

Best Performing Stocks Of The Decade

PLOUTOS DECEMBER 13, 2019

Summary

It was a strong decade for stocks, with average annualized returns of more than 13% for the S&P 500.

The last 10 years featured the first decade without a domestic economic recession in the country's history.

This article looks at the best performing stocks currently in the broad S&P 1500, and discusses some key themes that drove their outsized returns.

It has been quite the decade for stocks. The first full ten-year period in modern economic history without a recession. For the S&P 500, average annual returns for the S&P 500 averaged 13.3% with only 1 year of negative returns (2018).

With that type of performance, there was a lot of winners. This list looks at the best performing 50 stocks currently in the broad S&P 1500 Index. The S&P 1500 covers roughly 90% of the market capitalization of all U.S. stocks. Nearly all of the included market leaders were "10-baggers" that grew investors money ten-fold over the decade

Best Performing Stocks of the Decade					
Ticker	Issuer	Total Return in 2010s (%)	Current Mkt Cap (\$B)	GICS Sector	Industry
PATK	Patrick Industries Inc	4798%	\$1.26	Industrials	Building Products
DZP	Dominos Pizza Inc	4302%	\$12.13	Consumer Discretionary	Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure
NFLX	Netflix Inc	3652%	\$130.79	Communication Services	Entertainment
TREE	LendingTree Inc	3308%	\$3.82	Financials	Thriffs & Mortgage Finance
MKTX	MarketAxess Holdings Inc	2978%	\$14.01	Financials	Capital Markets
LAD	Lithia Motors Inc	2128%	\$3.80	Consumer Discretionary	Specialty Retail
TG	TransDigm Group Inc	2083%	\$30.39	Industrials	Aerospace & Defense
RGEN	Repligen Corp	2069%	\$4.64	Health Care	Life Sciences Tools & Services
AVGO	Broadcom Inc	2037%	\$130.03	Information Technology	Semiconductors & Semiconductor
ABMD	ABIOMED Inc	1952%	\$8.09	Health Care	Health Care Equipment & Suppli
HSKA	Heska Corp	1728%	\$0.73	Health Care	Health Care Equipment & Suppli
TREX	Trex Co Inc	1709%	\$5.17	Industrials	Building Products
NEO	NeoGenomics Inc	1675%	\$2.78	Health Care	Life Sciences Tools & Services
FICO	Fair Isaac Corp	1577%	\$10.22	Information Technology	Software
URI	United Rentals Inc	1564%	\$12.26	Industrials	Trading Companies & Distributo
AAXN	Axon Enterprise Inc	1539%	\$4.26	Industrials	Aerospace & Defense
XPO	XPO Logistics Inc	1530%	\$7.71	Industrials	Air Freight & Logistics
OLED	Universal Display Corp	1489%	\$9.20	Information Technology	Semiconductors & Semiconductor
REGN	Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc	1439%	\$40.86	Health Care	Biotechnology
ALGN	Align Technology Inc	1406%	\$21.15	Health Care	Health Care Equipment & Suppli
ULTA	Ulta Beauty Inc	1342%	\$14.80	Consumer Discretionary	Specialty Retail
TYL	Tyler Technologies Inc	1330%	\$10.94	Information Technology	Software
ODFL	Old Dominion Freight Line Inc	1291%	\$14.97	Industrials	Road & Rail
CGNX	Cognex Corp	1230%	\$9.23	Information Technology	Electronic Equipment, Instrume
AMZN	Amazon.com Inc	1209%	\$872.77	Consumer Discretionary	Internet & Direct Marketing Re
RUTH	Ruth's Hospitality Group Inc	1198%	\$0.67	Consumer Discretionary	Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure
MANH	Manhattan Associates Inc	1197%	\$4.98	Information Technology	Software
NVDA	NVIDIA Corp	1202%	\$137.13	Information Technology	Semiconductors & Semiconductor
POOL	Pool Corp	1165%	\$8.31	Consumer Discretionary	Distributors
ARWR	Arrowhead Pharmaceuticals Inc	1170%	\$6.74	Health Care	Biotechnology
TTWO	Take-Two Interactive Software	1146%	\$14.20	Communication Services	Entertainment
EXR	Extra Space Storage Inc	1118%	\$13.26	Real Estate	Equity Real Estate Investment
ROST	Ross Stores Inc	1108%	\$41.79	Consumer Discretionary	Specialty Retail
MA	Mastercard Inc	1103%	\$294.80	Information Technology	IT Services
STZ	Constellation Brands Inc	1094%	\$34.43	Consumer Staples	Beverages
CHTR	Charter Communications Inc	1096%	\$115.73	Communication Services	Media
ENSG	Ensign Group Inc/The	1090%	\$2.31	Health Care	Health Care Providers & Servic
FTNT	Fortinet Inc	1088%	\$17.86	Information Technology	Software
CHDN	Churchill Downs Inc	1079%	\$5.35	Consumer Discretionary	Hotels, Restaurants & Leisure
CTAS	Cintas Corp	1073%	\$26.83	Industrials	Commercial Services & Supplies
AX	Axos Financial Inc	1072%	\$1.80	Financials	Thriffs & Mortgage Finance
ORLY	O'Reilly Automotive Inc	1057%	\$33.38	Consumer Discretionary	Specialty Retail
IOSP	Immunoprec Inc	1053%	\$2.47	Materials	Chemicals
CRUS	Cirrus Logic Inc	1023%	\$4.43	Information Technology	Semiconductors & Semiconductor
EGHT	B&B Inc	1021%	\$1.68	Information Technology	Software
CDNS	Cadence Design Systems Inc	1017%	\$18.77	Information Technology	Software
CNC	Centene Corp	1006%	\$24.22	Health Care	Health Care Providers & Servic
PLUS	ePlus Inc	984%	\$1.14	Information Technology	Electronic Equipment, Instrume
STMP	Stamps.com Inc	985%	\$1.45	Consumer Discretionary	Internet & Direct Marketing Re
UNH	UnitedHealth Group Inc	981%	\$268.70	Health Care	Health Care Providers & Servic

Best Performing Stocks in the 2010s

In dollar terms, Amazon (AMZN) was the biggest winner, growing its market capitalization from just under \$60B to more than \$860B. In percentage terms, the e-commerce giant was only the 27th best performing

stock.

The best performing stock was an Elkhart, Indiana-based maker of components for the recreational vehicle and manufactured housing market. The fact that the best performing stock was based in the rust belt town of Elkhart has broader meaning. In early 2009, just weeks into President Obama's first term, he visited the hardscrabble town, where unemployment was approaching 20%. The former President ended his second term with a follow-up visit, returning to Elkhart with unemployment hovering around 4%. Over the intervening period, the RV industry so critical to Elkhart had gone from shipping 166,000 units to nearly 400,000. Recreational vehicle manufacturing is a notoriously cyclical industry, with the large ticket items leading to even more cyclicity than seen in the broader auto sector. The big winner of the 2010s was a very cyclical business that caught the tailwind of the decade's prolonged expansion.

There were other traditionally cyclical companies on the list. Two trucking firms - XPO Logistics ([XPO](#)) and an industrial equipment rental firm - United Rentals ([URI](#)) were also in the top 50.

If the back half of the 2000s was defined by the deflation of the housing bubble, the 2010s saw some of the best performers emerge from different parts of the value chain in the housing and mortgage sector. On the mortgage side, Lending Tree ([TREE](#)) was a top performer. Fair Isaac ([FICO](#)), the credit monitoring service, also surged. In the past decade, I added a Trex ([TREX](#)) deck to a home, evidently many others did as well. While the 2000s saw people foreclosing on their properties, the 2010s saw new decks and pools - Pool Corporation ([POOL](#)) was also a top performer as household wealth hit new records.

The second table below looks at the industry mix of the decade leaderboard versus the current industry weights in the S&P 1500.

Sector	S&P 1500		
	Weight	Leaders	Diff
Communication Services	9.5%	10.6%	1.1%
Consumer Discretionary	10.0%	40.5%	30.5%
Consumer Staples	6.5%	1.4%	-5.1%
Financials	13.8%	0.8%	-13.0%
Health Care	14.0%	15.5%	1.5%
Industrials	10.0%	4.2%	-5.8%
Information Technology	21.9%	26.5%	4.6%
Materials	2.9%	0.1%	-2.8%
Real Estate	3.9%	0.5%	-3.4%
Utilities	3.2%	0.0%	-3.2%
Energy	4.0%	0.0%	-4.0%

Stocks of the decade by industry weights

While consumer discretionary stocks have been among the leaders, it was a mixed decade for retailers within that sector as brick-and-mortar companies faced stress. More than one-third of the heavy weight for consumer discretionary stocks is driven by the classification of Amazon in that bucket. Ross Stores ([ROST](#)) and Ulta Beauty ([ULTA](#)) bucked the negative trend for traditional retailers, and bounced into the Top 50.

It was generally a rough decade for commodity-centric companies with no Energy firms in the top 50 and only specialty chemical company Innospec ([IOSP](#)) making the leaderboard from the Materials sector. West Texas

Intermediate has averaged \$72/barrel on the decade, but just \$52/barrel over the past 5 years - slightly lower than current levels in the high \$50s. In a decade where U.S. oil production more than doubled, U.S. Energy stocks ([XLE](#)) have meaningfully lagged, in part a victim of their own success in growing global supply.

You can not discuss the past decade without mentioning Tech. The tech-heavy Nasdaq has produced annualized returns of 17.5%, strongly outpacing the broader market. On this leaders list, 26% of the market capitalization is in the tech space, led by chipmaker Broadcom ([AVGO](#)) and graphics processing unit maker Nvidia ([NVDA](#)).

Beyond Tech, some of the market leaders were companies that adopted technology to outdistance rivals in very competitive markets. Domino's ([DPZ](#)) in slinging pizzas, and MarketAxess ([MKTX](#)) is marketing bonds, built easy-to-use tech platforms of value to their end clients and reaped substantial benefits.

After the lost decade for stocks in the 2000s, which was bookended by the beginning of the tech rout and the Financial crisis, the 2010s were a banner decade for stocks. The winners were a mixture of cyclical bounceback stories and secular growth stories. I hope this article provides readers a framing of the top performing stocks on the decade.

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