



Market Commentary May 14, 2018

Dear Investors:

Splash!

How do employers lure staff in a tightening labor market? The curly tail grubs and spinnies of the business world are higher wages and better benefits.

During the past decade, the employment picture in the United States has shifted dramatically. In mid-2009, 15.4 million unemployed Americans were chasing 2.2 million available jobs. At the end of 2017, just 6.6 million Americans were unemployed, and employers were casting eagerly to fill 6.6 million open jobs, reports *Barron's*.

Bloomberg offered some colorful examples:

“Want ads for truck drivers to haul crude oil in Texas are touting salaries as high as \$150,000 a year. Some nurses are getting \$25,000 signing bonuses. The U.S. unemployment rate just fell to 3.9 percent, one tick away from its lowest since the 1960s. And, on May 8, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported there are 6.5 million unfilled jobs in the United States, the most on record. Some employers say they’re feeling the squeeze.”

Clearly, wages are moving higher for some types of jobs, but they’re not increasing everywhere. Last week, the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* reported real average hourly earnings for all employees were flat from March to April. ‘Real wages’ mean wages after inflation is subtracted.

The *National Federation of Independent Business’ Small Business Optimism Index* hit a record high in April, as small companies reported record profits. It was the 17th consecutive month of record optimism.

Major U.S. stock market indices moved higher last week as did many global stock market indices.

4100 Embassy Parkway, Suite 100, Akron, Ohio 44333-1783
330-434-2000 / Fax: 330-665-1515
www.symphony-financial.com

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Data as of 5/11/18	1-Week	Y-T-D	1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year
Standard & Poor's 500 (Domestic Stocks)	2.4%	2.0%	13.9%	9.0%	10.8%	6.9%
Dow Jones Global ex-U.S.	1.7	0.4	12.8	3.3	3.5	0.2
10-year Treasury Note (Yield Only)	3.0	NA	2.4	2.3	1.9	3.8
Gold (per ounce)	1.1	2.2	8.3	3.7	-1.5	4.1
Bloomberg Commodity Index	0.1	2.1	8.3	-4.5	-7.4	-8.3
DJ Equity All REIT Total Return Index	1.2	-3.7	3.1	6.0	5.8	6.4

S&P 500, Dow Jones Global ex-US, Gold, Bloomberg Commodity Index returns exclude reinvested dividends (gold does not pay a dividend) and the three-, five-, and 10-year returns are annualized; the DJ Equity All REIT Total Return Index does include reinvested dividends and the three-, five-, and 10-year returns are annualized; and the 10-year Treasury Note is simply the yield at the close of the day on each of the historical time periods.

Sources: Yahoo! Finance, Barron's, djindexes.com, London Bullion Market Association.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indices are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. N/A means not applicable.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU BECAME A PARENT?

Mother's Day is behind us and Father's Day is ahead. It seems like a good time to consider the challenges and responsibilities of parenting.

National Public Radio's Science Desk introduced a new series called, 'How To Raise A Human.' They kicked off the show by asking bloggers, "What's the one thing you wish someone had told you before you became a parent?" Here are a few of the answers:

"I wish someone told me that there are going to be moments where you're playing chess with speed metal music in your ears. You're trying to make intricate choices but there's so much chaos."

--Alan Lawrence, *That Dad Blog*

"I wish someone had told me to block out the outside voices that come when you become a parent – and pay more attention to the children and what their needs are."

--Saira Siddiqui, *Confessions of a Muslim Mom*

"I wish someone had told me that even though your life changes when you become a parent, you still get to create the path you want."

--Drea Duclos, *OhDearDrea*

"Parents always told me to brace myself for the teen years, because that's when they'll hate you, be disrespectful to you, be sassy, talk back to you, be rude, be generally awful people. But I wish that someone had told me that's completely wrong."

--Karen Walrond, *Chookooloonks*

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One of the many challenges parents face is helping their children understand financial issues. If you would like some ideas about how to talk with your children about money, contact your financial professional.

Weekly Focus – Think About It

“I’m relieved I don’t work at SNL [right now]...The level of outrage is so high. It feels like talking to anyone, anywhere in 2018 is just landmine hopscotch.”

--*Tina Fey, American actress, comedian, writer, and producer*

Best regards,

SYMPHONY FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.

P.S. Please feel free to forward this commentary to family, friends, or colleagues. If you would like us to add them to the list, please reply to this email with their email address and we will ask for their permission to be added.

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- * Government bonds and Treasury Bills are guaranteed by the U.S. government as to the timely payment of principal and interest and, if held to maturity, offer a fixed rate of return and fixed principal value. However, the value of fund shares is not guaranteed and will fluctuate.
- * Corporate bonds are considered higher risk than government bonds but normally offer a higher yield and are subject to market, interest rate and credit risk as well as additional risks based on the quality of issuer coupon rate, price, yield, maturity, and redemption features.
- * The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. You cannot invest directly in this index.
- * All indexes referenced are unmanaged. Unmanaged index returns do not reflect fees, expenses, or sales charges. Index performance is not indicative of the performance of any investment.
- * The Dow Jones Global ex-U.S. Index covers approximately 95% of the market capitalization of the 45 developed and emerging countries included in the Index.
- * The 10-year Treasury Note represents debt owed by the United States Treasury to the public. Since the U.S. Government is seen as a risk-free borrower, investors use the 10-year Treasury Note as a benchmark for the long-term bond market.
- * Gold represents the afternoon gold price as reported by the London Bullion Market Association. The gold price is set twice daily by the London Gold Fixing Company at 10:30 and 15:00 and is expressed in U.S. dollars per fine troy ounce.
- * The Bloomberg Commodity Index is designed to be a highly liquid and diversified benchmark for the commodity futures market. The Index is composed of futures contracts on 19 physical commodities and was launched on July 14, 1998.
- * The DJ Equity All REIT Total Return Index measures the total return performance of the equity subcategory of the Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) industry as calculated by Dow Jones.
- * Yahoo! Finance is the source for any reference to the performance of an index between two specific periods.
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- * You cannot invest directly in an index.
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- * Consult your financial professional before making any investment decision.

Sources:

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