

What is Important to You About . . .

Financial ~ Mental ~ Physical ~ Spiritual ~ Social

NEWSLETTER

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"Where you are headed is more important than how fast you are going."

~Stephen Covey

With only 4 of the 500 companies in the S&P500 yet to report, it looks like the second quarter of 2018 printed another great earnings report. Compared to the second quarter of 2017, earnings are expected to increase 24.9% and revenues are expected to be up 9.5% from the same time period in 2017.

Of those companies reporting, 80% have earnings above analyst expectations and this is significantly higher than the historical average of 64% and even well above the 75% average of the past four quarters. On the revenue side, 72% of the companies reported revenues above expectations and this too is well above the 60% long term average.

Leading the way for the second quarter earnings season was the energy and the materials sectors. The energy sector had the highest growth rate at 123%, but these comparisons reflect a sector that has been stuck in the doldrums for an extended period of time. The materials sector was a distant second with a very respectable growth rate of 40%. This is actually quite remarkable given the hype and anxiety over the rhetoric surrounding the trade wars between the US and the rest of the world. The material sector is comprised of sectors such as copper, fertilizers, agricultural chemicals etc.

Not only was this an outstanding earnings season, the overall economic expansion continues to move forward, despite the occasional predictions of a recession on the horizon. Real gross domestic product (GDP) increased 4.2 percent in the second quarter of 2018, according to the "second" estimate released by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The growth rate was 0.1 percentage point more than the "advance" estimate released in July. In the first quarter, real GDP increased 2.2 percent.

Looking ahead to the third quarter, the estimated growth rate for the S&P500 is an impressive 22.4% for earnings. This certainly should give investors confidence that this economy has the capability to stay the course and build on the gains for this market recovery that will reach its 10 year anniversary in March.

Despite this very positive earnings and GDP news, there are still economists who are looking to the horizon to see signs of recession. They point to the rise in oil prices as one possible indicator. With oil prices up 20% since the first of the year and reaching \$70 a barrel, those sharp increases have economists a bit edgy since sharp spikes in oil have preceded every recession since World War II.

Asset bubbles are another indicator but the rise in stock market valuations have been hardly based on rapid run up in prices. One could argue that the recent valuation of Apple above \$1 Trillion is a prime example, but that has been a result of new products, new innovations and the opening of significant markets abroad for their products.

As the old saying goes, a broken clock is right twice a day and eventually we will find ourselves in slowdown and yes the economists who predicted it will have their day in the sun. For right now, enjoy the ride and let's hope this expansion will soon be the longest in history.



Valuing your time over money may be linked to happiness

By Jareen Imam (www.cnn.org)

Would you prefer a more expensive apartment with a shorter commute or a less expensive apartment with a long commute?

That's one of the many real world questions researchers at the University of British Columbia asked more than 4,600 participants in the latest study on happiness.

The questions aim to get to the heart of what people value more: time or money.

New research that was collected over a year and a half and published by the Society of Personality and Social Psychology suggests valuing your time rather than pursuing money may be linked to greater happiness.

Thousands of people participated in the six studies on happiness, and researchers found that the group was evenly split between those who valued money or time.

This was surprising for lead researcher Ashley Whillans, who says people tend to intuitively not say money because of cultural pressures. But since the groups were almost evenly split, with a slight leaning toward those who prefer time, she feels that participants were pretty honest during the studies.

"It appears that people have a stable preference for valuing their time over making more money, and prioritizing time, is associated with greater happiness," the doctoral student in social psychology at the University of British Columbia said.

Older people, those who were retired or approaching retirement, tended to say their time was more important than money, which was the reverse for younger participants.

Researchers sampled working Americans, students at the university and adult visitors of the science museum in Vancouver. The study found that those of various income levels and of both genders still tended to prioritize time over money. The study did not include those living at the poverty level.

"We wanted to learn about working adults who could go after more money or choose not to," she said.

The value of time

Time has become a hot commodity for working Americans. Adults who are employed full time work on average 47 hours per week, according to Gallup. That's an hour and a half more than a decade ago. Americans also tended to take fewer vacation days than their international peers, according to a 2014 Expedia.com survey.

Whillans' research focused on day-to-day decisions when it came to happiness. "We aren't saying you should give up

your rent money to take a vacation in order to be happy," she said.

But smaller decisions can possibly play a bigger role when it comes to happiness.

"In my personal life, my husband started taking a toll route that was a little more expensive so his commute would be shorter. We know that longer commuters generally make us unhappier," she said.

Others have challenged the adage that money can't buy happiness though.

Harvard Business School professor Michael Norton told CNN in November that people gain happiness when they spend their money on experiences rather than on things.

People who spend their money on vacations or dinner with friends tend to have greater happiness experiencing those events, even if they are only temporary.

"Because experiences disappear, they let us make up a reality that was amazing and wonderful, and they make us happier," Norton said.

Whillans added that it's likely having more free time that is vital toward happiness rather than earning more money. "Even giving up a few hours of a paycheck to volunteer at a food bank may have more bang for your buck in making you feel happier," she said.

Whillans says the findings suggest that there may be links between time and happiness, but more research is still needed.

Market Statistics

| | 8/31/2018 Close | Change YTD |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Dow Jones | 25,964.82 | 5.04% |
| NASDAQ | 8,109.54 | 17.47% |
| S&P | 2,901.52 | 8.52% |

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Password Managers: What You Need to Know

By Marc Saltzman (www.aarp.org)

When it comes to passwords, is your desk a sea of sticky notes scrawled with cryptic numbers and letters, or can anyone who knows your dog's name and your three lucky numbers access everything from your bank balance to your Facebook profile?

Yes? Well, you are not alone.

Passwords are needed for just about everything we do in our digital life, but keeping them straight is a challenge. We're not supposed to use the same password for all our online activity — because if someone guesses or hacks it, they now have access to all your accounts — yet we're not supposed to write passwords down either.

So, what to do?

Consider a password manager

As the name suggests, a password manager helps you easily create, store and recall passwords. Many of them are both a website and an app, so you have access to all your passwords regardless of what device you're on.

There are a few popular password managers to choose from — Dashlane, 1 Password, RoboForm, True Key, Keeper, Sticky Password, Last Pass and ZOH Vault, to name a few — and they're generally free to start and easy to use.

In most cases, you set up an account by providing your name, email address and a “master” password to enter your digital locker. Once you're inside, you may see familiar logos for some of the most popular brands on the web, including Facebook, Instagram, Gmail, PayPal, Amazon, Dropbox, Netflix, eBay, Reddit and so on. Or you can create your own for, say, your Internet Service Provider (ISP), favorite news site, bank site, online games or any other place you need a password to use.

Once you tap one, such as Facebook, you'll be prompted to enter your username and password once, and now it's stored here for good. In fact, with most of these password managers, you can tap the logo to launch and log you into the app or site in question, thanks to its “auto-fill” feature.

Because most password managers sync your information in the “cloud” (online), you'll have access to everything, regardless of the device you're logging in to. Therefore, if you add a new password on your smartphone, and then sit down at your desktop computer later, you'll find that everything has been synchronized.

How secure are they?

For each website or app password you keep, you can choose to require the master password only or a master password *and* a PIN code or fingerprint (on a mobile phone or tablet) for “two-factor authentication.”

But what if your phone, tablet or laptop is lost or stolen? Can't someone access all your passwords if they figure out your “master password”? You need not worry about this as your device has to be unlocked first — that is, a person would first need to know your PIN or password — and then guess your master password, too, which is highly unlikely. And since you can log on to your password manager from virtually any device, you can log in from another machine and change your master password — just in case.

As a veteran security researcher, ESET's Stephen Cobb (eset.com) is familiar with password managers and is generally in favor of them because, as he puts it: “they make it possible for us mere mortals to employ strong passwords across an ever-increasing number of accounts, websites and services.”

But Cobb offers some caveats: “While companies that offer these services are deeply vested in keeping your passwords safe, that is no easy task, so make sure that you are selecting a reputable product.”

Not only do password managers let you keep your favorite passwords, but you can also lean on the app or site to create a tougher password, if desired. All passwords are encrypted with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and AES-256, the strongest grade of encryption available (banks use 128- or 256-bit encryption).

Additional features

Depending on the password manager you choose, additional features — which may or not be free — can add even more value to the service.

- Some aren't just for filling out online passwords but can also help populate other tedious online forms, such as billing or address information.
- Since this is a privately accessed app or website, you can often keep sensitive or important information — like notes, photos and other files — safe and easily accessible.

Continued on Page 4...



3 things to consider before signing up for a group fitness class

Courtesy of Madison Conley (www.msn.com)

- Workout classes are very popular, and there are so many options to choose from.
- People of all levels of fitness attend these classes, so it's best to go at your own pace rather than overdo it.
- Hurting yourself in a class is easy to do, so make sure you are modifying exercises when necessary.

From barre to boot camps, people can't get enough of the loud music, inspirational words, and sweat that accompanies group fitness classes. With so many different options — there are classes targeted towards people who hate exercising and people who love cats — it's almost impossible not to find at least one you want to take.

But even though group fitness classes have many positive benefits, they also have their downsides.

INSIDER spoke with three certified personal trainers — who are also all group fitness instructors — about whether or not group fitness classes are bad for you.

Personal instruction can get lost in a big group

There's no doubt that group fitness classes are more cost-effective than one-on-one personal training. But certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor, Melissa Aldeborgh, told INSIDER that "the bigger the group, the less eyes you can keep on everyone."

In larger groups, it's more difficult to watch everyone perform every exercise. One way to ensure you get a proper workout is to talk to the instructor beforehand and ask them to keep an eye on your form. Aldeborgh also suggested using what she calls the "connect method."

"I look around at the whole group and if you feel you're not doing something correctly, or your form is suffering, make eye contact with me," she explained. "Then I'll know to help you make an adjustment without you having to announce it to the whole class, which nobody wants to do."

You can hurt yourself easily

All class goers have a different level of fitness and, at times, that can put people in danger. The 23-year-old who hasn't worked out in four months, for example, may think they can lift as much weight as a 60-year-old who frequents the class weekly.

Oftentimes people lift heavier weights than they should to "get the most out of their workout," and this is how they end up hurting themselves.

"I don't want to say that fitness classes are 'at your own risk' but really they are," Melissa Clay, another certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor, told INSIDER.

"It's hard to keep an eye on everyone's form, especially those who don't want to be noticed and stand toward the back of the room," she said. "Everyone attending a group fitness class should know that modifying an exercise is better than getting hurt, especially if you have been on an exercise hiatus. Just because you're modifying an exercise, doesn't mean its not working."

Hurting yourself is definitely the biggest risk of taking a group fitness class, as the trainer is not focused on you individually. Make sure you are performing the exercises properly and working your way up to heavier weights.

It might feel like a competition

If the person next to you has heavier weights or can do more burpees, that may make you feel intimidated. Although this keeps some people motivated, it can make others feel bad.

"I feel group fitness classes are bad only for the simple fact that you might not be accommodating everyone," certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor TC Cofield told INSIDER. "You can't make everyone feel adequate in training, which discourages certain people from coming to the gym."

Don't pay much attention to the person next to you in class. It's not a contest; it's about getting stronger without hurting yourself.

...continued from page 3

- A few of these password managers can also scan the internet (including the "dark web") for leaked or stolen personal data, and will alert you the moment your information is detected where it shouldn't be.
- Some password managers double as a VPN, or virtual private network, which helps you remain anonymous while browsing the internet. Using a VPN hides your online activity from your ISP, search engines, advertisers, social media platforms, the government and cyber-snooping criminals.
- A few of these password managers can also hold a list of emergency contacts, in the event you need to provide a friend or family member access to your accounts — or if you pass away and want to leave these passwords to a trusted family member or friend.