

# VALUE OPPORTUNITIES

## COMPOSITE PERFORMANCE (%) ANNUALIZED

	QTR	YTD	1 Yr	3 Yr	5 Yr	10 Yr	Inception
H&W Value Opportunities (gross)	0.15	0.15	12.91	15.53	11.91	13.71	13.60
H&W Value Opportunities (net)	-0.04	-0.04	12.08	14.68	11.08	12.87	12.76
Russell 3000 Value Index	2.23	2.23	16.37	14.26	9.19	10.52	9.48

Commencement of VO Composite: 11/1/02. Net performance results are presented after actual management fees and all trading expenses but before custodial fees; the composite includes all Value Opportunities discretionary accounts. Additional disclosures provided in GIPS Report.

## MARKET COMMENTARY

The S&P 500 Index declined -4.4% in the first quarter of 2026. Geopolitical turmoil and AI-driven investment themes were the primary market drivers. Brent crude oil rose more than 100% to \$127/bbl<sup>1</sup> following U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz. As a result, the energy sector outperformed by a wide margin, and the portfolio's overweight position provided an effective hedge. More than 20% of global crude oil supply flows through the Strait, much of it destined for Asia. Beyond oil, the disruption has created supply shocks across several key commodities, including natural gas, nitrogen-based fertilizer, helium, and aluminum. Despite these meaningful disruptions, the equity market reaction has been relatively muted—the S&P 500 Index is down only about 5% since the initial strikes. The VIX Index, a gauge of expected S&P 500 volatility, peaked at 31 in late March, above its 25-year median (~18) but well below levels seen during prior shocks such as Trump-era tariffs (52), the Russia/Ukraine war (36), COVID (83), and the Global Financial Crisis (81). Given the inflationary nature of supply shocks, futures markets now anticipate no rate cuts for the remainder of the year. The Fed held rates steady at 3.75% (upper bound) at its mid-March meeting.

Value stocks outperformed growth in the quarter, with the Russell 3000 Value Index returning +2.2% versus -9.5% for the Russell 3000 Growth Index. The technology sector underperformed. It comprises nearly half of the growth index but just 12% of the value index. Within technology, software was particularly weak, and our overweight position detracted from relative performance. Recent AI product releases have raised concerns about potential disruption to enterprise software businesses. For example, software stocks sold off following Anthropic's introduction of legal and finance automation tools for its Claude platform. We believe this reaction is overstated and presents opportunity rather than risk. Notably, consensus earnings estimates for our enterprise software holdings have moved higher, not lower, suggesting the selloff reflects concerns about long-term profit durability rather than near-term fundamentals. We do not share this view. Companies such as Workday and Salesforce continue to report strong customer retention (97% and 92% gross retention, respectively) and expanding product capabilities. SAP does not disclose gross retention but it is widely believed to be 98-99%.

Their competitive advantages are rooted in domain expertise, deep integrations, mission-critical workflows, and years of embedded customization—not simply underlying code. We believe these businesses are well positioned to monetize AI through enhanced offerings rather than be displaced by it.

Health insurers also underperformed during the quarter, and our overweight detracted from performance. Stocks declined amid policy uncertainty around Medicare Advantage reimbursement rates, and higher than expected utilization rates. Unlike software, near-term earnings estimates for insurers have fallen roughly in line with share price declines. The market appears to be discounting these earnings pressures as structural rather than temporary, which we believe is incorrect. Management teams remain focused on margin recovery through pricing adjustments and benefit optimization. Importantly, the structure of the market remains unchanged, with repricing occurring annually.

As noted, energy was the primary bright spot. While we did not anticipate the Iran conflict, our positioning reflected the view that select energy companies offered free cash flow yields more attractive than every other major market segment. More broadly, we believe the global crude market faces a risk of structural undersupply in the coming years, supporting higher oil prices over time. Additionally, a significant portion of global supply originates from geopolitically unstable regions, and we believed this disruption risk had been underappreciated.

The Hotchkis & Wiley team remains disciplined and long-term focused. We often find the most lucrative investment ideas in market segments surrounded by near-term controversy that we believe is overstated or misunderstood. The portfolio remains appropriately diversified but also reflects our strong conviction in some of the attractive themes described above.

*(continued)*

<sup>1</sup>Based on current crude prices, rather than prices for future delivery which are also frequently quoted. Based on the latter, Brent prices rose ~95% closing at ~\$118/bbl.

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## ATTRIBUTION ANALYSIS – 1Q26

The Value Opportunities portfolio underperformed the Russell 3000 Value Index in the first quarter of 2026 (gross and net of fees). An overweight position in software was the largest detractor by a wide margin, followed by exposure to health insurers. In contrast, the portfolio's overweight and positive security selection in energy was the primary contributor to performance, with energy holdings collectively returning +50%<sup>2</sup>.

## LARGEST INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS – 1Q26

APA (APA) is an independent E&P operating in the Midland and Delaware basins of the Permian and onshore Egypt, with exploration potential in Suriname, that trades at a discount despite lucrative natural gas financial contracts. We own APA for exposure to an energy market generating significant free cash flow in a perennially undersupplied environment. APA outperformed in the first quarter as oil prices surged following the Strait of Hormuz closure and the US-Israel conflict with Iran, with Brent crude peaking near \$127. The company's natural gas financial contracts—which capture differentials between Waha, the Houston Ship Channel, Henry Hub, and global LNG—became significantly more valuable as supply disruptions drove wider basis differentials.

Olin (OLN) is one of the largest global producers of chlor alkali chemicals and chlorine derivatives and the owner of the Winchester ammunition business. Chlorine derivative and caustic soda prices should increase over time as the North American chlor alkali industry faces a tightening 5+ year supply/demand outlook. As the swing producer in North America, Olin should capture more than its share of the industry's volume improvement off the trough. Olin posted a weak Q4 with low operating rates, weak commodity prices, and a mix of destocking and raw material pressure in the Winchester business. However, the business showed some signs of recovery, as Olin remains focused on matching production to the weaker side of the ECU to optimize value, prioritizing share repurchases, and an investment grade balance sheet remains the target. Olin's stock price has been strong following Q4 as the Iran conflict has disrupted global chemical supply and driven up caustic soda and epoxy pricing, benefiting Olin.

Ericsson (ERIC) is one of the largest vendors of hardware and software for wireless networks outside China, serving edge radio, cloud software and services, and enterprise markets. Ericsson's earnings are below normal as demand for wireless equipment is low in Japan and India, management turns around its mismanaged Cloud Software & Services business, and the Enterprise business loses money even with gross margins above 50%. We own Ericsson for its attractive valuation even if

competitors do not lose market share due to political or scale problems, with substantial additional upside if these possible outcomes occur. Ericsson outperformed in the first quarter following strong Q4 2025 earnings that beat estimates on 6% organic sales growth and the announcement of its first-ever share buyback of up to SEK 15 billion. The rally continued in March as AT&T announced over \$250 billion in five-year US infrastructure spending, which benefits Ericsson as a major supplier.

## LARGEST INDIVIDUAL DETRACTORS – 1Q26

Workday (WDAY) is a leader in cloud application software for back-office business functions including human capital management, financials management, and ERP (enterprise resource planning). Workday's formidable competitive advantages lead to compelling unit economics (97% gross retention, 38% normal EBIT margin, low-teens subscription revenue growth) and its ERP software markets are both the largest and least cloud-penetrated in the application software universe. This provides Workday with a long runway to invest at high returns while trading at a valuation that is attractive for an established franchise. Workday posted a good Q4 that slightly beat expectations. However, continued market concerns that AI agents will displace traditional software have pressured the stock, despite switching costs and compliance risks making displacement scenarios unrealistic.

Salesforce (CRM) is among the top five largest global software companies, with a broad portfolio that includes Sales, Service, Marketing & Commerce Clouds, Slack, MuleSoft, Tableau, and the Data & AI Cloud. Its products are deeply embedded across a large enterprise customer base, creating a long runway for growth through seat expansions, cross selling, and pricing, and supporting strong revenue growth for many years. Combined with sticky recurring revenue, high gross margins, and limited capital reinvestment needs, this creates a resilient business model with meaningful downside mitigation. Salesforce posted a good Q4 that matched growth expectations, however, market concerns that AI agents could displace traditional software have continued to pressure the stock, leaving the shares trading at an attractive valuation for an established franchise.

Sallie Mae (SLM) originates over half of all private student loans in the U.S. and trades well below our estimate of normal earnings. The stock declined in Q1 due to concerns over elevated expenses and consumer credit quality. Both are manageable—expense growth reflects deliberate investments to support higher volumes, and the vast majority of Sallie Mae's loans are originated with cosigners, providing significant credit protection. Encouragingly, management capitalized on the stock's weakness and returned large amounts of capital through buybacks.

<sup>2</sup> Gross return without the deduction of fees and expenses. Total strategy gross and net performance shown on previous page.

The specific investments shown are for informational purposes only and represent the top contributors and detractors for the relevant performance time period. The selection criteria used to determine the top contributors and detractors remains the same across performance measurement periods; additional disclosures provided in Endnotes.

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## Endnotes:

Portfolio managers' opinions and data included in this commentary are as of March 31, 2026. Any discussion or view of a security, an asset class/segment, industry/sector and/or investment type are not investment recommendations, should not be assumed to be profitable, and are subject to change without notice. All investments contain risk and may lose value.

Portfolio characteristics and attribution are based on a representative Value Opportunities portfolio. The representative portfolio is used for informational purposes only, does not predict future portfolio characteristics, and may differ from other portfolios in the strategy due to asset size, client guidelines, and other variables. H&W selected the representative portfolio based on non-performance criteria. The portfolio reflects the management style of the strategy, is part of the strategy's composite, and has the longest continuous duration under the Adviser's discretion. Selection of the representative portfolio considers one or more of the following factors, such as the portfolio's investment guidelines/restrictions, cash flow activity, or continuous duration under the Adviser's discretion. Based on the selection factors, the representative portfolio may change over the period shown.

Attribution is an analysis of a portfolio's gross of fee returns (without the deduction of fees and expenses) relative to the Index. Bloomberg calculates returns using daily holdings information. Returns calculated using this buy-and-hold methodology can differ from actual client portfolio returns due to data differences, cash flows, trading, and other activity (report is generated at a point in time and will not include any adjustments thereafter). Sector performance only covers the subset of investments specific to that sector. Analysis for different time periods and/or market environments can result in significantly different results.

Specific securities identified are the three largest contributors (or detractors) to the portfolio's performance, relative to the index, for the relevant performance time period. Other securities may have been the best and worst performers on an absolute basis. The selection criteria used to determine the top contributors and detractors remains the same across performance measurement periods. There is no assurance that the securities discussed will remain in the portfolio or that securities sold have not been repurchased. The securities discussed do not represent the entire portfolio, may only represent a small portion of the portfolio and should not assume the securities discussed were or will be profitable or that recommendations made in the future will be profitable or will equal the performance of the securities discussed. H&W's opinions regarding these securities are subject to change at any time, for any reason, without notice. Certain client portfolio(s) may or may not hold the securities discussed due to each account's guideline restrictions and other relevant considerations.

The value discipline used in managing accounts in the Value Opportunities strategy may prevent or limit investment in major stocks in the Russell 3000 Value and returns may not be correlated to the index. Composite performance is available at [www.hwcm.com](http://www.hwcm.com), located on the strategy's Performance tab; quarterly characteristics and portfolio holdings are located on the Portfolio and Literature tabs. For a list showing every holding's contribution to the overall account's performance and portfolio activity for a given time period, contact H&W at [hotchkisandwiley@hwcm.com](mailto:hotchkisandwiley@hwcm.com). Portfolio information is subject to the firm's portfolio holdings disclosure policy.

The Russell 3000® Value Index includes stocks from the Russell 3000® Index with lower price-to-book ratios and lower expected growth rates. The Russell 3000® Growth Index includes companies that display signs of above average growth. The index is used to provide a gauge of the performance of growth stocks in the U.S. The CBOE Volatility Index (VIX) measures the stock market's expectation of volatility over the next 30 days based on S&P 500® Index option prices. The S&P 500® Index is a broad-based unmanaged index of 500 stocks, which is widely recognized as representative of the equity market in general.

Any indices and other financial benchmarks shown are provided for illustrative purposes only, are unmanaged, reflect reinvestment of income and dividends and do not reflect the impact of advisory fees. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

Russell Investment Group is the source and owner of the Russell Index data contained herein (and all trademarks related thereto), which may not be redistributed. The information herein is not approved by Russell. H&W and Russell sectors are based on the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) by MSCI and S&P.

**Liquefied natural gas (LNG); Exploration and Production (E&P); and Earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT)** measures a company's net income before income tax and interest expenses are deducted.

Information contained in this material may represent or be based on forward-looking statements. Due to various risks and uncertainties, actual events/results or performance of the strategy may differ materially from those reflected or contemplated in such forward-looking statements. Information based on forecasts, proprietary or third-party estimates cannot be guaranteed and are subject to change. Information obtained from independent sources is considered reliable, but H&W cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness.

Investing in foreign as well as emerging markets involves additional risk such as greater volatility, political, economic, and currency risks and differences in accounting methods. Investing in smaller, medium-sized and/or newer companies involves greater risks not associated with investing in large company stocks, such as business risk, significant stock price fluctuations and illiquidity. Investing in debt securities typically decreases in value when interest rates rise. This risk is usually greater for longer-term debt securities. A value-oriented investment approach involves the risk that value stocks may remain undervalued or may not appreciate in value as anticipated. Value stocks can perform differently from the market as a whole or from other types of stocks and may be out of favor with investors and underperform growth stocks for varying periods of time. Principal Risks Disclosure for the firm's strategies are described in Part 2A of Form ADV of H&W ([www.hwcm.com/wp-content/uploads/HW-Principal-Risks.pdf](http://www.hwcm.com/wp-content/uploads/HW-Principal-Risks.pdf)).

Data source: H&W, Russell, Bloomberg

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**GIPS Report:**

Hotchkis and Wiley Capital Management, LLC (the “Firm” or “H&W”) claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. H&W has been independently verified for the periods October 9, 2001 through December 31, 2023. 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 Value Opportunities Composite has had a performance examination for the periods November 1, 2002 through December 31, 2023. The verification and performance examination reports are available upon request.

H&W is an independent investment management firm registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and manages value equity and high yield assets for institutional and mutual fund investors. Its predecessor firm was established in 1980. The equity team of the predecessor firm established H&W in October 2001.

H&W refers to itself as a “registered investment adviser” in materials distributed to current and prospective clients. As a registered investment adviser with the SEC, H&W is subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the SEC under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, as amended (the “Advisers Act”). Registration as an investment adviser is not an indication that H&W or its directors, officers, employees or representatives have attained a particular level of skill or ability.

Valuations and returns are stated in U.S. dollars. Investment returns include reinvestment of dividends, interest, and capital gains. Gross performance results are presented before management and custodial fees but after all trading expenses. Net performance results are presented after actual management fees and all trading expenses but before custodial fees. H&W’s management fees are described in Part 2A of its Form ADV. The standard Value Opportunities management fee schedule is 75 basis points on the first \$25 million and 65 basis points thereafter.

Internal dispersion is calculated using the equal-weighted standard deviation of all portfolios (gross returns) that were included in the Composite for the entire year. A list of composite and broad distribution pooled fund descriptions and policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. Past performance is no guarantee of future performance. 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.

**Composite:** The Composite includes all Value Opportunities discretionary accounts. The Value Opportunities strategy seeks capital appreciation primarily through investments in equity securities, such as common stock, preferred stock and convertible securities, of any size market capitalization, and investment grade and high yield (“junk bonds”) fixed income securities. Companies that is believed to have strong capital appreciation potential and may invest in foreign (non-U.S.) securities. It may enter into currency contracts (such as spot, forward and futures) to hedge foreign currency exposure. As of December 31, 2025, there was one non-fee paying account in the composite, which represented 0.2% of composite assets. Applied standard fee schedule to calculate net of fee returns. The typical market cap range of the strategy is consistent with the market cap range of the Russell 3000® Index. (Composite creation & inception date: 11/1/2002)

**Index:** The Russell 3000® Value Index (“R3000V”) includes stocks from the Russell 3000® Index with lower price-to-book ratios and lower expected growth rates. The index assumes reinvestment of dividends and capital gains, and assumes no management, custody, transaction or other expenses. The value disciplines used in managing the accounts in the Composite may prevent or limit investment in major stocks in the R3000V and returns may not be correlated to the index. Benchmark returns are not covered by the report of independent verifiers.

The 3-year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite (using gross returns) and the benchmark(s) returns over the preceding 36-month period ended.

	% Total Return Gross of Fees	% Total Return Net of Fees	% Total Return R3000V	No. of Accts	Internal Dispersion (%)	Comp. Assets (\$M)	Total Firm Assets (\$M)	3-Year Annualized Standard Deviation (%)		As of December 31, 2025 (%)				
								Composite	R3000V	1 Yr	5 Yr	10 Yr		
2025	15.6	14.7	15.7	<6	n/m	838	36,906	2025	13.2	12.7	Composite - Gross	15.6	16.0	13.5
2024	12.7	11.9	14.0	<6	n/m	689	33,144	2024	20.7	16.9	Composite - Net	14.7	15.2	12.6
2023	27.9	27.0	11.7	<6	n/m	650	31,220	2023	21.2	16.7	R3000V	15.7	11.2	10.5
2022	-7.1	-7.8	-8.0	<6	n/m	508	28,330	2022	27.9	21.5	Average annual total returns for periods greater than one year.			
2021	35.9	34.9	25.4	<6	n/m	602	34,902	2021	24.2	19.3				
2020	6.4	5.6	2.9	<6	n/m	465	31,687	2020	24.9	20.0				
2019	26.8	25.9	26.3	<6	n/m	818	33,623	2019	14.5	12.0				
2018	-10.1	-10.8	-8.6	<6	n/m	599	27,191	2018	14.8	11.1				
2017	14.8	13.9	13.2	<6	n/m	653	32,037	2017	13.5	10.3				
2016	20.8	19.9	18.4	<6	n/m	566	29,952	2016	14.0	11.0				

n/m – not considered meaningful for composites with five accounts or less for the full year.