

## US Small Cap Equity Strategy

December 31, 2024

### Objective

The US Small Cap Equity Strategy seeks long term compounding by focusing its investments in smaller capitalization companies of US markets.

### Why Invest?

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

### Annualized Returns (%)

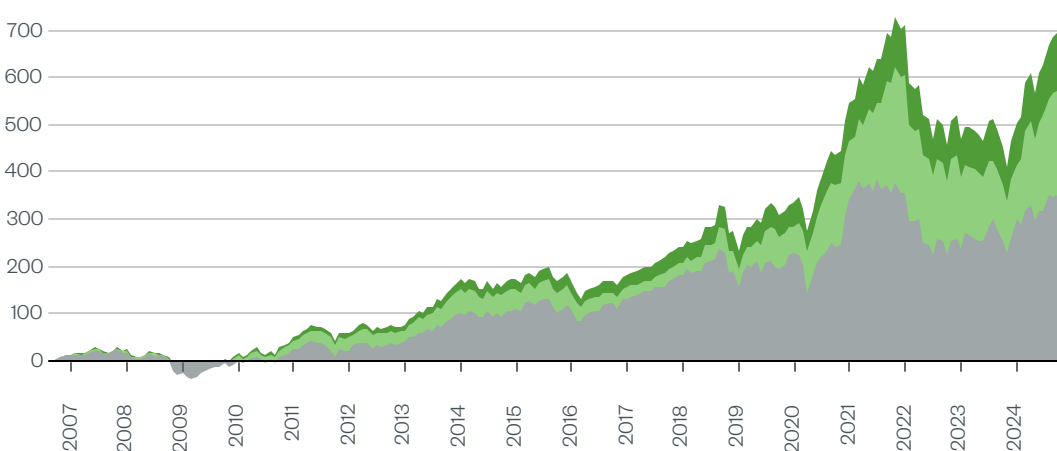
As of 12/31/24



\*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 12/31/24



### Strategy Facts

#### Inception

September 1, 2006

#### Firm Assets

\$24.7 B\*

#### Strategy Assets

\$707 M\*

#### Benchmark

Russell 2000 Growth

#### Vehicles

Separate account  
Commingled fund  
CIT\*\*  
UCITS  
Mutual Fund\*\*\*

### Portfolio Managers

#### David Kim, CFA

Portfolio Manager

#### Matthew Franco, CFA

Portfolio Manager

\*Assets include Assets Under Management (\$24.2B) & Assets Under Advisement (\$0.5B); Strategy Assets include Assets Under Management (\$630M) & Assets Under Advisement (\$77M).

\*\*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 CapEquity 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 12/31/24

Security	Sector	% of Portfolio	% of Index
Vertex, Inc. Class A	Information Technology	3.9	0.2
Q2 Holdings, Inc.	Information Technology	3.5	0.4
Stifel Financial Corp	Financials	3.3	0.0
Modine Manufacturing Company	Consumer Discretionary	3.1	0.4
Moelis & Co. Class A	Financials	3.1	0.4
Ensign Group	Health Care	3.0	0.5
Clearwater Analytics Holdings, Inc. Class A	Information Technology	3.0	0.4
ExlService Holdings, Inc.	Industrials	3.0	0.5
RadNet, Inc.	Health Care	3.0	0.3
Sterling Infrastructure, Inc.	Industrials	3.0	0.4

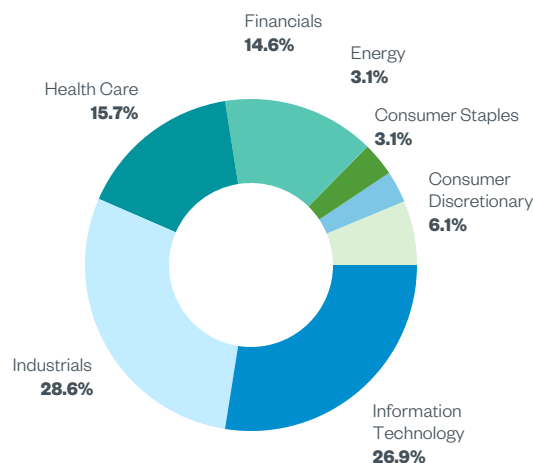
## Risk/Return Analysis & Portfolio Characteristics (%)

As of 12/31/24

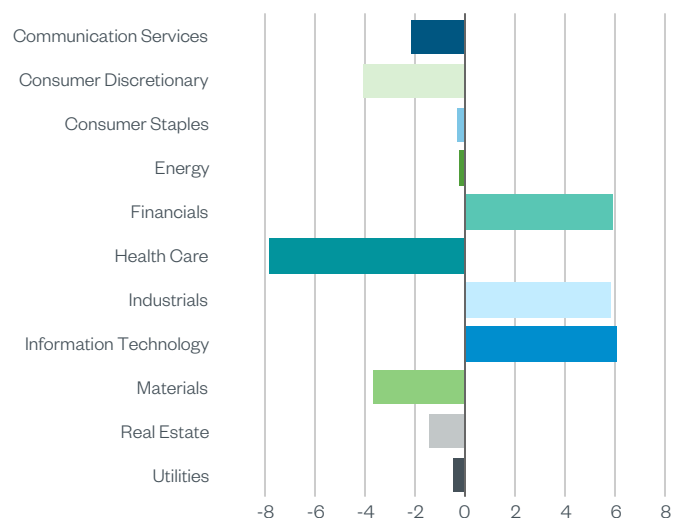
10 Year Statistics	Axiom (Gross)	Axiom (Net)	Index
Cumulative Return (%)	180.0	157.8	117.7
Annualized Return (%)	10.8	9.9	8.1
Annualized Excess Return (%)	2.8	1.8	--
Batting Average (% Quarterly)	52.5	52.5	--
Annualized Standard Deviation (%)	18.4	18.4	21.1
Tracking Error (%)	8.0	8.0	--
Information Ratio	0.3	0.2	--
Annualized Sortino Ratio	0.7	0.7	0.4
Upside Capture (% Quarterly)	90.2	84.0	-
Downside Capture (% Quarterly)	84.4	85.6	-

	Axiom	Index
Holdings	54	1117
% in Axiom Top 10 Holdings	31.8%	3.6%
Weighted Average Market Cap (\$B)	\$7.0	\$4.3
Median Market Cap (\$B)	\$6.1	\$1.2
Liquidity (\$M/Day)	\$60	\$66
Net Debt/Equity Ratio	21.1	37.5
Wgt. Avg. Carbon Intensity	58.7	76.3

## Sector Exposure (%)



## Sector Allocation vs. Index (%)



Index: Russell 2000 Growth

Currency: USD

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. 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.

# Investing Ahead of the Curve



## Commentary

During the fourth quarter 2024, the Axiom US Small Cap Equity Strategy ("Strategy") underperformed the Russell 2000 Growth Index ("Index") net of fees. The Strategy has outperformed the Index on a net of fees basis over the 1-year, 5-year, 10-year, and since inception periods.

Axiom begins its second quarter-century having delivered strong investment returns across our platform of dynamic growth strategies and, as a result, achieving \$25 billion in assets at the start of 2025. This milestone is notable because it reinforces Axiom's ability to sustain our organizational edge by continuously adding to our capabilities across our investment, client partnership, risk management, and fiduciary teams. We have also steadily advanced our technological resources, enhancing our investment tools, including Axware, while streamlining and automating operational processes. Axiom's disciplined, forward-looking, dynamic growth approach is increasingly distinctive in today's market where over 60% of assets are passively managed and much of the remaining capital is deployed through non-fundamental quant strategies or short-term, trading-oriented approaches underscoring Axiom's differentiation and potential to add value. We believe a substantial core allocation to actively managed growth equities will continue to be foundational for achieving attractive long-term compounded returns. Given the structural tailwinds to dynamic growth equity investing (see [Axiom's 4D's presentation](#)), Axiom's sustained ability to generate significant value through agile, ahead of the curve, fact-based stock selection appears increasingly compelling. Recently, we have even begun to observe large institutions reconsidering their over-commitment to private equity allocations in favor of public market growth stocks to better achieve their risk and return objectives with enhanced liquidity and transparency. Our client-aligned partnership structure and unwavering focus on investment excellence position Axiom to remain a strong partner for longer-term oriented investors seeking to capitalize on ongoing and emerging global market opportunities.

US Small cap growth stocks rose in the final quarter of 2024. The post-election rally was driven by optimism around potential tax cuts, deregulation, and tariff reforms designed to boost corporate earnings, alongside continued Federal Reserve support. While US inflation has eased from its peak, it remains persistent and above the Federal Reserve's 2% target. Economic growth has outperformed expectations, with third-quarter 2024 GDP growth revised upward to 3.1% year-over-year. Consensus forecasts for US real GDP in 2024 and 2025 were also raised to 2.7% and 2.1%, respectively. US economic growth has surpassed an annualized rate of 2% in eight of the past nine quarters. Corporate earnings reported during the quarter exceeded expectations, further supporting optimism for stronger earnings growth in 2025. However, December saw a surge in market volatility, and stocks gave back recent gains. Contributing factors included the Federal Reserve signaling fewer interest rate cuts for 2025 than previously anticipated, a second consecutive monthly acceleration in November's CPI, and a rise in the 10-year US Treasury yield. Additionally, market sentiment weakened as post-election enthusiasm faded amid uncertainty over specific policy measures, immigration, fiscal deficits, and year-end profit-taking after a strong year of performance for the broader stock market.

The top-performing sector on a relative basis during the quarter was consumer staples, led by Sprouts Farmers Market and Casey's General Stores. Our underweight to materials and energy also contributed to performance during the quarter. The largest detracting sectors were industrials, consumer discretionary, and information technology.

At the individual stock level, the top relative performers were Vertex Inc., Q2 Holdings, Sprouts Farmers Market, Stifel Financial Corp., and Agilysys. Conversely, the largest relative detractors were Wingstop, Varonis, TransMedics, Modine Manufacturing, and Exponent.

Axiom remains committed to investing in dynamic growth stocks that deliver exceptional growth and profitability. While small cap growth stocks have underperformed their large cap counterparts in 2024, several factors—such as attractive relative valuations, accelerating earnings growth, supportive Federal Reserve policies, and favorable government policy tailwinds—provide a positive outlook for the future. As 2025 begins, we continue to closely monitor company fundamentals within an uncertain global environment shaped by inflation, economic growth, and geopolitical risks. Our strategy focuses on bottom-up investing in innovative, high-quality companies that are outperforming the broader economy. Financially independent, profitable, and reasonably valued dynamic growth companies thriving in the current environment present a compelling investment opportunity in small cap stocks.

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.

### Client Partnership Contacts

**Lindsay Chamberlain**

Managing Director  
203.422.8039  
lchamberlain@axiom-  
investors.com

**Greg Schneider**

Director of Client Partnerships  
203.422.8038  
gschneider@axiom-  
investors.com

**Steve Hanson**

Director of Client Partnerships  
203.422.8085  
shanson@axiom-  
investors.com

**Siobhan Kranz, CFA**

Director of Client Partnerships  
203.422.8044  
skranz@axiom-  
investors.com

**Max Klein**

Client Partnership Associate  
203.422.8062  
mklein@axiom-  
investors.com

## 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 (%)
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
2015	-2.73%	-3.50%	-1.38%	≤ 5	44.2	8,704.3	0.51	N/A	14.37	14.95

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 December 31, 2024. 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 December 31, 2024. 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, 2023 was 0.60%. 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.

GIPS® is a registered trademark of CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein.

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.