

TREND-FOLLOWING PRIMER

GRAHAM INSIGHT SERIES

Trend-following is among the most established and longest-standing investment strategies, with an estimated $350 billion[1] in assets under management globally. Rooted in the premise that markets tend to exhibit persistent directional movements over time, trend-following seeks to capture these trends across a broad set of asset classes using disciplined, rules-based processes. By taking both long and short positions in liquid global markets, the strategy has historically demonstrated low correlation to traditional assets and the ability to perform across a range of market environments. As investors increasingly seek diversification and resilience in portfolios, trend-following has become a strategic allocation within many institutional investment frameworks. This primer outlines the key characteristics of trend-following and explores how the strategy can impact a broader investment portfolio when implemented as a long-term, strategic allocation.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Trend-following has historically exhibited low correlation to traditional assets and can provide diversification across market environments.
- By taking both long and short positions, trend-following can perform during sustained market moves, including periods of market stress.
- Incorporating trend-following may improve portfolio outcomes by enhancing returns while reducing volatility, drawdowns, and equity sensitivity over time.

WHAT IS TREND-FOLLOWING?

Trend-following strategies use a systematic process, whereby algorithmic models seek to identify price trends in markets, with the expectation that upward trending markets may continue to rally and downward trending markets may continue to decline. These strategies take long positions in positively trending markets and short positions in negatively trending markets, using indicators based on price and volatility of the underlying assets to identify trends of various lengths. Trend followers seek to run diverse portfolios, typically trading liquid, centrally-cleared futures and currency markets, with the number of markets potentially ranging from tens to hundreds. These strategies often target consistent volatility within a predetermined range and try to preserve upside potential and limit downside risk by running with winners and cutting losing positions.

Theoretical Foundation: Why Do Markets Trend?

Trend-following performance depends on the existence of trends, or sustained directional moves in markets. Trends may exist both in times of market duress or during relatively stable market environments. A substantial body of academic research supports the existence of trends and offers several explanations for why they persist across asset classes:

Behavioral Bias and Herding Investors extrapolate recent price movements into the future and "follow the crowd," reinforcing trends (Barberis, Shleifer, and Vishny, 1998; Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch, 1992).

Anchoring and Underreaction Investors adjust too slowly to new information, leading prices to trend as markets gradually incorporate news (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974; Hong and Stein, 1999).

Disposition Effect Investors sell winners too early and hold onto losers (Frazzini, 2006).

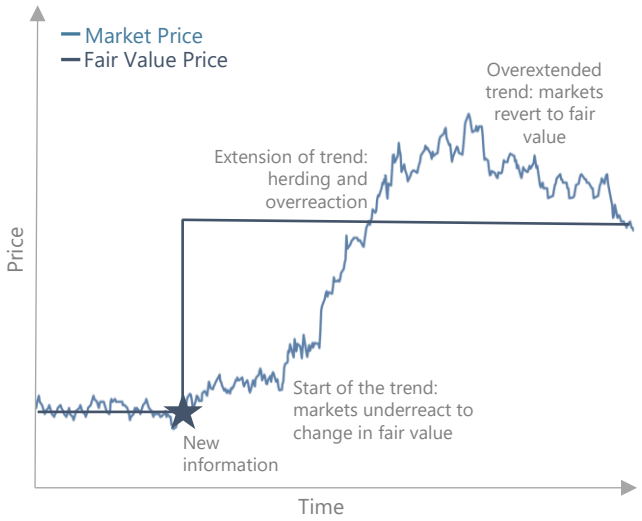
Risk Management Risk constraints can force investors to buy or sell assets as volatility or risk limits change, amplifying existing price moves (Danielsson, Shin, and Zigrand, 2012).

Macroeconomic Regimes Shifts in monetary and fiscal policy can drive sustained trends across asset classes as markets reprice growth and inflation expectations (Ang and Bekaert, 2007).

Time-Varying Risk Premia Changes in the compensation investors require to hold risky assets can lead to prolonged price movements across asset classes (Moskowitz, Ooi, and Pedersen, 2012).

Together, these behavioral and structural forces help explain why trends can emerge and persist, forming the foundation for trend-following strategies.

Illustrative Example: Why Trends Exist



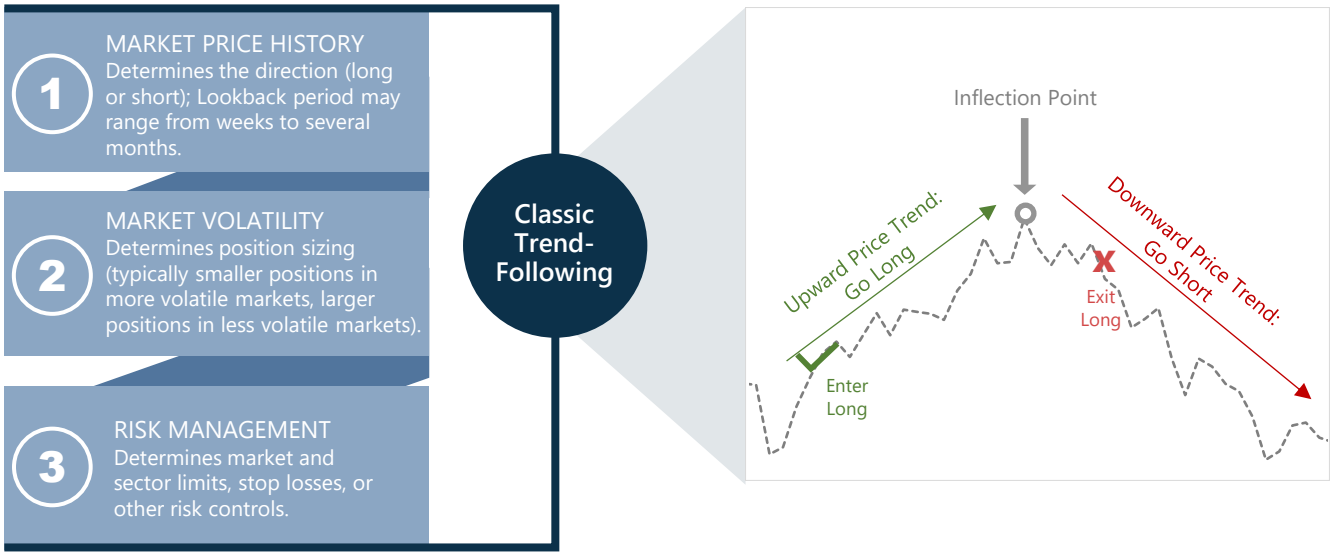
Source: Graham Capital Management

TREND IDENTIFICATION

Trend-following strategies identify trends by systematically analyzing historical market prices. Algorithms evaluate price movements over lookback periods ranging from intraday to several months to determine whether a market is exhibiting sustained upward or downward momentum. When prices rise consistently, models may take long positions; when prices decline, they may take short positions.

Models also incorporate price volatility and other risk measures to determine position sizing and overall portfolio exposure. More volatile markets typically receive smaller allocations, while less volatile markets may receive larger positions to maintain balanced risk across a diversified set of assets such as equities, interest rates, currencies, and commodities.

Illustrative Example: How Trends are Identified



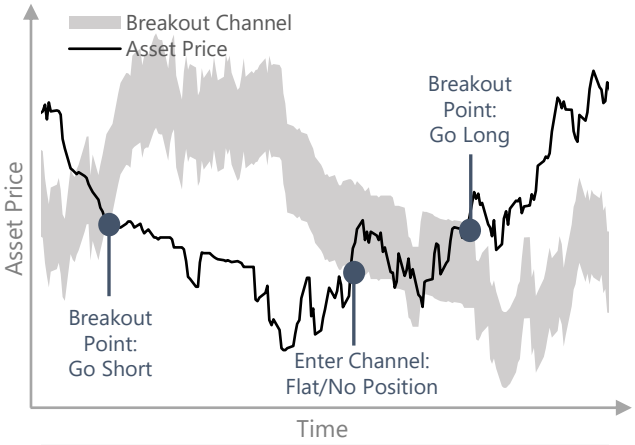
Source: Graham Capital Management

Signal Generation

Moving average and breakout models are two prominent strategies used by most trend-followers for initial signal generation. While these models may be parameterized differently, the raw signals generated are often highly correlated over time because of their common dependence on past prices.

Breakout models compare the current price with a threshold to signal long, short, or no position. The threshold is determined by either a "price breakout" (past maximum or minimum price) or "channel breakout" (past price at a given lookback and trading range.)

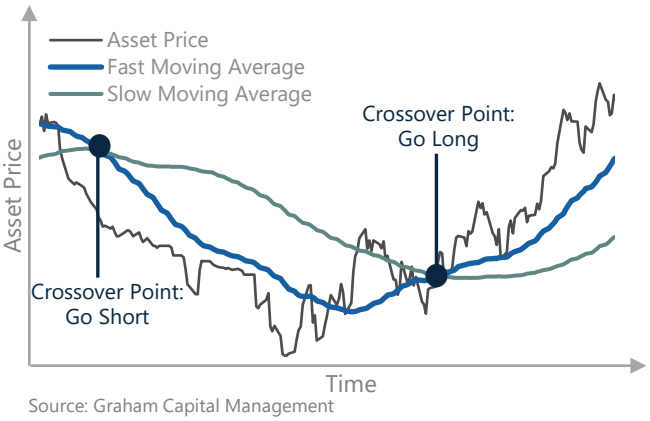
Breakout Models



Source: Graham Capital Management

Moving average models use moving averages of past prices to generate a trading signal. The difference between two moving averages, a "fast" and a "slow" one, determines a long or a short position. A crossover between the two will signal a trend reversal.

Moving Average Models



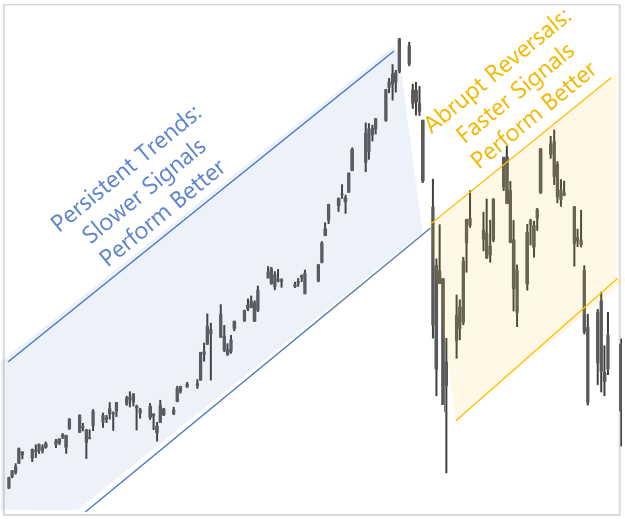
Source: Graham Capital Management

While these approaches differ in construction, they share a common objective: detecting persistent directional movement in prices. A key factor influencing how these models behave is the speed at which they respond to new information, which is largely determined by parameter choices such as lookback windows and signal thresholds.

THE SPEED OF TREND-FOLLOWING

A key dimension of trend-following strategies is speed, which refers to how quickly a model responds to emerging price movements. Speed is primarily determined by model parameters such as the length of moving averages and breakout lookback windows. Models that use shorter lookback periods are typically considered faster (short-term trend-following), as they respond more quickly to recent price changes and may identify new trends earlier. Slower models, which rely on longer lookback horizons (long-term trend-following), tend to react more gradually but may be less sensitive to short-term market noise. As a result, faster models can adapt more quickly to changing market conditions but may experience more frequent position changes and potential "whipsaws," while slower models may capture longer, more persistent trends with fewer trades.

Signal Speed and Market Conditions

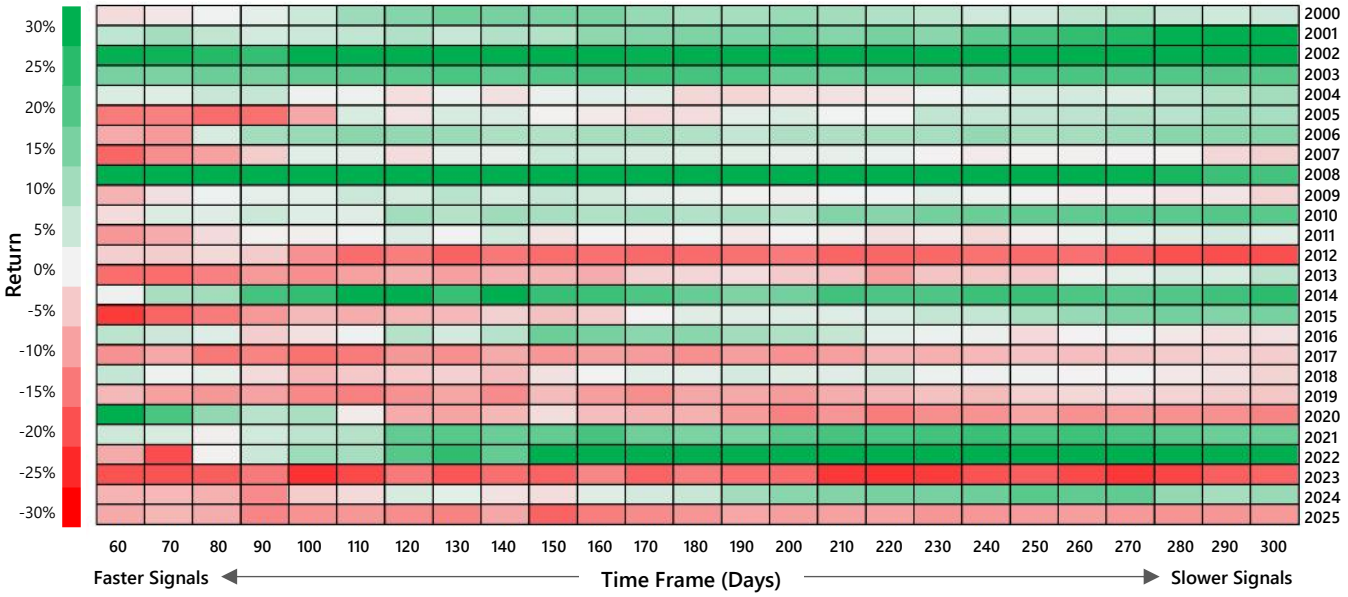


Source: Graham Capital Management

Evidence across time suggests that model speed can influence performance depending on market conditions. As shown in the heatmap below, which compares the performance of trend models across different time horizons, intermediate- to longer-term models have, on average, fared better than shorter-term models. When longer-term signals performed well, faster models often produced similar gains, though the reverse was less frequently the case.

However, faster models can be particularly valuable during periods of sudden market dislocation, when trends emerge quickly. For example, during episodes of sharp market stress such as the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, faster signals were able to react more quickly. As a result, incorporating shorter-term models can help strategies respond more quickly during abrupt market events, complementing slower models that capture more persistent trends.

Return Heatmap: Model Time-Frames Performance[2]



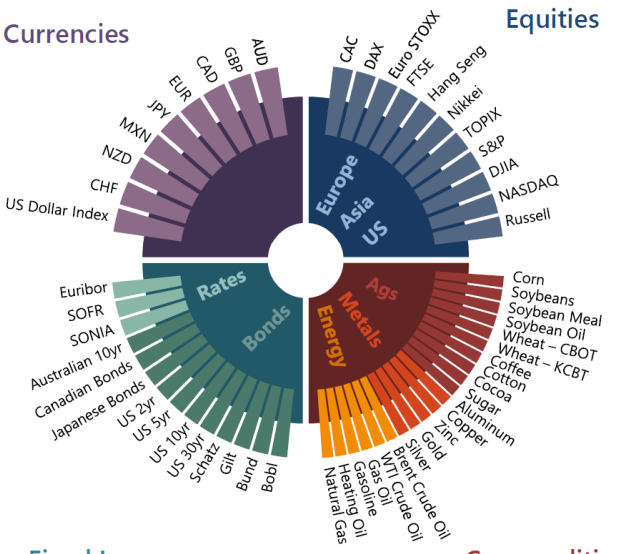
Source: SG Prime Services & Clearing; Data through April 30, 2025

As a result, when selecting the speed of trend signals, many managers use a blend of signal speeds to balance responsiveness, cost efficiency, and robustness across different market environments.

MARKETS TRADED

Trend-following typically trades a diversified set of liquid global markets, most commonly through exchange-traded futures and forwards. These instruments provide efficient access to major asset classes, including equities, fixed income, currencies, and commodities, and allow trend-followers to take both long and short positions. Because futures markets are liquid, centrally cleared, and relatively low cost to trade, portfolios often include dozens – or up to hundreds - of markets across global regions. Diversification across markets is a core feature of trend-following, as trends can emerge in different asset classes at different times.

Markets Commonly Traded by Trend-Followers



Source: Graham Capital Management

Considerations in Market Selection

Considerations for including markets in a trend-following portfolio include the potential alpha opportunity, correlation with existing holdings, liquidity, price history, transaction costs, and operational complexity. While some alternative or niche markets may exhibit strong trends, they can be more difficult to trade at scale due to lower liquidity, wider spreads or operational complexity. As a result, managers must weigh the incremental diversification and return potential against implementation challenges and costs. Legal and regulatory constraints also play an important role, as certain instruments or jurisdictions may impose restrictions on derivatives usage, margin requirements, reporting, or fund structures, particularly in vehicles such as UCITS or '40 Act funds. These considerations can influence which markets are included and how exposures are implemented within a given strategy.

PORTFOLIO CONSTRUCTION

Beyond choices related to signal generation, model speed, and the markets traded, portfolio construction plays a critical role in determining how signals are combined across the portfolio, how risk is allocated across markets, and how exposures are scaled while maintaining disciplined risk management.

Combining and Weighting Signals

Managers must determine how to combine and weight signals from multiple models and time horizons into a composite forecast that reflects the overall strength and direction of trends in each market. Considerations include historical signal quality, volatility and correlation to other signals, among other factors. Combining signals helps reduce reliance on any single model specification and can improve the consistency of trend detection.

Volatility Targeting and Leverage

Many trend-following strategies employ volatility targeting to maintain a relatively stable level of portfolio risk. Position sizes are scaled based on the volatility of each market, so more volatile assets receive smaller allocations and less volatile markets receive larger positions. Because futures markets require relatively little margin to gain exposure, leverage is often used to scale the overall portfolio to a target level of risk.

Volatility targeting can be implemented in different ways. Managers may differ in how volatility is measured and targeted across time horizons to balance responsiveness and stability, with the choice reflecting a preference for either stability or adaptability to changing market environments while maintaining overall portfolio risk within a desired range. Some managers use constant volatility targeting, adjusting exposures to maintain a fixed portfolio volatility level over both short and long time horizons. Others use dynamic volatility targeting, allowing the volatility to vary with market conditions or changes in risk estimates.

Risk Management

Managers typically apply risk controls such as position limits for individual markets, caps on sector or asset class exposure, and portfolio-level constraints. These measures help prevent excessive concentration in correlated markets and aim to ensure that portfolio risk remains diversified and controlled across changing market environments.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS OF TREND-FOLLOWING

Trend-following has historically shown low correlation to traditional assets and the ability to perform in both rising and falling markets. Over time, it has delivered positive long-term returns with convex performance during sustained trends, including periods of market stress.

Non-correlated returns

Over the long-term, trend-following has had low or even negative correlation to other investments. Trend-following strategies also tend to exhibit negative downside correlation to equity markets, providing the potential to perform well during periods of sustained stress in global equity markets. At any point in time, however, correlations may be positive or negative, including during crisis conditions. Therefore, trend-following strategies should not be treated exclusively as a portfolio hedge; rather, they may be viewed as additional sources of uncorrelated returns over intermediate to longer-term time periods.

Correlation of Trend-Following to Benchmarks

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Jan-00 to Dec-25)

Trend-Following Correlation versus:	Overall Correlation	Correlation: Up Months for Index	Correlation: Down Months for Index
Global Equities	-0.09	-0.11	-0.33
U.S. Equities	-0.12	-0.10	-0.37
Global Bonds	0.06	0.11	-0.15
U.S. Bonds	0.01	-0.01	-0.25
Hedge Funds	0.08	0.14	-0.18

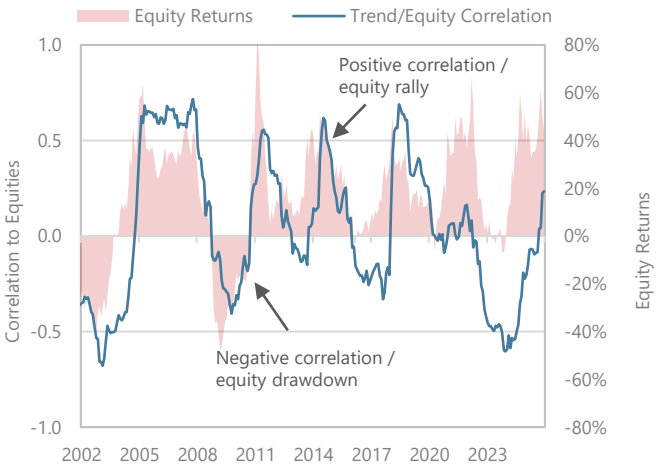
Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment

No Structural Long or Short Bias

No structural long or short bias means that correlations may be positive or negative over different time horizons. On average, trend-following has no correlation to the markets that it trades and typically has positive correlation when markets move higher and negative correlation when markets decline.

Rolling Correlation to Equities and Equity Returns

36 Month Rolling Correlation of SG Trend Index to Global Equities



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Because trend-following has no structural long or short bias, it can generate returns in both rising and falling markets and potentially perform well across different phases of the market cycle, as illustrated below.

Performance Across the Market Cycle

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Jan-00 to Dec-25)

Performance when 12-Month Equity Returns are:	Global Equities	60/40 Portfolio	Trend-Following
30% or higher	39%	26%	6%
20% to 30%	24%	16%	4%
10% to 20%	15%	11%	1%
0% to 10%	5%	4%	6%
0% to -10%	-4%	-1%	7%
-10% to -20%	-15%	-8%	17%
-20% to -30%	-24%	-12%	24%
-30% or lower	-41%	-27%	13%

Equities Up

Equities Down

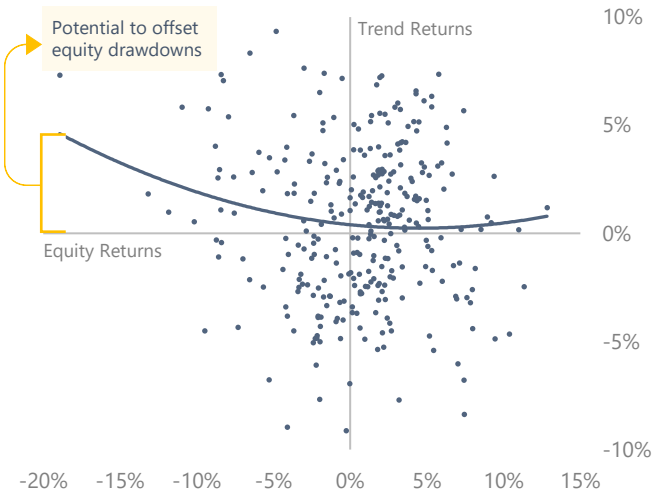
Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Positive Convexity

Trend-following exhibits positive convexity, or a non-linear pay-off to its underlying market universe. This is a highly valued characteristic for investors seeking portfolio diversification. As shown below, trend-following performs well during large directional moves (up or down), including equity stress periods. In these environments, the strategy can capture extended trends and generate outsized gains, while typically experiencing more limited losses during smaller or less persistent market moves.

Convexity of Trend-Following to Equities

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Monthly Returns, Jan-00 to Dec-25)



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Key Performance Benefits

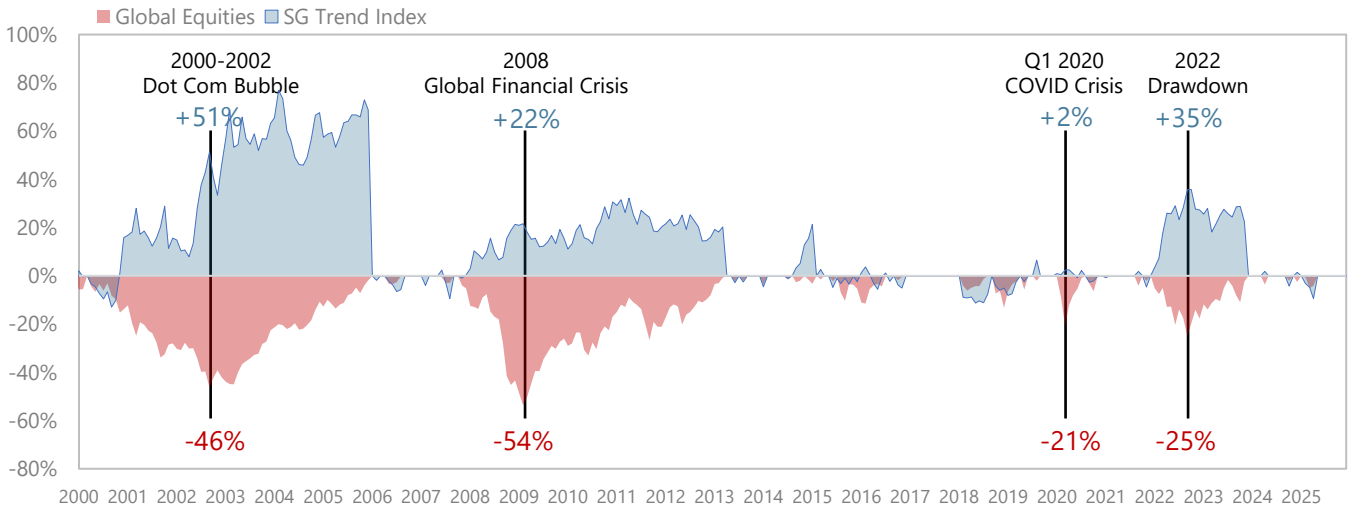
- ✓ Low correlation to traditional asset classes over time
- ✓ Ability to go long and short, with no inherent bias
- ✓ Ability to perform well across market cycles, including crisis periods
- ✓ Positive absolute returns over the long-term
- ✓ Buy and hold diversification benefits

Potential to Offset Equity Drawdowns

Trend-following has historically performed well, on average, during equity sell-offs, but positive performance during equity downturns is not guaranteed. For example, while trend-following was a good hedge during longer-term market declines such as the burst of the technology bubble and the Global Financial Crisis, it did not provide protection during the shorter-term equity sell-off in Q4 2018. Importantly, sharp reversals and short-term declines can be challenging for trend-following.

Trend-Following Performance during Underwater Drawdowns for Equities

Equity Peak-to-Recovery Drawdowns, Since SG Trend Index Inception (Based on Monthly Returns, Jan-00 to Dec-25)



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Market Inflection Points

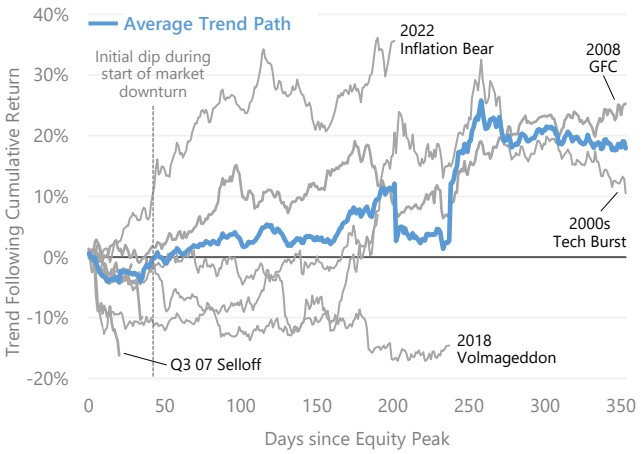
Trend-following can face challenges around market inflection points, when the direction of prices changes abruptly after an extended trend. Because models rely on past price behavior to confirm trends, they often enter after a move has begun and exit after a reversal is evident. As a result, strategies may experience losses during short, sharp market drawdowns, when prices rapidly shift direction, as positions are unwound before new trends are established. As illustrated in the figures below, performance tends to improve during more sustained equity drawdowns, while shorter, abrupt episodes can be more challenging, reflecting the design of trend systems to capture persistent moves rather than predict turning points.

Trend-Following Across Volatility Regimes

It is well-documented that trend-following generally performs well during crisis periods for equities. Since market volatility tends to spike during equity crisis periods, many investors are tempted to characterize trend-following as a long volatility strategy. Contrary to such an interpretation, trend-following can perform well in both high and low volatility environments. It is the existence of sustained market trends rather than high volatility that preconditions good trend-following performance. Using the VIX Index as a measure of market volatility, trend-following performance can be observed to perform well in both high and low volatility regimes, as shown below.

Path of Trend Returns Across Largest Equity Drawdowns

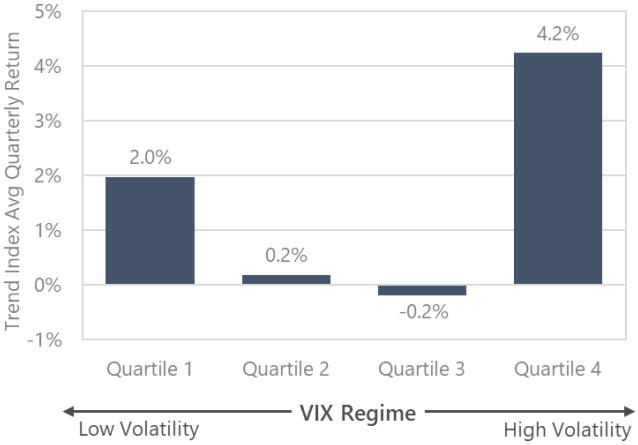
Based on Daily Returns Jan-00 to Dec-25; Equity Drawdowns <-10%



Data Source: Societe Generale, Bloomberg; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Trend-Following Returns Across Volatility Regimes

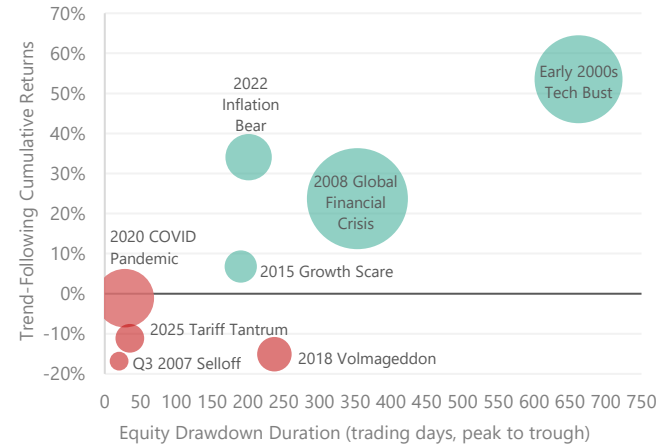
Since SG Trend Index Inception (Jan-00 to Dec-25)



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Trend-Following Returns and Equity Drawdown Length

Based on Daily Returns Jan-00 to Dec-25; Equity Drawdowns <-10%



Data Source: Societe Generale, Bloomberg; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Hypothetical Example of Low Volatility Asset Consider a hypothetical asset that goes down 1% every day. Any reasonable implementation of trend-following would short this asset and thereby make a certain gain on an asset that itself has no volatility. Having zero-volatility is not in itself a reason for poor trend-following performance.

Hypothetical Example of High Volatility Asset Consider a hypothetical asset whose daily returns are consistently +5% followed by -5%. This asset is all volatility. Yet, trend-following on this asset would almost certainly yield terrible performance, suggesting that it is not volatility per se that matters to trend-following.

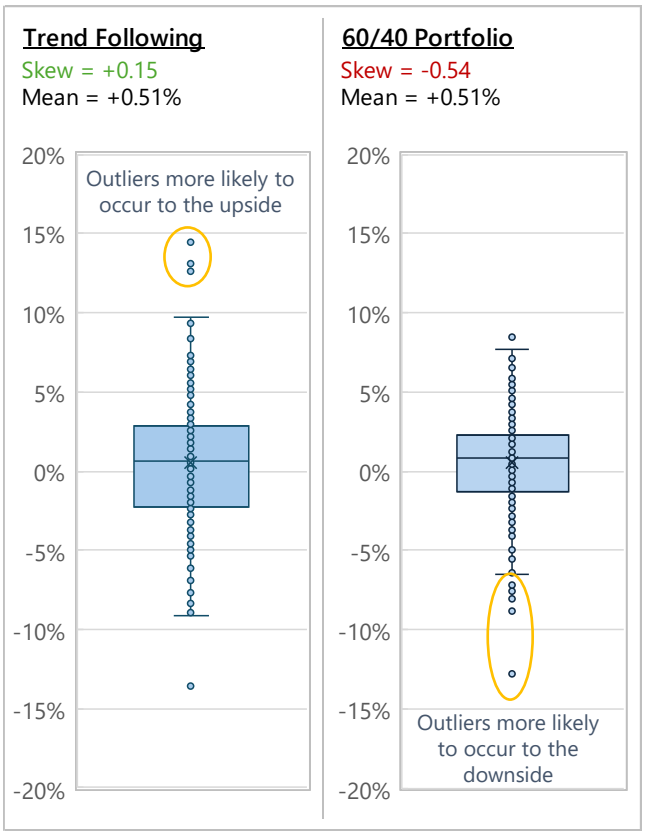
Positive Skew

Trend-following strategies typically exhibit positive return skew (particularly when viewed using monthly or lower-frequency returns), meaning they tend to produce a larger number of modest losses and gains punctuated by occasional large positive returns when strong trends develop. These outsized gains often occur during periods of significant market dislocation or sustained directional moves across asset classes, when trend models can capture large price movements by holding positions in the direction of the trend.

This contrasts with traditional 60/40 equity–bond portfolios, which historically have exhibited negative skew. In such portfolios, returns are often characterized by frequent small gains during stable markets but occasional large losses during equity market drawdowns. Because trend-following tends to capture large moves during crises, its positive skew can provide a complementary return profile when combined with traditional assets.

Skew of Trend-Following and 60/40 Portfolio

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Monthly Returns, Jan-00 to Dec-25)



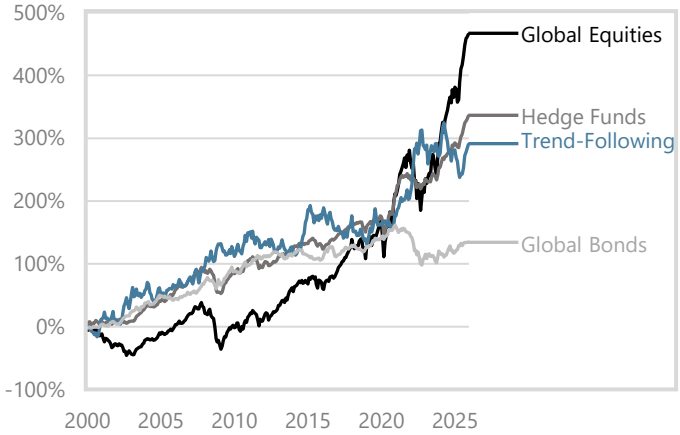
Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Long-Term Returns

Like all asset classes, trend-following has periods of strong, challenging, and flat performance. Over the long term, however, the strategy has maintained a strong return profile relative to other asset classes, even amid the "golden era" of significant appreciation of global equities and bonds post-2008, demonstrating its ability to deliver competitive returns across varying market environments.

Cumulative Return History

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Jan-00 to Dec-25)



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Because the market universe is liquid and the rules-based investment approach is scalable, many trend-following funds available through liquid investment vehicles - including managed accounts, UCITS and '40Act (mutual fund) structures - with daily, weekly or monthly liquidity without lockups, gates or other constraints. These formats often translate to a high degree of transparency, including position-level reporting, and competitive fee structures.

Favorable Investment Structure

- ✓ Scalable, transparent, rules-based
- ✓ Liquid vehicle
- ✓ Typically lower-fee relative to other alternatives
- ✓ Available in a variety of formats, including managed accounts, UCITS, and '40Act

Favorable Investment Structure



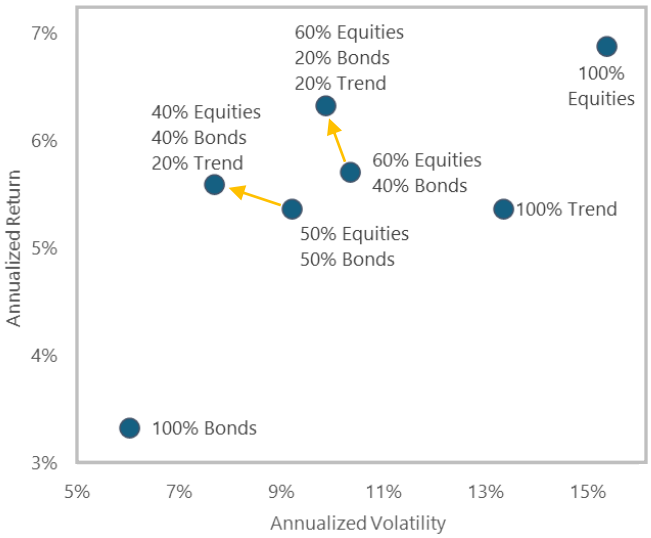
IMPLICATIONS FOR AN INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Traditional portfolios typically allocate to bonds to protect capital during equity downturns. However, the incorporation of asset classes beyond stocks and bonds can create many more opportunities for diversification in a portfolio. Over the long-term, allocating to trend-following with a buy and hold approach over time has the potential to enhance returns while reducing volatility, drawdowns, and beta to equities.

Importantly, the value of trend-following lies not only in its return potential but in its diversifying role across market environments. By participating in both upward and downward trends across global asset classes, trend-following can provide a complementary return stream that behaves differently from traditional assets, particularly during periods of sustained market stress or macroeconomic transition. As a result, incorporating trend-following within a broader portfolio may improve overall resilience, helping investors navigate a wider range of market conditions while maintaining a more balanced risk profile over time.

Impact on a Stock/Bond Portfolio

Since SG Trend Index Inception (Jan-00 to Dec-25)



Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

Potential Benefits of Allocating to Trend (Jan-00 to Dec-25)	Increase Overall Returns	Improve Risk-Adjusted Returns	Lower Overall Volatility	Reduce Drawdowns	Reduce Beta to Equities
	Annualized Return	Information Ratio	Annualized Volatility	Worst Drawdown	Beta to Equities
Global 60/40 Portfolio	5.72%	0.55	10.34%	-36.1%	0.66
Global 60/40 Portfolio with 10% Trend-Following	5.83%	0.63	9.31%	-31.6%	0.58
Global 60/40 Portfolio with 20% Trend-Following	5.91%	0.69	8.51%	-26.8%	0.51

Data Source: Societe Generale, eVestment; Chart by Graham Capital Management

IMPORTANT DISCLOSURE

SOURCES

[1] Total AUM in Trend-Following Strategies is sourced from BarclayHedge and represents estimated assets under management for the managed futures industry utilizing AUM information provided by contributing CTA managers as of September 30 2025.

[2] Societe Generale Prime Services & Clearing (2025). Keeping Up With the Trend-Followers: CTA Industry Update. Societe Generale Corporate & Investment Banking.

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60/40 PORTFOLIO or GLOBAL 60/40 PORTFOLIO: Reflects a hypothetical portfolio with a 60% allocation to equities and a 40% allocation to bonds as represented by the MSCI World Index and the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index, rebalanced monthly. Performance of the underlying stock and bond indices is calculated on a gross basis and includes the reinvestment of dividends. This is a hypothetical composite portfolio that is not investable. Please refer to important disclosures at the end of this document regarding hypothetical performance.

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