



POLARIS

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INTERNATIONAL EQUITY COMPOSITE COMMENTARY

	2021					Annualized as of December 31, 2021				
	YTD	QIV	QIII	QII	QI	1 Yr	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	Since 6/30/1984
Polaris International Equity Composite gross	10.43%	1.35%	-1.67%	1.75%	8.92%	10.43%	11.36%	8.89%	10.97%	11.40%
Polaris International Equity Composite net	9.88%	1.22%	-1.79%	1.62%	8.78%	9.88%	10.80%	8.32%	10.35%	10.57%
MSCI EAFE Index, gross dividends reinvested	11.78%	2.74%	-0.35%	5.38%	3.60%	11.78%	14.06%	10.06%	8.53%	9.05%

Composite returns are preliminary. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

Global equity markets recovered in the fourth quarter, after prior quarter declines, capping off a strong 2021 despite the headwinds of COVID-19, supply chain challenges and interest rate uncertainty. The MSCI EAFE Index returned 2.74% for the quarter, while the Polaris International Equity Composite gained 1.35%. The Composite outperformed in the consumer discretionary, financial and information technology sectors, but lost ground in communication services, consumer staples and materials. Some of the best Composite performance came from stocks in out-of-benchmark countries including South Korea, Canada, India, Puerto Rico and Thailand. The Composite also outperformed in Japan, but the country as a whole was in negative territory for the quarter, dragging down results. Detractors included holdings from Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Austria.

SK Hynix, the South Korean semiconductor company, was the top overall contributor to performance, up more than 25% as DRAM memory chip prices stabilized and inventory dwindled. The rest of the top 10 were well diversified across industry and country, with double-digit gains from British homebuilder, Taylor Wimpey, Canada's Toronto-Dominion Bank, Japanese trading conglomerate Marubeni Corp, Belgian auto glass repair business, D'Ieteren Group, German chemical company Linde PLC and British distribution/outsourcing company Bunzl. Detractors included theater operator, Cineworld Group, Canadian methanol producer, Methanex, and Japanese beverage distributor, Asahi Group Holdings. Fresenius SE, the German healthcare company providing outpatient kidney dialysis services, declined as COVID-19 hampered patient services.

FOURTH QUARTER 2021 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Double-digit gains from Taylor Wimpey PLC, D'Ieteren Group and Sony Group Corp. buoyed the consumer discretionary sector. Taylor Wimpey rose after the retirement of the company CEO coincided with a new activist shareholder calling for a number of changes, both managerial and operational. The activist asserted that value could be unlocked through a refocused strategy away from larger sites, leading to higher operating margins, more in line with their peers. Polaris is not supportive of the activist's research. D'Ieteren Group was up more than 30% for the quarter, as its three core business lines (especially ADAS windshield recalibration via Belron) showed strong recovery from 2020. D'Ieteren closed the acquisition of a 40% stake in TVH Parts, in a deal that is expected to be complementary to current customer channels. Sony Group and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company entered into a joint venture to build a new \$7 billion fab facility in Japan, with the goal of mass-producing chips in that facility by 2024. This venture is expected to smooth out the supply of critical image sensor chip components for Sony products and other electronics makers. Sony also reported strong quarterly results across all business lines: electronic goods, image sensors, music and publishing and gaming (PlayStation).

Financials were the second largest contributor in absolute and relative terms. Nearly all financial holdings were in positive territory, with two capturing double-digit gains: Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD Bank) and Sparebank 1 SR. TD Bank announced robust quarterly results on the back of higher domestic consumer

spending and a resilient housing market; the bank also noted margin expansion in its U.S. retail business. Canada's banking regulator lifted pandemic-related restrictions that prevented the country's banks and insurer from raising dividends or conducting share buybacks. With this news, TD Bank has already signaled its intention to resume both practices. Positioned in a very resilient Norwegian economy, Sparebank 1 SR reported higher loan growth in a solid housing market, as well as lower quarter-over-quarter impairments and operating costs.

In the information technology sector, SK Hynix noted firming DRAM prices, which should lead to favorable contract prices. SK Hynix's acquisition of Intel's NAND business closed and will be put into a separate U.S. subsidiary called Solidigm. Infosys raised its growth forecast as revenue in the September end quarter rose by 5.7%, aided by 22 large deal wins (worth approximately \$2.2 billion) and increased client spending on cloud computing, artificial intelligence and internet-of-things. Brother Industries was the only detractor of note, even though it reported firm quarterly results and revised guidance upward. Concerns arose about temporary shutdowns due to part shortages, as was the case at Brother's Vietnam factory in December; a waning work-from-home customer base as workers returned to offices; and logistics headwinds.

Returns in the industrial sectors could best be described as "barbell", with some of the best and worst performers in the portfolio. Marubeni Corp. and Bunzl PLC were up 17% and 19% respectively, as both reported good September quarter numbers. Babcock International Group drained some of these gains, down nearly 14% for the quarter. Diversified business conglomerate Marubeni revised up net income guidance for 2022, as the inflationary environment has been beneficial for its food, agriculture, metals and mining businesses. Impairments overhanging the stock were addressed, while management raised EPS guidance and considered a share buyback; the market reacted positively to this news. British distribution/outsourcing company Bunzl cited higher sales and margins, as its health care and cleaning businesses continue to be in high demand during the pandemic. Planning for a post-COVID world, Bunzl's management outlined a constructive strategy helping customers and suppliers move towards more sustainable products. Conversely, U.K. defense company, Babcock International, declined on news that the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority is considering launching an anti-competition probe surrounding CHC Group LLC's acquisition of Babcock's oil-and-gas business. Otherwise, Babcock's business remains solid, with a trading update that met analyst expectations, and the completion of the Frazer-Nash Consultancy sale, which will allow the company to pay down debt.

The communication services sector detracted most from portfolio gains, mainly due to U.K. theater operator Cineworld Group. Box office numbers were strong for blockbuster, Spider-Man: No Way Home; however, most other titles did not live up to expectations. The Omicron variant dampened further upward projections, as concerns swirled about new restrictions and lockdowns. Many investors wary of continued COVID-19 induced volatility sold the name. Cineworld has not only been wrestling with the pandemic for the past 18 months, but it has also been embroiled in a legal fight with Cineplex, a Canadian theatre operator. Cineworld had agreed to acquire Cineplex shortly before the pandemic. Following the outbreak, the deal was terminated, with Cineplex claiming rights to break-up fees. Following a lengthy court battle, the judge ruled in favor of Cineplex with a \$900M judgment, which Cineworld will appeal. Two telecom companies, KDDI Corporation and Deutsche Telekom, also produced lackluster returns.

Japanese beverage company Asahi Group Holdings, as well as U.K.-based food-to-go firm Greencore Group dragged the performance of consumer staples. These stocks lost ground on high commodity and other input cost inflation, logistical challenges, labor shortages and ongoing COVID-19 waves that tempered product demand. Neither have been able to pass on price increases to the consumers yet, although both companies are making headway in this effort.

In materials, Linde PLC gained in excess of 18% for the quarter, but losses from Methanex, HeidelbergCement, Solvay and BASF overwhelmed sector performance. Linde's streak of operational and financial excellence continued as volumes and prices rose, leading to healthy quarterly sales coupled with margin improvement. Three years post the merger with Praxair, the combined firm continued to deliver value to shareholders. While methanol prices are still at very good levels, Methanex is facing some challenges including: the Geismar 3 expansion although it is coming in better than budget; softer Chinese demand for methanol-to-olefins; and production issues in New Zealand and Trinidad. HeidelbergCement, the world's #2

cement maker, launched a \$579 million savings program to battle cost inflation, after higher energy costs caused an 11% drop in quarterly core profits. Chemical companies, including Solvay and BASF, continued to rebound from pandemic-induced economic slump of 2020, but new problems (namely inflation and supply chain snarls) dragged on third quarter performance.

Three portfolio holdings were sold during the quarter: Coca-Cola Europacific Partners PLC (CCEP), South Korean tobacco/ginseng company, KT&G Corp. and Thai bank, Siam Commercial. CCEP was sold on valuation after the company's stock met our target sell price. KT&G's performance has been lackluster as the company struggled to expand outside of its traditional domestic tobacco business, and its heat-not-burn product failed to gain widespread adoption. Siam Commercial was sold at a profit, as the stock jumped on the bank's fintech and other business reorganization plans. Some of the proceeds were reallocated to purchase FlatexDegiro, a pan-European online brokerage business with a dominant market share. The company is one of the fastest-growing online brokerage businesses in Europe, with more than 1.75 million customers with a wide range of products and competitive pricing.

The following table reflects the sector and regional allocation for a representative international equity portfolio as of December 31, 2021.

	MSCI EAFE Weight	Portfolio Weight	Energy	Utilities	Materials	Industrials	Consumer Discretionary	Consumer Staples	Health Care	Financials	Information Technology	Comm. Services	Real Estate	Cash
N. America	0.0%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Japan	22.5%	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1.9%	3.4%	1.4%	0.0%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	0.0%
Other Asia	11.1%	17.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	5.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	6.9%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Europe	58.1%	41.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.6%	5.8%	10.6%	1.0%	4.2%	4.1%	0.0%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Scandinavia	8.4%	11.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	2.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Africa & South America	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cash	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%
Portfolio Totals		100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	11.4%	21.9%	2.4%	4.2%	20.4%	8.2%	8.1%	1.5%	3.6%
MSCI EAFE Weight	100.0%		3.4%	3.4%	7.6%	16.2%	12.5%	10.3%	12.8%	16.9%	9.7%	4.5%	2.8%	0.0%

Table may not cross foot due to rounding.

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

COVID-19 continued to roil markets throughout the year, as the Delta and Omicron variants weaved across the globe with developed and emerging countries navigating uneven vaccine distribution. Yet markets were fairly resilient throughout, with gains in all but the third quarter of 2021. For the year ending 2021, the MSCI EAFE Index returned 11.78%, while the Composite was up 10.43%. The Composite saw double-digit gains in consumer discretionary, financials and communication services, offset by losses in healthcare. From a country perspective, the Composite had notable contributions from select holdings in Belgium, Canada, France, U.K., India, Japan and Norway; detractors included Colombia, Ireland, Russia and Taiwan.

Pandemic-induced volatility presented opportunities to invest in new investment ideas that fell into value territory on short-term swings. During the year, we purchased eight companies that we believe have strong upside potential (Marubeni Corp., FlatexDegiro AG, Lundin Mining to name a few), while selling those that were more richly priced. Our research effort continues to identify companies with similar profiles; we intend to continue this buy/sell strategy, enhancing the valuation profile, limiting downside risk, and positioning the Composite for long-term success.

INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGY

The ultimate recovery from the pandemic continues to drag out, with developing countries rebounding at a much slower rate than developed countries where vaccination rates are higher. The Omicron variant added another wrinkle to the recovery; however initial analysis shows that despite the increased virulence, severity appears less with fewer hospitalizations and fatalities. This supports the thesis that we are moving from a pandemic to an endemic disease, with a congruent lessening economic impact.

Certain inefficiencies remain, either because labor rates are higher or absenteeism is greater, hurting peak efficiency at many companies. Others are extremely lean and well run, but depressed because of volatile economic activity and supply chain challenges, all of which are holding back stock prices and valuations.

These labor issues, shortages, and supply/demand imbalances are translating into higher input prices. Notwithstanding our long-held observations that we have been in a longer-term deflationary market, short-

term inflation will persist until global economic competition returns. Inflation should help many of our portfolio companies and we're clearly seeing almost all the companies able to raise prices and ultimately cash flow. In particular, the financial sector should benefit from this trend. Assuming that inflation doesn't hurt low loan performance and credit quality, it should help banks' net interest margin. Materials companies and many of the low-cost producers that are hallmarks of the Polaris portfolio should benefit nicely as they adjust prices upward and add to margins. In some cases, margin adjustments may take time to develop since selling price increases may lag cost increases.

We have anticipated many of these trends and believe that our portfolio is largely positioned to avoid the negative impact and hopefully benefit from the coming changes in the world economy. Our research pipeline remains very active, as we capitalize on pockets of volatility driven by COVID waves, supply chain disruptions, etc. to purchase undervalued companies. We expect the opportunity set to be fruitful throughout 2022. The challenge is waiting for the recovery to transpire and drive realized value of our existing holdings. This will allow us to make room for new holdings in our portfolio and act on the many attractive ideas coming through our screens.

FOOTNOTES: The information presented is supplemental. It should not be considered as a recommendation to purchase or sell a particular security mentioned, may change at any time and may not represent current or future investments. References to individual securities throughout this document are intended to illustrate contributors to recent performance or market trends and to provide examples of thematic or security-specific catalysts identified by the investment team as part of its investment process. References to specific securities should not be viewed as representative of an entire portfolio, nor should the performance of any particular security be viewed as representative of the performance experienced by any other security or portfolio. Please refer to the annual disclosure presentation. Past performance is not indicative of future results. The MSCI EAFE Index, gross dividends reinvested, is designed to represent the performance of large and mid-cap securities across 21 developed markets, including countries in Europe, Australasia and the Far East, excluding the U.S. and Canada. One cannot invest directly in an index.