

Press Review: Stocks & Commodities Magazine

(September 2000)

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ASCTrend/ eASCTrend

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software

Arrayed along the bottom of the screen are the workspace tabs, which let you shift quickly from one group of charts to another. You won't buy ASCTrend for its charting, but it does have the basics: indicators (averages, moving average convergence/divergence, relative strength index, %R, and stochastics but no on- balance volume); subgraphs; and expansion or contraction of the bars. Though the bar spacing submenu in our version didn't work, the on-screen button that accomplishes the same thing worked fine. eASCTrend uses Info Window to display details of data and indicator values. By clicking the last bar, the Info Window will update the data with every tick in real time. Most users we spoke to used another program for this sort of analysis.

SIGNALS

Trading signals can be taken directly from the bars, which are blue with a big blue dot if a perceived upward trend is in place, red (with a big magenta dot) if a downward trend is in place, or green if neither is seen. Though much other detailed instruction is available in the Help section and the manual and four versions of the signals, no more refinement than this is necessary. As Figure 1 demonstrates, ASCTrend generally does fine with an established trend but most any retracement will trigger a green bar and occasionally a bar of another direction. In this respect, it behaves mostly like any short-period oscillator. Congestion zones often generate a series of green, red, and blue bars but usually no reversal-of-trend indicators.

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System requirements

by John Sweeney

ASCTrend is proprietary trading software designed to give trading signals on just about any series of prices you can feed it. The real value in ASCTrend is that it has gone through all the development headaches of the past five years and is now a stable trading guide you can use on intraday data or daily/weekly/monthly data.

DATA

I tested the newest version, eASCTrend, which has the capability of hooking onto eSignal's Internet datafeed. You can get all the historical data you want through the datafeed, allowing you to visually review ASCTrend's signals and indicators.

DISPLAY

ASCTrend is presented in simple charts (Figure 1). Indeed, the entire program has been designed to be as graphic as possible. The screen is uncluttered with icons, unless you're running on an Omega Research Platform like ProSuite.



FIGURE 1:APPLE COMPUTER. AAPL gets into a congestion zone in June 2000. ASCTrend indicates downtrends with red bars and uptrends with blue bars. Blue and magenta dots indicate trend changes.

I recommend making a quick move when this happens; otherwise, you're likely to give up

Most everyone I talked to mentioned the

It's worth noting that I've been a consistent annual Reader's Choice award winner for trading balloting for tr

good gains when a breakout and subsequent trend change is signaled. On the flip side, ASCtrend is relatively immune to whipsaws in congestion

straightforwardness of the display and the signals as a strong benefit.

SUPPORT

Tech support is by phone or E-mail, and they are responsive both ways. The only occasions I had to call tech support were for my own mistakes or not understanding how to operate the program. In this regard, the online help and Website are also helpful but occasionally out of date.

The manual's chief virtue is that it offers some practical directions for implementation of the trading signals. Screen displays and trading procedures, plus rules for setup and execution, will help an inexperienced trader get started.

Of ASCtrend users I spoke to, those new to trading tended to be the most enthusiastic, but even seasoned users I spoke to with elaborate trading setups continued to use ASCtrend with other forms of analysis. Most everyone I talked to mentioned the straightforwardness of the display and the signals as a strong benefit.

SUMMARY

As a trading signal generator, ASCtrend is as serviceable as any oscillator, but it could use a more aggressive exit capability during congestion. It's reliable and completely satisfactory, but it's expensive. Although the calculations of the indicators are not disclosed, the trading rules are fully disclosed in the manual and through the Video on Demand part of AbleSys Website. Overall, you can count on ASCtrend to get you right with the market and do it with comparatively few whipsaws.

John Sweeney is Technical Editor for STOCKS & COMMODITIES.

zones, even though bars are flipping colors. The actual significant trend-change dots usually appear only upon breakout, though there are occasional miscues. Since you use the same program for intraday as for interday, I also set up a trading screen for real-time activity on Cisco [CSCO] (Figure 2). Personally, I thought it was clean and easy to work with in the helter-skelter of daytrading. By setting the charts to recalculate on every tick, you'll be on top of each break. Of course, watching the proper issue at the moment of breakout is a trick in itself, but ASCTrend has an assist of sorts: alert features. Just turn on the alert when you insert the ASCTrend indicator. Provided you have told it to monitor an issue, ASCTrend will let you know when it sees a change in trend. AbleSys has thoughtfully inserted an "Alert Once" option so an alert need not go off repeatedly unless you want it to do so. ASCTrend gives other signals: stops. Note the level series of dots on the figures. These are stop levels for the trading position that ASCTrend is currently calling. They draw in quite tightly when in a short-period mode, but you can adjust their sensitivity.

SCANNING

Naturally, once you have a set of trading rules in



Figure 2: CISCO. Thirty- and five-minute setups presage an intraday breakout in Cisco Systems. With eSignal's or Omega Research's datafeed, you can daytrade using (e)ASCTrend.

place, next you need to find where those rules might apply. ASCTrend, through eSignal or Omega Research's GlobalServer, can grind through the 10,000 or so issues available to find those which, in ASCTrend's terms, are moving significantly. To keep this process within reasonable bounds, you can create lists of the issues you want scanned and specify which of the four versions of trading signals you want to invoke. Once you save the list and click "Scan," don't expect to wait long. The scan pops up the first chart on your list and you may view scan results from the Tools menu and go to the charts by mouse-clicking.