

# Picker of America's best crop

A German manager tells Angus Foote how his portfolio became a top performer for the US

The latest fund manager rankings for the North America Equity sector demonstrate that providers don't need to outsource their US equity funds to American based managers to achieve outperformance.

Fund managers based in Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the UK appear among the top 15 managers in the sector, ranked by their individual average monthly performance over three years.

Among the German contingent is Wolfgang Mayr, ranked fifth for his management of the WM Helios Amerika UI fund.

Mr Mayr caught the attention of fund investors in 2003 when a period of spectacular outperformance by his WM Aktien Global funds won him acclaim as Germany's most successful fund manager for that year.

Assets under management swelled rapidly but in 2004 his global equity funds hit a sticky patch, although the longer term performance remains impressive.

Now Mr Mayr is rising back up the rankings and he says his funds have passed that difficult period, which was caused by the "unstable" behaviour of investors as they looked for direction in a period of uncertainty.

In selecting stocks Mr Mayr and his team use their

own quantitative screening system, which involves weekly analysis of all the companies in their universe.

Every stock is given a score based on its share price history and this process reduces the universe to a manageable number of stocks. Detailed analysis of the companies on the short-list begins with each stock being given a rating according to whether it shows positive earnings characteristics.

For the Helios Amerika fund the universe is all US large and mid-cap stocks, which means those with a market value of more than €1bn - some 1,250 companies in all. The fund is long only, is always fully invested and does not hedge the dollar.

The quantitative selection process results in a list of 250 potential investments but the actual portfolio consists of just 26 stocks. The figure is always 26 because Mr Mayr's analysis has told him that above that number the positive effects of diversification are negligible.

Mr Mayr entered the investment world in 1991 when he joined a German family office based in Munich. He rose to become managing director, before leaving in 1997 to start his own investment firm.

Although he makes all the investment decisions, the

fund's structure and German regulations mean Mr Mayr is technically the adviser rather than the manager and several of his funds are marketed under Universal Investment in Frankfurt.

Universal was set up in the 1960s by four private banks, which considered themselves too small to justify creating a stand-alone asset management business.

The group now provides the legal structure to allow small, specialist asset managers to reach a wider audience without having to create an expensive company infrastructure of their own.

Angus Foote is the editor of *Citywire's Fund Manager International* magazine. E-mail [fmi@citywire-fmi.com](mailto:fmi@citywire-fmi.com) for a free copy

## The Citywire league table: Bond Global

Manager name	3-year average monthly performance (%)	Funds managed
George Davis	2.02	Hotchkis & Wiley US-Value Universal-Fonds
Nicholas Evans	1.90	Framlington IP Nasdaq, Framlington Nasdaq
Marvin Schwartz	1.87	UBAM Neuberger Berman US Equity Value
Johann Weisenhorn	1.85	Weisenhorn Amerika
Wolfgang Mayr	1.67	WM Helios Amerika UI-Fonds
Alzin Mroziewicz	1.55	Liberte Amerique
Giordano Martinelli	1.55	Anima American Equity
Luigi Ripamonti	1.55	Anima American Equity
Olgerd Eichler	1.55	UniNordamerika
Bob Doll	1.55	Merrill Lynch American Inc, MLIIF US Flexible Equity Fund
Gerrit Ooms	1.54	ING (I) Invest Nasdaq
Komal Sri-Kumar	1.52	SG American Growth Retail Acc, SGAM Fund Equities US Multi Strategies A, Sogeacons Opportunités Amerique
Ivan de la Fressange	1.50	Gutzwiller One
Thomas Schussler	1.50	DWS (CH) - US Equities
Brian Beitner	1.49	SGAM Fund Equities US Concentrated, SGAM US Concentrated
<b>Average Manager</b>	<b>1.05</b>	

Source: Citywire