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Vantage Point 8.0

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Rating: 4 of 4

Product:

Trend forecasting software for futures, forex, ETFs and equities markets using intermarket analysis and neural network technology to develop forecasts.

Recommended System:

Windows XP or Windows Vista, 1G+ RAM, 20G+ hard-drive disk space, internet access (end-of-day data downloads), subscription to data provider (Commodity Research Bureau)

Price:

\$3,900 for foundation program (additional categories extra).

Trading is hard work and having a tool that makes that work both easier and worthwhile is the desire of every trader. Market Technologies has been delivering that tool since 1991, when Louis Mendelsohn introduced the first edition of VantagePoint Intermarket Analysis Software, the software that produces leading indicators derived from intermarket analysis and neural networks to forecast market trends.

Since 1991, Market Technologies has upgraded each new edition of that software by adding more leading indicators, more markets, and new features that have improved both its functionality and aesthetic appeal. Version 8.0 is no exception.

This latest version is more robust, less cluttered, tightly integrated, faster, and has some new features that are well worth some elaboration. The new features include: easier to read charts with integrated color-coded information (replacing the legend at the bottom of charts), charts that now display all of the predictive technical indicators simultaneously; auto-hide features for various sections; a new technical indicator, Predicted TSI (PTSI), which predicts the True Strength Index (TSI) one day ahead, customizable trend lines, an Opportunity Calculator to test trading strategies, and more customizable history reports.

The most helpful enhancement in Version 8.0, however, is a scanning plug-in that instantly finds the market you defined from more than 70 search criteria.

If there is a downside to VantagePoint version 8.0, it is this new edition does require a minimum of 1 gigabyte of memory. This is understandable when you consider that Market Technologies added powerful new features without sacrificing the smooth functionality and beneficial features found in the previous version.

Product Overview

VantagePoint 8.0 provides leading indicators for about 600 markets across 22 categories divided neatly into three categories – commodities, financials, and stocks. The commodities markets covered include energies, grains, meats, metals and softs. The financials include currency futures, ETFs, forex pairs, stock indices and interest rates. The stocks span 12 sectors: basic materials, capital goods, conglomerates, consumer/cyclical, consumer/non-cyclical, energy, financial, health care, services, technology, transportation and utilities.

VantagePoint 8.0 has retained all of the leading indicators from the previous version. These include:

- Predicted short-term, medium-term, and long-term differences
- Predicted high/low difference

- Predicted strength difference

Predicted short-term, medium-term, and long-term moving average crossovers. (Computers have determined the best combinations, but users can choose their own combinations from among six exponential moving averages of typical prices and three actual simple moving averages of the close)

- Predicted next day high and low
- Predicted Technical Indicators, which include MACD, Stochastics, RSI, and the much-touted Predicted Neural Index (PNI).

VantagePoint's 80% accuracy rate across a broad range of markets and time frames is based on the Predicted Neural Index. This claim has been challenged since the first edition of VantagePoint. My review of the studies found that this claim has been substantiated, so I felt no need to test it in depth again; however, as a small test, I did track 20 trades over two highly volatile months (April and May 2008). All of the trades were long, placed with a PNI of 1.00. The results were 15 wins and 5 losses, a 75% success rate.

I am satisfied that the VantagePoint PNI produces results at or near the 80% claim.

New Features

Version 8.0 still sports the “easy on the eyes” look of the previous version with its well-designed graphic layout, but it has added one new feature that now allows for easily removing what you see on the screen at any one time — auto-hide for three sections. Two of these three sections are new additions which take the functionality of the software to a new level (I'll get to those in a moment), however, the third, the Portfolio and Market section, can now be easily hidden in the “Navigation Pane” with a simple icon click.

VantagePoint 8.0 retains the valuable Daily and History Reports, and data can still be easily exported from the History Report into Excel worksheets for further analysis. A small tweak in the History Report, however, makes this feature just a tad more valuable. You can now save your customized reports in a default setting.

VantagePoint 8.0 eliminated the legend at the bottom of the chart, which streamlines the look and feel of the charts. The actual data represented in the charts is now color-coded and built into the chart itself at the top of each section within the chart. The end result is a chart that is both easier to read and defines the data more clearly.

For those users who utilize technical analysis in their search for potential trades, this new version is offers several new technical tools. Not only can you now draw trend lines, but you can easily customize the span of the trend by setting the “to” and “from” dates, set color and width, and utilize the Opportunity Calculator, which determines the dollar value associated with a particular price move. The calculation is based on the difference between the starting price and ending price, and the full point and full tick values of a market.

For the real technical enthusiast, however, the best has been saved for last. The one improvement in VantagePoint 8.0 that really ups the ante in functionality is the “Scan for Opportunities” plug-in and its corresponding “Field Chooser,” which allows the user to select from more than 70 technical operators to find potential trades. Once the search criteria are set, all of the potential trades based on your selected criteria are there for your review in just a fraction more time than it takes to open the Scan for Opportunities tab.

More exciting yet, you can tweak the results by right clicking a single field and customizing it according to the choices given or according to a set of your own customized operators. For the technical analyst, you can choose from an abundance of technical criteria to define and sort your potential trades.

Market Technologies also added to this feature the ability to configure and save “pre-set scans” that can be imported at will to any portfolio. You can also customize and save the search fields in any order you wish, so that each time you click on the Scan for Opportunities tab, the default scan not only appears as you left it but the potential trades also appear instantly.

Conclusion

VantagePoint 8.0 still relies on its time-tested neural networks and intermarket analysis to arrive at its predicted forecasts. That is a definite plus because they have proven to give the user an accurate “heads up” on market direction. This is the heart that drives the software, and Market Technologies could have built simple functionality around this core and left it at that. But the company has added many additional functions that are beneficial to users.

These enhanced capabilities speak to the adage that “you get what you pay for.” If you are a happy VantagePoint user or a serious trader looking for an edge that spots potentially profitable trading opportunities, VantagePoint 8.0 is the ticket.

Brandon Jones is an entrepreneur, a writer, and an educator. He trades on a regular basis to maintain and improve his portfolio return.