLIENTS (IBC)			OTHER MATERIAL INVESTMENT SERVICES CLIENTS (MISC)	
	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL IBC	% OF RATING CATEGORY	COUNT	% OF TOTAL OTHER MISC
<b>Overweight/Buy</b>	<b>1356</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Equal-weight/Hold</b>	<b>1589</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Not-Rated/Hold</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Underweight/Sell</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,555</b>		<b>743</b>			<b>1537</b>	

Data include common stock and ADRs currently assigned ratings. Investment Banking Clients are companies from whom Morgan Stanley received investment banking compensation in the last 12 months. Due to rounding off of decimals, the percentages provided in the "% of total" column may not add up to exactly 100 percent.

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Attractive (A): The analyst expects the performance of his or her industry coverage universe over the next 12-18 months to be attractive vs. the relevant broad market benchmark, as indicated below.

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Benchmarks for each region are as follows: North America - S&P 500; Latin America - relevant MSCI country index or MSCI Latin America Index; Europe - MSCI Europe; Japan - TOPIX; Asia - relevant MSCI country index or MSCI sub-regional index or MSCI AC Asia Pacific ex Japan Index.

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