

A FRESH PAIR OF EYES

Weekly Edition – 1/26/2014

SEAN STEIN SMITH - MBA, CPA, CMA, CGMA

Themes for 2014

Every year is dominated by themes. The fashion world has themes, movies go through different periods where different themes are the most coveted, automobile styles shift, and there is usually a mood, or theme, that dominates many industries from year to year. Why should the business world be any different? More specifically, why should the investing world be any different?

Recently, the business and investing world have had themes for single- or multi-year stretches. Whether it was the financial crisis, recovering from the financial crisis, banking health, financial stability, current issues, quantitative easing, or pollution, the pattern remains the same. There are themes and patterns in virtually everything, and one of the most important keys to understanding these themes is, obviously, being able to identify them to begin with.

2014 is shaping up to be a very dynamic year for the business world and the investing community. As always, it is imperative to be able to identify and understand the underlying themes and stories that help generate the headlines we see every day.

Let's get started

Here the link to my weekly podcast - The Weekly Business Roundup

[Weekly Business Roundup 1/25/2014](#)



Contact - A Fresh Pair of Eyes

Feel free to reach out with your comments/suggestions or questions.

afreshpairofeyes88@gmail.com



INVESTING TIP/DEFINITION

SEAN STEIN SMITH - MBA, CPA, CMA, CGMA

Bringing it all together

Paying attention to themes, trends, and the most current news is always an important skill to have. Every industry, and every area, goes through cycles, different periods, and different iterations of tastes and moods. It is always important to keep an eye on, and watch, what these trends and stories are. Fortunately, the headlines usually are driven by these themes, so they are difficult to miss completely. This, however, is only part of the story.

In order to fully understand, and profit from, these underlying themes and trends, it is important to not only see the headlines that are generated, but also to have a working understanding of how these headlines are coming into existence. With that being said, let's take a look at some of the most dominant themes that are setting themselves up to factor strongly into both the business and investment climate in 2014.

- 1) Financial firms – are they strong enough? Stable enough? Lending enough?
- 2) Data security – is information that is stored digitally safe and secure from hackers?
- 3) Pollution – what does this mean for the environment and the business environment
- 4) Corporate governance -- will the era of the activist investor continue?

Just a few of the questions and themes to think about in 2014.

What do you think?

Themes

As discussed above, virtually every industry has trends, themes, or moods that define a single-, or multi-year period. The same principle applies to business – it is just referred to as the business cycle instead of as a fashion season. Just like you would not want to be driving an obsolete car or wearing hideously out-of-style clothing, you do not want to be caught chasing last year's themes and stories.

Headlines – A very basic word with a very basic definition that understates the importance of it. Headlines drive news, market actions, and many of the activities that shape your personal financial life.

Translating

One of the most difficult things to do is to translate and interpret headline information into actionable ideas that can be used for investing and business decision-making. For example, the data breaches at Target and other retailers have been dominating the headlines lately, but what does that mean for business and investing? One possible actionable item is to research data protection and security firms.

What do you think?

Let us know what you think, and it might become the topic of a blog post or follow up newsletter article.

afreshpaireofeyes88@gmail.com

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sean Stein Smith - MBA, CPA, CMA, CGMA

It is always good to recap and to analyze what happened during the past week, which is what I strive to do via the weekly roundup podcast (link to it is above). In addition to analyzing what did happen, it is equally important to look forward to try to anticipate how the upcoming events of the week ahead could impact you and your money. That is the point of this column, which is broken down into domestic events, as well as the international events that could be of importance to your investments.

Budget Tip – Cold Weather Tip

With continuous inflows of cold weather enveloping large areas of the country, heating bills can really put a damper on your budget planning activities. One budget-friendly tip to help cut down (slightly) on this is to think of your drapes as blankets and the sun as a heater. If the sun is up, open drapes that are exposed to sun to let some heat in, and close them at night to help keep the cold out. Simple, yet effective!

Excel Tip – Those Function Keys, Part 3

Have you ever wondered what those F1 – F12 keys are for? Let's look at a few of them and see what exactly they do.

F9 – calculates all worksheets in all open workbooks
 F10 – turns key tips on or off
 F11 – creates a chart of data in the current data range
 F12- displays the “Save As” dialogue box

What do you think?

Let me know if these tips were helpful

afreshpairefeyes88@gmail.com

Domestic

Let us start our discussion with the news and economic activity that are on the agenda for the U.S. this week.

This week will undoubtedly be dominated by the market headlines. Following the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the attention of the media will definitely be focused once again on the firms and stories that make the market move. From the banking system striving to rebuild its image, to the tech industry attempting to find its identity - software versus hardware - to the idea of business as a member of the community, it will surely be a very busy week in the marketplace.

Another story that will begin to creep into the marketplace as the calendar moves to February is the story of personal income tax filings. H&R Block and Turbo Tax are two of the largest software providers for individual tax return programs. The tax return market is valued in the billions of dollars, and the impact that this has on both firms and individuals cannot be overstated.

Last but not least, the cold weather that has been impacting much of the country this winter has been impacting cold weather retailers, utilities, and natural gas providers.

Of course, there will be corporate news announced during the week as well, so keep your eyes open and check out the blog @ <http://ssteinsmith.com/> for daily analysis!

International

As unrest continues to build and boil over in the Ukraine - protestors has been protesting the elections of President Victor Yanukovich and his deals with the Russian Federation, Kiev has been the site of protests for several months. This weekend the President has offered to reshuffle his government, share power, and open negotiations with protestors to hopefully put an end to the (sometimes) violent protests



THE WEEKLY EDITION

Feedback is Always Welcome!

Feedback is the key to continuous improvement, so if there are any topics, themes, or stories you would like covered in the weekly newsletter, or if there is something you wish to know more about, please send an email to afreshpaiofeyes88@gmail.com.

Thanks again for reading!

Sean

A Fresh Pair of Eyes

**Making Sense of Finance and
Accounting**

afreshpaiofeyes88@gmail.com

[A Fresh Pair of Eyes](#)

If you like the newsletter, you might also enjoy the book. "A Fresh Pair of Eyes - Finance for the Young Investor" is available on both Amazon and in the Kindle Store.

A Fresh Pair of Eyes - Finance for the Young Investor

Personal Financial Planning

A Fresh Pair of Eyes - Personal Financial Planning

And my new book - Stocks

A Fresh Pair of Eyes - Stocks for the Young Investor

