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The Case for Strategic Convertible Allocations

An Analysis of Global Convertible Market Opportunities

Our experience with convertible securities dates to the volatile financial markets of the 1970s. During this period, convertible strategies often provided better returns than either the stock or bond markets. As a fixed-income security with equity attributes, a convertible may be viewed as offering the best of both worlds. When we consider the current environment, we believe the case for actively managed convertible allocations is as strong as ever, given that:

▸ As a fixed-income security with equity attributes, a convertible may be viewed as offering the best of both worlds.

- » We believe equity markets can continue to advance, but gains are likely to be punctuated by volatility associated with the shaping of U.S. fiscal policies, global political and central bank uncertainties, and ongoing geopolitical tensions. Against this backdrop, convertible securities may provide an attractive way to participate in equity market upside with potentially less exposure to equity downside.
- » Convertibles have proven less vulnerable to rate increases than non-convertible debt, a timely consideration given expectations of further Fed tightening.
- » Economic growth and rising interest rates support convertible issuance. Economic data is improving overall and a renewed focus on fiscal policy provides tailwinds for further expansion. Additionally, as rates move higher, companies seeking capital at lower borrowing costs may find convertible structures increasingly attractive versus traditional corporate debt. (In exchange for the equity upside participation they offer, convertibles often have modestly lower coupons than non-convertible debt.)

As we will discuss in this paper, the use of convertibles in a risk-managed strategy may provide benefits that stock and bond allocations alone cannot. However, due to their structural complexities, convertible securities require active management to achieve a desired outcome.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Founder, Chairman and Global CIO

John P. Calamos, Sr. founded Calamos Investments in 1977. With origins as an institutional convertible bond manager, the firm has grown into a global asset management firm with major institutional and individual clients around the world. With 48 years of investment industry experience, John has established research and investment processes centered around a team-based approach designed to deliver superior risk-adjusted performance over full market cycles. He is Chairman of the Calamos Investment Committee, which is charged with providing a top-down framework, maintaining oversight of risk and performance metrics, and evaluating investment process.

John is often quoted as an authority on risk-managed investment strategies, markets and the economy, and has authored two books on convertible securities. He is a frequent speaker at investment seminars and conferences around the world and appears regularly on leading news networks. He holds a B.A. in Economics and M.B.A. in Finance, both from the Illinois Institute of Technology. After college graduation, he joined the United States Air Force where he served as a combat pilot during the Vietnam War and ultimately earned the rank of Major.

Eli Pars, CFA

Co-CIO, Head of Alternative Strategies and Co-Head of Convertible Strategies, Senior Co-Portfolio Manager

As a Co-Chief Investment Officer, Eli Pars is responsible for oversight of investment team resources, investment processes, performance and risk. As Head of Alternative Strategies and Co-Head of Convertible Strategies, he manages investment team members and has portfolio management responsibilities for those investment verticals. He is also a member of the Calamos Investment Committee, contributing 30 years of industry experience, including ten at Calamos. He received a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Illinois and an M.B.A. with a specialization in Finance from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

I. INTRODUCTION: CONVERTIBLES AND ASSET ALLOCATION

Convertible securities are equity-linked instruments that offer equity market participation with potential downside resilience when equity markets decline. In simplest terms, a convertible is a fixed-income security that includes an embedded option. Structurally, the risk/reward characteristics of convertibles allow them to support a range of asset allocation goals. However, convertible securities are complex. The attributes of convertibles may differ considerably and a specific convertible may be more equity-like at certain periods and more fixed-income-like in others.

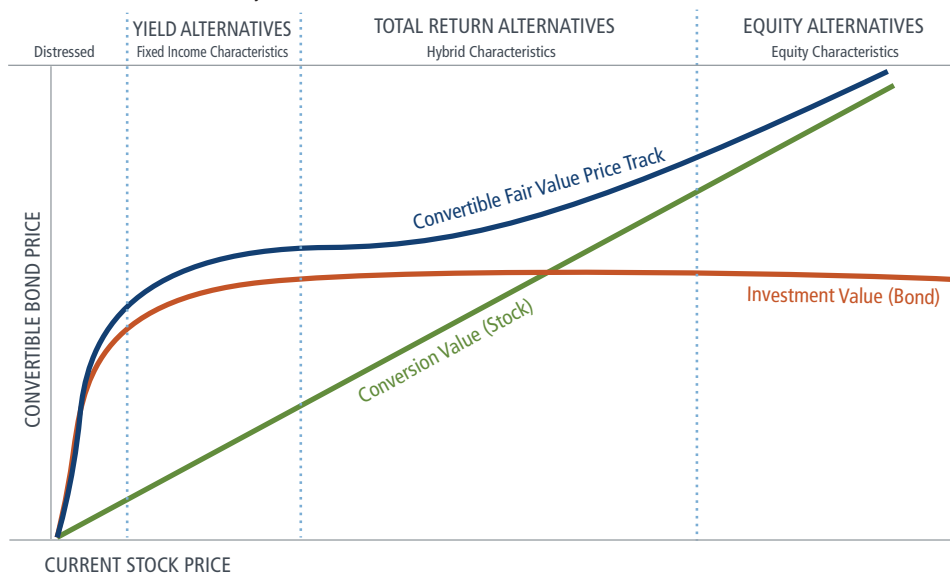
Because of their structural complexities, convertible securities demand active management within asset allocations. Often, convertible securities are thought of as a single asset class; this ignores the variations within the convertible universe. Our approach is to use different convertibles within specific investment strategies. It is not simply the convertibles that make a strategy work but how convertibles are managed to achieve a particular investment objective.

Convertibles with higher levels of equity sensitivity may be utilized within lower-volatility equity allocations, providing an innovative solution for investors who wish to participate in equity markets but are concerned about downside equity volatility. (In volatile markets, the bond value provides a floor, and through coupon income, investors are “paid to wait” for the markets to turn.)

Because of their structural complexities, convertible securities demand active management within asset allocations.

FIGURE 1. CONVERTIBLE BONDS: AN OVERVIEW

A convertible bond has three main parts: its value as a straight bond (investment value), its value as a stock (conversion value) and the theoretical fair value. The three factors are interdependent, and each must be considered for a proper valuation of a convertible security.



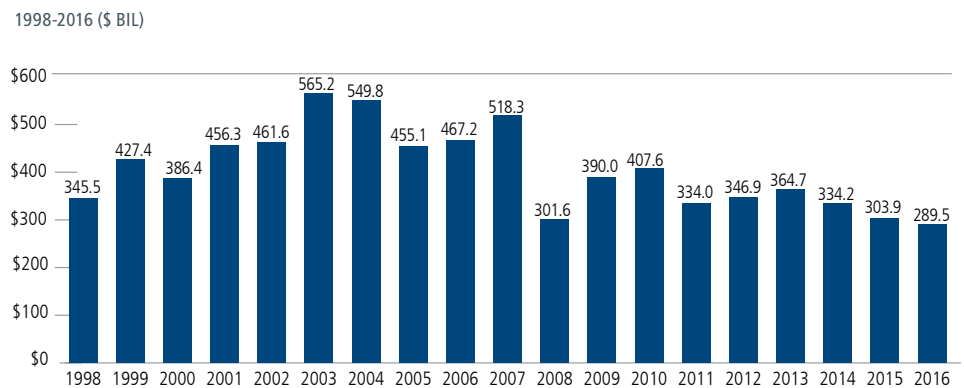
- » Yield Alternatives: Exhibit more fixed income characteristics and lower levels of equity sensitivity
- » Total Return Alternatives: Offer a balance of equity and fixed-income characteristics
- » Equity Alternatives: Exhibit higher levels of equity sensitivity

Convertibles can serve a role within enhanced fixed-income allocations. Convertibles have historically performed well during periods of rising interest rates and inflation, and therefore convertible strategies may be used to diversify a traditional fixed-income portfolio (i.e., government bonds) as a high yield corporate bond allocation might. Additionally, convertibles with a range of characteristics can be used within alternative allocations, such as hedge strategies that employ convertible arbitrage.

II. AN EVOLVING MARKET ENVIRONMENT

The dynamics of all asset classes ebb and flow due to economic and market factors, issuance trends and investor sentiment. Convertible securities are no exception. In the years following the financial crisis, many companies chose to take advantage of historically low interest rates and issued non-convertible debt. As a result, the asset class is now smaller than it was between the late 1990s and mid-2000s (Figure 2). Additionally, in 2015, BofA Merrill Lynch changed its methodology to include a narrower group of securities, which we believe accounts for substantially all of the drop-off between 2014 and 2015.

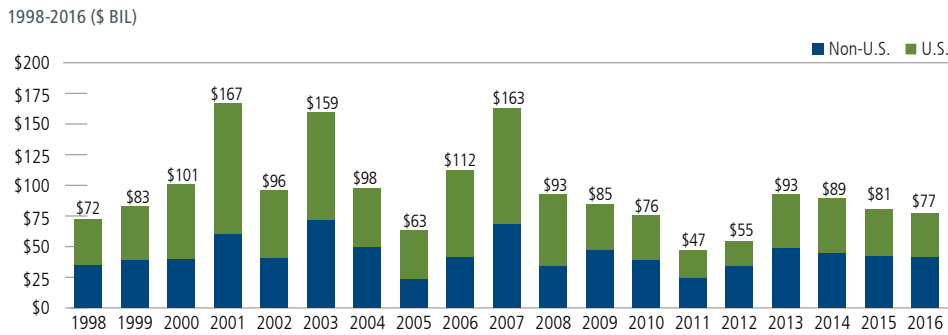
FIGURE 2. ASSET LEVELS HAVE STABILIZED IN THE GLOBAL CONVERTIBLE MARKET



Source: BofA Merrill Lynch Convertibles Research. Convertible market size is represented by the sum of the market capitalization of the BofA Merrill Lynch regional convertible indexes. In 2015, BofA Merrill Lynch Convertible Research began using pricing from third party data providers. Names that are not priced by those providers have been removed.

Global issuance in 2016 totaled \$77 billion (Figure 3), less than recent years but still quite respectable. Issuers in the U.S. accounted for about half the total, bringing \$36 billion to market, followed by Europe with \$29 billion. Of particular note, 2016 saw one of the largest convertible deals in history, issued by a Chinese internet company. Although emerging markets issuers represent a small portion of the convertible market today, we believe this deal represents an exciting milestone in the evolution of the global convertible market.

FIGURE 3. NEW CONVERTIBLE SECURITIES ISSUANCE



Source: BofA Merrill Lynch Global Research.

Issues came to market with generally favorable terms, with strong representation from the technology, energy and health care sectors. In the U.S., 40% of new issuance came in the form of mandatory convertible structures. Mandatory issuance has been more robust in recent years, supported in part by companies that have chosen the structure to raise capital for M&A activities.

Global issuance has gotten off to a good start in the first months of 2017, with more than \$12 billion coming to market through February, led by the U.S. at \$7.4 billion. We expect issuance in 2017 to be in line with 2016, providing us with a sufficiently broad universe of choices. Convertible market issuance is about capital market access; capital market access is closely tied with economic growth. Looking to the remainder of 2017, we expect an increased emphasis on fiscal policies and global monetary accommodation to provide a favorable backdrop for economic expansion, and by extension, continued catalysts for issuance. If interest deductibility is eliminated as part of U.S. tax code changes, companies would likely prefer issuing convertibles versus straight debt, due to the lower coupons typically offered by convertibles. Additionally, infrastructure spending could increase demand for capital.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE MANAGEMENT

As previously noted, convertibles have varying degrees of equity and fixed-income sensitivity, and these characteristics may change for a given convertible over time. Figure 4 provides a good example of how convertible characteristics change alongside market conditions. The convertible market demonstrated a much higher degree of equity sensitivity in March of

FIGURE 4. THE MARKET CYCLE AND U.S. CONVERTIBLE CHARACTERISTICS

	YIELD ALTERNATIVES	TOTAL RETURN ALTERNATIVES	EQUITY ALTERNATIVES
3/1/2000	18.9%	27.8%	53.3%
2/28/2009	67.4%	20.9%	11.7%
12/31/2016	37.3%	33.6%	29.1%

Convertible market issuance is about capital market access; capital market access is closely tied with economic growth.

Source: BofA Merrill Lynch, All U.S. Convertibles Index (VXAO). Data as of December 31, 2016. A convertible bond has "fixed income characteristics" when it is valued at about the same level as a similar non-convertible bond and is not as sensitive to the underlying equity. A convertible bond has "hybrid characteristics" when it has fixed income characteristics as previously explained but is becoming increasingly sensitive to changes in the underlying equity price. "Equity characteristics" represents a convertible bond that is highly sensitive to movements in the underlying equity. Percentages shown represent the proportion of convertible bonds in the BofA Merrill Lynch, All U.S. Convertibles Index (VXAO) which fall into each classification.

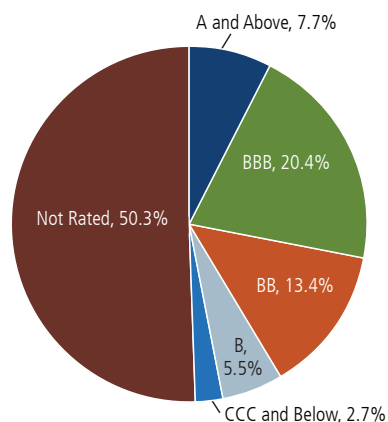
2000, against the backdrop of a peaking equity market and technology bubble. In February of 2009, the pendulum had swung to the other extreme. As the markets troughed in the liquidity crisis, more than two-thirds of convertible markets were trading as “credit-sensitive.”

These changing characteristics speak to the importance of actively managing convertible allocations. The most equity-sensitive convertibles may not provide adequate downside protection, while the most bond-like convertibles may not offer sufficient equity upside participation. Passive strategies cannot adjust to either the changes in an individual convertible’s characteristics or to the characteristics of the convertible universe as a whole. Therefore, they cannot provide investors with the benefits that an actively managed convertible portfolio may offer.

In contrast, in a number of U.S. and global convertible strategies, our goal is to earn equity-like returns over a full market cycle with less volatility than the equity market. An active approach affords us this opportunity, and we continually monitor the equity- and credit-sensitivities of the issues in a portfolio, among our many risk-management considerations.

Proprietary research is a key component of our active approach. While investment-grade and mid-grade credits are well represented in the global convertible market, non-rated issues make up a significant percentage as well (Figure 5). Often, companies forego having their securities rated at the outset, avoiding a lengthy and expensive process. We often do invest in non-rated convertible securities but only after rigorous research. Among many factors, we will consider company fundamentals, balance sheet data, and debt servicing prospects.

FIGURE 5. GLOBAL CONVERTIBLE MARKET: CREDIT QUALITY COMPOSITION



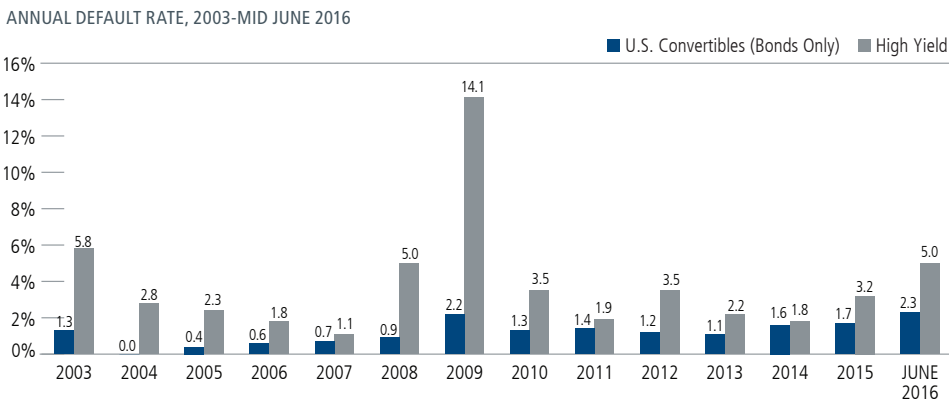
Investment-grade and mid-grade credits are well represented in the global convertible market.

Source: BofA Merrill Lynch Convertible Research, G300 Index. Data as of December 31, 2016.

IV. HISTORICALLY, CONVERTIBLES HAVE SEEN LOW LEVELS OF DEFAULTS

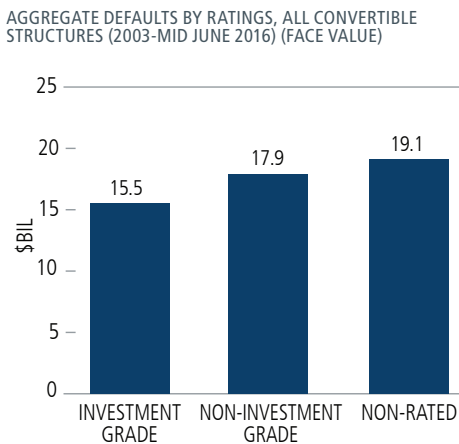
We are often asked about default rates in the convertible market. As Figure 6 shows, defaults in the U.S. convertible market have been lower than in the high yield market. According to Barclay’s equity research, the default rates for convertible bonds have averaged 1% versus 4% for traditional high yield from 2003 through mid-2016. Defaults in the convertible market were also lower than in the high yield market for every year during this period. Interestingly, there has not been a wide disparity among the default rates of investment grade, non-investment grade and non-rated convertible issues (Figure 7). In recent years, a substantial number of defaults in the investment-grade market have been attributable to the financial sector (Figure 8), which was hit hard in the financial crisis. In contrast, default rates in the growth-oriented technology sector—one of the largest in the convertible market—have been much lower.

FIGURE 6. DEFAULTS IN THE CONVERTIBLE MARKET HAVE BEEN LOWER THAN HIGH YIELD



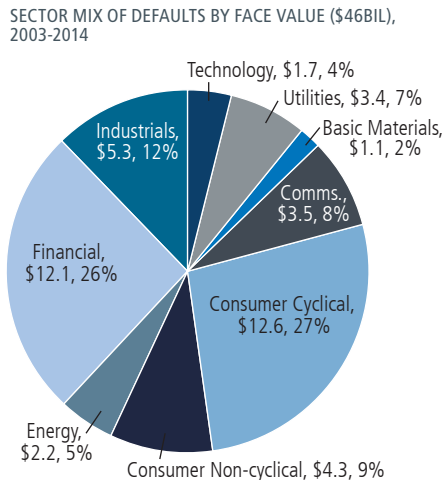
Past performance is no guarantee of future results.
Source: Barclays Equity Research, June 22, 2016, using data from Barclays Research and Moody.

FIGURE 7. NON-RATED ISSUES REPORTED LOWER DEFAULT RATES



Past performance is no guarantee of future results.
Source: Barclays Equity Research, June 22, 2016.

FIGURE 8. TECH ISSUES REPORTED LOWER DEFAULT RATES



Source: Barclays Equity Research, April 9, 2015.

Tech defaults have been markedly lower than the tech weighting within the convertible universe.

V. FROM A VALUATION PERSPECTIVE, THE HUNTING GROUNDS ARE FINE

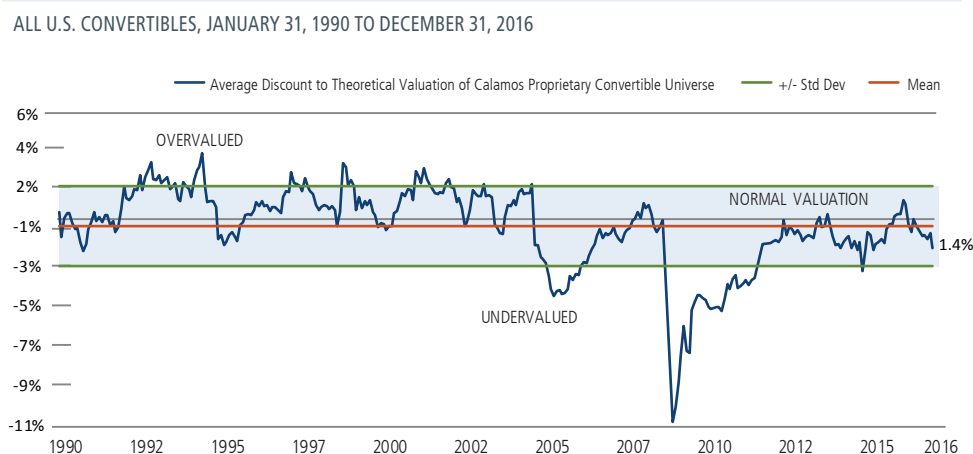
In 2008, systemic risk led to unparalleled valuation opportunities within convertibles. No other period came close to the undervaluation level recorded in the second half of 2008, when we saw an 11% discount to theoretical fair value, based on our fair value proprietary methodology. Entering 2017, the average valuation remains in the normal band (Figure 9), supporting our constructive view of the asset class.

However, even if the average valuation moves above normal levels, we believe the case for convertibles remains intact. In our view, the variability of the valuation climate speaks to the importance of actively managed strategies versus passive strategies, such as exchange traded funds. Since we began managing convertible portfolios in the 1970s, we have invested through many valuation environments. We are not looking to buy the asset class as a whole, but rather, to construct portfolios of securities most likely to deliver the specific risk/return profiles we seek.

Also, the emphasis we place on valuations may differ as the result of strategy-specific considerations. For example, in a convertible arbitrage strategy, valuations are the most important criteria because we seek to take advantage of pricing discrepancies in the convertible security itself. (In a convertible arbitrage strategy, we purchase convertibles that we believe are mispriced while simultaneously short-selling a specific number of shares of the underlying stock.) In contrast, while valuations are important in a long-only strategy, the direction of the underlying stock's movement tends to be our top criteria.

The standard deviation around the current average is 5.7%, meaning that two thirds of the convertible market trades in a range of 7.1% undervalued to 4.2% overvalued. This wide distribution of convertible valuations provides a strong argument in favor of active management.

FIGURE 9. CONVERTIBLE VALUATIONS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE MANAGERS



Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance quoted. Please note that the chart above includes data derived from Calamos Corporate Systems (CCS), a proprietary valuation system designed and maintained solely by Calamos. CCS data is unavailable prior to 1/31/90. While we deem the information contained in the charts to be reliable, Calamos makes no public claims as to the validity of the information derived from the system. In addition to market risk, there are certain other risks associated with an investment in a convertible bond, such as default risk, the risk that the company issuing debt securities will be unable to repay principal and interest, and interest rate risk, the risk that the security may decrease in value if interest rates increase.

VI. SYNTHETIC CONVERTIBLES INCREASE THE INVESTABLE UNIVERSE

Our investable universe is not solely dictated by convertible issuance, due to our use of synthetic convertibles. A convertible bond can be thought of as the sum of its parts, that is a straight bond combined with a long-term call option (the right to convert the bond into stock). A synthetic convertible can be constructed by purchasing these parts in such quantities to provide the balanced risk/reward attributes that we seek. This allows us to synthetically create a convertible security for a company that may not have any convertible or even non-convertible debt outstanding. The bond component could be a credit instrument of any kind, including a Treasury bond, sovereign debt or a straight corporate bond. The synthetic convertible is created when this credit instrument is combined with a long-term call option such as long-term equity anticipation securities (LEAPS) or warrants.

VII. CONVERTIBLES: A PROACTIVE WAY TO ADDRESS INTEREST RATE INCREASES

Convertibles provide a way for investors to hedge against a rising interest-rate environment. Bonds tend to lose value in an environment of rising interest rates. However, convertible returns have tended to more closely reflect equity returns than bond returns when the 10-year Treasury yield rose more than 100 basis points (Figure 10). While convertibles are influenced to a degree by interest-rate fluctuations, they also are affected by the price movements of their underlying stocks, a factor that historically has helped soften the negative effect of rising interest rates. In general, the more a convertible's price is determined by the value of its underlying equities, the greater its tendency not to be influenced by changing interest rates.

FIGURE 10. RETURNS IN RISING INTEREST RATE ENVIRONMENTS

	OCT '93- NOV '94	JAN '96- JUN '96	OCT '98- JAN '00	NOV '01- APR '02	JUN '03- JUN '04	JUN '05- JUN '06	DEC '08- JUN '09	OCT '10- FEB '11	JUL '12- DEC '13	JUL '16- DEC '16
Yield Increase (bps)*	286	150	263	122	176	134	187	134	157	123
Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Govt/Credit	-5.15%	-4.08%	-3.38%	-3.09%	-3.64%	-1.49%	-2.08%	-3.94%	-2.14%	-4.88%
BofA ML All U.S. Convertibles	-2.28	11.97	68.85	2.29	11.49	9.46	24.68	11.63	35.49	7.58
S&P 500	2.22	11.42	46.59	3.07	14.66	6.71	9.41	14.89	42.09	8.65

Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

*10-year Treasury yield. Rising rate environment periods from troughs to peak from October 1993 to December 2016. Performance shown is cumulative. Source: Morningstar.

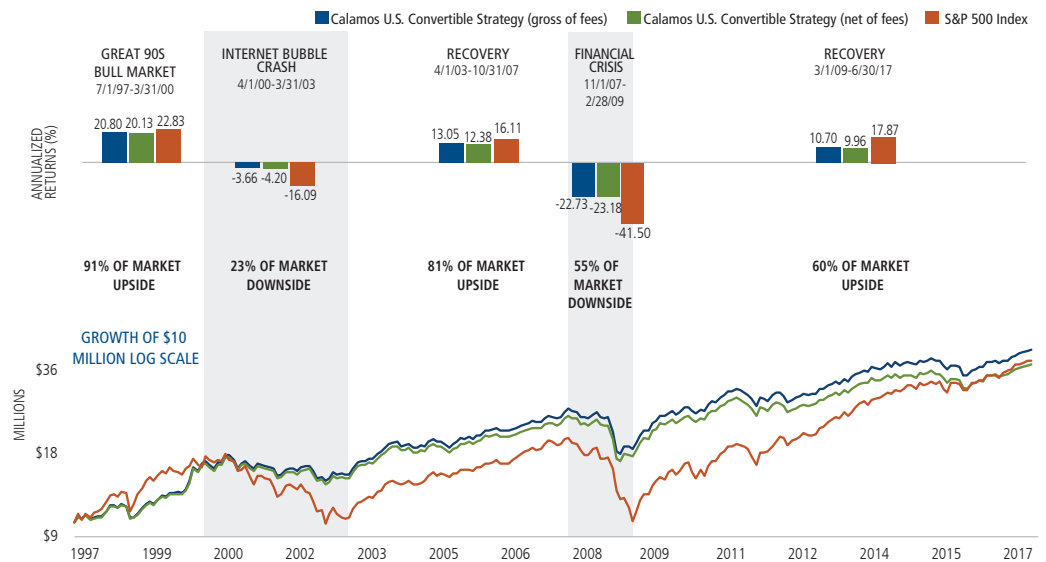
VIII. CALAMOS U.S. CONVERTIBLE AND GLOBAL CONVERTIBLE STRATEGIES

The Calamos Convertible Strategy is one of the oldest convertible strategies in the marketplace, with roots that date to 1979. In 2001, we introduced our global convertible strategy, designed to capitalize on the global growth in the convertible market. We believe the performance of these strategies speaks to potential benefits of including convertible securities as an actively managed strategic allocation (Figure 11).

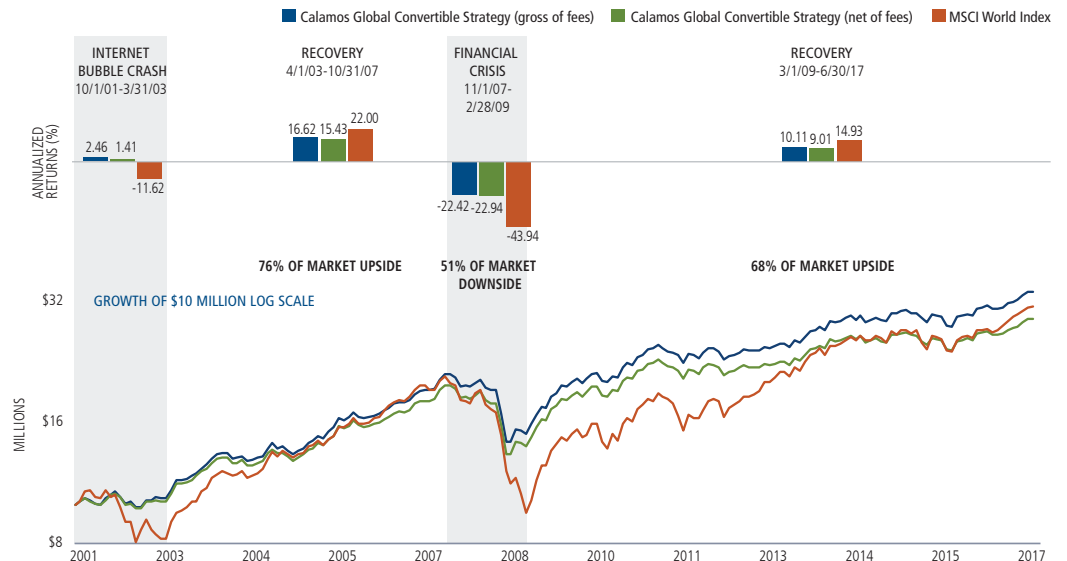
It is not simply the convertibles that make a strategy work but how convertibles are managed to achieve a particular investment objective.

FIGURE 11. MANAGING RISK OVER MARKET CYCLES*

11A. CALAMOS U.S. CONVERTIBLE STRATEGY VERSUS U.S. EQUITY MARKET, 20 YEARS THROUGH 6/30/17



11B. CALAMOS GLOBAL CONVERTIBLE STRATEGY VERSUS GLOBAL EQUITY MARKET, SINCE INCEPTION THROUGH 6/30/17



Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance quoted. The principal value and return of an investment will fluctuate so that your shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. For the most recent strategy performance information visit www.calamos.com. For Calamos Global Convertible Strategy, index data shown is from 10/1/01 and for Calamos U.S. Convertible Strategy, index data shown is from 7/1/97, since comparative index data is available only for full monthly periods. Logarithmic scales can be useful when looking at performance data over a long period of time. Common percent changes are represented by an equal spacing between the numbers in the scale. For example, the distance between \$1 and \$2 is equal to the distance between \$2 and \$4 because both scenarios represent a 100% increase in price. Source: Mellon Analytical Solutions LLC.

*The strategy data has been updated through the most recent quarter.

Through our positioning in both strategies, we endeavor to provide an asymmetrical risk/return profile over full market cycles. Our emphasis on capital preservation sets us apart both from passive strategies as well as from investment managers that invest more heavily in the most speculative issues. While there are periods when our focus on mitigating downside risk may cause our approach to trail during rapidly rising markets, we believe the risk-management opportunities offered by select convertible securities are too compelling to overlook within an overall asset allocation.

▸ Strategic convertible allocations may provide investors with opportunities to manage returns and risk in ways that stocks or bonds cannot.

IX. CONCLUSION

We believe the case for strategic convertible allocations remains strong. Strategic convertible allocations may provide investors with opportunities to manage returns and risk in ways that stocks or bonds cannot. However, convertible portfolios require active management to maximize their potential benefits.

In our view, the structural characteristics of convertibles (the opportunity for upside equity participation with a degree of downside resilience) can serve investors well, given our expectations for global economic expansion, advancing but at times volatile equity markets, and rising interest rates in the U.S.

We are encouraged by recent global issuance trends and believe that economic growth can support new opportunities for convertible investors. We are particularly interested in the growing importance of non-U.S. issuance; to us, it underscores the ongoing evolution of the asset class. We continue to favor securities with a balance of equity and fixed-income characteristics, rather than those which are disproportionately equity- or credit-sensitive. We are confident that our long track record speaks to our ability to identify convertible opportunities in a variety of market environments.

For additional information about convertible securities and asset allocations, please visit us at www.calamos.com, where you will find a range of resources. You can also contact us at 800.582.6959, and we will provide resources that best address your specific needs.

ANNUALIZED PERFORMANCE, AS OF JUNE 30, 2017*

CALAMOS GLOBAL CONVERTIBLE STRATEGY

	1-YEAR	3-YEAR	5-YEAR	10-YEAR	15-YEAR	SINCE INCEPTION (10/01)
Return Gross of Fees	14.79%	4.74%	7.59%	5.74%	8.00%	7.95%
Return Net of Fees	13.23	3.23	6.24	4.73	6.95	6.90
BofA ML Global 300 Convertible Index	13.74	5.12	8.93	5.52	7.25	6.97
MSCI World Index	18.86	5.83	12.01	4.56	7.79	7.35

CALAMOS U.S. CONVERTIBLE STRATEGY

	1-YEAR	3-YEAR	5-YEAR	10-YEAR	15-YEAR	SINCE COMPOSITE INCEPTION (1/1991)
Return Gross of Fees	16.36%	4.07%	8.89%	5.88%	7.14%	9.66%
Return Net of Fees	15.55	3.35	8.14	5.18	6.46	8.99
BofA ML All U.S. Convertibles ex Mandatory Index (VOA0)	19.86	5.60	11.56	7.20	8.32	9.99
S&P 500 Index	17.90	9.61	14.63	7.18	8.35	10.07

*The strategy data has been updated through the most recent quarter.

The opinions referenced are as of the date of publication and are subject to change due to changes in the market or economic conditions and may not necessarily come to pass. Information contained herein is for informational purposes only and should not be considered investment advice. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Past performance does not guarantee or indicate future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance quoted. Portfolios are managed according to their respective strategies which may differ significantly in terms of security holdings, industry weightings, and asset allocation from those of the benchmark(s). Portfolio performance, characteristics and volatility may differ from the benchmark(s) shown.

Active management does not guarantee that the strategy will produce its intended results.

The results portrayed on the preceding pages are for the Calamos Global Convertible Composite. Representative holdings and portfolio characteristics are specific only to the portfolio shown at that point in time. Other portfolios will vary in composition, characteristics, and will experience different investment results. The representative portfolio shown has been selected by the advisor based on account characteristics that the advisor feels accurately represents the investment strategy as a whole. Supplemental information has been provided for the Global Convertible Composite.

The Calamos Global Convertible Composite is an actively managed composite investing primarily in a globally diversified portfolio of convertible securities. The composite includes all fully discretionary, fee-paying accounts, including those no longer with the firm. All returns are net of commission and other similar fees charged on securities transactions and include reinvestment of net realized gains and interest.

The results portrayed on the preceding pages are for the Calamos Institutional Convertible Composite (inception date: 1/1991). The inception dates and performance results shown are for the composite. Representative holdings and portfolio characteristics are specific only to the portfolio shown at that point in time. Other portfolios will vary in composition, characteristics, and will experience different investment results. The representative portfolio shown has been selected by the advisor based on account characteristics that the advisor feels accurately represents the investment strategy as a whole. Supplemental information has been provided for the Institutional Convertible Composite.

Returns presented are based on the Calamos Institutional Convertible Composite, which is an actively managed composite investing primarily in high-quality U.S. convertible bonds. The composite includes all fully discretionary, fee paying accounts. All returns are net of commission and other similar fees charged on securities transactions and include reinvestment of net realized gains and interest.

Fees include the investment advisory fee charge by Calamos Advisors LLC. Returns greater than 12 months are annualized. Chart Data Sources: Mellon Analytical Solutions LLC and Calamos Advisors LLC

The Bank of America Merrill Lynch All U.S. Convertibles ex Mandatory Index (VOA0) is broadly representative of the U.S. convertible securities market, consisting of publicly traded issues, denominated in U.S. dollars, of all credit qualities, and excluding mandatory (equity-linked) convertibles. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch Emerging Markets Convertible Index is a measure of emerging market convertible performance. Unmanaged index returns assume reinvestment of any and all distributions and do not reflect any fees, expenses or sales charges. Investors cannot invest directly in an index. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch Global 300 Convertible Index (VG00) is a global convertible index composed of companies representative of the market structure of countries in North America, Europe and the Asia/Pacific region.

The MSCI World Index is a market capitalization weighted index composed of companies representative of the market structure of developed market countries in North America, Europe, and the Asia/Pacific region. The indices are calculated in both U.S. dollars and local currencies. The S&P 500 Index is a measure of the performance of the U.S. equity market.

The information in this report should not be considered a recommendation to purchase or sell any particular security. There is not assurance that any securities discussed herein will remain in an account's portfolio at the time you receive this report or that securities sold have not been repurchased. The securities discussed do not represent the account's entire portfolio and in the aggregate may represent only a small percentage of an account's portfolio holdings.

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