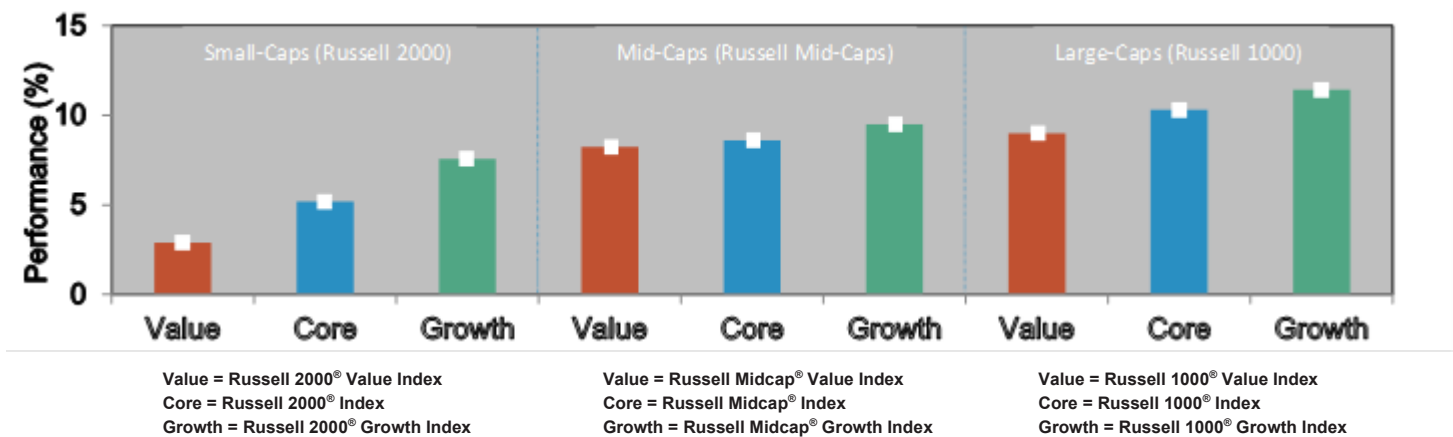


## Quarterly Highlights

- The RS Small Cap Growth Strategy returned 11.11% gross (10.85% net) for the three months ended March 31, 2024, outperforming the Russell 2000® Growth Index,<sup>1</sup> gross of fees, which returned 7.58%.
- Strategy performance relative to the benchmark was positively impacted during the quarter by stock selection in the Technology and Consumer Staples sectors; stock selection within the Materials & Processing and Health Care sectors offset a portion of the outperformance.
- This period's absolute performance was hindered in part by the relative performance of secular small-cap growth stocks as small growth, as defined by the Russell 2000® Growth Index, underperformed large growth, as defined by the Russell 1000® Growth Index,<sup>2</sup> 7.58% vs. 11.41%.
- We believe the multi-year underperformance of innovative smaller-cap growth stocks has created an outsized opportunity for smaller-cap growth stocks, as current valuations (defined as the forward price-to-earnings ratio, excluding non-earners) of the Russell 2000® Growth Index are the cheapest since the 1979 inception of the index relative to the Russell 1000® Growth Index (per FactSet).

## Market Performance / Fundamentals Snapshot

### Q1 2024 Market Performance



Index returns are for illustrative purposes only and do not represent actual Fund performance. Index performance does not reflect management fees, transaction costs or expenses. Indexes are unmanaged and one cannot invest directly in an index. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

## Market Commentary

The U.S. stock market continued its strong momentum in the first quarter of 2024. The iconic S&P 500® Index,<sup>3</sup> the most popular proxy for the domestic market, clocked in with an impressive return of 10.56% during the first quarter. The market's strong run reflects solid economic growth, low unemployment and surprising payroll data, and a consumer that continues to spend, albeit at a slightly lower rate than last year. All this has been fueling corporate earnings and, ultimately, share prices.

It's interesting to note that equities continued to push higher during the quarter in the face of rising yields. The rally in stocks at year-end was largely fueled by the expectation that the Federal Reserve would be more accommodative, perhaps as early as March. But inflation data continued to be higher than the Federal Reserve's target, and this has pushed out expectations for interest rate cuts until June or beyond. Not surprisingly, yields across the curve moved higher during the first quarter, with the 10-year Treasury yield ending March at approximately 4.2%. Nevertheless, equities shrugged off these changing rate-cut expectations. Stocks also seemed unfazed by ongoing geopolitical turmoil and high energy

prices that could make inflation "sticky" and keep the Federal Reserve on the sideline for longer.

In terms of investment styles, the Russell 3000® Growth Index<sup>4</sup> clocked in with impressive gains of 11.23%, thanks largely to the ongoing excitement surrounding artificial intelligence, as well as performance of the Technology and Communication Services sectors. Large-cap stocks once again assumed the leadership position, as the Russell 1000® Growth Index rose 11.41% during the first quarter. Small-cap growth stocks, as measured by the Russell 2000® Growth Index, also returned an impressive 7.58% during the quarter, while the Russell Midcap® Growth Index<sup>5</sup> delivered a return of 9.50%.

While many growth-oriented investors continue to gravitate toward large-cap stocks, we have been encouraged to see the wider participation of more small- and mid-cap growth stocks in the market rally, which we began to see in earnest late last year. Our team continues to focus on identifying potential opportunities within secular growth, and we believe many of these smaller companies are priced attractively compared to the broader market, even after solid first quarter performance.

Moreover, we are convinced that we are still in the early stages of a secular shift that is transforming how consumers, businesses, and employees interact, especially after witnessing extensive technological advancements and acceptance during the initial stages of the pandemic. What was once a test run of certain products and technologies has become mainstream and standard operating procedure for many companies. Furthermore, new emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence are poised to have a significant impact in the years ahead, particularly among growth-oriented investment styles.

### Investment Strategy

The RS Small Cap Growth Strategy (the “Strategy”) is guided by our philosophy that sustainable earnings growth drives long-term share price appreciation. Our investment process is focused on finding innovative companies whose core business, we believe, can grow from a small-cap company to a mid- or even large-cap company over time.

The team seeks companies with products and services that are growing organically, creating new markets or taking market share from existing companies. We are focused on finding companies whose business values can appreciate regardless of the underlying market environment. The Strategy is led by the team’s chief investment officer, Scott Tracy, along with portfolio managers Steve Bishop, Melissa Chadwick-Dunn, Chris Clark, and Paul Leung. The five co-portfolio managers, as well as three research analysts, serve as sector specialists and are supported by two associates, drawing on strong relationships with industry experts and company management teams.

Together, we conduct over 2,000 company meetings each year through in-person meetings, conference calls, and trade shows. We then back up our findings through discussions with industry leaders and third-party sources. We are long-term investors and seek to establish definable “anchor points,” which are quantifiable metrics that help determine a company’s potential long-term growth trajectory. Anchor points arise from our analysis of a company’s long-term capabilities and performance goals over three to five years. These long-term anchor points serve as guideposts to help us measure a company’s progress as it executes its business strategy, regardless of what is taking place in the overall market, and help prevent distractions caused by short-term stock price movements and inevitable market volatility.

### Performance Review

The RS Small Cap Growth Strategy returned 11.11% gross (10.85% net) for the three months ended March 31, 2024, outperforming, gross of fees, the Russell 2000® Growth Index, which returned 7.58%. Strategy performance relative to the benchmark was positively impacted during the quarter by stock selection in the Technology and Consumer Staples sectors; stock selection within the Materials & Processing and Health Care sectors offset a portion of the outperformance. This period’s absolute performance was hindered in part by the relative performance of secular small-cap growth stocks as small growth, as defined by the Russell 2000® Growth Index, underperformed large growth, as defined by the Russell 1000® Growth Index, 7.58%

vs. 11.41%. We believe the multi-year underperformance of innovative smaller-cap growth stocks has created an outsized opportunity for smaller-cap growth stocks, as current valuations (defined as the forward price-to-earnings ratio, excluding non-earners) of the Russell 2000® Growth Index are the cheapest since the 1979 inception of the index relative to the Russell 1000® Growth Index (per FactSet).

### Top Contributing Sector: Technology

One of the largest drivers of relative outperformance within the Technology sector was Vertiv Holdings Co. Class A (1.40% ending weight), a designer, manufacturer, and servicer of critical digital infrastructure technology that powers, cools, deploys, secures and maintains data center electronic equipment. Vertiv has been benefiting from a surge in demand from infrastructure spending to build artificial intelligence capabilities globally. We continue to believe in the long-term opportunities ahead for Vertiv and consider it a unique secular growth company leveraging a multi-year investment thesis.

### Top Detracting Sector: Health Care

One of the larger areas of underperformance within the Health Care sector was driven by Pacific Biosciences (0.00% ending weight), a developer, manufacturer, and marketer of advanced sequencing solutions for genetic analysis. Pacific had disappointing Q4 results and saw a diminished outlook for their products in 2024. As such, we exited the position in the quarter.

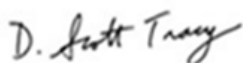
### Market and Strategy Outlook

We are optimistic about the health of the domestic economy in 2024 and are excited about the prospect that the U.S. economy remains strong and that the Federal Reserve is done hiking interest rates. While the full impact on the economy from the rate hiking campaign is as yet unclear, any healthy pullback in economic activity, if coupled with solid consumer and business spending, could augur a very favorable backdrop for growth stocks. We remain especially optimistic about worker productivity against a healthy and resilient employment backdrop, which should help corporate profit momentum. Certain segments of the economy appear well positioned to continue to grow, while company valuations vary significantly across styles.

In the current investment landscape, there is a notable opportunity for secular growth companies outside of the mega-cap growth category. Despite their relative underperformance since November 2020, smaller-cap secular growth companies have displayed continued strength in their underlying fundamentals. We expect this fundamental strength to persist, and are optimistic that the valuation gap of smaller companies will narrow with that of their larger-cap peers.

Overall, while interest rate and inflation uncertainty remains, we believe that opportunities will emerge in sectors and industries that demonstrate resilience through the cycle and sustained growth. We feel that secular growth companies within the growth universe are particularly attractive relative to cyclicals due to their strong and consistent fundamentals and potential for continued outperformance.

Thank you for your continued investment.



D. Scott Tracy, CFA  
CIO, Co-Portfolio Manager




Steve Bishop  
Co-Portfolio Manager



Melissa Chadwick-Dunn  
Co-Portfolio Manager



Chris Clark, CFA  
Co-Portfolio Manager



Paul Leung, CFA  
Co-Portfolio Manager

### Sector Allocation (Representative Account)<sup>6</sup>

As of March 31, 2024

Sector	% of Portfolio
Technology	27.04%
Health Care	21.49%
Producer Durables	14.56%
Consumer Discretionary	11.36%
Financial Services	8.29%
Materials & Processing	7.22%
Energy	5.22%
Consumer Staples	3.35%
[Cash]	1.11%
[Other]	0.35%

### Top 10 Holdings (Representative Account)<sup>7</sup>

As of March 31, 2024

Holding	% of Portfolio
Super Micro Computer, Inc.	2.51%
Sprout Social, Inc. Class A	2.29%
MACOM Technology Solutions Holdings, Inc.	2.03%
MicroStrategy Incorporated Class A	1.99%
Freshpet Inc.	1.82%
FirstCash Holdings, Inc.	1.75%
Semtech Corporation	1.72%
Varonis Systems, Inc.	1.64%
AZEK Co., Inc. Class A	1.63%
Weatherford International plc	1.60%

### Composite Performance

Average Annual Returns as of March 31, 2024

RS Small Cap Growth Composite	First Quarter 2024	1-Year	3-Year	5-Year	10-Year	Since Inception (11/30/87)
Gross of fees	11.11%	25.84%	-7.18%	4.35%	8.23%	13.54%
Net of fees	10.85%	24.71%	-8.02%	3.41%	7.28%	12.09%
Russell 2000 <sup>®</sup> Growth Index <sup>1</sup>	7.58%	20.35%	-2.68%	7.38%	7.89%	8.86%

Returns include reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. Performance returns for periods of less than one year are not annualized.

### Past performance does not guarantee future results.

Composite and benchmark returns are net of non-reclaimable withholding taxes, if any. Gross-of-fees returns are presented before management and custodial fees but after all trading expenses. Net-of-fees returns reflect gross performance less investment management fees. Net-of-fees returns are calculated by deducting one-twelfth of the highest tier of the standard fee schedule in effect for the period noted (the model fee). The composite model fee for each period is either the highest tier of the current fee schedule or a higher value, whichever is required to ensure the model composite net-of-fee return is lower than or equal to the composite net-of-fee return calculated using actual fees. Actual fees may vary depending on, among other things, the applicable fee schedule and portfolio size. The firm's fees are available on request and may be found on Part 2A of its Form ADV.

Index returns are provided to represent the investment environment during the periods shown. Index returns do not include transaction costs, management fees or other costs that would be incurred with an investment. One cannot invest directly in an index.

Performance may have been meaningfully impacted by investments in initial public offerings (IPOs). There is no guarantee that any positive impact on performance will be repeated or that the strategy will participate in any future IPOs. The prices of IPO securities may fluctuate more than prices of equity securities of companies with longer trading histories. Investing in IPOs entails special risks, including limited operating history of companies, limited number of shares available for trading, unseasoned trading, lack of investor knowledge of the company, and high portfolio turnover.

- 1 The Russell 2000<sup>®</sup> Growth Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index that measures the performance of those companies in the Russell 2000<sup>®</sup> Index (which consists of the 2,000 smallest-cap companies in the Russell 3000<sup>®</sup> Index) with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- 2 The Russell 1000<sup>®</sup> Growth Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index that measures the performance of those companies in the Russell 1000<sup>®</sup> Index (which consists of the 1,000 largest U.S. companies based on total market

capitalization) with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.

- 3 The S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.
- 4 The Russell 3000<sup>®</sup> Growth Index is an unmanaged market-capitalization-weighted index that measures the performance of those companies in the Russell 3000<sup>®</sup> Index (which consists of the 3,000 largest U.S. companies based on total market capitalization) with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- 5 The Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Growth Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index that measures the performance of those companies in the Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Index with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.
- 6 The Representative Account holdings are allocated to each sector based on the Russell Global Sectors Standard (RGS). If a holding is not classified by Russell, it is assigned a Russell designation by RS Investments. Cash includes short-term investments and net other assets and liabilities.
- 7 Portfolio holdings are subject to change and should not be considered a recommendation to buy or sell individual securities.

**All investments carry a certain degree of risk, including the possible loss of principal**, and an investment should be made with an understanding of the risks involved with owning a particular security or asset class.

The opinions are as of the date indicated and are subject to change at any time due to changes in market or economic conditions. The comments should not be construed as a recommendation of individual holdings or market sectors, but as an illustration of broader themes.

The RS Small Cap Growth Composite invests principally in equity securities of small-capitalization growth companies. The benchmark is the Russell 2000<sup>®</sup> Growth Index. The composite was created in November 1987.

Information relating to portfolio holdings is based on the representative account in the composite and may vary for other accounts in the strategy due to asset size, client guidelines, and other factors. The representative account is believed to most closely reflect the current portfolio management style.

A complete list of all holdings for the previous 12 months, each holding's contribution to the strategy's performance, and the calculation methodology used to determine the holdings' contribution to performance is available on request. Victory Capital Management Inc., and its affiliates, as agents for their clients, and any of its officers or employees, may have a beneficial interest or position in any of the securities mentioned, which may be contrary to any opinion or projection expressed in this report. This information should not be relied upon as research or investment advice regarding any security in particular.

Victory Capital claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS<sup>®</sup>). Request a GIPS<sup>®</sup> Report from your Institutional Relationship Manager or visit [www.vcm.com](http://www.vcm.com).

Victory Capital Management Inc. (VCM) is a diversified global investment advisor registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and comprises multiple investment franchises: Integrity Asset Management, Munder Capital Management, New Energy Capital, NewBridge Asset Management, RS Investments, Sophus Capital, Sycamore Capital, THB Asset Management, Trivalent Investments, Victory Income Investors (formerly USAA Investments, a Victory Capital Investment Franchise), and the VictoryShares & Solutions Platform. Munder Capital Management and Integrity Asset Management became part of the Victory Capital GIPS firm effective November 1, 2014; RS Investments and Sophus Capital, effective January 1, 2017; Victory Income Investors, effective July 1, 2019; THB Asset Management, effective March 1, 2021; and New Energy Capital, effective November 1, 2021. Effective September 1, 2023, INCORE Capital Management is no longer part of the firm definition.

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