

January 14, 2009

Research
India

India Strategy

How Cheap are Equity Valuations?

MORGAN STANLEY RESEARCH

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How Cheap are Equity Valuations?

Several investors are now arguing that valuations of Indian equities are getting compelling. Let's examine the facts:

- India's absolute valuations are getting to historical low points, especially when one uses earnings and cash flow based metrics. However, P/B and dividend yield are still shy of the lows. Although the MSCI India P/B is 27% above its Sep-01 low, the index dividend yield is still 32% below its high.
- The equity risk premium implied by our residual income model for the BSE Sensex is 5.8%, well above the 4% level in December 2007.
- Our composite valuation index is at its third lowest level ever with Sep-01 and Nov-98 being the two months when it went lower.
- Broad market valuation measured using market cap to GDP is also normalizing. After touching 160% at the peak of the bull market in late 2007 and early 2008, the ratio is now close to the global average of around 60%. However, the ratio is still the best in the BRICs context.
- Relative to bonds, equities are about the least expensive they have ever been. Just 7% of MSCI Index value is being assigned to future growth, the rest of the index value is explained by trailing earnings. This is the least valued assigned to the future growth by the MSCI Index since 1994 (when our data series starts). The earnings bond yield gap is also close to a high point.
- Relative to emerging markets, India is now significantly better off. After being the most expensive emerging market for most of 2006 and 2007, India is now in the top third of the emerging market universe with both relative P/E and P/B approaching historical averages.

However, we think there are several issues with valuations before they can be declared as compelling:

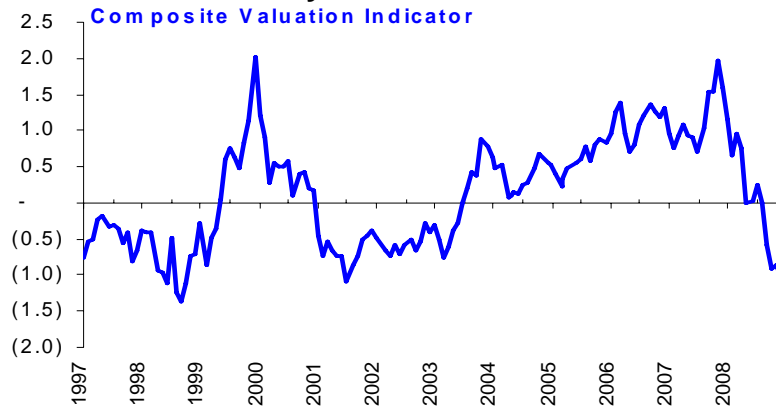
- Trailing earnings are inflated. The fact is that the BSE Sensex constituents on aggregate, have grown earnings fivefold in five years from Rs247 billion to Rs1,215 billion – it would not be incorrect to call this an earnings bubble. Corporate India is sitting on record margins, record financial income, and a high base of earnings. We also observe that earnings quality has been deteriorating. The rising share of non-cash earnings in reported earnings and the high share of financial earnings in pretax earnings both underpin the earnings-quality issue. Operating cash flow to net profit is at multi-year lows. The “Satyam episode” does not increase confidence in the trailing earnings number.
- The deteriorating outlook for forward earnings is a matter of concern for valuations. We continue to contest the view that the consensus has for market earnings. Our view is that earnings will likely fall over the next 18 months whereas the consensus is arguing for high single digit growth.
- Due to the uncertainty in future earnings, we believe P/B and dividend yield are probably better measures of valuations in the short run. Both these metrics are around 30% above lows and hence not compelling enough.
- Relative valuations are still not convincing enough. In 2003, India traded at a discount to emerging markets. It is still trading at a premium of 20% and 51% on earnings and book, respectively.
- Risk free bonds may be in a bubble situation, making equities look cheaper than they may actually be. Government bond yields will likely remain depressed due to the negative growth outlook but that is what precisely is a worry for equities.
- Where exactly is India's medium or long term growth – Are the trailing five years any indication of medium term growth? As the next five years' growth story unfolds, equity valuations are likely to be lower than where they were in 2006 and 2007, in our view.
- Ultimately, valuations are all about the returns that investors expect from stocks and what is embedded in share prices. The related question is whether the long-term expected return is now higher than before (i.e. is equity risk premium higher?). If yes, then equities may not yet be cheap enough. If expected ERP is unchanged from say its 2005 level, then the long-term returns embedded in share prices are reasonable now, in our view.

Our view is that valuations could turn cheaper before they attract investors into the market. At the margin, most investors look for earnings momentum to buy equities rather than just value. Positive earnings momentum may not return before 2010. The market is already presenting long-term investors with some interesting opportunities. In our view, consumer staples, healthcare and technology still offer the most compelling valuation case from a sectoral perspective. More recently, materials has joined this list though the earnings outlook for materials is less convincing, in our view.

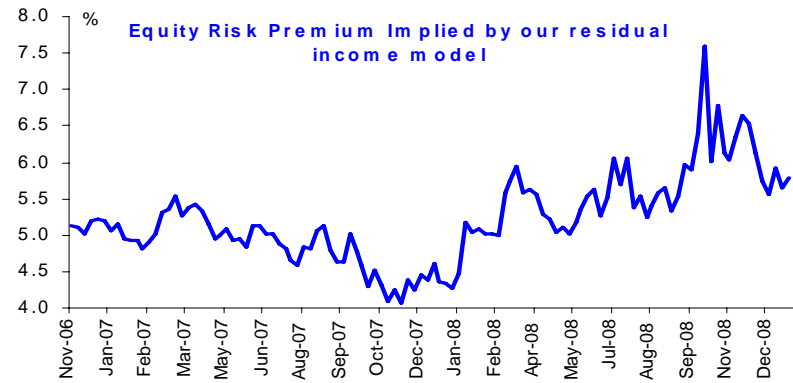
Long-term returns could revert to average levels

Due to a combination of elevated base earnings, low bond yields and depressed share prices, the long-term return that is being implied by equity shares is now looking more reasonable but not necessarily irresistible.

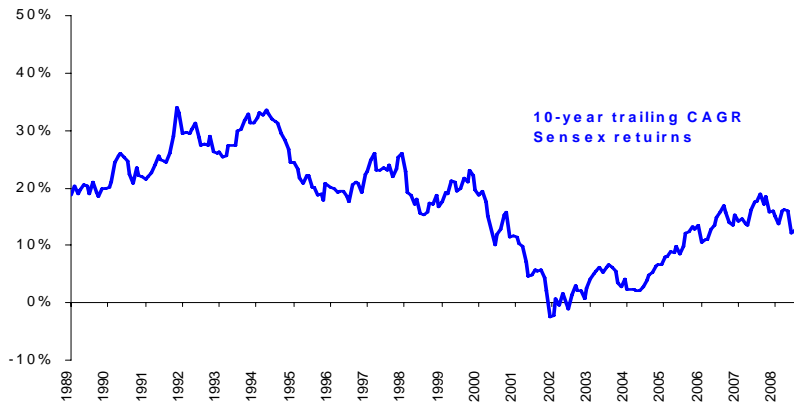
CVI: Just Shy of Lowest Level Ever



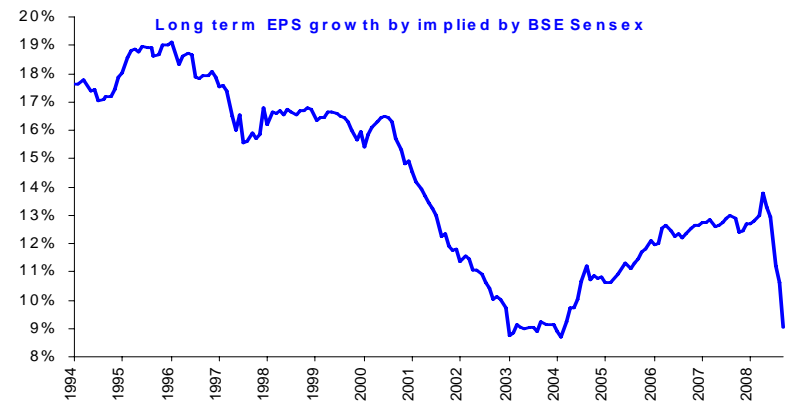
Equity Risk Premium Seems Normalized



BSE Sensex: Long-Term Returns



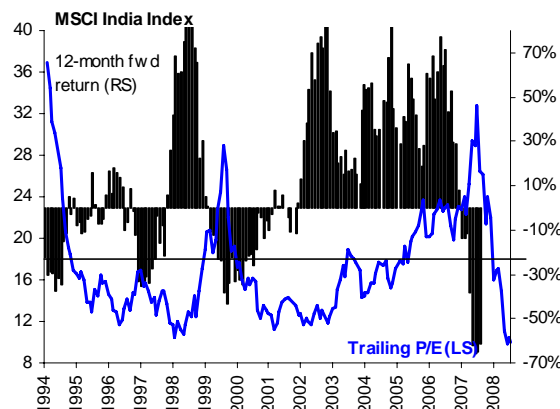
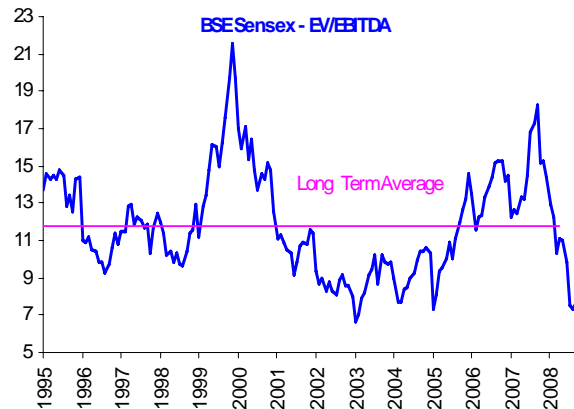
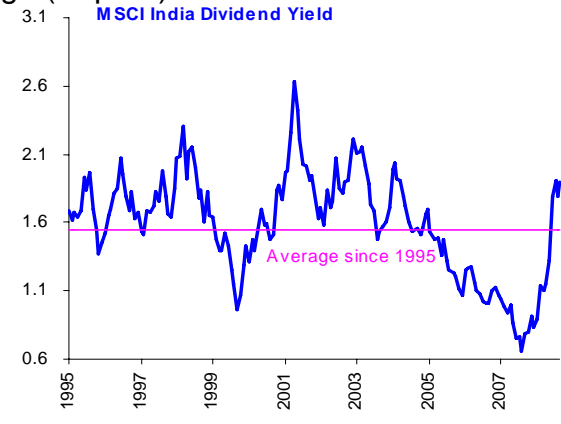
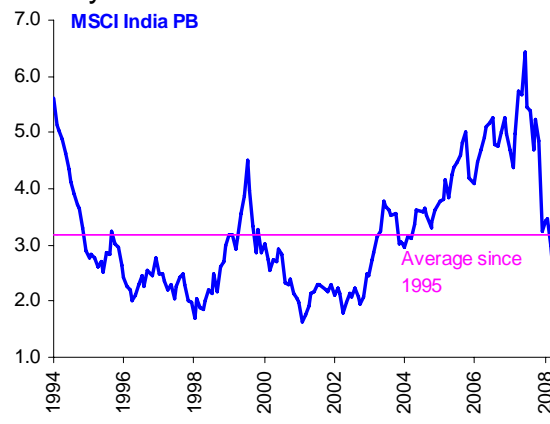
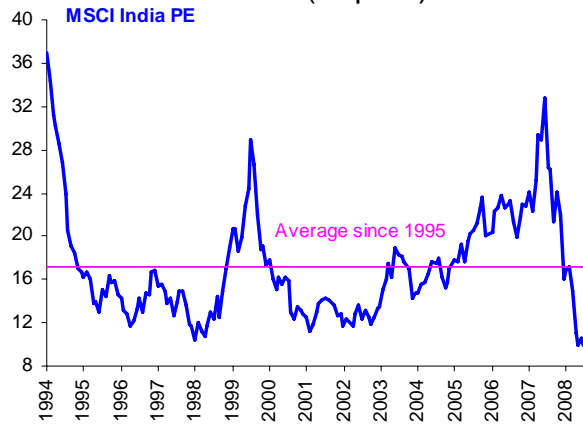
Not much growth implied by the Sensex



Sources: IBES estimates, Worldscope, FactSet, Company data, Morgan Stanley Research

Absolute valuations getting there

Absolute valuations are as cheap as they have been, especially on earnings and cash flow metrics. Notably, P/B is still 27% above its all-time low (Sep-01) whereas dividend yield is still 32% below its all-time high (Sep-01).



BSE Sensex	Current	Median	Current / Median	as SD from Avg
P/E (trailing)	11.4	17.8	0.6	(1.3)
12m Fw d PE	9.1	13.3	0.7	(1.4)
P/B	1.7	2.5	0.7	(1.5)
Div yield	3.1%	2.0%	1.6	1.3
P/Cash	7.8	10.5	0.7	(0.9)
P/Sales	1.1	1.4	0.8	(0.9)
EV/EBITDA	7.5	11.3	0.7	(1.5)
Earnings yield-Bond yield	2.6%	-3.7%	(0.7)	1.8
Bond yield - Div yield	1.1%	5.7%	0.2	(1.7)
Implied EPS growth	10%	14%	0.7	(1.3)

Sources: Bloomberg, FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

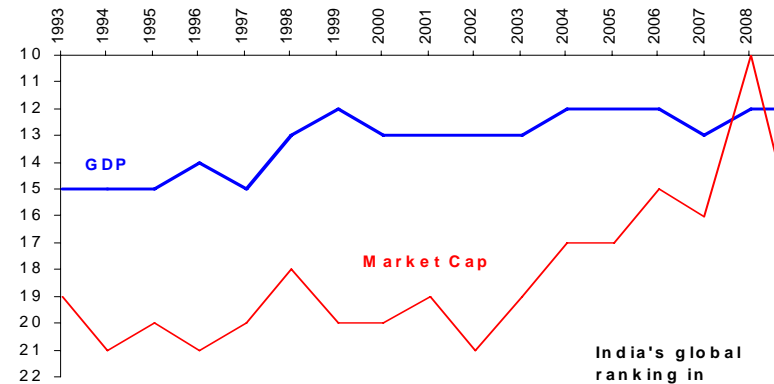
Broad market valuations: Again just about returning to normality

India is now trading at par with the world on market cap to GDP but still ahead of BRICs.

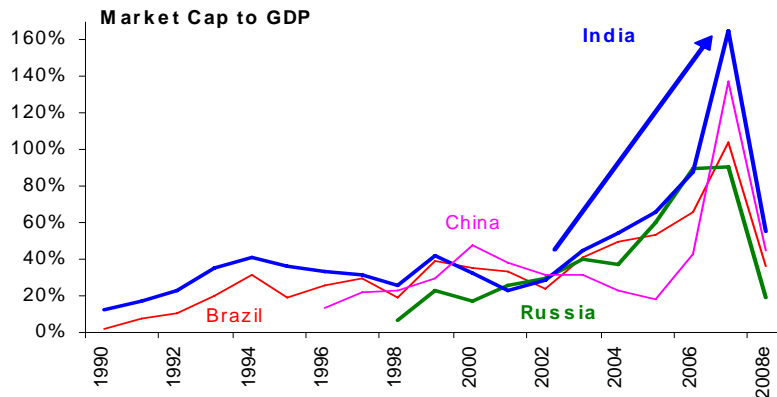
India's Mk Cap/GDP – At Top End of Historical Range



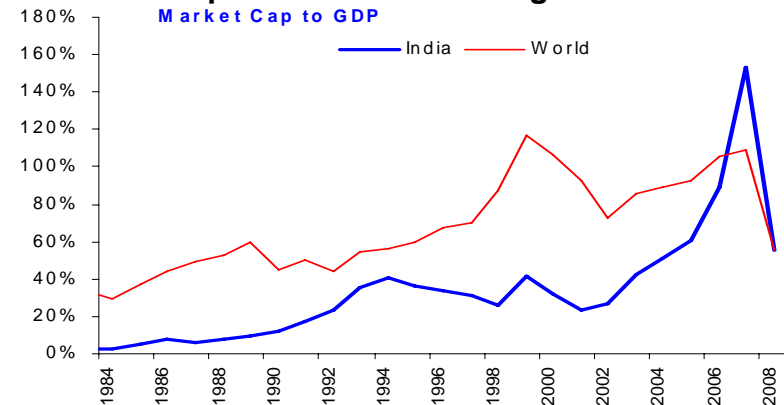
India's Market Cap and GDP Ranking In Sync



India: Mkt Cap/GDP Still Higher than BRIC



India Mkt Cap/GDP: Now Reverting to Global Average

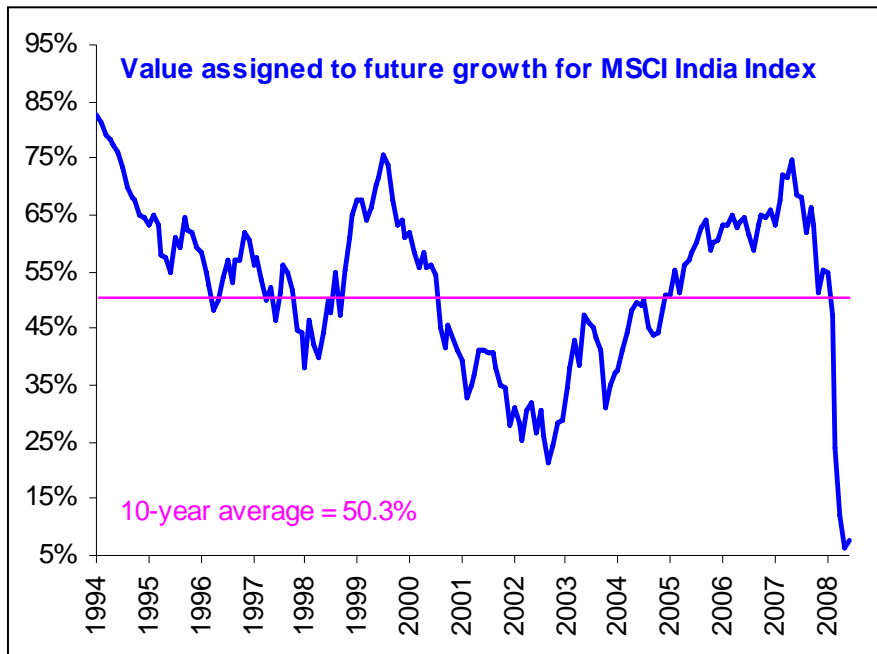


Sources: World federation of Exchanges, Worldscoop, FactSet, Morgan Stanley Research

Equity valuations relative to bonds: Are bonds overvalued or equities inexpensive?

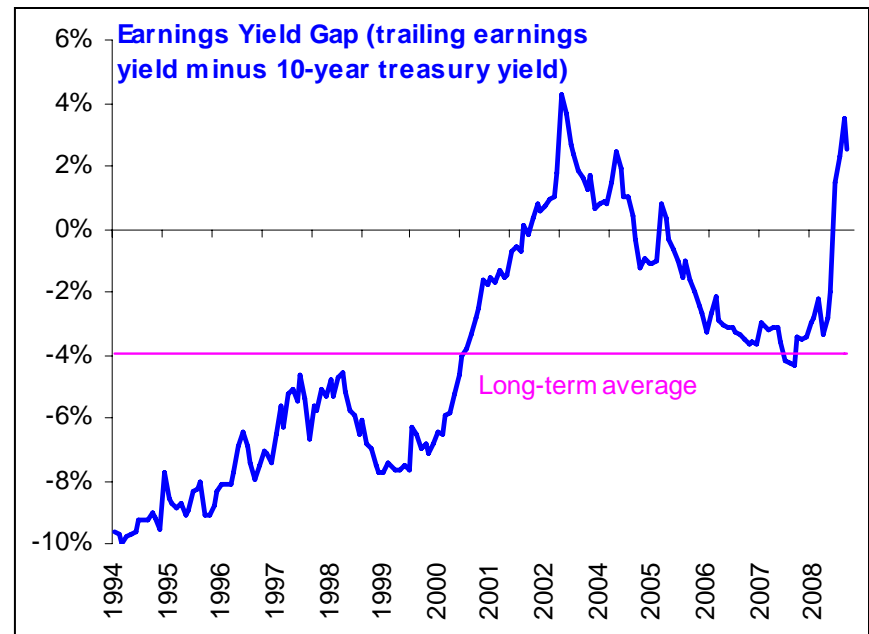
Versus bonds, this is the cheapest valuation that equities have traded at. Just 7% of the index value is assigned to future growth. However, the concern here is that trailing earnings were a bubble and that bonds may be overvalued.

Optimism turning to Pessimism on Future Growth



Sources: FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

Equity Valuations Getting Better Versus Bonds

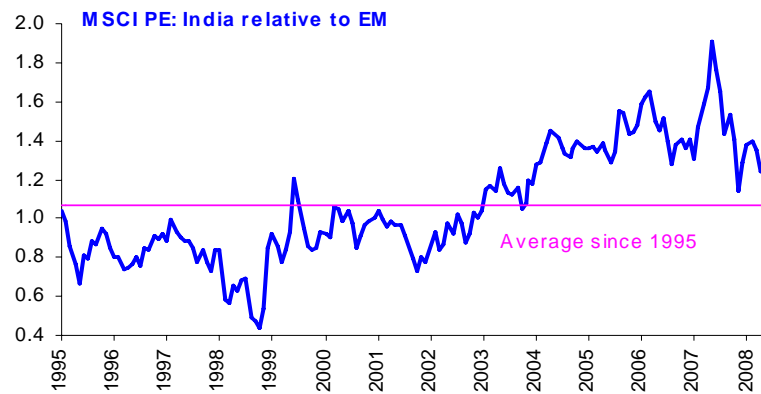


Source: Bloomberg, Morgan Stanley Research

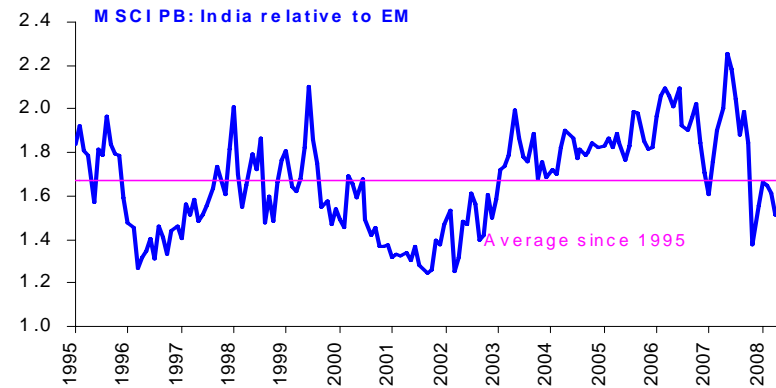
Relative valuations still not compelling

At best, relative valuations to emerging markets are at average levels.

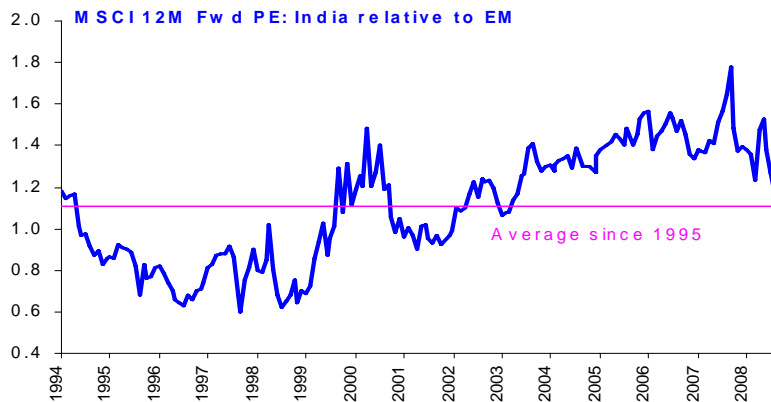
Relative PE Still Above Average



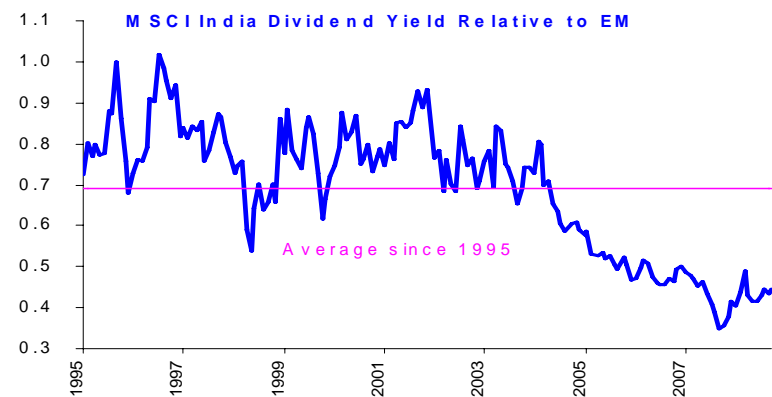
Relative PB At Long term Average



12M Fwd PE Approaching Long-Term Average



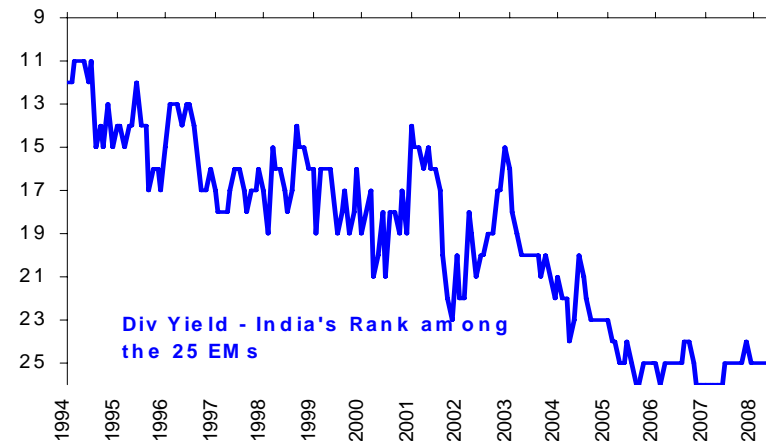
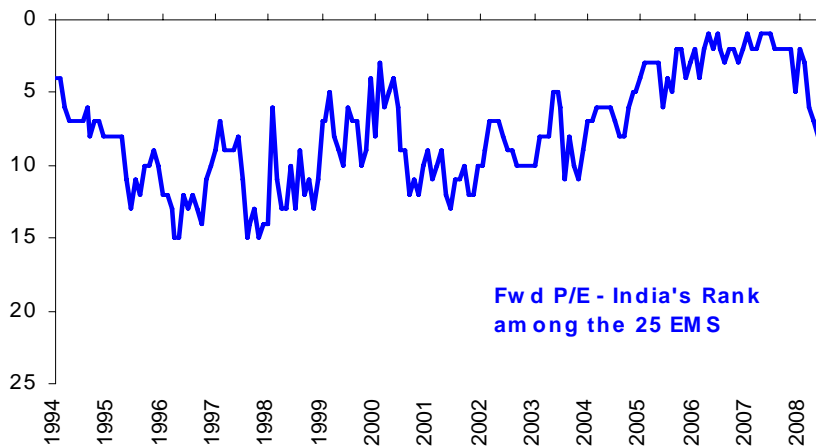
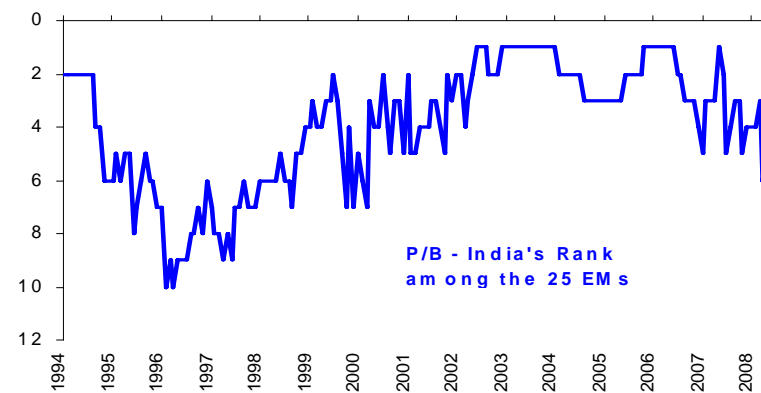
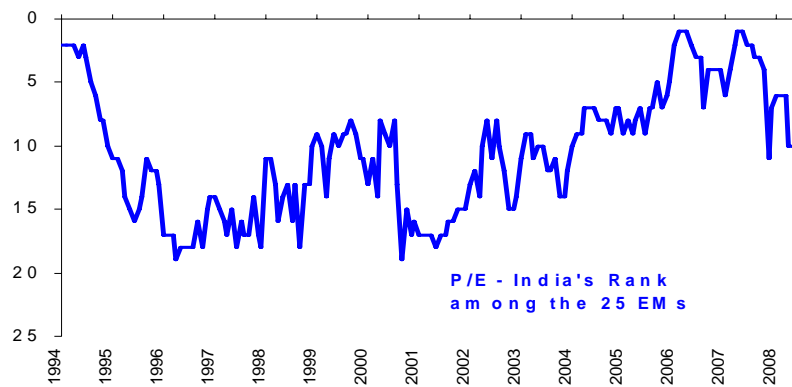
India is Expensive Relative to EM on Dividends



Sources: Worldscope, FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

India's ranking among emerging markets – middling but not persuasive

India used to be the most expensive emerging market for most of 2006 and 2007, as well as the start of 2008. At the beginning of 2009, it is still in the top third but no longer at the top on any metric.



Sources: FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

Sector valuations

Discretionary, staples, healthcare, technology, telecoms and materials are now reasonable or attractive versus EM.

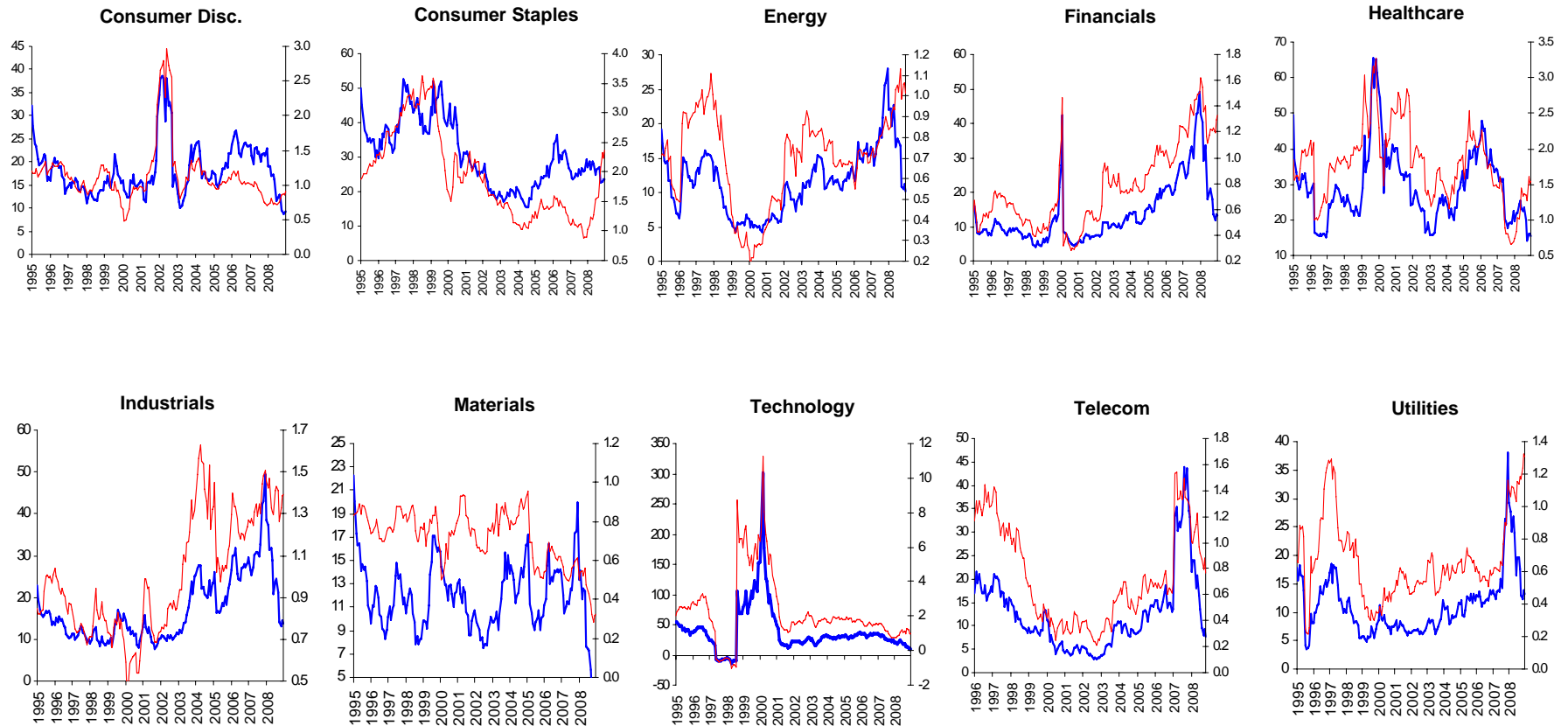
12-Jan-09	Relative to EM			P-B ROE Model	12-Jan-09	MSCI India		Asia Pac		Emerging Markets	
	PE	PB	ROE	Deviation From Fair Value		PE	Curr / SD from Avg	Rel PE	Curr / SD from Avg	Rel PE	Curr / SD from Avg
Consumer Discretionary	1.0	1.6	9%	-10%	Consumer Discretionary	9.1	-159%	1.0	37%	1.0	-38%
Consumer Staples	1.4	3.3	23%	-24%	Consumer Staples	23.5	-78%	1.6	34%	1.4	-41%
Energy	1.8	1.6	-2%	27%	Energy	10.1	-31%	1.1	33%	1.8	162%
Financials	1.5	1.4	0%	14%	Financials	13.3	-5%	1.4	55%	1.5	105%
Health Care	0.9	1.3	8%	-23%	Health Care	15.5	-135%	0.8	33%	0.9	-43%
Industrials	1.7	2.2	5%	50%	Industrials	13.9	-41%	1.8	56%	1.7	120%
Technology	1.2	2.3	15%	-45%	Technology	9.6	-88%	1.2	103%	1.2	-75%
Materials	0.5	0.8	13%	-40%	Materials	3.2	-284%	0.5	26%	0.5	-156%
Telecom	0.7	0.8	2%	-8%	Telecoms	7.6	-61%	0.7	45%	0.7	-6%
Utilities	1.0	1.8	6%	1%	Utilities	13.0	36%	0.8	33%	1.0	69%
Implied Dividend growth	Current	Median	Current to Median	Current as SD from Avg	Value Assigned to Future Growth	Current	Median	Current to Median	Current as SD from Avg		
Consumer Discretionary	6%	13%	48%	-169%	Consumer Discretionary	-15%	59%	-25%	-409%		
Consumer Staples	6%	12%	51%	-112%	Consumer Staples	55%	75%	74%	-92%		
Energy	7%	7%	110%	-29%	Energy	16%	31%	53%	-13%		
Financials	11%	12%	99%	-15%	Financials	21%	40%	53%	-20%		
Healthcare	11%	19%	57%	-161%	Healthcare	36%	66%	54%	-189%		
Industrials	12%	15%	80%	-42%	Industrials	34%	53%	64%	-69%		
Technology	6%	20%	31%	-133%	Technology	-15%	73%	-21%	-466%		
Materials	6%	10%	58%	-104%	Materials	-50%	15%	-325%	-115%		
Telecom	34%	22%	153%	115%	Telecom	36%	56%	65%	8%		
Utilities	12%	12%	99%	-22%	Utilities	56%	47%	119%	77%		

Sources: FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

PE valuations for MSCI India Sectors

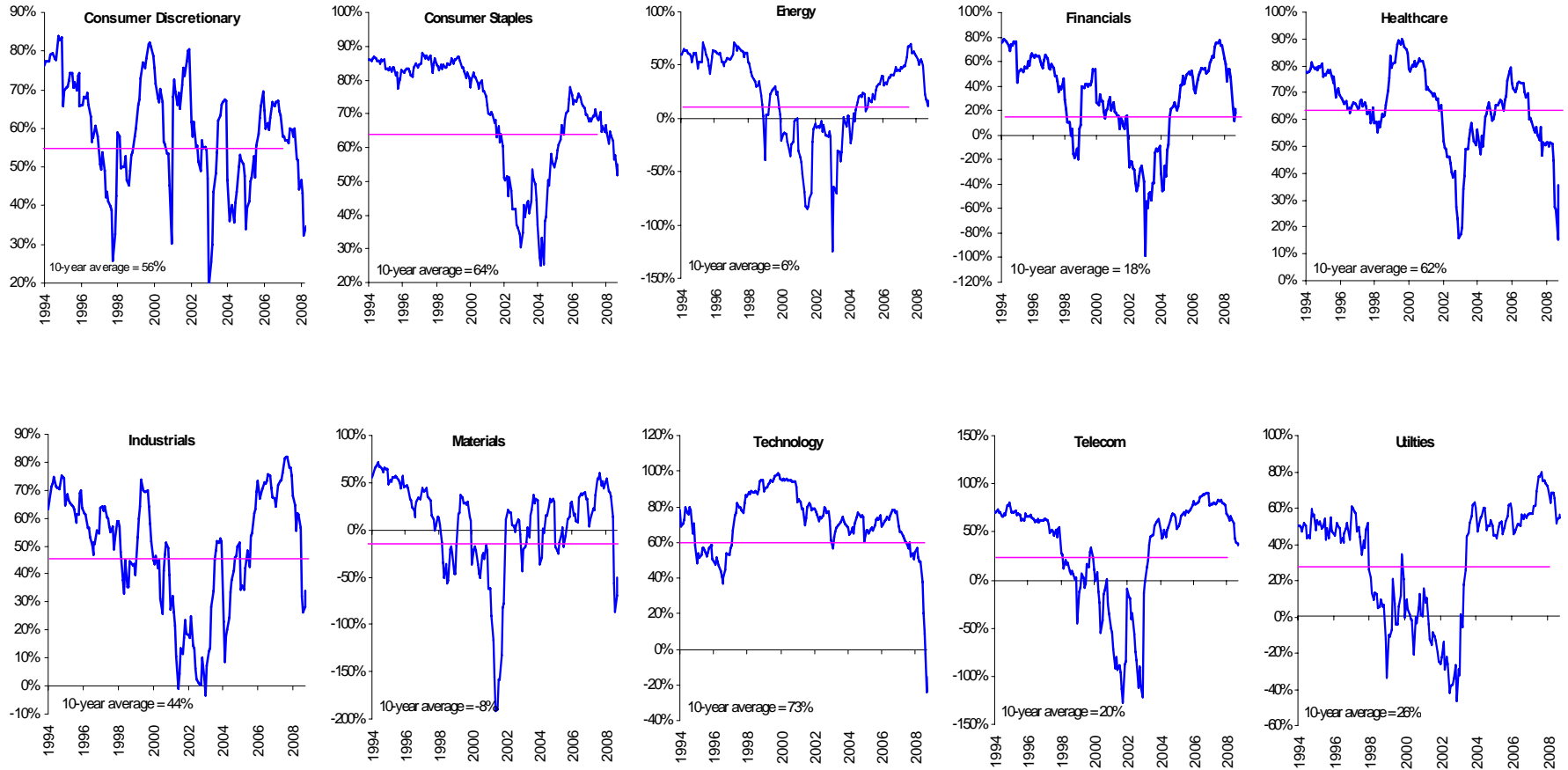
Blue Line – Price to Earnings – LS

Red line – Sector P/E Relative to MSCI India - RS



Source: FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

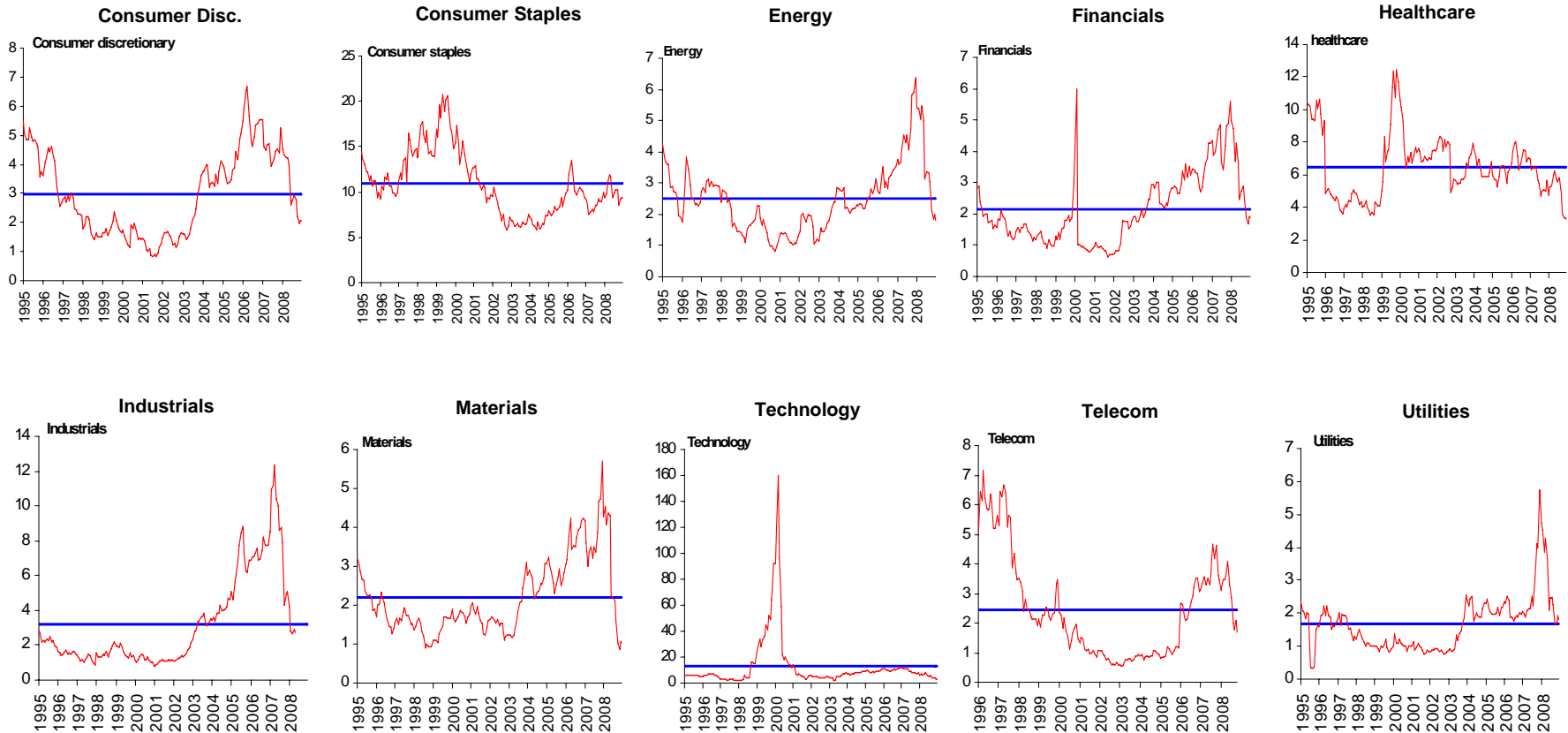
Value Assigned to Future Growth at Sector Level



Source: Morgan Stanley Research

PB valuations for MSCI India Sectors

Red Line – Price to Book
Blue line – Long-term average

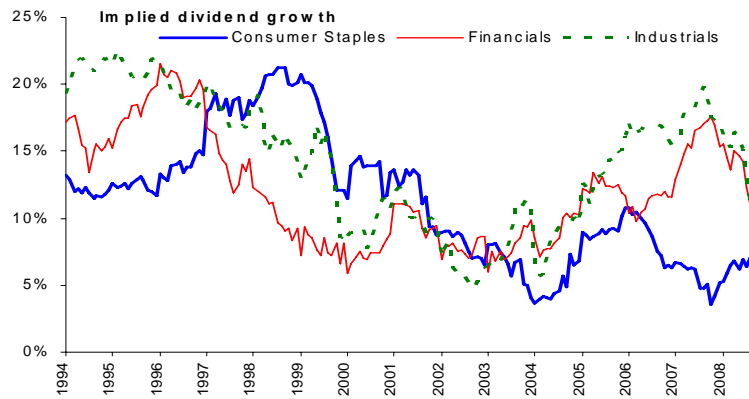


Source: FactSet, MSCI, Morgan Stanley Research

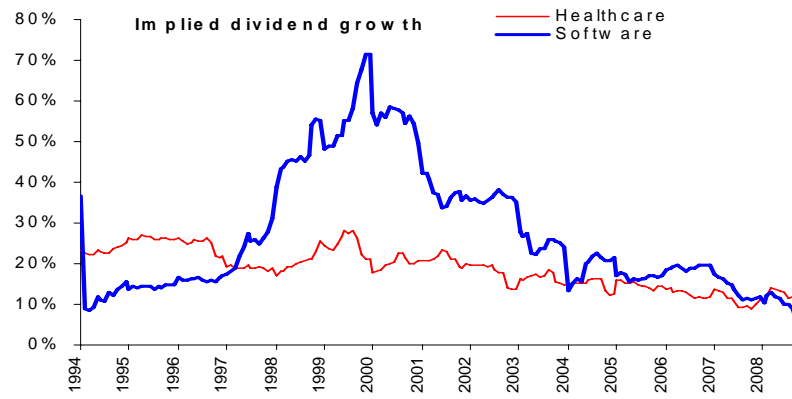
Implied dividend growth for sectors

Consumer staples, technology and healthcare still offering value

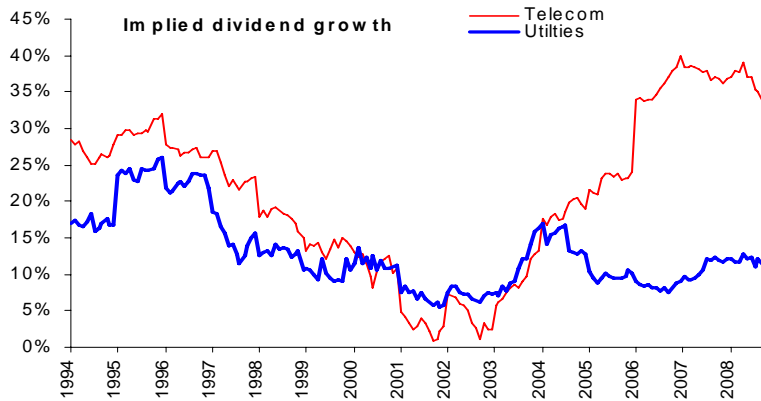
Staples vs. Financials and Industrials



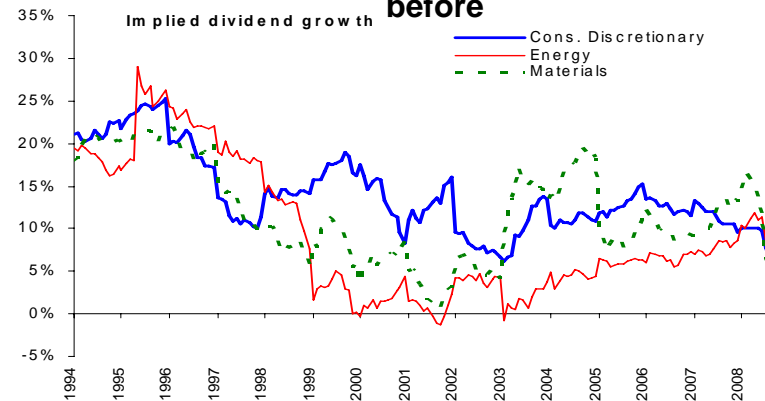
Healthcare vs. Software



Telecoms vs. Utilities



Energy, Materials & Discretionary – Cheaper than before



Sources: Company data, Morgan Stanley Research



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	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total IBC	% of Rating Category
Overweight/Buy	811	34%	240	40%	30%
Equal-weight/Hold	1060	45%	271	45%	26%
Not-Rated/Hold	33	1.4%	8	1.3%	24.2%
Underweight/Sell	463	20%	87	14%	19%
Total	2,367		606		

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Underweight (U or Under) - The stock's total return is expected to be below the total return of the relevant country MSCI Index, on a risk-adjusted basis, over the next 12-18 months.

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