Using Excel for Optimizing Blended Strategies

AAII CIMI 9-2025

How to optimize blends with Excel

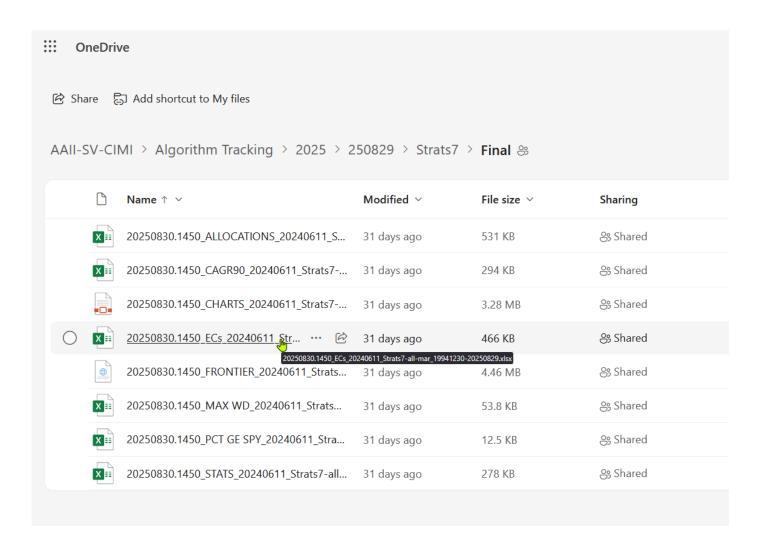
--The steps in a nutshell --

- 1. Navigate to the Algorithm Tracking folder and find the data for the strategies you want to test.
- 2. Download a copy and trim away the stuff you don't need
- 3. Add fields to calculate the blended portfolio and summary statistics
- 4. Open Solver within Excel and enter in the relevant constraints
- 5. Use Solver to find the blend with the best characteristics for your risk/return preferences.

A simple example

- Just three strategies
 - SB041 a high return, high drawdown strategy using Mix3x5 universe
 - 72% CAGR and 44% Max DD since 1994
 - SB029 a modest return, low drawdown strategy using Fidelity sectors
 - 20% CAGR and 19% Max DD
 - S398 the strategy of non-equity assets that is usually used when the timer tells us to be "risk-off"
 - 13% CAGR and 23% Max DD
- Just 24 months of data a real-world test requires periods of protracted bear market.
- This is way too short a time period for real-world insights; it is solely to demonstrate the mechanics.

Navigate to the Algorithm Tracking folder and find the strategy you want to work with.

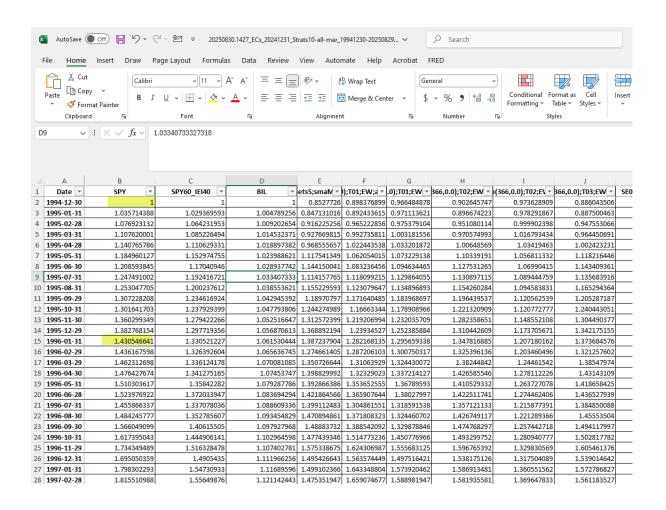


Go into the CIMI folder, into algorithm tracking, the current date, and the set of strategies you are interested in.

Find the excel file with "EC" in the title, which stands for for "Equity Curve"

Open it.

Download a copy



- This file shows the equity curve for each strategy in the collection, normalized to 1 as a starting point.
- Each row is one month.
- Each column is one strategy.
- For example, on 12/30/1994 your portfolio in SPY is assumed to be \$1.
- On 1/31/96, your portfolio in SPY has increased to \$1.43.
- These are total return figures adjusted for dividends and splits

Delete or hide everything but the strategies and models you are interested in.

	Α	В	С	D	Е
1	Date 💌	S398 ▼	SB029 ▼	SB041 ▼	
2	2022-12-30	25.72892693	240.6642546	2439911.9	
3	2023-01-31	27.21072351	255.114668	2610873.362	
4	2023-02-28	25.75016208	246.8843742	2792566.428	
5	2023-03-31	26.098025	244.0104399	3447282.913	
6	2023-04-28	26.32308082	241.2019638	3591747.515	
7	2023-05-31	25.96982858	254.4556774	4566278.952	
8	2023-06-30	25.39294267	267.7003333	5327841.47	
9	2023-07-31	26.08898519	279.3702918	5856974.972	
10	2023-08-31	25.374145	270.2603874	5482483.351	
11	2023-09-29	24.22440114	259.2097681	4831002.966	
12	2023-10-31	23.78766291	250.6222486	5268337.83	
13	2023-11-30	24.38981751	266.1088363	5670412.109	
14	2023-12-29	26.11031475	280.4119928	6474359.492	
15	2024-01-31	25.56648889	276.7678623	6906946.684	
16	2024-02-29	25.79547342	293.7250304	9978299.571	
17	2024-03-28	26.34034331	301.9512035	11213124.17	
18	2024-04-30	27.12778651	286.0859291	9962188.625	
19	2024-05-31	27.56696414	303.0358765	13066330.3	
20	2024-06-28	27.52983129	308.0657621	15224293.91	
21	2024-07-31	29.00741119	309.9800525	13816435.93	
22	2024-08-30	29.61431996	317.5127756	12823976.71	
23	2024-09-30	31.12134942	322.8416414	14132533.02	
24	2024-10-31	32.45936657	324.815136	12812142.48	
25	2024-11-29	31.4452919	356.2811943	13315148.08	
26	2024-12-31	31.00227454	337.6009802	15255881.52	
27					
28					
29					

- I deleted all columns except the three strategies of interest.
- I deleted all dates except for a two year sample.
- I changed Strategy names to the shorthand form SB029 etc. so they don't truncate.

Now, add rows and columns

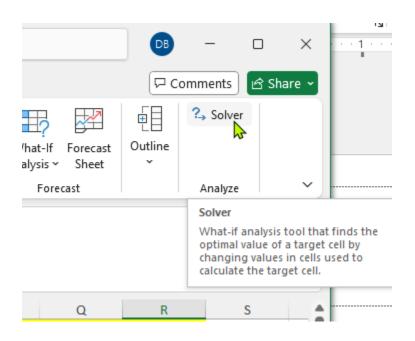
	A	В	С	D	Е	F	G	Н	1	J	K	1	M
	Date	S398			_	SB029	0	- ''	SB041	,	K	141	
2		EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Composite Mo Return	DD %
3	2022-12-30	25.73			240.66			2,439,912					
4	2023-01-31	27.21	1.058	0.0%	255.11	1.060	0.0%	2,610,873	1.070	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
5	2023-02-28	25.75	0.946	5.4%	246.88	0.968	3.2%	2,792,566	1.070	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
6	2023-03-31	26.10	1.014	4.1%	244.01	0.988	4.4%	3,447,283	1.234	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
7	2023-04-28	26.32	1.009	3.3%	241.20	0.988	5.5%	3,591,748	1.042	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
8	2023-05-31	25.97	0.987	4.6%	254.46	1.055	0.3%	4,566,279	1.271	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
9	2023-06-30	25.39	0.978	6.7%	267.70	1.052	0.0%	5,327,841	1.167	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
10	2023-07-31	26.09	1.027	4.1%	279.37	1.044	0.0%	5,856,975	1.099	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
11	2023-08-31	25.37	0.973	6.7%	270.26	0.967	3.3%	5,482,483	0.936	6.4%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
12	2023-09-29	24.22	0.955	11.0%	259.21	0.959	7.2%	4,831,003	0.881	17.5%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
13	2023-10-31	23.79	0.982	12.6%	250.62	0.967	10.3%	5,268,338	1.091	10.1%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
14	2023-11-30	24.39	1.025	10.4%	266.11	1.062	4.7%	5,670,412	1.076	3.2%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
15	2023-12-29	26.11	1.071	4.0%	280.41	1.054	0.0%	6,474,359	1.142	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
16	2024-01-31	25.57	0.979	6.0%	276.77	0.987	1.3%	6,906,947	1.067	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
17	2024-02-29	25.80	1.009	5.2%	293.73	1.061	0.0%	9,978,300	1.445	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
18	2024-03-28	26.34	1.021	3.2%	301.95	1.028	0.0%	11,213,124	1.124	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
19	2024-04-30	27.13	1.030	0.3%	286.09	0.947	5.3%	9,962,189	0.888	11.2%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
20	2024-05-31	27.57	1.016	0.0%	303.04	1.059	0.0%	13,066,330	1.312	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
21	2024-06-28	27.53	0.999	0.1%	308.07	1.017	0.0%	15,224,294	1.165	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
22	2024-07-31	29.01	1.054	0.0%	309.98	1.006	0.0%	13,816,436	0.908	9.2%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
23	2024-08-30	29.61	1.021	0.0%	317.51	1.024	0.0%	12,823,977	0.928	15.8%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
24	2024-09-30	31.12	1.051	0.0%	322.84	1.017	0.0%	14,132,533	1.102	7.2%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
25	2024-10-31	32.46	1.043	0.0%	324.82	1.006	0.0%	12,812,142	0.907	15.8%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
26	2024-11-29	31.45	0.969	3.1%	356.28	1.097	0.0%	13,315,148	1.039	12.5%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
27	2024-12-31	31.00	0.986	4.5%	337.60	0.948	5.2%	15,255,882	1.146	0.0%		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
28											,		
29	CAGR	9.8%			18.4%			150.1%			#DIV/0!	_	
30	Mean		0.83%			1.51%			8.79%			#DIV/0!	
31	MAX DD			12.6%			10.3%			17.5%			#DIV/0!
	MAR		0.78			1.79			8.57			#DIV/0!	
33													

- Add columns C, F, I to derive monthly return from the equity curve
- Add columns D, G, J to calculate drawdown and maxDD
- Add columns K, L, M to track a weighted average portfolio
- Add rows at the bottom for summary statistics
 - MAR = CAGR/MAX DD
- You can organize your spreadsheet to focus on Sharpe, UPI or any other measure of risk-adjusted return.
- Color-code headers and create sub heads as shown so it is easier to read

Create a section on the right to set coefficients for how much exposure to each of the strategies.

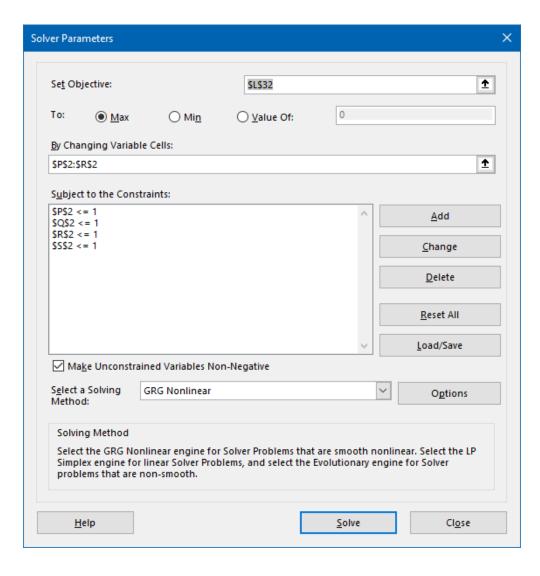
A	В	С	D	E	F	G	Н	1	J	K	L	M M	0	P	Q	R	S	
Date		S398			SB029			SB041			Composite		Strategy	S398	SB029	SB041	total	_
	EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Mo Return	DD %	EC	Mo Return	DD %	Weight	0.3	0.3	0.4	1	
2022-12-30	25.73			240.66			2,439,912			1								
2023-01-31	27.21		0.0%	255.11	1.060	0.0%	2,610,873	1.070	0.0%	1.0633	1.063	0.0%	_					cc: - : + -
2023-02-28	25.75		5.4%	246.88	0.968	3.2%	2,792,566	1.070	0.0%	1.0655		0.0%	•	Ente	er sor	ne sa	mple	coefficients
2023-03-31	26.10		4.1%	244.01	0.988	4.4%	3,447,283	1.234	0.0%	1.1660	1.094	0.0%		/D 0	D 0 \			1000/
2023-04-28	26.32 25.97		3.3% 4.6%	241.20 254.46	0.988 1.055	5.5% 0.3%	3,591,748 4,566,279	1.042 1.271	0.0%	1.1846 1.3279	1.016 1.121	0.0%		(P2:	K2) tr	าat รเ	ım to	100%
2023-05-31	25.39		6.7%	267.70	1.052	0.3%	5,327,841	1.167	0.0%	1.4283	1.121	0.0%		,	,			
2023-00-30	26.09		4.1%	279.37	1.032	0.0%	5,856,975	1.107	0.0%	1.5155		0.0%	•	In co	olumi	n L. c	alcula	ate the weighted
2023-08-31	25.37		6.7%	270.26	0.967	3.3%	5,482,483	0.936	6.4%	1.4495		4.4%						_
2 2023-09-29	24.22		11.0%	259.21	0.959	7.2%	4,831,003	0.881	17.5%	1.3431	0.927	11.4%		mor	าthlv เ	returr	า usin	g the coefficient
2023-10-31	23.79	0.982	12.6%	250.62	0.967	10.3%	5,268,338	1.091	10.1%	1.3711	1.021	9.5%						_
2023-11-30	24.39	1.025	10.4%	266.11	1.062	4.7%	5,670,412	1.076	3.2%	1.4488	1.057	4.4%		in P	2:R2	* the	returi	ns for each
2023-12-29	26.11	1.071	4.0%	280.41	1.054	0.0%	6,474,359	1.142	0.0%	1.5850	1.094	0.0%				4		
2024-01-31	25.57	0.979	6.0%	276.77	0.987	1.3%	6,906,947	1.067	0.0%	1.6113	1.017	0.0%		stra	tegy i	n col	umns	CFL
7 2024-02-29	25.80		5.2%	293.73	1.061	0.0%	9,978,300	1.445	0.0%	1.9318	1.199	0.0%		otia	coby i	11 000	arriilo	O,1 ,1
2024-03-28	26.34		3.2%	301.95	1.028	0.0%	11,213,124	1.124	0.0%	2.0559	1.064	0.0%	•	In co	dumi	n K	alcula	ate the blended
2024-04-30	27.13		0.3%	286.09	0.947	5.3%	9,962,189	0.888	11.2%	1.9502		5.1%		111 6	Julin	11 IX, C	atcute	ate the blended
2024-05-31	27.57		0.0%	303.04	1.059	0.0%	13,066,330	1.312	0.0%	2.2374		0.0%		AGII	itv ou	rva k	hased	on column L.
2024-06-28	27.53 29.01		0.1%	308.07	1.017 1.006	0.0%	15,224,294 13.816.436	1.165 0.908	0.0% 9.2%	2.3954 2.3499	1.071 0.981	0.0% 1.9%		cqu	ity Gu	IVC, k	Jaseu	on column L.
2024-07-31	29.01	1.054	0.0%	309.98 317.51	1.006	0.0%	12,823,977	0.908	15.8%	2.3499		3.4%		Con	v tho	Movi	D for	mula to columr
2024-08-30	31.12		0.0%	322.84	1.024	0.0%	14,132,533	1.102	7.2%	2.4557	1.061	0.0%		COP	y the	Maxi	וטו טכ	illuta to cotuilli
2024-10-31	32.46		0.0%	324.82	1.006	0.0%	12,812,142	0.907	15.8%	2,4001	0.977	2.3%		Μ.				
2024-11-29	31.45		3.1%	356.28	1.097	0.0%	13,315,148	1.039	12.5%	2,4850	1.035	0.0%		1*1.				
7 2024-12-31	31.00		4.5%	337.60	0.948	5.2%	15,255,882	1.146	0.0%	2.5803	1.038	0.0%		Mar	+61,7	بلمطم	anain	a io implioit
3													_	IVIOI	ithity i	epat	ancin	g is implicit.
CAGR	9.8%			18.4%			150.1%			60.6%				NIAL				
Mean		0.83%			1.51%			8.79%			4.22%		•	JOVI	etne	sumi	nary s	statistics for the
L MAX DD			12.6%			10.3%			17.5%			11.4%		blar				
MAR		0.78			1.79			8.57			5.33			bler	ıu.			
) IVIAN		0.70			1., 3			0.57			3.33			Dia		ء ممالا	tt: -	cients if you wan

Launch "Solver"



- Solver is a free excel add-in
- You might have to load it if it is not pre-installed.
- It shows up under the "Data" tab, in the "analyze" group.

Set parameters for Solver and run it.



- Under "Set objective" chose the cell you are trying to optimize, for example the MAR of the composite portfolio
- Under "by changing variable cells" enter the cells or range that you want to modify, in this case the coefficients.
- Under "constraints" enter the limits that the optimization needs to respect, e.g. all coefficients must sum to 1.
- Hit "solve" and read off the result.
- In this short time period, a portfolio of 100%
 SB041 is optimal with respect to MAR but the time period is not representative.

Can we get MaxDD to 10%?

	А	С	D	F	G	1	J	L	M	N O	Р	Q	R	S
1 [Date	S39	8	SBO	129	SBO	41	Comp	osite	Strategy	S398	SB029	SB041	total
2		Mo Return	DD %	Weight	0.02	0.72	0.27	1.00						
3	2022-12-30													
4	2023-01-31	1.058	0.0%	1.060	0.0%	1.070	0.0%	1.063	0.0%					
5	2023-02-28	0.946	5.4%	0.968	3.2%	1.070	0.0%	0.994	0.6%					
6	2023-03-31	1.014	4.1%	0.988	4.4%	1.234	0.0%	1.054	0.0%					0400
7	2023-04-28	1.009	3.3%	0.988	5.5%	1.042	0.0%	1.003	0.0%		•	Set s	olver	to maximize CAGR subject to
8	2023-05-31	0.987	4.6%	1.055	0.3%	1.271	0.0%	1.111	0.0%					
9	2023-06-30	0.978	6.7%	1.052	0.0%	1.167	0.0%	1.081	0.0%			Maxl)D<=	10%
10	2023-07-31	1.027	4.1%	1.044	0.0%	1.099	0.0%	1.058	0.0%			1 - 0.7 1-		
-	2023-08-31	0.973	6.7%	0.967	3.3%	0.936	6.4%	0.959	4.1%		•	Solve	er reti	urns 27% SB041, 72% SB029
_	2023-09-29	0.955	11.0%	0.959	7.2%	0.881	17.5%	0.938	10.0%			COLV	71 1000	11110 27 70 000 41, 72 70 00020
_	2023-10-31	0.982	12.6%	0.967	10.3%	1.091	10.1%	1.000	10.0%			and '	2% S3	202
	2023-11-30	1.025	10.4%	1.062	4.7%	1.076	3.2%	1.065	4.2%			ariu 2	290 33	090
_	2023-12-29	1.071	4.0%	1.054	0.0%	1.142	0.0%	1.077	0.0%			If and	h , , , o	re on antion the recult would of
_	2024-01-31	0.979	6.0%	0.987	1.3%	1.067	0.0%	1.008	0.0%		•	III cas	sn we	re an option, the result would of
	2024-02-29	1.009	5.2%	1.061	0.0%	1.445	0.0%	1.162	0.0%					1:00
_	2024-03-28	1.021	3.2%		0.0%	1.124	0.0%	1.053	0.0%			cour	se be	different.
	2024-04-30	1.030	0.3%		5.3%	0.888	11.2%		6.7%					
	2024-05-31	1.016	0.0%	1.059	0.0%	1.312	0.0%	1.126	0.0%					
_	2024-06-28	0.999	0.1%		0.0%	1.165	0.0%	1.056	0.0%					
_	2024-07-31	1.054	0.0%	1.006	0.0%	0.908	9.2%	0.981	1.9%					
_	2024-08-30	1.021	0.0%	1.024	0.0%	0.928	15.8%	0.999	2.0%					
	2024-09-30	1.051	0.0%	1.017	0.0%	1.102	7.2%	1.040	0.0%					
_	2024-10-31	1.043	0.0%	1.006	0.0%	0.907	15.8%	0.980	2.0%					
_	2024-11-29	0.969	3.1%	1.097	0.0%	1.039	12.5%	1.079	0.0%					
-	2024-12-31	0.986	4.5%	0.948	5.2%	1.146	0.0%	1.001	0.0%					
28														
29	CAGR	9.8%		18.4%		150.1%		47.2%						
30	Mean	0.83%		1.51%		8.79%		3.43%						
31	MAX DD		12.6%		10.3%		17.5%		10.0%					
32	MAR	0.78		1.79		8.57		4.72						
33														

What is the lowest possible MaxDD with these 3 strategies?

4	Α	С	D	F	G	1	J	L	1 M	0 /	Р	Q	R	S	
1	Date	\$39	8	SBO	129	SB0	41	Comp	osite	Strategy	S398	SB029	SB041	total	
2		Mo Return	DD %	Mo Return	DD %	Mo Return	DD %	Mo Return	DD %	Weight	0.95	0.00	0.05	1.00	
3	2022-12-30														
4	2023-01-31	1.058	0.0%	1.060	0.0%	1.070	0.0%	1.058	0.0%						
5	2023-02-28	0.946	5.4%	0.968	3.2%	1.070	0.0%	0.952	4.8%						
	2023-03-31	1.014	4.1%	0.988	4.4%	1.234	0.0%	1.024	2.6%						
_	2023-04-28	1.009	3.3%	0.988	5.5%	1.042	0.0%	1.010	1.6%						
_	2023-05-31	0.987	4.6%	1.055	0.3%	1.271	0.0%	0.999	1.6%						
-	2023-06-30	0.978	6.7%	1.052	0.0%	1.167	0.0%	0.986	3.0%						
_	2023-07-31	1.027	4.1%	1.044	0.0%	1.099	0.0%	1.031	0.0%			• 5	et so	lver to minimize MaxDD.	
-	2023-08-31	0.973	6.7%	0.967	3.3%	0.936	6.4%	0.971	2.9%					tvor to minimizor laxbb.	
	2023-09-29	0.955	11.0%	0.959	7.2%	0.881	17.5%	0.951	7.6%			• T	he lo	west possible MaxDD is achieve	ہد
_	2023-10-31	0.982	12.6%	0.967	10.3%	1.091	10.1%	0.987	8.8%			I	ווט נט	West possible MaxDD is achieve	Ju
_	2023-11-30	1.025	10.4% 4.0%	1.062	4.7% 0.0%	1.076	3.2% 0.0%	1.028 1.074	6.3% 0.0%				vith 0	5% S398 and 5% SB041.	
_	2023-12-29	1.071 0.979	6.0%	1.054 0.987	1.3%	1.142 1.067	0.0%	0.983	1.7%			V	vitii 9	3% 3396 and 3% 3D041.	
_	2024-01-31	1.009	5.2%	1.061	0.0%	1.445	0.0%	1.029	0.0%				من منما	way battarthan COOO itaalf	
_	2024-02-29	1.003	3.2%	1.001	0.0%	1.124	0.0%	1.025	0.0%			• T	nis is	way better than S398 itself.	
_	2024-04-30	1.030	0.3%	0.947	5.3%	0.888	11.2%	1.023	0.0%					in a second seco	
	2024-05-31	1.016	0.0%	1.059	0.0%	1.312	0.0%	1.030	0.0%			• E	sut, tr	imming off the last bit of	
-	2024-06-28	0.999	0.1%	1.017	0.0%	1.165	0.0%	1.006	0.0%						_
-	2024-07-31	1.054	0.0%	1.006	0.0%	0.908	9.2%	1.047	0.0%			С	Irawd	lown costs too much in terms o	•
23	2024-08-30	1.021	0.0%	1.024	0.0%	0.928	15.8%	1.017	0.0%						
24	2024-09-30	1.051	0.0%	1.017	0.0%	1.102	7.2%	1.053	0.0%			r	eturn		
25	2024-10-31	1.043	0.0%	1.006	0.0%	0.907	15.8%	1.037	0.0%			•			
26	2024-11-29	0.969	3.1%	1.097	0.0%	1.039	12.5%	0.972	2.8%						
27	2024-12-31	0.986	4.5%	0.948	5.2%	1.146	0.0%	0.993	3.5%						
28															
29	CAGR	9.8%		18.4%		150.1%		14.6%							
30	Mean	0.83%		1.51%		8.79%		1.19%							
31	MAX DD		12.6%		10.3%		17.5%		8.8%						
32	MAR	0.78		1.79		8.57		1.65							
33															