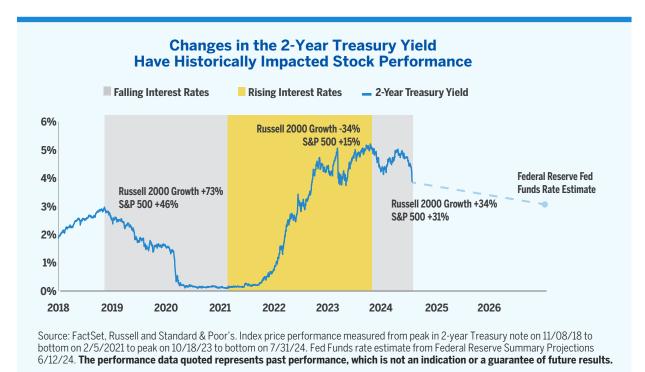


Small Cap Sensitivity

While much of the market's attention has been fixated on the strength of large cap stock performance, small cap stocks have remained neglected, unable to break their prior all-time highs since November 2021. Why have small caps trailed large caps over the past few years, and what could potentially boost small cap returns going forward?



- Long-duration securities are those whose cash flows are expected to be received further out in the future, such as long maturity bonds. Growth equities—particularly small cap growth equities—can also be thought of as long-duration securities, focusing on expanding their business and market share, and less on near-term profitability.
- In the chart above, the yield on the U.S. 2-year treasury note has swung considerably over the past couple of years, in large part in response to changes in inflation expectations and resulting policy rates. These abrupt changes in interest rates have had a considerable impact on longer duration small cap growth stocks, which often underperform large caps when interest rates rise. In fact, since the beginning of 2021, small cap growth stocks (as represented by the Russell 2000 Growth) have had a -74% correlation to the yield of the U.S. 2-year treasury note, while large cap stocks (as represented by the S&P 500) actually had a positive correlation.
- As of July 31, 2024, the S&P SmallCap 600 Growth Index was trading at a 20% discount to the S&P 500 Index on a P/E basis, despite historically trading at an 11% premium.¹ Should interest rates continue to fall and small growth stocks improve their fundamentals more rapidly than the broader market, we believe there's a chance for small cap growth stocks to outperform large caps.² That said, while interest rates may be an important short-term consideration, we believe that productivity and innovation are the key drivers of corporate earnings growth, which determine stock performance over the long-term.



¹The historical average was calculated from September 1998 through July 2024 on a monthly basis.

2As of 12/31/23, consensus cumulative EPS growth for the Russell 2000 Growth Index is estimated to grow 71% through 2026, while the S&P 500 is estimated to grow 45%.

Correlation is a statistical measure that shows how two variables are related to each other. If two variables are correlated, it means that they tend to move together in some way. The strength of the correlation is measured by a number called the correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to 1. A value of 0 indicates no correlation, a value of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation (i.e., as one variable increases, the other increases as well), and a value of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation (i.e., as one variable increases).

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