

CIO OFFICE MORNING MARKET WRAP 25 November 2024

The past week can be summarised as one more instance of American exceptionalism, against the backdrop of ongoing Trump trades and rising geopolitical tensions. The rally was broad-based in US markets and economic reports showed yet again signs of strength. President-elect Trump almost completed nominations for his cabinet, including the all-important Treasury Secretary role. Meanwhile, the dollar touched new highs for the year, bitcoin came close to reaching the 100,000 mark, and the equity rally broadened, all trades somehow related to the new presidency. Nvidia's release failed to exceed the most optimistic forecasts and had little price follow-through, with most action to be seen elsewhere in the market where other companies surprised to the upside. Business confidence surveys underwhelmed in Europe, and China was light on macro newsflow, while Japan's inflation reinforced conviction about further tightening. The Dow Industrials (+2%) outperformed alongside the S&P 500 equal weighted (+2.6%), and the smaller companies (+4.5%) ripped higher. With the exception of Telecommunication Services that were weighed down by Google, all sectors closed in the green, led by Staples (+3.1%) and Materials (+2.9%). Other major markets were little changed for the week, confirming US dominance coupled with a more muted growth impulse globally, or rather concerns about future tariffs. The yield curve flattened significantly on moderating expectations for future rate cuts. The yield on the 10-year note fell 4bps, while the 2-year gained 7bps. Traders now see a 50% chance of an additional Fed move in December and less than three cuts next year. Commodities (+3.1%) rebounded, led by gold (+6%) and crude (+5.8%). The US dollar (+0.8%) closed at a 2-year high, on resilient macros and some safe-haven demand. The Russia-Ukraine conflict intensified, possibly as both sides tried to score gains with the prospect of a stronger bargaining position for a peace deal under Trump. This would help understand why markets have continued to take the spiking tensions in their stride.

The purchasing manager indices were the macro highlight for the week. The US PMI Composite offered a strong reading, with activity expanding at the fastest pace since 2022, and a brightening outlook in anticipation of economy-friendly Trump's policies. On the other hand, business confidence softened notably in the euro area and the UK. Both indices reached contraction territory on rising uncertainty domestically and abroad. Economic divergence between the United States and the major DM areas is expected to drive monetary policy divergence, with a relatively more hawkish Federal Reserve. Also, the US PMI should be read in conjunction with the University of Michigan consumer sentiment report, where longer-term inflation expectations rose to 3.2%, the highest level since the GFC. And in Japan a solid CPI report that was in line with the BOJ's outlook reinforced expectations for multiple rate hikes starting from January next year.

The earnings season showed that Nvidia's growth story is far from over. The new Blackwell processing unit seems to have limitless demand, and the company provided a robust outlook for the current quarter. But Nvidia saw some profit taking after the release. Investors showed more enthusiasm for Walmart (+7.3%) that delivered good topline and margin momentum, for Deere (+11.9%) that reported upbeat Q4 results, and for Gap (+15.8%) that lifted its annual sales forecast.

Markets this morning:

US futures are hedging higher this morning, as investors welcome Trump's nomination of Scott Bessent as Treasury Secretary, a renowned hedge-fund manager expected to inject stability in the economy and financial markets. Stocks are up in Asia as well, with Australia, Japan and Hong Kong gaining. Meanwhile, the yield on the 10-year Treasury note opened 6bps lower at 4.34%, and rallies in bitcoin and the US dollar, linked to Trump trades, are showings some signs of cooling.

Upcoming Key events/data for the week:

Monday: IFO business survey in Germany

Tuesday: FOMC minutes, Conference Board consumer confidence

Wednesday: China's industrial profits, US consumer income & PCE inflation, 3Q GDP (second print), durable goods

Thursday: US Thanksgiving, markets closed; Eurozone economic & consumer confidence, Germany CPI Friday: Black Friday, Eurozone CPI, Japan unemployment, Tokyo CPI, industrial production, retail sales.

Have a good week ahead!

Chief Investment Office Wealth Management, Emirates NBD.

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