
Is Stimulus Near?

Weekly Update – December 7, 2020

The Week on Wall Street

Stocks marched higher last week on an improving outlook for the passage of a fiscal stimulus package.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.03%, while the Standard & Poor's 500 tacked on 1.67%. The Nasdaq Composite index gained 2.12% for the week. The MSCI EAFE index, which tracks developed overseas stock markets, gained 0.78%.^{1,2,3}

A Record Week for Stocks

After opening the week with moderate losses amid rising COVID-19 infections, stocks turned higher as investor sentiment was buoyed by the resumption of fiscal stimulus negotiations. As lawmakers discussed various proposals, stocks managed to grind higher.

A better-than-expected jobless claims report on Thursday added fuel to the market rally, but the gains evaporated in late-day trading following news by a major pharmaceutical company that it would be slowing its rollout of the vaccine due to logistical challenges.⁴

A disappointing jobs report on Friday did not keep investors from bidding stocks higher as the week came to a close, sending the Dow Jones Industrials, S&P 500, and the NASDAQ Composite indices to record high closes.⁵

The Start of Holiday Shopping

The start of the holiday shopping season provides important insight into the state of the economy and overall consumer confidence. In response to the pandemic, consumers avoided in-store visits over the Thanksgiving weekend. This translated into a 22.4% decline in spending from last year's levels.⁶

However, spending prior to the Thanksgiving-to-Sunday period surged 65.7% from a year earlier, thanks to large retailers introducing Black Friday-like deals as early as mid-October.⁷

Of course, the pandemic has led to an acceleration in shopping online. Cyber Monday sales jumped 15.1% over last year's levels as consumers spent almost \$11 billion, making it the largest U.S. online shopping day ever.⁸

THIS WEEK: KEY ECONOMIC DATA

Wednesday: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS).

Thursday: Consumer Price Index (CPI), Jobless Claims.

Friday: Consumer Sentiment.

Source: Econoday, December 4, 2020

The Econoday economic calendar lists upcoming U.S. economic data releases (including key economic indicators), Federal Reserve policy meetings, and speaking engagements of Federal Reserve officials. The content is developed from sources believed to be providing accurate information. The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions and may not materialize. The forecasts also are subject to revision.

THIS WEEK: COMPANIES REPORTING EARNINGS

Monday: Coupa Software (COUP)


Tuesday: Autozone (AZO), MongoDB, Inc. (MDB), Chewy, Inc. (CHWY)

Wednesday: Campbell Soup Company (CPB), Slack Technologies (WORK)

Thursday: Lululemon Athletica, Inc. (LULU), Adobe, Inc. (ADBE), Broadcom (AVGO), Costco Wholesale Corp. (COST)

Source: Zacks, December 4, 2020

Companies mentioned are for informational purposes only. It should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of the securities. Investing involves risks, and investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost. Companies may reschedule when they report earnings without notice.

A banner with a warm, golden-brown background. On the left, the text "QUOTE OF THE WEEK" is written in a serif font. On the right, there is a close-up image of a fountain pen nib and a small icon of a fountain pen.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It is wonderful what we can do if we are always doing."

– George Washington

A banner with a warm, golden-brown background. On the left, there is a close-up image of a fork and a knife. In the center, the text "RECIPE OF THE WEEK" is written in a serif font. On the right, there is a small icon of a fork and knife.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Holiday Crinkle Cookies



40 cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup confectioner's sugar

Directions:

1. Mix together the cocoa, granulated sugar, and vegetable oil.
2. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Slowly stir in the vanilla.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and salt.
4. Stir in the cocoa mixture and combine.
5. Cover the dough and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. This helps get the crinkles in the cookies.
6. Once the dough is chilled, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
7. Coat each cookie ball in confectioner's sugar and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet.
8. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Recipe adapted from Food52⁹



Paying Employment Taxes? Make Sure You're Using the Correct Form

If you're a small business owner, you should understand the differences between two commonly used employment tax returns.

Form 944, Employer's Annual Federal Tax Return, is designed for small business owners to pay employment taxes once a year instead of quarterly. Business owners may receive a notice from the IRS informing them that they can file Form 944. Business owners may have to file this form every year until the IRS notifies them differently.

Form 941, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return, is a form designed for employers to report income taxes, Social Security, or Medicare tax withheld from employee's paychecks. Again, the IRS may inform business owners of whether they should use Form 941.

If you have questions about which form you should use, please contact our office. We may be able to provide some guidance or help you find some information on the IRS website.

* This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific tax issues with a qualified tax professional.

Tip adapted from IRS¹⁰



Mentally Practice Saying "Do" not "Don't"

When many golfers are teeing up for their shot, they spend so much time thinking about what they *don't* want to happen ("don't go in the water," "don't go in that bunker," etc.). One golf tip you can practice is saying what you *want* the ball to do instead. This is called mental imagery.

This practice can help you think positively and you may be surprised at how often you can hit where you imagine. While lining up for your shot, create a clear picture in your mind of where you want the ball to go, rather than where you don't want it to go!

Tip adapted from John F. Murray¹¹



Have a Healthier Holiday

The holidays are known for rich meals and lots of sweet goodies. But, that doesn't mean that you can't stay healthy! Here are some tips to help you have a healthier holiday, while still enjoying this special time of year:

- Choose your splurges. Enjoy things you can only have once a year and save your stomach for those.
- Don't skip meals. If you do, you might be even hungrier later and overeat.
- Don't feel guilty. This is probably the most important wellness tip this season. If you do overindulge, don't beat yourself up over it. Try to do better next time and just focus on having a relaxing holiday!

Tip adapted from Mayo Clinic¹²



Beautiful Eco-Friendly Wreaths

Wreaths make the perfect holiday decor and it's easy to find eco-friendly options that are both beautiful and gentle on the planet. Here are some tips to make your own wreath for the holidays:

- Use natural materials that will biodegrade after the holiday season is over. Clematis twigs or branches are good to use as a base due to their flexibility, but any branches that have some natural movement to them will work. Form a circular shape with the branches, securing with twine or string so it holds its shape.
- Gather natural materials to decorate. Leaves, flowers, fruits, and evergreen plants make lovely eco-friendly additions to your wreath.

- Bunch your decorative materials together in groups of 3-5 so that they are roughly the same height. Secure each bunch with string or twine to the wreath until no bare spots are left.
- Trim any excess material, and hang your wreath.

Tip adapted from BioFriendly Planet Magazine¹³

Share the Wealth of Knowledge!

*Please share this market update with family, friends, or colleagues.
We love being introduced!*

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Diversification does not guarantee profit nor is it guaranteed to protect assets.

International investing involves special risks such as currency fluctuation and political instability and may not be suitable for all investors.

The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted average of 30 significant stocks traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the NASDAQ. The DJIA was invented by Charles Dow back in 1896.

The Nasdaq Composite is an index of the common stocks and similar securities listed on the NASDAQ stock market and is considered a broad indicator of the performance of stocks of technology companies and growth companies.

The MSCI EAFE Index was created by Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) that serves as a benchmark of the performance in major international equity markets as represented by 21 major MSCI indices from Europe, Australia, and Southeast Asia.

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.

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- ¹ The Wall Street Journal, December 4, 2020
 - ² The Wall Street Journal, December 4, 2020
 - ³ The Wall Street Journal, December 4, 2020
 - ⁴ The Wall Street Journal, December 3, 2020
 - ⁵ CNBC, December 4, 2020
 - ⁶ CNBC, November 30, 2020
 - ⁷ CNBC, November 30, 2020
 - ⁸ CNBC, December 1, 2020
 - ⁹ Food52.com, December 4, 2020
 - ¹⁰ IRS.gov, December 17, 2019
 - ¹¹ Johnfmurray.com, December 4, 2020
 - ¹² Newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org, December 4, 2020
 - ¹³ Biofriendlyplanet.com, December 4, 2020