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How-To Tips for Successful Stock Market Trading

Best Stock Market Investment: How To Choose Investments That Pay Off

Some financial experts say that engaging into the more lucrative but challenging world of investments is not for the faint of heart.

With the economy seemingly riding on a roller-coaster, investing in the right stock at the right time seems to be next to impossible. However, with the advent of information technology, people all over the world are going crazy over stock market investing. This is because the convenience of information technology has found its place in the world of investments.

If you are one who is looking to get into the world of stock market investing, here are a few pieces of advice you might want to heed:

1. The stock market is risky business

Generally, most people believe that buying stocks are as easy as 1-2-3. Of course, it can and in fact anybody is capable of doing it. But the problem lies on the fact that few people know when to sell. And that is, in its greatest sense, the heart of stock market.

So, the best advice for people to get the best stock market investment, it is best not to gamble everything that they have on it, especially if they don't have a good understanding of how it works. It's better to lose a little than lose really, really big.

2. The "trailing stop strategy."

Most experts incorporate this strategy when trading stocks. What they usually do is to "ride" their stocks really high, and maintain an exit strategy in the event that things get out of hand. This is where the liquidity of their investment is extremely vital to one's business. That is, they should know that whatever liquidity they have can be easily converted into cash.

3. Invest only what you are comfortable with.

Even if a particular investment opportunity, say, an exciting IPO of a big company, looks very attractive, it is a must for every investor not to invest in it if they are not prepared to risk losing their money on it. Regardless of how attractive an investment might look, there is always risk involved. You can come out a winner, but you can also come out a loser, so don't gamble away your life's savings.

Finally, most stock experts recommend today that those who want to get the best stock market returns should use every day costs in their investment strategy. Therefore it is a good idea for investors to always carry a handy calculator with them. The most important thing about stock market investment is not so much to pick the winners but to try to avoid the losers 😊

Timing Is Everything

Aim for the best timing in stock market trading. It is the only option for a successful stock market investor.

In order to raise capital and invest in the business, companies issue their stocks and the public may then buy and sell. The price varies depending on the supply and demand. This is what a stock market trader takes full advantage of.

The business of stock market trading can offer better profits to the investor compared to ordinary stock enterprise. The stock market offers a wide variety of stocks to choose from for any investor to go on with stock trading. There is always a moving stock out there amongst the thousands of others registered.

However, a careless attempt to proceed with stock market trading can produce undesirable result. Big losses can be incurred if the market trend is not properly predicted. Small profits would also frustrate the purpose of doing stock market trading. An uninformed stock trader may also end up waiting for that decisive moment that would never come.

Market Timing

To avoid the adverse effects of poor stock market trading, investors use market timing to forecast when the market will change its course. Market timing presumes that the decisive point can be predicted ahead. The direction of the market is predicted through a thorough examination of the price and economic data.

Best Timing

The consistency of such trend prediction is subject to many factors, that is why the aim of any would-be successful investor is best timing. At first glance, market timing sounds like a guaranteed way to make it big. This however requires exertion of considerable effort and persistence in carefully studying the various factors.

Avoid mere speculating. Speculating is a desperate move when the investor hasn't done his homework.

Investors also buy stocks because they got a hot tip from someone. Most of these tips however prove to be false, as they are mostly given by parties with vested interests.

Market timing requires involvement in research to know the company's history and calculate the trend by charting the movement of the stock's price. This involves analysis of the value of the stock to come close to accurate in predicting the trend. This is ideal in developing standards for when to buy and when to sell for the investor must accurately settle on the proper time to sell. One must also correctly determine when to regain, reselling the stock bought when it reaches its peak value. This way, the maximum profits can be realized.

The Best Way to do the Stock Market

In a volatile market such as stock trading, there is no sure fire way of continually posting growths in profits for any investor year after year, stock after stock. It is statistically impossible.

This is true simply because of the unpredictability of the market. The lack of an accurate prediction tool and the lack of a consistent trend for any stock only compounds the problem.

The greatest myth about being successful in trading is the need for the investor to be able to predict the stock market's movements. People incorrectly assume that stocks bounce around the range forever and therefore they must be able to predict a trend in the movement in order buy stocks during their lowest value and sell them at their highest peaks.

This is grossly incorrect.

The best way to make money in the stock market is to avoid approaches that rely on stock market predictions.

If you look at it, a conscious action of predicting the market is no better than buying a stock and holding on to it for a long period.

The reason behind this is because there is simply no way to predict stock performance. There is no person who can accurately predict stock movement consistently, all of the time.

An analyst may be able to predict a stock's performance in the immediate future but rarely in the long term. The analyst may predict next quarter's performance, or even for the entire year. But it is statistically impossible to predict stock movement correctly quarter after quarter, year after year.

A good way to do trading is to formulate your own strategy. Consider the following:

- Take time to do a careful evaluation of the history of a stock's performance.
- Keep up with the latest news and stock market reports
- Study the structure of successful mutual funds to see how their investment strategy is done. You can choose these funds to choose the best they are composed of and build your own portfolio from them.
- It is best to invest in a stock that has good dividend and growth.
- Invest in stocks that have a history of progressive gain.
- Evaluate the type of sector your company deals with.

Again, there is no specific and proven strategy that consistently reaps profit for any investor. Stocks are volatile and any strategy that proves reliable today may prove entirely worthless tomorrow.

The best way is to study several stocks and consider them as long-term investments. These may take you longer before you post any profit, but it beats putting all of your eggs in one basket.

How To's of Stock Market Trading

Stock is ownership in a company. Each share of stock represents a small piece of ownership. The more shares a person holds, the more part of the company he owns. The more part of the company a person owns translates to more dividends he earns when the company profits.

A stock market is a market for the trading of publicly held company stock as well as associated financial instruments such as stock options and stock index futures. On the other hand, stock market trading is the buying or selling securities or commodities specifically in the stock market.

There are two basic methods of doing stock market trading. Traditionally, stock markets were open-outcry where trading happened on the stock exchange floor. The more modern way of doing stock trading is through electronic exchanges where everything occurs online real-time.

Stock market trading via the exchange floor could not look any more chaotic. When the stock market is open, hundreds of people are seen rushing about, shouting and gesturing to each another on the exchange floor. Traders are also often seen talking on phones, keeping a close eye on the consoles and entering data into terminals.

Online stock market trading moves the trading off the floors and more into the networks. The electronic market employs a vast network of computers to match buyers and sellers instead of human brokers. While lacking the excitement of the usual stock market exchange floor, it is faster and more efficient. Investors frequently get an almost instant confirmation on any trades done.

How does stock market trading work? Be it on the chaotic stock market exchange floor or electronically, one needs to get an investment broker first.

For traditional exchange floor trading, after asking a broker to buy a certain number of shares at the market, the broker's order department sends this order to the clerk on the floor. The clerk alerts a trader who finds another trader who is willing to sell the shares the investor requested. The two traders agree on a price for the stocks and close the deal. Notification is sent back the same way until the broker calls the investor to inform him of the final price. This process may take a while depending on the market and stocks. Days later, the investor receives the confirmation mail.

The electronic counterpart is less complicated because the stock buying and selling are matched by the computers in real-time. And the investors get instant updates on what happens to his stock trade.

To Win or to Fail: Tips for Successful Trading

Investing money entails a great amount of risk. Like they always say, "It takes money, to make money." But money doesn't grow on trees, you know.

But it doesn't necessarily mean that to achieve good profits, one has to invest heavily and risk

greatly. That is not the case all the time. A well-informed investor can make sound decisions that will help him earn considerable profits with minimal loss.

The first lesson a successful businessman will tell you is that any endeavor carries potential risk along with potential gain. The trick is to determine if the profit is worth the risk. If it is, it is now time to consider if you are willing to take the risk.

So before you start trading, ask yourself this:

- a.) What are your achievement goals?
- b.) Are your investments going to lose money?
- c.) Are you willing to take bigger risks for better profits?

Setting your achievement goals will allow you to know how long you're willing to wait for a stock to gain profit. It will also give you a limit on how much you're willing to lose. It will also give you an idea on how to go about investing in a stock.

If you choose a low-return investment, it will mean that either you increase the amount you invest or increase the length of time invested.

After you have made up your mind with the above questions, there are some tips you may want to use to evaluate your trading philosophy.

When to invest

Ordinarily, you want to trade all the time. You get excited when you see shares go up or when they fall down. You make decisions based on a whim and factors that don't usually affect a stock in the long run. The best traders wait 50% of the time waiting and studying how a stock performs. They do not trade every day and all the time.

Discipline yourself

You are so excited to make trades that you trade on a stock that looks half-decent enough rather than waiting for the best stock to come along.

Small moves big pay off

Don't waste time dabbling in so many small stocks with minimal profit. Watch out for big stocks and concentrate on a few.

Do not be too emotional

Making money is exciting. Losing money can get very depressing. Detach yourself from your emotions; otherwise, you won't be able to look at things objectively.

Trading stocks is a high-risk, high-profit venture. Dabbling in the stock market half-cocked is suicide. Take your time. Study, research and be patient. After all, it's your money, so it's your loss.

7 Stock Market Tips to Live By

Planning to go into stock market investment? Here are some general tips to live by.

1. Understand the basics of economics.

The stock market follows the laws of economics, particularly the law of supply and demand. If there is a greater demand for the stocks of a particular company, the price of its stocks will go up accordingly. On the other hand, if there are more stocks available for selling (more sellers) than stock buyers, the unit price of that company's stocks will go down.

2. Study your prospective company(ies).

Read up on the company's profile: products, services, operations, and track record in the business. This is important to assess the company's stability and capability to deliver its promises and meet its profit targets.

3. Choose companies that are more likely to stay.

With so many existing companies in the stock market, choosing becomes a big challenge for beginners. Government-owned companies and businesses are relatively stable, unless there is a political revolution in the horizon. Telecommunications and gasoline companies are also stable and profitable since the demand for these products and services is constant.

Although IT companies are the fastest growing in the market today, be careful because there are so many of them that it checking on their profiles could be very taxing. Choose IT companies that have proven track records of profitability and stability of at least 10 years.

4. Always read and watch the news.

Dealing with the stock market is not a guessing game. Sound decisions and good intuition are results of constantly learning about the local and global political and economic happenings. Give particular attention to the industry where your company belongs. Even stable companies can suddenly go bankrupt or experience a big blow that can bring them down. Remember Enron?

5. Spread your investments.

Avoid investing in just one company. If all your stocks are concentrated to one company, the chance for loses is also greater. Spread them out so that earning investments can cushion those investments that earn less.

6. Do not rely solely on stock brokers.

Do your homework. Remember, the stockbroker is "gambling" with your money. When an investor does not understand how the stock market works, he/she becomes vulnerable to scrupulous brokers.

7. Do not be greedy.

Although stock market investment is all about profits, becoming greedy will make an investor lose his/her better senses. He/She might suddenly forget to check on economic rumors and decide right away to buy or sell thinking that he/she would make big profits by doing so.

Win the Stock Market With A Winning Attitude!

Many people often wonder why some make it in the stock market and some don't. They sometimes sigh and say, "They have all the luck, that's why." True enough, luck can be a factor in one's success or failure in the stock market. As most experts will allow, trading at the stock market is very similar to gambling. They both involve a great deal of risk. But unlike gambling, success or failure in the stock market is not solely dependent on luck. It has much to do with two things information and attitude.

Information has much to do with success or failure at the stock market. First of all, information makes stock trading more than just guesswork. Analyzing trends can help investors make educated guesses regarding their investments.

One important aspect that often goes unnoticed is the proper attitude investors must have towards investing. Too often, investors fall prey to the wrong type of attitude in investing. This leads to wrong decisions, and impulsive buying or selling. What are these attitudes, and how should they be avoided?

1. Many Investors Exhibit an Impatient Manner

Unfortunately, many investors get into the mix just because they are under the impression that they could get rich overnight as result of a few investments. This is so far from the truth. In fact, successful portfolios are built over time. Stocks take time to mature and appreciate. If the investor never realizes this, he or she might be looking to make a quick buck. And when he or she is unable to, he or she may become discouraged or may sell his or her shares for a lower price.

2. Many Investors Look to Take the Risk to Be Overnight Millionaires

Warren Buffet, the Wall Street Tycoon has this advice for investors: don't bet all your marbles on stocks that seem to be skyrocketing today. They could crash tomorrow. Buffet confides that he has always built his empire over stocks that were stable and exhibited continued growth over the years. He says that these stocks are preferable to volatile stocks that could crash anytime.

Other investors fail to diversify their portfolios. Depending on how much risk one is willing to take, an investor should divide his or her portfolio into low-risk, medium-risk, and high-risk categories, and invest in such stocks. Some people are too risky and put their heads on the guillotine with high-risk investments. Others will not risk their necks on any investments. One should choose an attitude that is just right for his or her risk tolerance.

Fifteen Characteristics of a Successful Stock Trader

Stock trading isn't for everyone. Some folks can do it and some can't. Even among the some who can, not everyone can be successful at it. While there are no hard and fast rules on what makes or doesn't make a successful stock trader, those Wall Street Wizards you may hear about who made the most in the shortest amount of time, all seem to have certain characteristics in common.

1. Successful stock traders are able to go against their natural instincts.
2. Successful traders have a system. It's as simple a system as possible. It doesn't matter which system you use as long as you stick to it. A Successful trader knows her system and makes trades based ONLY on the system. "The secret to success is consistency of purpose" You need to develop a separate strategy for entering a position and exiting one.
3. Successful traders are risk adverse. Successful traders do not like to lose money and stop themselves before losing too much, even if it means admitting they made a mistake.
4. Successful traders are willing to make mistakes. Successful traders have what many Native Americans call, "Sovereignty" Sovereignty is the right and ability, not to do the right thing, but to do the wrong thing. Sovereignty is the ability to make your own mistakes.
5. Successful traders care not embarrassed by taking a loss. Successful traders expect to take losses and know when to cut them.
6. Successful traders know, or learn how to analyze stocks. Many traders only use technical analysis, but you may want to learn to use fundamental analysis as well.
7. Successful traders led balanced lives. We all know the thrill of the hunt and the market can be addicting, a successful trader is one who knows when to walk away and can.
8. A successful trader is Patient. A successful trader lets profitable positions run, but is able to back out when proven wrong. Patience can mean resilience, courage, and conviction for when markets go against you.
9. A successful trader has a strong Desire to succeed. Success takes steady work not a haphazard effort, a strong desire to succeed can make all the difference in learning what you need to know and sticking to your strategy when the going get rough.
10. A successful trader is disciplined. Very disciplined. A successful trader will do what he needs to do, even if he isn't in the mood. Discipline also means Sticking to your strategy, not suddenly buying or selling on a whim, or because of a "hot tip."
11. A successful trader knows the difference between defensive and offensive behavior, and when to use each. - Preserve your money first, profit later.
12. Successful traders don't listen to rumors or get emotionally involved. To be a successful trader you have to be very hard on yourself. You have to be able to resist the urge to prove

yourself right and be ready to make mistakes. . You also need to be able to not let emotions affect your decisions. Setting up stop loss points for every decision is something you are going to have to do.

That will mean more than occasionally admitting that you were wrong. You and your portfolio will survive and you will be able to enter the position again when trends indicate the time is right. You are going to have to learn to ignore any emotional ties you have to your stock and make quick stock trends your master. You will miss the lowest entry points and the highest selling points, but you will be able to sleep at night. You will need to learn how to ride the train of the trends and jump off before your profits turn into losses.

13. A successful trader knows herself. Successful traders must be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Your strengths and weakness will become very important. Have a plan for dealing with your weakness. Play on your strengths whenever you can.

14. A successful trader knows her investments. Your investments are almost as important as you are. Know their past and their strengths and weaknesses as well.

15. A successful trader sticks to the rules. The rules are there for a reason. Nothing can ruin a successful Trader as quickly, or as surely as breaking the rules.

Five Questions Leading to Successful Stock Purchases

In order to become a knowledgeable investor, there are certain aspects about stocks that you must become familiar with. Remember that knowledge is power, so the more you know about the stock you are about to purchase, the better your chance is on receiving a high return on your investment. There are seven guiding questions that will provide the answers about each stock that you consider buying.

1. What is the source(s) of the company's cash flow(s)?

To properly answer this question about the company you are considering to purchase stock from, it is important to be as specific as possible, but most importantly, avoid making assumptions in order to know the exact cash flow of the given company. It is important for the investor to know about a company's cash flow because it determines which stock is the best to buy.

For example, Betty Crocker baking mixes are predominately sold in all discount stores across America, therefore, it is easy to assume that this is the company's main cash flow. Through further research, you discover that Betty Crocker also sells their recipes to catering companies throughout the world and that most of their cash flow comes from this venture. Therefore, the conclusion would be to purchase stock in the part of the Betty Crocker company that sells their recipes to catering companies so that you can gain the highest return on investment.

2. How much cash is generated by the company and when?

Once you, the investor, has recognized the highest cash flow of any given company, you must estimate the total amount as well as when the cash flow takes place. For example, you estimate that Betty Crocker makes \$25,000 per day during the month of December. As times goes on, this \$25,000 will grow each December due to inflation, concluding that during the month of December, sometime in the future, is the best time to cash in your stocks.

3. How much money does the company require to function?

Depending on the company, some businesses require more capital in order to generate profit. The less capital it takes to operate a business, the more attractive it is to an owner. The more attractive a company is to buy, the better the chance of selling the company to a businessman that would make the company become a noticed establishment in the economy, which in turn, increases the return rate on the stock.

4. Does the management of a company have a friendly shareholder orientation?

The way in which the management of any given company decides to treat its shareholders is the direct determinant of its success in the stock market. The better the shareholders are treated by the company, the more likely the shareholder will either buy more stock or refer other people to purchase stock for the company. A good way for management to ensure friendly relations with shareholders is to keep the shareholders informed as to when the return rate of the stock is going to increase so that they are able to purchase more stocks, and, thus, make more money.

5. Are the actions of the management of a certain company consistent with what they say in public?

Basically stated, the more honest the management is with any company, the more shareholders they will gain. For example, 5 members of management of a given company give a public speech declaring that the return rate on their company's stock is about to increase. So, shareholders begin to purchase more shares in their company. However, later, the 5 members of management have a public meeting, stating that they really lied about the return rate increasing to persuade people to buy stocks so that their company could gain more money, then the trust level of their stockholders has just decreased, and they would more than likely sale their stocks in retaliation of being lied to in order to make that company fail in the stock market. Therefore, it is highly important for companies that sale stock to be honest at all times with their shareholders.

By answering these five questions with information that you have obtained while researching a certain company, the better your chance is of gaining a return on your investment if you decide to buy stock from an honest, reputable company.

Stock Investing Mistakes that Make a Difference

Investing is the most important thing that you can do to secure your financial future. Trading stocks is a centuries' old practice and with a good brokerage firm, you can benefit from

investing in stocks. There are, however, some common investing mistakes that people make that can result in huge losses and missed opportunities. In order to benefit from the stock market, here are the most common mistakes and tips to avoid them.

The first most common mistake in investing in the stock market is waiting too long to start investing. The perception of investing is that it is reserved for older, financially established people who can invest large sums of money. This is a misconception that is limiting people from tapping into the power of investing. Waiting just ten years can make a huge difference in the total gains that one can make over their lifetime.

For example, investing just \$2000 a year (that's just \$170 a month) starting at the age of 26 can yield \$2,114,379 by the time you are 75. This is with an Annual Return Rate (ARR) of 10% per year steady through the life of the investment. The same investment, with the same ARR, made ten years later at the age of 36 will result in a return of only \$802,895 at the age of 75. That is a 1.3 million dollar difference. If you are not able to invest as much as \$160 a month, set aside \$25 per month. Even this small amount can have a large impact over time.

It is shocking that many people will put more time and research into choosing an MP3 player or home theater system than they will researching the stocks they will invest in. It is imperative that you take the time to understand the financial history of the companies you wish to have shares with. Make sure that you understand what you are buying and how it will benefit you in the long run. It is also important to keep in mind that you must remain objective when choosing stocks.

Stocks that you have researched well and carefully selected are more likely to increase than ones you choose based on a "feeling." Put your emotions aside and consider your options carefully. Taking time to research and investigate is also important when choosing your financial advisor. Consider meeting with a few candidates and evaluating their approach to investing. If you are meeting with someone on a recommendation, make sure that the person who recommended the advisor is someone who is qualified to do so.

Another common mistake is confusing gambling or speculating with investing. Investing in stocks is part of a long-range financial picture and not a get-rich-quick scheme. While there certainly are high yield quick return programs out there, it is wise to limit your participation in those programs. Day trading is one of these types of programs. When someone is involved in day trading they trade very rapidly in and out of stocks in order to profit daily from marginal changes in the market.

This practice may seem easy to profit from but it actually results in more losses for investors than gains. Similarly, some try investing over a short period of time in very risky stocks. A short-term investment of six months to a year in a "hot stock" does not belong in a well-thought out financial plan. True investing should be done in quality companies over a period of several years. Finally, listening to someone who has a "hot tip" is a quick way to lose a lot of your investment. Research any tips you get carefully and only invest if the numbers pan out, no matter how much others insist that this is the stock to have.

Finally, you need to remember to diversify your investment portfolio. Loading it up on one company's stock is unfortunately a common practice for many investors. Additionally, having

too much stock in one specific industry can also be a recipe for disaster when the market changes. Spread your money over several different companies and different industries for the best long-term investment.

How To Evaluate Stocks

Stock picking is akin to weather prediction - no one can predict with certainty five hours from now if the price will rise or fall, much less five years from now.

Nevertheless, there are indicators that help to reduce the risk and increase the odds of profiting over the long term. After all, historically stocks have returned over 10%, as measured by the growth of the S&P 500.

The first step is to get educated. Learn not only about dividends yields and earnings per share, but also some basic accounting. Reported figures have an air of authority but the sad fact remains that those numbers are arrived at, in part, by accounting methods, which are not cut and dried.

The Enron case (case in which the executives of Enron manipulated their earnings figures to appear to be much more successful than they were) is extreme, but even ordinary procedures involve judgment calls on the part of financial officers and auditors.

Next, commit to continuing research about stocks both inside and outside your intended portfolio, and update it as you buy and sell. There's a broad spectrum between exact prediction and throwing darts blindly. In the long run, those who do their homework do far better and almost all day traders lose money.

Research both prospective buys and intended sells. Many investors put considerable time and effort into analyzing a buy, but then only watch for some price to be reached in order to sell. Knowing when to sell is just as important, and a target should be selected before the stock is bought.

RESEARCHING BUYS

Obtain the latest, and some historical, financial statements. The SEC provides these free (www.sec.gov) in their EDGAR database, but other exchanges have similar arrangements.

Analyze the quarterly statements covering two to three years, looking for EPS (earnings per share) and revenue trends. Calculate dividend yields, if the company pays dividends.

Compare the company's P/E (Price to Earnings) ratio to others in the same economic sector. Look at P/S (Price to Sales) ratios, too. Sales growth is easier to predict than earnings and less volatile than P/E ratios.

Examine general economic factors. Interest rates affect stock prices as well as bonds (though less directly), since almost every company borrows money. Even when they don't, their

competitors, suppliers, and customers do. Interest charges reduce profits for all but the lenders, for whom it's income.

Even when researching a bank, though, high interest rates increase short-term profits, but can reduce the number of loans and cause certain current ones to be repaid early. High interest rates aren't necessarily good for banks either, therefore.

Use some of the more common technical indicators, such as MA (moving averages) and RSI (Relative Strength Index, which compares the number of days a stock finishes up versus down). An RSI of 70, or above, for example, does tend to indicate a stock which, is overbought and due for a fall in price.

RESEARCHING SELLS

Pick a target price, which amounts to deciding how much profit (in dollars or percentage terms) you seek then sell at that price, unless your continuing research has turned up significant new information.

Consider selling if the price has dropped substantially or remained unchanged for several months. Losses are hard to bear, but consider that you can't always pick winners and while you're invested in one stock, you're forgoing potential profit from another. That profit could help reduce or more than make up for the loss from the sale.

Continue to monitor the company's fundamentals by obtaining updated filings. Re-evaluate them by updating earnings trend calculations, significant management or general economic changes.

You can ease the difficulty of performing calculations (which is a useful exercise at least once) by finding Internet sites that provide objective data and go easy on the "here's how to pick winners" sales talk. And remember, 'on the street' opinions are a dime a dozen - including mine.

Tips on Buying and Selling Stocks

'SOFT' FACTORS

The first thing to consider about investing isn't technical at all. EPS, P/E, P/S, MA and EMA, RSI and dozens of other indicators are all important. But start at the beginning by looking not outside, but in.

What kind of investor are you? Young with a little capital to risk but a large earnings potential over several decades? Retired, or near it, with a healthy savings but living on limited income?

And, more psychologically, what's your temperament for research and your tolerance for risk? Are you comfortable with statistics or intuitive? Are you detail oriented, or tend to look at the big picture? Not mutually exclusive categories, to be sure.

All these factors will influence your investment strategy. You do have a strategy, right? If not, go back to square one and develop that first.

'HARD' FACTORS

PEG - Projected Earnings Growth

Traditionally, Price to Earnings (P/E) ratio was a helpful indicator of value. Low price, relative to large earnings (per share) suggested a company's share price would likely rise in the future. But that was before thousands of new companies entered the public markets and when investing meant buying Coca-Cola stock.

But P/E isn't entirely useless, even today. Just supplement it with a little more information to calculate the PEG - Projected Earnings Growth.

Calculate PEG by taking the P/E and dividing it by the projected growth in earnings. For example, a stock with a P/E of 20 and projected earning growth next year of 10% would have a PEG of 2 ($20/10 = 2$). The lower the number the less you're paying for a unit of future earnings growth. Therefore, a company with a high P/E may still be a value if it has a high-projected earnings.

Of course, the key is getting accurate projections. While no one can predict with certainty, many Internet sites provide those numbers and over time, with diligence, you can find one you trust.

Just as deciding to buy is, in small part, finding a large PEG stock, electing a time to sell means estimating when PEG is likely to take a turn downward. So, tracking PEG over time in the form of a simple chart should be a weekly (or more often) task on your research list.

ROE - Return On Equity

Some companies can make silk purses out of pig's ears, others couldn't make a profit if they were given Apple's engineering and marketing teams for free. Return on Equity is one measure of how well a company uses its assets to produce earnings. (By the way, silk comes from worms, not pigs.)

It's easy to calculate, simply divide Net Income by Book Value (assets minus liabilities). Both numbers needed are easy to obtain from Internet sites. Three percent is low, 15% is healthy - but be sure to compare to other companies in the same economic sector, and track the number over the long term.

Obviously, when projected ROE is high (based on historical trend) you want to buy. Timing the sell is a matter of estimating when ROE is trending downward.

Some factors to consider for the latter involve major mergers, which look to be unwise (HP acquiring Compaq is one example), major technology or management changes (this can be positive or negative), lawsuits initiated or settled, and general economic factors influencing that company more than others.

Continually add to your database and your toolkit. Track the numbers and add new numbers to track. MA - moving averages and RSI - Relative Strength Indicator are two of the more common technical indicators used, for example. After you're comfortable with those, seek out some of the methods of quantifying risk.

And don't forget to develop that strategy. Tools are useless if you don't know what you want to do with them.

Stock Market Investments: Secrets to Success

Everybody can buy and sell stocks. All you need is money to invest, an online exchange and a whole lot of determination.

The truly difficult part is when to sell stocks. Should you sell when it's on an upward swing? Or do you wait until it peaks and starts to fall? How long do you wait while the stock falls? Should you keep on holding until it rebounds or should you sell immediately and cut your losses?

Keep those questions in mind while you continue reading the article.

Part of a successful trading is to take a step back from the market and look at the bigger picture. Too many details and information can actually be detrimental to your goal of achieving profits through stock trading.

Here are some secrets for a successful stock market investment:

1. Buy when the market signals the start of a bull trend. A bull trend is a set of rallies (an upward surge of stock value) where each rally exceeds the highest point of a previous rally. The start of an uptrend is signaled when the peak of a rally is higher than the previous peak. This means that the value of a stock peaks at a certain value, drops again, and then increases again reaching a value higher than the previous high value.
2. Select leading stocks that are outperforming the market
3. Sell when the bull trend has ended. This can be seen when the bull trend has a rally whose peak is lower than the peak of the previous rally.
4. Sell stocks when they move against this trend

Given the above tips, it may still be difficult for you to actually identify the end of a bull trend. The problem here is when the last peak of the bull trend starts to dip and continues to fall without stopping. When do you sell when that happens?

That's when the next big secret comes: Trailing stops.

Trailing stops have three uses:

- To limit losses
- To protect profits
- To prevent you from entering (or exiting) a trade too early

Stops can be based on the high/low of the daily trading range or on a trailing percentage.

Based on this, you can formulate your own trailing stop strategy. With a trailing stop strategy, you ride your stocks as high as you can, but if they start to tumble, you have an exit strategy. A good trailing stop is 25% off the highest value the stock reaches.

With these strategies in place, you'll be able to have a better chance of minimizing your loss.

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