ETF & Mutual Fund Rankings: Small Cap Growth Style

The Small Cap Growth style ranks last out of the twelve fund styles as detailed in our 3Q20 Style Ratings for ETFs and Mutual Funds report. Last quarter, the Small Cap Growth style ranked last as well. It gets our Very Unattractive rating, which is based on an aggregation of ratings of 19 ETFs and 544 mutual funds in the Small Cap Growth style as of July 23, 2020. See a recap of our 2Q20 Style Ratings here.

Figures 1 and 2 show the five best and worst rated ETFs and mutual funds in the style. Not all Small Cap Growth style ETFs and mutual funds are created the same. The number of holdings varies widely (from 28 to 3213). This variation creates drastically different investment implications and, therefore, ratings.

Investors should not buy any Small Cap Growth ETFs or mutual funds because none get an Attractive-or-better rating. If you must have exposure to this style, you should buy a basket of Attractive-or-better rated stocks and avoid paying undeserved fund fees. Active management has a long history of not paying off.

Our Robo-Analyst technology[1] empowers our unique ETF and mutual fund rating methodology, which leverages our rigorous analysis of each fund's holdings.[2] Only our research utilizes the superior data and earnings adjustments featured by the HBS & MIT Sloan paper, "Core Earnings: New Data and Evidence." We think advisors and investors focused on prudent investment decisions should include analysis of fund holdings in their research process for ETFs and mutual funds.

Figure 1: ETFs with the Best & Worst Ratings – Top 5

	Allocation of ETF Holdings			
Ticker	**Attractive-or-better Stocks**	**Neutral Stocks**	**Unattractive-or-worse Stocks**	**Predictive Rating**
Best ETFs				
IVOG	19%	40%	40%	**Neutral**
MDYG	19%	40%	40%	**Neutral**
IJK	19%	40%	40%	**Neutral**
RZG	19%	31%	35%	**Neutral**
JSMD	16%	43%	37%	**Neutral**
Worst ETFs				
VBK	10%	28%	55%	**Unattractive**
VTWG	12%	23%	47%	**Unattractive**
IWO	9%	22%	47%	**Unattractive**
JKK	9%	21%	61%	**Very Unattractive**
MFMS	4%	21%	60%	**Very Unattractive**

* Best ETFs exclude ETFs with TNAs less than $100 million for inadequate liquidity.

Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings

Janus Henderson Small Cap Growth Alpha ETF (JSML) is excluded from Figure 1 because its total net assets (TNA) are below $100 million and do not meet our liquidity minimums.

1 Harvard Business School features the powerful impact of our research automation technology in the case New Constructs: Disrupting Fundamental Analysis with Robo-Analysts.

2 Compare our analytics on a mega cap company to Bloomberg and Capital IQ's (SPGI) analytics in the detailed appendix of this paper.

Figure 2: Mutual Funds with the Best & Worst Ratings – Top 5

	Allocation of Mutual Fund Holdings			
Ticker	**Attractive-or-better Stocks**	**Neutral Stocks**	**Unattractive-or-worse Stocks**	**Predictive Rating**
Best Mutual Funds				
VQSRX	25%	44%	23%	**Neutral**
PXQSX	25%	44%	23%	**Neutral**
HDSIX	35%	31%	30%	**Neutral**
HDPSX	35%	31%	30%	**Neutral**
VMFGX	19%	40%	40%	**Neutral**
Worst Mutual Funds				
NSNAX	10%	17%	54%	**Very Unattractive**
WEMAX	4%	16%	60%	**Very Unattractive**
MNDAX	7%	20%	48%	**Very Unattractive**
PQUAX	2%	11%	15%	**Very Unattractive**
DADGX	7%	19%	55%	**Very Unattractive**

* Best mutual funds exclude funds with TNAs less than $100 million for inadequate liquidity.

Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings

Vanguard S&P Mid Cap 400 Growth Index Fund (IVOG) is the top-rated Small Cap Growth ETF and Virtus KAR Small Cap Value Fund (VQSRX) is the top-rated Small Cap Growth mutual fund. Both earn a Neutral rating.

RBB MFAM Small Cap Growth ETF (MFMS) is the worst rated Small Cap Growth ETF and Dunham Small Cap Growth Fund (DADGX) is the worst rated Small Cap Growth mutual fund. Both earn a Very Unattractive rating.

The Danger Within

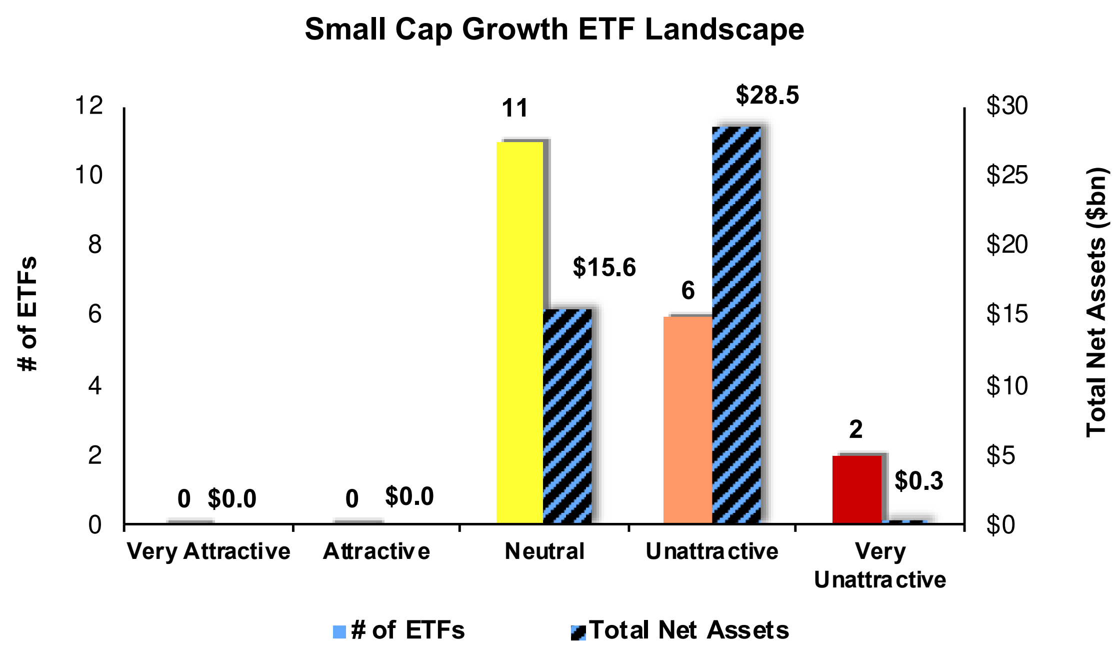
Buying a fund without analyzing its holdings is like buying a stock without analyzing its business and finances. Put another way, research on fund holdings is necessary due diligence because a fund's performance is only as good as its holdings' performance. Don't just take our word for it, see what Barron's says on this matter.

PERFORMANCE OF HOLDINGs = PERFORMANCE OF FUND

Analyzing each holding within funds is no small task. Our Robo-Analyst technology enables us to perform this diligence with scale and provide the research needed to fulfill the fiduciary duty of care. More of the biggest names in the financial industry (see At BlackRock, Machines Are Rising Over Managers to Pick Stocks) are now embracing technology to leverage machines in the investment research process. Technology may be the only solution to the dual mandate for research: cut costs and fulfill the fiduciary duty of care. Investors, clients, advisors and analysts deserve the latest in technology to get the diligence required to make prudent investment decisions.

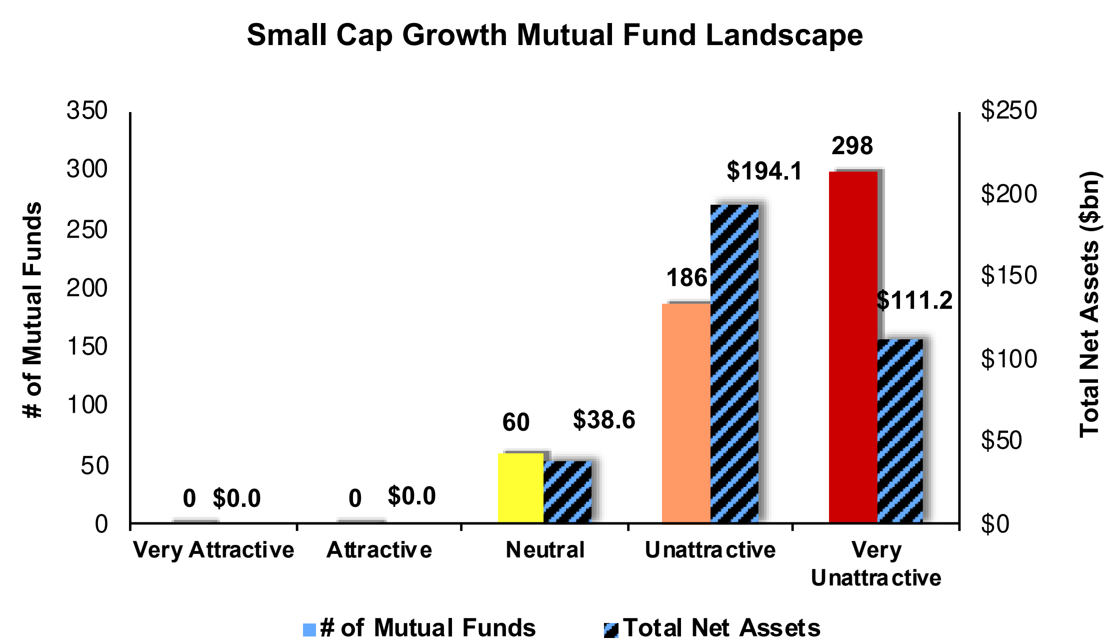
Figures 3 and 4 show the rating landscape of all Small Cap Growth ETFs and mutual funds.

Figure 3: Separating the Best ETFs from the Worst Funds



Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings

Figure 4: Separating the Best Mutual Funds from the Worst Funds



Sources: New Constructs, LLC and company filings

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Disclosure: David Trainer and Kyle Guske II receive no compensation to write about any specific stock, style, or theme.

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Footnotes adjustments matter. We are the ONLY source.

We provide ratings, models, reports & screeners on U.S. 3,000 stocks, 700 ETFs and 7,000 mutual funds.

HBS & MIT Sloan research reveals that:

- **Markets are inefficiently assessing earnings because no one reads the footnotes.**
- **Corporate managers hide gains/losses in footnotes to manage earnings.**
- **Our technology brings the material footnotes data to market for the first time ever.**

Combining human expertise with NLP/ML/AI technologies (featured by Harvard Business School), we shine a light in the dark corners (e.g. footnotes) of hundreds of thousands of financial filings to unearth critical details.

The HBS & MIT Sloan paper, Core Earnings: New Data and Evidence, shows how our superior data drives uniquely comprehensive and independent debt and equity research.

This paper compares our analytics on a mega cap company to other major providers. The Appendix details exactly how we stack up.

Learn more.

Quotes from HBS & MIT Sloan professors on our research:

Get better research:

"…the NC dataset provides a novel opportunity to study the properties of non-operating items disclosed in 10-Ks, and to examine the extent to which the market impounds their implications." – page 20

Pick better stocks:

"Trading strategies that exploit cross-sectional differences in firms' transitory earnings produce abnormal returns of 7-to-10% per year." – Abstract

Avoid losses from using other firms' data:

"…many of the income-statement-relevant quantitative disclosures collected by NC do not appear to be easily identifiable in Compustat…" – page 14

Build better models:

"Core Earnings [calculated using New Constructs' novel dataset] provides predictive power for various measures of one-year-ahead performance…that is incremental to their current-period counterparts." – page 4

Exploit market inefficiencies:

"These results … suggest that the adjustments made by analysts and Compustat to better capture core earnings are incomplete. Moreover, the non-core items identified by NC produce a measure of core earnings that is incremental to alternative measures of operating performance in predicting an array of future income measures." – page 26

Fulfill fiduciary duties:

"An appropriate measure of accounting performance for purposes of forecasting future performance requires detailed analysis of all quantitative performance disclosures detailed in the annual report, including those reported only in the footnotes and in the MD&A." – page 33-34

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