

A Change in Leadership

- Robeco Global Consumer Trends returns -0.6% in EUR (-1.4% in USD) in February
- The gap between software and semiconductor stocks continues to widen
- Samsung Electronics shares rally 35% due to memory shortages

Track record of Robeco Global Consumer Trends (EUR)- 28 February 2026

	Fund	Index*	Rel. perf.
Last month	-0.6%	2.1%	-2.7%
Year to date	-1.9%	3.7%	-5.6%
1-year	-7.0%	9.4%	-16.4%
3-year (ann.)	11.4%	16.5%	-5.0%
10-year (ann.)	11.8%	12.0%	-0.2%

Track record of Robeco Global Consumer Trends (USD) – 28 February 2026

	Fund	Index*	Rel. perf.
Last month	-1.4%	1.3%	-2.7%
Year to date	-1.4%	4.3%	-5.6%
1-year	5.6%	24.2%	-18.6%
3-year (ann.)	15.5%	20.7%	-5.2%
10-year (ann.)	12.7%	13.0%	-0.2%

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The value of your investments may fluctuate.

Source: Robeco. Returns gross of fees, based on gross asset value. If the currency in which the past performance is displayed differs from the currency of the country in which you reside, then you should be aware that due to exchange rate fluctuations the performance shown may increase or decrease if converted into your local currency. Performance since inception is as of the first full month. Periods shorter than one year are not annualized. Values and returns indicated here are before cost; the performance data does not take account of the commissions and costs incurred on the issue and redemption of units. *MSCI All Country World index.

The Market

U.S. economic growth slowed sharply at the end of 2025, with output rising at a 1.4% annualized rate in the fourth quarter, down from 4.4% in the previous quarter. According to The Bureau of Economic Analysis the prolonged government shutdown cut roughly one percentage point from growth. For the year as a whole, the economy expanded by 2.2%, its weakest annual performance since the pandemic-hit year of 2020.

PORTFOLIO MANAGER'S UPDATE FEBRUARY 2026

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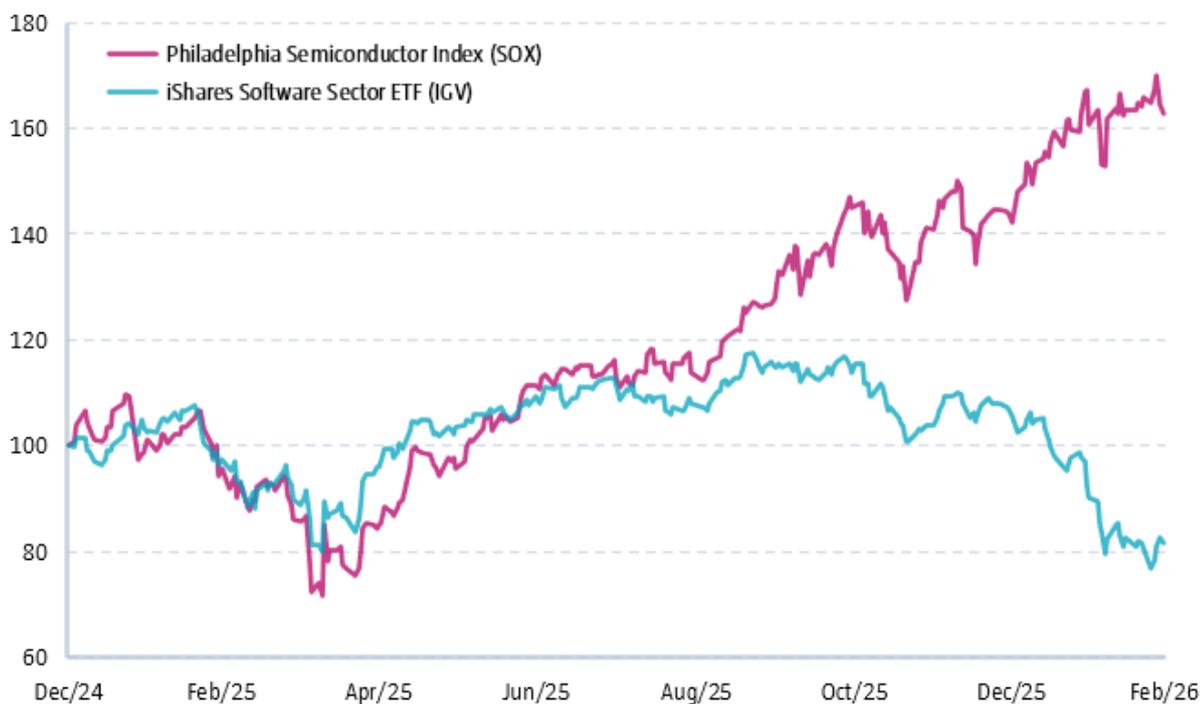
Jack Neele
Portfolio Manager



Richard Speetjens
Portfolio Manager

The biggest story in markets so far in 2026 has undoubtedly been about software. The debate over software companies' business models has intensified as artificial intelligence reshapes how digital work gets done. Investors and executives are increasingly questioning whether traditional Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) models, built on high-margin, seat-based, recurring subscriptions, are vulnerable to AI tools that can automate entire workflows. In short, the bear thesis argues that the release of more capable "agentic" AI systems could commoditize some applications, compressing pricing power and eroding long-standing competitive moats. This concern has contributed to sharp sell-offs in the software sector.

Figure 1 | The fortunes of the software and semiconductor sectors have diverged significantly since the summer of 2025



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

Software bulls argue the disruption narrative is overstated. While AI may challenge standalone or niche applications, established software firms still control valuable assets such as proprietary data, deep customer relationships, and mission-critical platforms that AI is more likely to augment than replace. The debate now hinges on which business models can adapt by pivoting to AI, and which may struggle as intelligence becomes cheaper. For markets, the question is no longer whether AI will affect software, but how uneven that impact will be across different segments of the industry.

The MSCI All Country World Index (in EUR) returned 2.1% (1.3% in USD) last month. Robeco Global Consumer Trends lagged the performance of the reference index and returned -0.6% (-1.4% in USD), as we lag exposure to some of the cyclical sectors. From a sector perspective, the rotation away from the Magnificent Seven into hard assets (industries like energy and materials) continued. The energy sector was bolstered by further geopolitical tensions, this time involving Iran, and rising concerns about energy security as European gas inventories have reached the lowest level since the pandemic. While the broader market remained positive, growth stocks underperformed their value brethren again and smaller capitalization stocks outperformed their larger peers.

In the United States, the S&P-500 Index dropped 0.9% while the Nasdaq fell 3.4%, as equal-weight indices start to outperform the cap-weighted gauges. European stocks did much better, with the FTSE Europ-100 Index gaining more than 3% for the second consecutive month. Japanese equities returned a stellar 10%, boosted by Prime Minister Takaichi's landslide election victory, which removed political uncertainty and strengthened expectations of a pro-growth policy. Finally, emerging markets continued their strong start to the year with the MSCI Emerging Markets Index gaining 5.4%, on top of January's 8.8% return.

Portfolio Changes

We reduced our exposure to Tencent Holdings, as the lacklustre consumer spending sentiment in China continued, indicated by a rising promotional intensity across Lunar New Year. On top of that, investors are concerned that increased spending may be required by the tech giants for China's 'AI Plus' initiative. We also further trimmed our Magnificent Seven exposure by further reducing positions in Microsoft and Amazon, as concerns about the massive capital expenditures have risen.

Finally, we increased our position in Danish freight forwarder DSV and Swedish streaming service Spotify. Both feel victim to an AI-based narrative that would disrupt their business. We fundamentally disagree here and have therefore used the sell-off in both shares to add to positions.

Performance Review

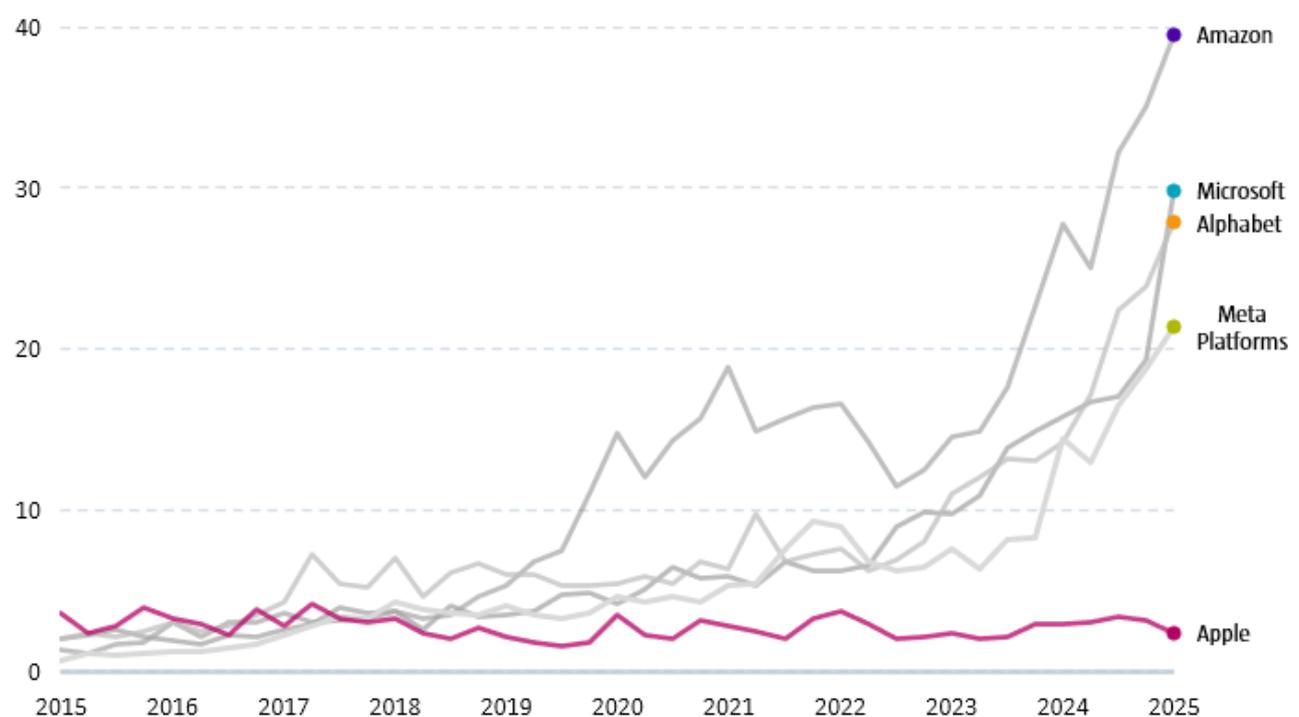
Our Next Generation Consumer theme was the biggest drag on the portfolio last month, while our AI Revolution outperformed nicely driven by our exposure to semiconductor companies in the memory segment.

Table 1 | The top and bottom contributors

Top contributors	Main detractors
Samsung Electronics	Tencent
Vertiv	Amazon
Comfort Systems	Alphabet

The **AI revolution** theme continues to be very strong, but the investment narrative has transitioned to one where investors are starting to get concerned about the hundreds of billions in capital expenditures and the required return on these investments. Quarterly capital expenditures for Microsoft (-9%) and Alphabet (-8%) have jumped to roughly \$30 billion. Only Apple has not participated in the surge of capex increases and seems to be well positioned to benefit in case of a fall-out among its peers.

Figure 2 | Quarterly capital expenditures (in USD billions). Spot the odd one out among the big spenders!



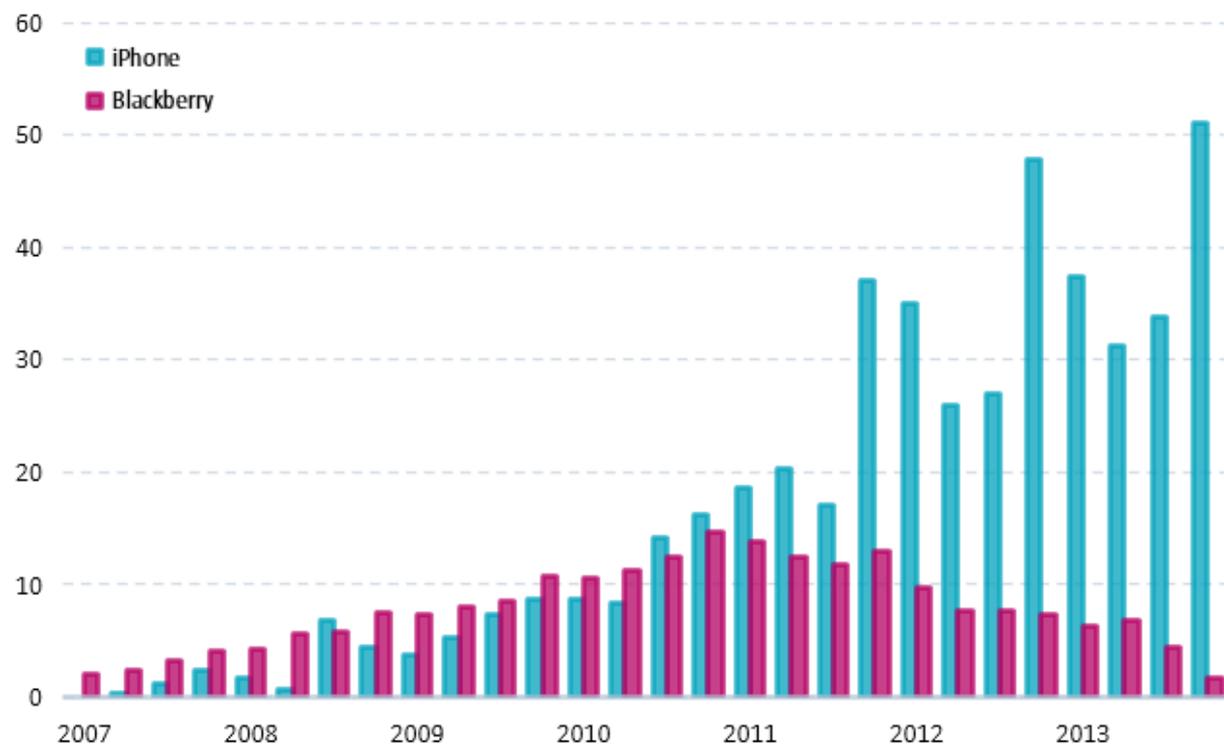
Source: Bloomberg

The size of investments into building new datacenters has recently led to a bottleneck in high-bandwidth memory (HBM). AI chips need to quickly access data and as a result of the high demand for memory, DRAM prices have skyrocketed. The memory industry has consolidated in recent years with three main players remaining, namely Samsung Electronics (+35%), SK hynix (+18%) and Micron Technology (-0.6%). All three have benefited massively over the past six months, but the parabolic nature of the move leaves the stocks vulnerable to a correction.

The beneficiaries of the capex cycle remain very strong though. Both liquid cooling company Vertiv (+37%) and datacenter construction leader Comfort Systems (+25%) reported large earnings beats and raised their forward guidance significantly. Vertiv delivered a very strong quarter, driven by surging demand for AI and datacenter infrastructure. Fourth-quarter revenue rose 23% year-on-year to \$2.9 billion, while adjusted earnings increased 37%. Order growth was exceptional, with organic orders up roughly 252% (!) pushing the backlog to \$15 billion, more than double last year's level. Profitability also improved meaningfully, with adjusted operating margin expanding to 23%. The guidance reinforced the bullish outlook. For 2026, Vertiv forecast 27–29% organic sales growth, and earnings growth of more than 40% at the midpoint.

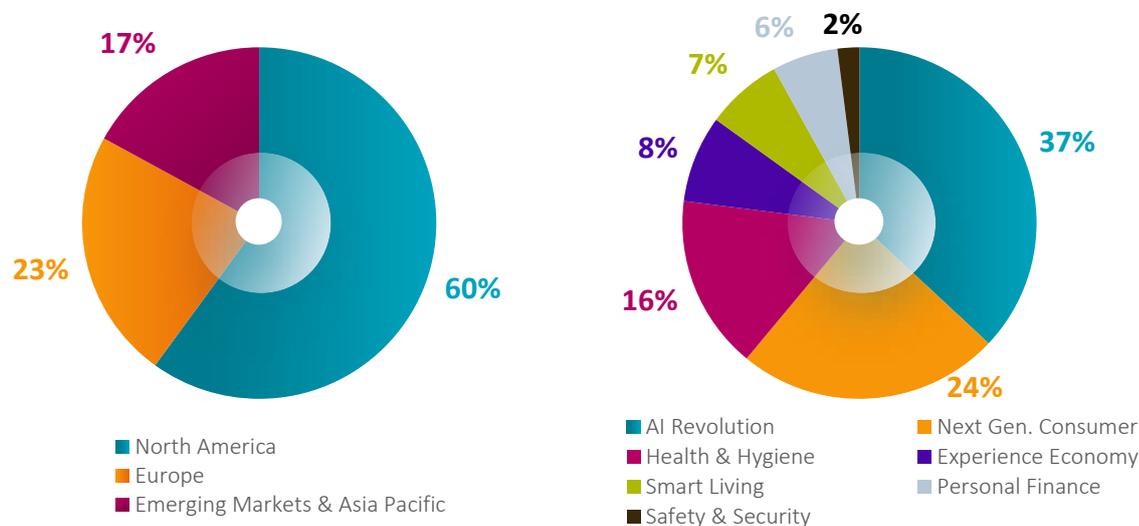
To discuss the difficulty surrounding software I have compared the quarterly unit volume shipments of both iPhone and Blackberry since the introduction of the iPhone. Despite the iPhone being introduced in early 2007, it took until the third quarter of 2010 for the iPhone to surpass Blackberry in terms of unit volumes. Blackberry sales peaked shortly after, but for three years Blackberry continued to outgrow the iPhone, before fading into irrelevance over the next three years. The analogy with software is that software investors argue that there has been no disruption from artificial intelligence in the quarterly reports. There may be some nitpicking about slightly slower growth rates, but for now it's been very hard to attribute this slowdown to the impact of AI. However, investors fear that this will change over the course of the next few years. There's a debate about the long-term business model, with investors pricing in lower margins due to higher required investments in AI and, potentially, more variability in financial results due to a change in the subscription business model to one based on (token) usage. This has pressured multiples, especially for expensive software companies with high levels of stock-based compensation.

Figure 3 | Unit volumes (in millions) of both the iPhone and Blackberry post the iPhone launch in 2007



Source: Robeco, Bloomberg

Figure 4 | Regional and Thematic Breakdown – 27 February 2026



Source: Robeco. This is the current overview as of the date stated above and not a guarantee of future developments. It should not be assumed that any investments in regions or trends identified were or will be profitable.

Table 2 | Top 10 weights – 27 February 2026

Company	Trend	Weight
1 NVIDIA	AI Revolution	7.1%
2 Alphabet	AI Revolution	6.5%
3 Mastercard	Personal Finance	3.5%
4 Inditex	Next Generation Consumer	3.4%
5 Samsung Electronics	AI Revolution	3.3%
6 Amazon.com	Next Generation Consumer	3.2%
7 Galderma	Health & Hygiene	3.2%
8 Microsoft	AI Revolution	3.0%
9 TSMC	AI Revolution	3.0%
10 Stryker	Health & Hygiene	2.4%
Total		38.6%

Source: Robeco. The data stated above may differ from data on the monthly factsheets due to different sources. The companies shown in this table are for illustrative purposes only in order to demonstrate the investment strategy on the date stated. It cannot be guaranteed that the strategy/fund will consider the companies in the future. No reference can be made to the future development of the companies.

Outlook

Given the uncertain macro and geopolitical climate, our quality growth style seems well suited for the current investment climate. We believe long term investors should focus on high quality businesses with valuable intangible assets, high margins, and superior returns on capital. Companies with these traits have historically delivered above average returns while offering downside protection. These firms are also poised to deliver healthy revenue and earnings growth, and we expect them to generate attractive long-term returns as a result.

We believe premium valuations for these businesses are justified given the quality of their business models, the high levels of earnings growth and the sustainability of their franchises.

General

- Robeco Global Consumer Trends is a long-only equity capability that is available as a Luxembourg listed capital growth fund, both in EUR and USD.
- The strategy’s AuM is about EUR 4.6/ USD 5.4 billion from retail, wholesale, and institutional clients.
- Winner of Lipper Fund Awards every year over the 2013-2020 period.

Investment Team

- Growth investor Jack Neele (27 years of experience) started managing the fund in 2007 and in 2010 he was joined by Richard Speetjens (26 years exp.).
- Since November 2020 Technology analyst Daniel Ernst (31 years exp.) has been added to the Robeco Global Consumer Thematic team and in June 2021 Consumer analyst Sam Brassler (6 years exp.) joined. Since November 2024, Teun Evers has been added to the team as an analyst.

Investment Philosophy

- Our mission is to profit from the increase in consumer spending over the next decade by focusing on secular trends.
- We combine our top-down allocation to these consumer trends with stock picking within these trends based on fundamental and quantitative research techniques.

Themes Overview

Next Generation Consumer

- The next generation of consumers is reshaping global demand patterns, favoring companies that leverage data, omnichannel ecosystems, and innovative design to meet these preferences are positioned for outsized growth



AI Revolution

- The AI Revolution is driving a structural shift across industries, unlocking productivity gains, new revenue streams, and cost efficiencies. Companies that own critical AI infrastructure, proprietary data, and scalable deployment platforms stand to capture outsized returns as adoption accelerates.



Experience Economy

- The Experience Economy reflects a consumer shift from goods to memorable, personalized experiences. Businesses that harness technology, data analytics, and brand storytelling to deliver unique experiences are positioned to foster loyalty, and drive sustainable growth.



Health & Hygiene

- Heightened awareness of wellness, safety, and preventive care is driving sustained demand for health and hygiene solutions across consumer markets. Companies that innovate in personal care, cleaning technologies, and health-focused products are positioned to benefit from recurring demand.



Personal Finance

- The democratization of financial services, driven by digital platforms and embedded finance, is empowering consumers to manage wealth, credit, and payments with ease and transparency. Companies that deliver secure, personalized solutions are positioned to capture long-term growth.



Smart Living

- Companies delivering integrated ecosystems, spanning smart home, energy management, and mobility services, are well positioned as consumers prioritize automation and sustainability.



Safety & Security

- Growing concerns around safety, cybersecurity, and privacy are driving demand for protection solutions. Companies that deliver integrated security platforms are positioned to benefit from recurring revenue models and regulatory tailwinds as safety becomes a priority in today’s connected world.



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