

## US Small Cap Equity Strategy

March 31, 2026

### Objective

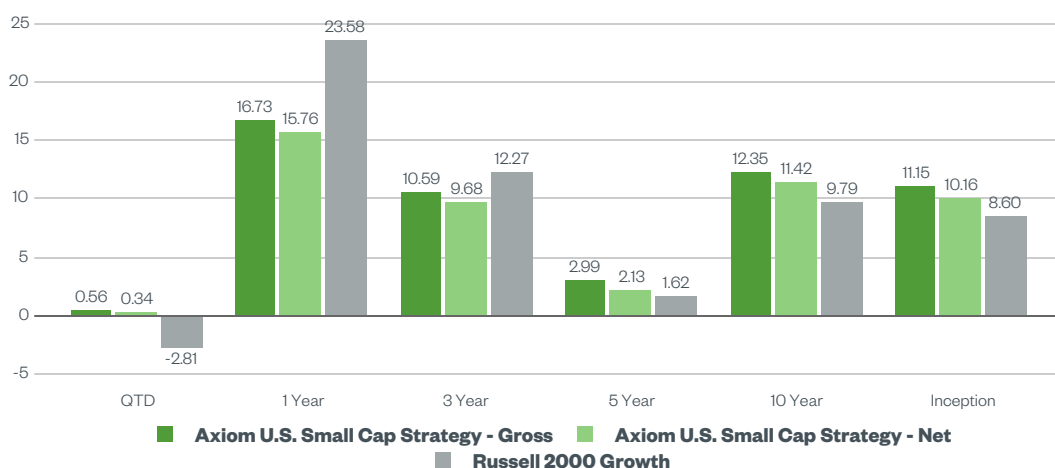
The U.S. Small Cap Equity Strategy seeks to compound long-term returns by focusing its investments in smaller capitalization companies with dynamic growth opportunities in the U.S.

### Why Invest?

- Clearly defined, transparent, and consistent process
- Active risk management with disciplined portfolio construction
- Driven by fundamentals, supported by evidence
- Advancing positive change through active engagement

### Annualized Returns (%)

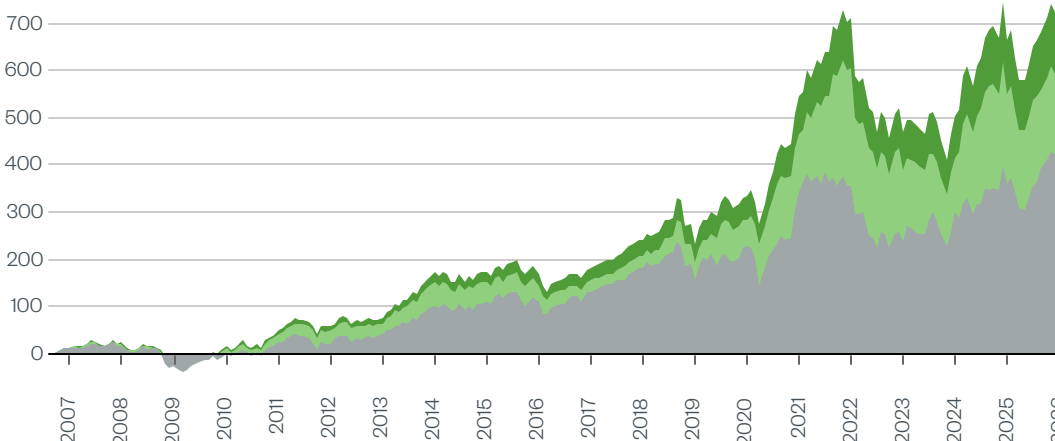
As of 3/31/26



\*Past performance is not indicative of future results, and the principal value and investment return will fluctuate, so that you may have a gain or loss when you sell your units

### Cumulative Returns (%)

As of 3/31/26



### Strategy Facts

#### Inception

September 1, 2006

#### Firm Assets

\$28.1 B\*

#### Strategy Assets

\$883 M\*

#### Benchmark

Russell 2000 Growth

### Portfolio Managers

#### David Kim, CFA

Portfolio Manager

#### Matthew Franco, CFA

Portfolio Manager

\*Assets include Assets Under Management (\$26.6B) & Assets Under Advisement (\$1.5B); Strategy Assets include Assets Under Management (\$714M) & Assets Under Advisement (\$170M).

\*\*SEI Trust Company (the "Trustee") serves as the Trustee of the Trust and maintains ultimate fiduciary authority over the management of, and the investments made in, the Fund. The Fund is part of a Collective Investment Trust (the "Trust") operated by the Trustee. The Trustee is a trust company organized under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a wholly owned subsidiary of SEI Investments Company (SEI). Axiom CIT Trusts are trusts for the collective investment of assets of participating tax qualified pension and profit sharing plans and related trusts, and governmental plans as more fully described in the Declaration of Trust. As bank collective trusts, the Axiom CIT Trusts are exempt from registration as an investment company. Axiom CIT Trusts are managed by SEI Trust Company, the trustee, based on the investment advice of Axiom Investors, LLC, the investment adviser to the trusts.

\*\*\*The John Hancock Small Cap Dynamic Growth Fund is a John Hancock Fund subadvised by Axiom Investors and distributed by John Hancock. The Fund is modeled after Axiom's US Small Cap Equity Strategy. For information on the Fund, please call 1-800-225-6020. SEI Trust Company is not affiliated with John Hancock.

Source: Factset and Axiom. There can be no assurance that the Strategy will continue to hold these positions or that weightings do not change after the as of date stated. Please refer to the attached GIPS compliant presentation for complete performance information.

## Top 10 Holdings

As of 3/31/26

Security	Sector	% of Portfolio	% of Index
Ensign Group	Health Care	3.7	0.8
RBC Bearings Incorporated	Industrials	3.7	0.0
Casey's General Stores, Inc.	Consumer Staples	3.3	0.0
Advanced Energy Industries, Inc.	Information Technology	3.0	0.8
Fabrinet	Information Technology	2.9	1.3
Nova Measuring Instruments	Information Technology	2.8	0.0
FirstCash Holdings, Inc.	Financials	2.7	0.5
Viavi Solutions	Information Technology	2.6	0.5
Nextpower Inc. Class A	Industrials	2.5	0.9
Plexus Corp.	Information Technology	2.3	0.3

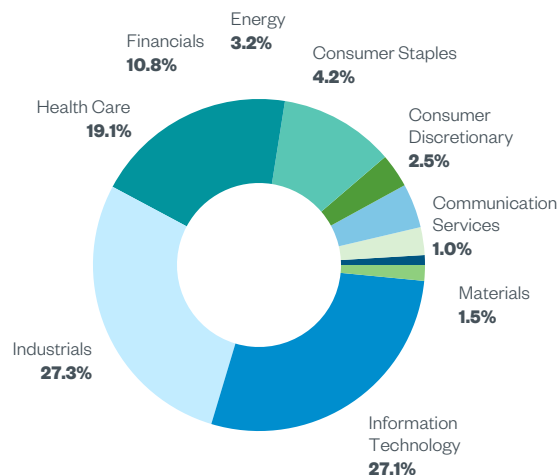
## Risk/Return Analysis & Portfolio Characteristics (%)

As of 3/31/26

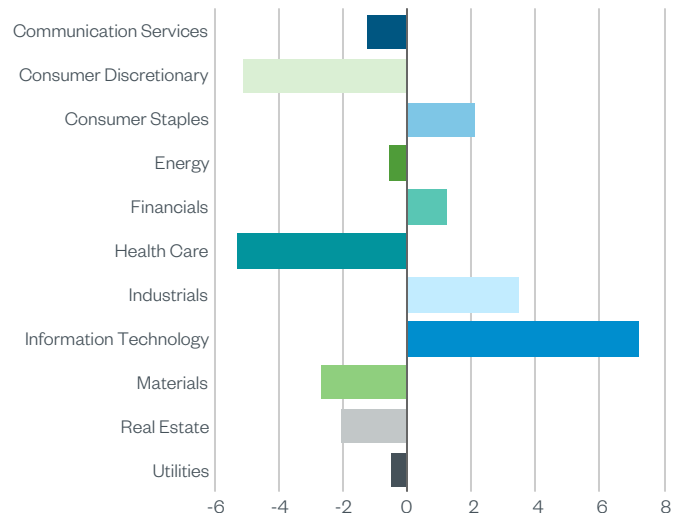
10 Year Statistics	Axiom (Gross)	Axiom (Net)	Index
Cumulative Return (%)	220.4	194.9	154.4
Annualized Return (%)	12.3	11.4	9.8
Annualized Excess Return (%)	2.6	1.6	--
Batting Average (% Quarterly)	50.0	50.0	--
Annualized Standard Deviation (%)	18.2	18.2	20.7
Tracking Error (%)	8.0	8.0	--
Information Ratio	0.3	0.2	--
Annualized Sortino Ratio	0.8	0.7	0.5
Upside Capture (% Quarterly)	86.7	80.8	-
Downside Capture (% Quarterly)	82.7	83.9	-

	Axiom	Index
Holdings	61	1107
% in Axiom Top 10 Holdings	29.6%	10.0%
Weighted Average Market Cap (\$B)	\$9.5	\$6.0
Median Market Cap (\$B)	\$5.4	\$1.2
Liquidity (\$M/Day)	\$156	\$152
Net Debt/Equity Ratio	10.6	29.8
Wgt. Avg. Carbon Intensity	82.9	182.5

## Sector Exposure (%)



## Sector Allocation vs. Index (%)



Index: Russell 2000 Growth

Currency: USD

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Source: Factset and Axiom.

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# Investing Ahead of the Curve



## Commentary

During the first quarter of 2026, the Axiom US Small Cap Equity Strategy ("Strategy") outperformed the Russell 2000 Growth Index ("Index") net of fees. The Strategy has outperformed the Index on a net of fees basis over the 5-year, 10-year and since inception periods.

US equity markets diverged sharply across market-cap segments and styles in Q1 2026. The quarter opened with continued strength from 2025, as small cap domestic equities sustained early outperformance relative to large caps through much of January and February. For the quarter, the S&P 500 Index declined -4.3% (-5.0% in March alone), lagging major asset classes. The Russell 2000 Index finished the quarter up +0.9% and the Russell Midcap Index up +1.3%, both outperforming the Russell 1000 Index which returned -4.2%. From a style perspective, the Russell 2000 Growth Index declined -2.8%, lagging the Russell 2000 Value Index which returned +5.0%.

The dominant macro event of the quarter was the outbreak of military conflict with Iran, Operation Epic Fury. Beginning on February 28, the United States and Israel struck key military and civilian infrastructure targets in Iran, killing Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and multiple senior officials. Iran retaliated by targeting US military infrastructure as well as broader energy, industrial and civilian infrastructure across the Gulf and wider Middle East, disrupting air travel and regional economic activity. WTI (West Texas Intermediate) crude oil surged +77% for the quarter, with Brent crude crossing \$110 per barrel by mid-March and up +94% during the quarter. The VIX (CBOE Volatility Index) jumped nearly +70%, its largest three-month move since COVID.

The US economy transitioned into a more challenging environment in Q1 2026, as the outperformance of 2025 was met by geopolitical headwinds and the release of delayed economic data. While real GDP growth remained resilient at +2.4% due to AI-related infrastructure investment and fiscal stimulus, progress on disinflation stalled with CPI (Consumer Price Index) rising to +3.25% following energy price spikes from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The labor market settled into a "low-hire, low-fire" state with unemployment at 4.3%, yet consumer sentiment plummeted to 53.3 as households grappled with surging costs and global conflict. A federal government shutdown delayed critical payroll and PCE (Personal Consumption Expenditures) data, forcing the Federal Reserve to maintain a "wait-and-see" posture and hold rates at 3.50%-3.75%.

Q4 2025 earnings season was strong. Roughly 73% of S&P 500 Index companies beat consensus earnings expectations, resulting in a year-over-year earnings growth of +14%, the fifth consecutive quarter of double-digit growth. Small cap followed suit, with the Russell 2000 Index earnings beat rate improving to 68% from 62% in Q3 2025. Full-year 2026 consensus calls for large cap earnings growth of approximately +17% and stronger small cap earnings growth of +20% year-over-year. While reported corporate earnings were strong, durability will depend on forward revision trends as geopolitical and inflationary pressures evolve.

Factor leadership within the Russell 2000 Growth Index created tailwinds for the Strategy in Q1 2026. High-beta cohorts, non-earners, and the smallest-capitalization names materially underperformed, with the highest-beta quintile falling -7.7%, non-earners declining -7.6%, and the smallest size quintile losing nearly -10%. With the low-quality cycle appearing to have peaked at year-end 2025 and the valuation spread between the highest and lowest-ROE (Return on Equity) quintiles remaining wide, the current environment favors continued quality factor leadership. Breadth has improved, but sustainability will require earnings follow-through and macro clarity not yet in evidence.

From a sector perspective, information technology was the largest relative contributor, led by Nova and Viavi Solutions, followed by industrials, led by RBC Bearings and Argan, and consumer staples, driven by Casey's General Stores. The primary detracting sectors on a relative basis were energy, real estate, and materials.

At the stock level, the primary relative contributors were Casey's General Stores, Nova, Viavi Solutions, RBC Bearings, and Argan. The largest detractors on a relative basis were Cushman & Wakefield, GeneDx, Modine Manufacturing, Huron Consulting Group, and Applied Optoelectronics. Certain positions were exited due to fundamental deterioration, while others remain under active monitoring as we assess any changes to their dynamic growth outlook.

The Iran conflict has shifted the 2026 outlook. Pre-war tailwinds including tax cuts, depreciation incentives, tariff clarity, and anticipated Fed rate cuts are being eroded by energy-driven inflation, supply chain challenges, and rising bond yields, with the 2-year Treasury yield now exceeding the Federal Funds rate. US interest expense at approximately 19% of tax receipts and estimated military costs of \$1 billion per day add further yield pressure, while elevated tariffs compound the energy shock across supply chains, input costs, and corporate confidence. The April 2 tariff announcements introduced a fresh layer of trade policy uncertainty weighing directly on future earnings visibility. We remain focused on businesses with durable growth, pricing power, and earnings visibility, well-positioned to navigate the current environment and capitalize as conditions stabilize.

Axiom remains committed to identifying quality small cap businesses with the demonstrated ability to sustain dynamic growth. We maintain a constructive medium-term outlook for the asset class, supported by attractive relative valuations and improving earnings trajectories. In an environment defined by economic and geopolitical complexity, our disciplined global bottom-up process remains our steadfast foundation. We continue to prioritize self-funding businesses capable of exceeding expectations and compounding shareholder value independent of the broader macroeconomic environment.

The information presented is not definitive investment advice, should not be relied on as such, and should not be viewed as a recommendation by Axiom. The securities presented are not representative of all of the securities purchased, sold or held for advisory clients, and it should not be assumed that investment in the securities identified was or will be profitable.

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# Investing Ahead of the Curve



## Footnotes and Disclaimers

	Composite return (gross of fees)	Composite return (net of fees)	Benchmark Total Return	No. of accounts	Market value (millions)	Total firm assets (millions)	% of firm assets (%)	Internal dispersion (%)	Composite 3-year standard deviation (%)	Benchmark 3-year standard deviation (%)
YTD '26	0.56%	0.34%	-2.81%	7	713.5	26,636.8	2.68	N/A	18.56	19.80
2025	2.94%	2.08%	13.01%	7	748.7	27,573.2	2.72	N/A	18.15	20.04
2024	26.88%	25.84%	15.15%	6	630.4	24,180.9	2.61	0.15	21.72	23.99
2023	6.07%	5.18%	18.66%	6	609.2	19,915.6	3.06	N/A	19.45	21.79
2022	-29.72%	-30.33%	-26.36%	≤ 5	182.2	16,580.9	1.10	N/A	21.87	26.20
2021	25.61%	24.58%	2.83%	≤ 5	249.9	18,639.7	1.34	N/A	17.06	23.07
2020	48.98%	47.77%	34.63%	≤ 5	242.7	18,535.9	1.31	N/A	20.74	25.10
2019	30.87%	29.80%	28.48%	≤ 5	204.3	13,458.1	1.52	N/A	15.67	16.37
2018	-2.70%	-3.51%	-9.31%	≤ 5	208.0	9,729.2	2.14	N/A	15.73	16.46
2017	21.02%	20.04%	22.17%	≤ 5	363.1	12,116.0	3.00	N/A	12.56	14.59
2016	5.52%	4.68%	11.32%	≤ 5	282.4	9,671.6	2.92	N/A	14.23	16.67

Fee schedule: First \$10 million: 0.80%; next \$15 million: 0.75%; Balance: 0.70%

**Firm Compliance Statement:** Axiom Investors LLC (the "Firm") claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. Axiom has been independently verified for the period September 1, 1998 to March 31, 2026. A firm that claims compliance with the GIPS standards must establish policies and procedures for complying with all the applicable requirements of the GIPS standards. Verification provides assurance on whether the firm's policies and procedures related to composite and pooled fund maintenance, as well as the calculation, presentation, and distribution of performance, have been designed in compliance with the GIPS standards and have been implemented on a firm-wide basis. The Axiom US Small Cap Equity composite has had a performance examination for the periods September 1, 2006 to March 31, 2026. The verification and performance examination reports are available upon request.

**Definition of the Firm:** The firm is currently defined for GIPS purposes as Axiom Investors, LLC (the "Firm") is a registered investment advisor under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940.

**Policies:** Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. Past performance does not predict or guarantee future results.

**Composite Description:** The US Small Cap Equity strategy (the "Composite") is designed for investors who seek to invest in a broadly diversified portfolio of small cap equities. Portfolios are invested in smaller capitalization equity and equity-related securities in companies located within the United States. Currencies may be actively managed to reduce portfolio volatility. The Composite represents the performance of all Institutional small cap style fee-paying, discretionary equity accounts, regardless of asset size and commingled fund(s). The Composite was initiated and created in September 2006. As of January 1, 2022 the composite name changed from US Small Cap Equity Composite - IPO Eligible to US Small Cap Equity Composite. Prior to January 1, 2022 the composite only included accounts that were eligible to invest in Initial Public Offerings. A list of composite descriptions, a list of limited distribution pooled fund descriptions, a list of offroad distribution pooled funds and performance results are available upon request.

**Benchmark Description:** The benchmark is the Russell 2000 Growth index, which is designed to measure the performance of the small cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. The benchmark is calculated on a total return basis and is free float-adjusted market cap weighted and unmanaged.

**Significant Cash Flow Policy:** Accounts with a cash flow greater than 20% of the portfolio market value are excluded for the month.

**Reporting Currency:** Valuations are computed and performance is reported in U.S. dollars.

**Fees:** Gross of fees returns are presented before management and custodial fees but after all trading expenses. Net of fees returns are calculated by deducting the highest fee from the monthly gross composite return which is expressed above in the stated fee schedule. Returns include the reinvestment of income. The fee schedule for the Axiom U.S. Small Cap Equity Portfolio, which is included in the US Small Cap Equity Composite is listed above. The total expense ratio as of December 31, 2025 was 0.49%. The Axiom U.S. Small Cap Equity Trust CIT, which is also included in the composite has an all-in fee (management fees & expenses) of 0.70%.

**Internal Dispersion:** Internal dispersion is calculated using the asset-weighted standard deviation of annual gross returns of those portfolios that were in the composite for the entire year. If 5 or less accounts, N/A is shown.

**Annualized Standard Deviation:** The three-year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite gross returns and the benchmark returns over the preceding 36-month period.

**Batting Average:** The number of periods that the portfolio outperforms (or matches) the benchmark divided by the total number of periods.

**Tracking Error:** The active risk of the portfolio. It determines the standard deviation of the excess returns between the portfolio and the benchmark. It is calculated by creating a new return series of the excess returns and then calculating the population standard deviation of that return series.

**Information Ratio:** A measure of consistency in excess return. The annualized excess return over a benchmark divided by the annualized standard deviation (population) of excess return.

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This may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Actual results could and likely will differ, sometimes materially, from those projected or anticipated.

We are not undertaking any obligation to update or revise any forward looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. You should not take any statements regarding past trends as a representation that trends or activities will continue in the future. Accordingly, you should not put undue reliance on these statements.

The information contained herein represents neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy any securities or investment service. This strategy will only be offered through appropriate documents, copies of which may be obtained upon request from InvestorServices@axiom-investors.com. Offers will not be made in any jurisdiction in which the making of an offer or the acceptance thereof would not be in compliance with the laws of such jurisdiction. Investors should read applicable materials carefully before making a decision to invest.

**Risks of investing in the strategy:**

**Potential loss of investment:** No guarantee or representation is made that the investment program used by Axiom will be successful. The strategy represents a speculative investment and involves a high degree of risk. An investment in the strategy should be discretionary capital set aside strictly for speculative purposes. Investors must have the financial ability, sophistication/experience and willingness to bear the risks of an investment in the strategy. An investment in the strategy is not suitable for all investors. An investor could lose all or a substantial portion of his/her/its investment. Only qualified eligible investors may invest in the strategy. Because of the nature of the trading activities, the results of the strategy's operations may be volatile from month to month and from period to period. Accordingly, investors should understand that past performance is not indicative of future results.

**Fees and expenses:** The strategy may be subject to substantial charges for management, advisory and brokerage fees. It may be necessary for those accounts that are subject to these charges to make substantial trading profits to avoid depletion or exhaustion of their assets.

**Reliance on key persons:** The strategy's manager or advisor has total trading authority over the strategy and may be subject to various conflicts of interest. The death, disability or departure of the manager or advisor may have a material effect on the strategy.

**Counterparty and bankruptcy risk:** Although Axiom will attempt to limit its transactions to counterparties which are established, well-capitalized and creditworthy, the strategy will be subject to the risk of the inability of counterparties to perform with respect to transactions, whether due to insolvency, bankruptcy or other causes, which could subject the strategy to substantial losses.

**Volatile markets:** Market prices are difficult to predict and are influenced by many factors, including: changes in interest rates, weather conditions, government intervention and changes in national and international political and economic events.

The above summary is not a complete list of the risks, tax considerations and other important disclosures relating to Axiom products or services. Prospective clients should read all disclosure documents provided by Axiom relating to its products or services before engaging Axiom's advisory services.

The information herein is only current as of the date indicated, and may be superseded by subsequent market events or for other reasons.

The Axiom Investors Collective Investment Trust is a trust for the collective investment of assets of participating tax-qualified pension and profit sharing plans and related trusts, and governmental plans as more fully described in the Declaration of Trust. The Axiom Investors Trust is managed by SEI Trust Company, the trustee, based on the investment advice of Axiom Investors, the investment adviser to the trust. As a bank collective trust, the Axiom Investors Trust is exempt from registration as an investment company.