

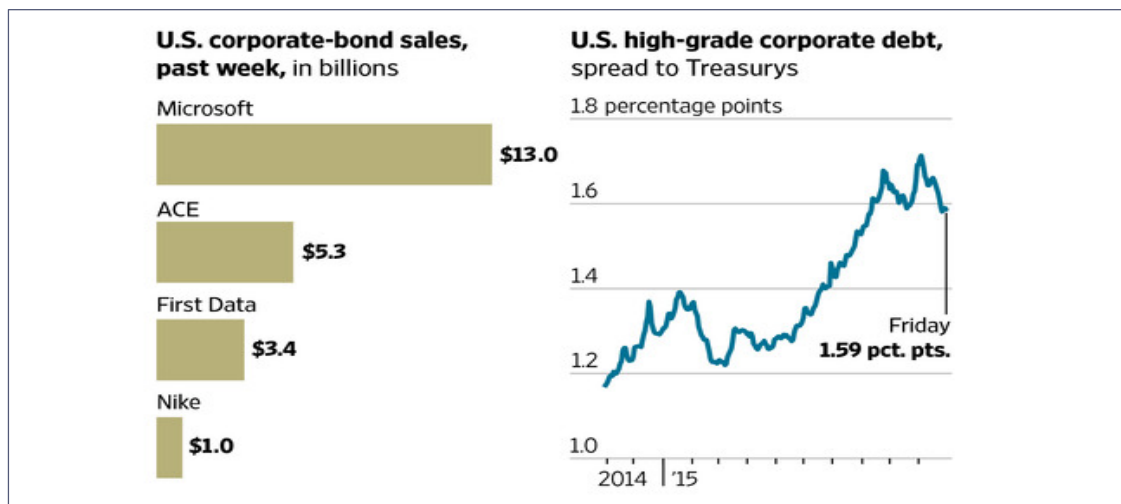
# Market Recap

## Investor Optimism Driving the Market Upward



Source: Bloomberg, BlackRock

## Corporate Bonds Signal a Strengthening Economy



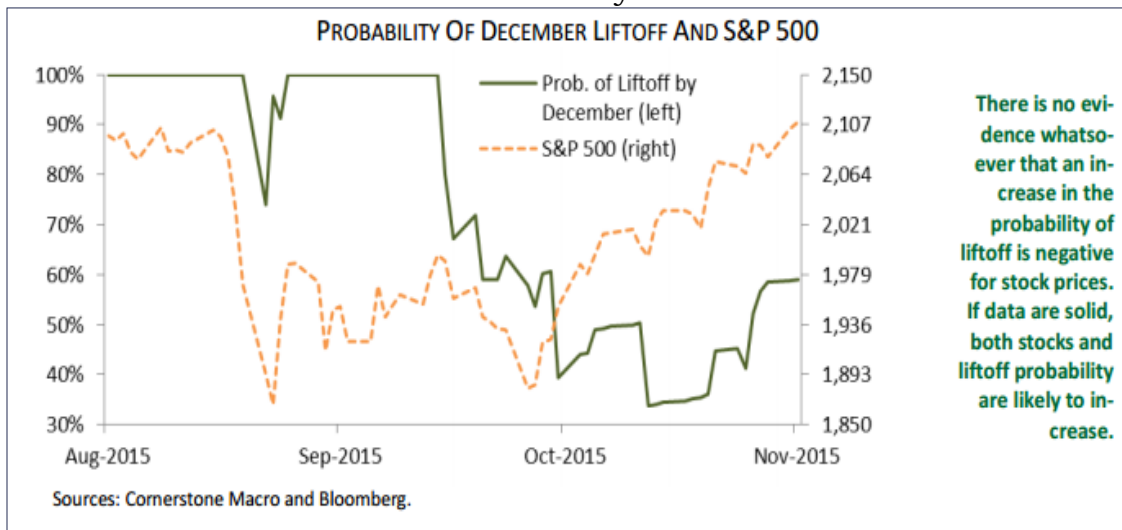
Source: WSJ

As the S&P 500 approaches its record level previously set in May, the index's Price-to-Earnings ratio (P/E ratio) is also nearing a five-year high of 18.9 (last seen on July 20<sup>th</sup>). During 2015, stocks have seen heightened volatility, suffering two significant corrections followed by dramatic market rises. Unfortunately, while stock prices have risen of late, earnings of U.S. companies have been flat to slightly negative, driving the P/E ratio higher. Despite the fact that, at a P/E ratio of 18.9 equities are deemed to be "expensive", stock investors continue to demonstrate their willingness to pay more for every dollar of earnings produced. One important positive driver is investor optimism about next year's earnings, and the belief that they are acquiring stocks at an opportunistic time. With poor earnings results in 2015 setting a low starting point, it should be relatively easy for 2016 corporate earnings to demonstrate year-over-year growth, leading to higher stock prices and healthier P/E multiples.

Last month, sales of investment-grade bonds (BBB+ or better), hit a new record for sales in the month of October topping \$103 billion and are on track for their fourth straight yearly record. As economic growth during the third quarter stalled and the health of U.S. companies was questioned, corporate bond spreads (the difference between what an investor pays for a corporate bond versus its benchmark Treasury) widened making debt more expensive to issue. However, more recent indications of economic growth, coupled with the desire to issue bonds at low rates ahead of any interest rate move by the Fed, drove companies to issue debt sooner rather than later. In turn, bond spreads have tightened from 1.71% to 1.59%. Investors are willing to accept lower coupons for corporate debt, acknowledging improving credit quality and a lower chance of default. This tightening of spreads is a positive sign for the U.S. economy.

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## Fed Liftoff is Not Necessarily Bad for Stocks

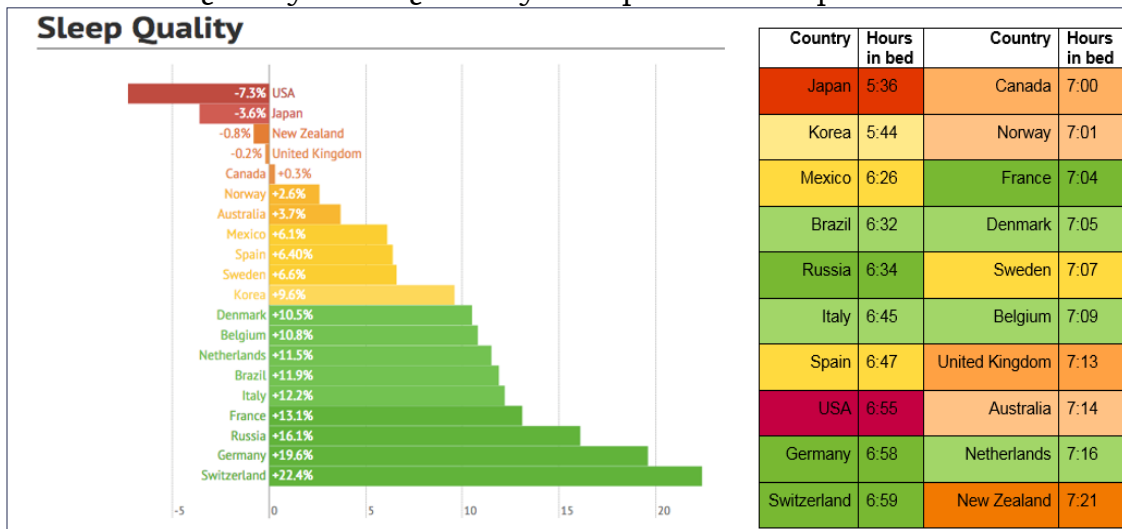


**There is no evidence whatsoever that an increase in the probability of liftoff is negative for stock prices. If data are solid, both stocks and liftoff probability are likely to increase.**

The U.S. economy added 271,000 jobs in October, with the unemployment rate falling to 5%. This is the best monthly gain of 2015. Wage growth registered 2.5%, the strongest number we have seen since 2008. This bodes well for the economy at large—higher wage growth is supportive of consumer spending, which is a large driver of U.S. economic growth. One implication of such a strong payroll report is that the market probability for a Fed rate hike in December has jumped from approximately 60% to 70-80%. Higher rates intuitively benefit margins for financial institutions, but the general perception is that stronger returns in the fixed income market and tighter financing may be a drag on equity valuations. However, this rate hike is expected to be modest, and the removal of the uncertainty surrounding the liftoff may actually be supportive to the broad market.

Source: Cornerstone Macro and Bloomberg

## Quality Over Quantity: Sleep Is No Exception



Although experts recommend sleeping 8 hours per night, many studies suggest that the key to healthy sleep patterns may lie in the quality of sleep, not the quantity. To analyze modern sleep patterns in a historical context, scientists studied three current preindustrial societies in Africa and Latin America, finding that these indigenous people averaged only 6.4 hours of sleep per night, yet exhibited lower levels of high blood pressure, obesity, and insomnia than Americans. In addition to diet and exercise, light and temperature were found to play crucial roles in the quality of sleep. These indigenous people slept without distractions – the light from a TV, perhaps – and outdoors, where the temperature drops gradually over the course of the night, rather than in a climate-controlled structure. So, for all of the efficiency that technology affords us, it may in fact be creating inefficiencies in our sleep habits.

Source: SleepCycle.com

**Contact:** If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at 703.992.6164. For more information about Harbour Capital Advisors, please visit our website at [www.harbourcapitaladvisors.com](http://www.harbourcapitaladvisors.com).

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