

Abbott Laboratories (ABT)

\$120.80 (As of 02/23/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$127.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 11/20/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

2-Buy

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:C

Value: D

Growth: C

Momentum: A

Summary

Abbott posted better-than-expected earnings and revenue numbers for fourth quarter 2020. The company has been seeing improvements in testing and procedure volumes across its hospital-based businesses. At the same time, its consumer-facing businesses like diabetes care, nutrition and established pharmaceuticals (EPD), are catching up pace. In Adult Nutrition, the company reported strong double-digit growth on robust sales of Ensure and Glucerna. Diabetes Care sales were strong on solid worldwide adoption of FreeStyle Libre. In 2020, the company received U.S. approval of Freestyle Libre 2 and CE Mark for Libre 3 and Libre Sense Glucose Sport. Overall, in the past six months, Abbott has been outperforming the industry. Yet, the company's performance was disappointing particularly in Pediatric Nutrition, Cardiovascular and Neuromodulation.

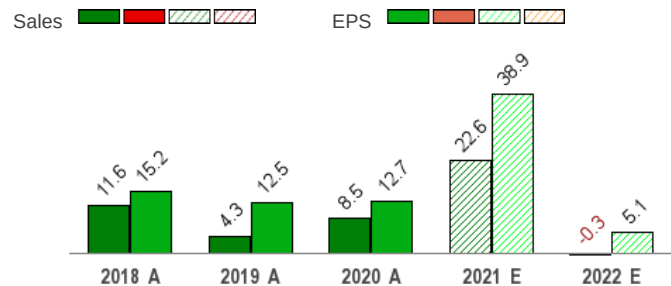
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$128.54 - \$61.61
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	5,478,833
Market Cap	\$217.1 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	11.9%
Beta	0.73
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$1.80 / 1.5%
Industry	Medical - Products
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 37% (160 out of 253)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	6.6%
Last Sales Surprise	8.0%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	15.6%
Expected Report Date	04/15/2021
Earnings ESP	0.0%

P/E TTM	33.6
P/E F1	23.8
PEG F1	1.7
P/S TTM	6.3

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	10,035 E	10,134 E	10,401 E	10,676 E	42,310 E
2021	10,855 E	10,739 E	10,435 E	10,447 E	42,444 E
2020	7,726 A	7,328 A	8,853 A	10,701 A	34,608 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$1.28 E	\$1.32 E	\$1.41 E	\$1.49 E	\$5.33 E
2021	\$1.34 E	\$1.31 E	\$1.22 E	\$1.21 E	\$5.07 E
2020	\$0.65 A	\$0.57 A	\$0.98 A	\$1.45 A	\$3.65 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 02/23/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 02/24/2021.

Overview

Abbott Park, IL-based Abbott discovers, develops, manufactures and sells a diversified line of health care products.

Established Pharmaceuticals Division (EPD) includes branded generics business in the emerging markets. The division accounted for 12% of total sales in 2020 and registered organic growth of 1.9% from 2019.

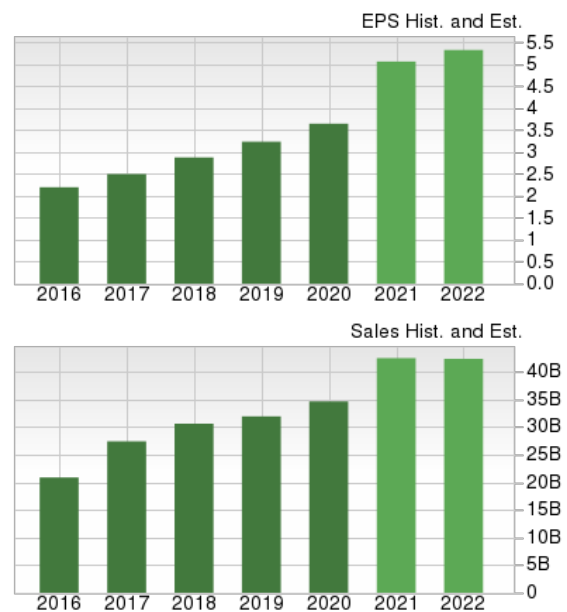
Medical Devices includes the diabetes care, vision care and vascular businesses and accounted for 34% of total sales in 2020 and reported 3.8% decline in organic growth from the year-ago number.

Diagnostics manufactures and markets diagnostic systems and tests in four business lines – core laboratory, molecular, point of care and rapid diagnostics (reflects sales from Alere, which was acquired on Oct. 3, 2017). The division accounted for 31% of total sales in 2020, a 41% organic growth from 2019.

Nutrition includes a broad line of pediatric and adult nutritional products. The division accounted for 22% of total sales in 2020 and registered 4.7% organic growth from the year-ago period.

Abbott has been actively pursuing acquisitions to expand and diversify its portfolio. In 2014, Abbott acquired CFR Pharmaceuticals for \$2.9 billion. In Aug 2015, the company acquired Tendyne Holdings, Inc., In Jan 2017, Abbott acquired St. Jude Medical and in October 2017 the company acquired Alere Inc.

On the other hand, Abbott sold its developed markets branded generics pharmaceuticals business to Mylan in Feb 2015, for 110 million shares of Mylan N.V. Abbott retained the branded generics pharmaceuticals business in emerging markets. Abbott sold its animal health business to Zoetis Inc in Feb 2015. Also the company divested its vision care business, Medical Optics, to Johnson and Johnson for \$4.325 billion in cash.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ **Share Price Performance:** Over the past six months, Abbott has been outperforming the industry. The stock has gained 17.9% as compared with the industry's 13.2% rise. Abbott posted better-than-expected earnings and revenue numbers for the fourth quarter and full-year 2020.

Despite regional and limited restrictions across many of its prime business regions, which led to the postponement of elective medical procedures, over the past few months, Abbott has been seeing improvements in both testing and procedure volumes across its hospital-based businesses. At the same time, the company's consumer-facing businesses, which include diabetes care, nutrition and established pharmaceuticals, are catching up pace following an initial hiccup witnessed during the first few months of the pandemic.

In the fourth quarter, within Adult Nutrition, the company reported strong double-digit growth with Ensure (adult complete and balanced nutrition brand) and Glucerna (diabetes nutrition brand) reporting robust sales. Within pediatric nutrition too, U.S. sales growth was more than 5% led by increased market share of Similac infant formula brand.

Within Medical Device, Diabetes Care business has also been in the limelight for developments in its flagship, sensor-based continuous glucose monitoring system, FreeStyle Libre. The company currently expects the procedure volume for cardiovascular and neuromodulation within Medical Device to improve as COVID case rates subside. Abbott is also looking forward to a cadence of product launches within Medical Device including the recent FDA approval of the fourth-generation MitraClip, CE Mark for Tendyne and TriClip, Launch of two cardiac rhythm defibrillation products under Gallant brand, approval of next generation 3D cardiac mapping technology EnSite X, U.S. approval of Freestyle Libre 2 and CE Mark for Libre 3 and Libre Sense Glucose Sport.

For 2021, within Medical Device, the company currently expects continued strong double-digit growth in diabetes care business led by Freestyle Libre and steady improvements in cardiovascular and neuromodulation businesses fueled by the continued business recovery through COVID-19 and on the strength of the recent and upcoming product launches.

Within EPD, despite the presence of the pandemic, sequential improvement has been seen in the fourth quarter demonstrating strong fundamentals. For 2021, the company forecasts improvements in existing EPD product demand. Also a continued steady cadence of new product introductions will contribute to growth.

Abbott has been riding high on a healthy growth graph within its Diagnostics sales, which were extremely strong in the fourth quarter driven by demand for its portfolio of COVID-19 diagnostics tests across its rapid and lab-based platforms. The biggest contribution in the fourth quarter came from sale of rapid lateral flow test to detect the virus, which includes BinaxNOW in the United States and Panbio internationally.

- ▲ **Molecular & Rapid Diagnostics Grow Strong Amid Pandemic:** We note that, Abbott has developed and launched several COVID-19 tests across its testing platform for both laboratory and rapid point-of-care settings. In March, the company launched two COVID-19 tests — the ID NOW COVID-19 molecular test (the fastest available molecular point-of-care test delivering results within 13 minutes and positive results in five minutes) and the RealTime SARS-CoV-2 molecular test, which runs on Abbott's m2000 RealTime System located in hospitals and reference laboratories. In addition to molecular testing during this period, the company also anticipated increased demand for other types of tests, including both antigen and antibody. In October, the company received EUA for the its AdviseDx SARS-CoV-2 IgM (Immunoglobulin M) lab-based serology test for use on the ARCHITECT and Alinity platforms. The company also launched BinaxNOW rapid antigen test which can detect COVID-19 infection in just 15 minutes with no instrument required. Earlier in April, the company rolled out its serology blood test for the detection of the antibody, IgG, on its lab-based immunoassay testing platforms.

Abbott's fourth-quarter 2020 performance was led by its diagnostics business. Sales grew nearly 110% in the quarter with \$2.4 billion contribution coming from COVID testing-related sales. The biggest contribution in the fourth quarter came from rapid lateral flow test to detect the virus, which includes BinaxNOW in the U.S. and Panbio internationally.

In terms of non-COVID testing, even amid the pandemic, the company retained existing businesses and captured share at strong rates. Abbott remained focused on the launch and rollout of Alinity, its suite of diagnostic instruments. In 2020, it initiated the U.S. launch of Alinity M for molecular testing. In January, the company announced FDA clearance for the first rapid handheld blood test for concussions.

- ▲ **EPD Business Long-Term Prospects Bright:** Abbott's EPD business operates solely in emerging geographies, with leading positions in many of the largest and fastest growing pharmaceutical markets for branded generics in the world. These markets include India, Russia, China and Latin America. The company recently noted that, banking on successful execution of its Branded Generic operating model, EPD is well positioned for sustained growth in many of these growing pharmaceutical markets.

According to Abbott, its unique branded generics model was built to focus specifically on key emerging countries where long-term growth in medicines is guaranteed by the aging populations and the related rise in chronic diseases. We believe, Abbott's continued focus on enhancing local capabilities and expanding its product portfolio within core therapeutic areas targeted specifically to address local market needs will further strengthen its position in these markets.

Within EPD, growth in 2020 was led by improved sales in India, Russia, China and Brazil. There were more than 50 new product launches across the key emerging markets in 2020. For 2021, the company forecasts improvements in existing EPD product demand. Also a continued steady cadence of new product introductions will contribute to growth.

- ▲ **Progress With Diabetes Business:** This business achieved growth of nearly 30% in the fourth quarter banking on the solid worldwide adoption of FreeStyle Libre. This device alone registered global sales surge of 41.3% on an organic basis. In 2020, in the United States, Libre

The branded generics and international diabetes businesses should drive growth in the coming quarters. New product launches and acquisitions should boost sales further.

sales grew 50% while it grew 40% outside the U.S.

The company encouragingly noted that, in a relatively short span, Libre has achieved global leadership among CGM systems for both Type 1 and Type 2 users. In 2020, the company received U.S. approval of Freestyle Libre 2 (an integrated continuous glucose monitoring or iCGM system for adults and children) and CE Mark for Libre 3(integrates Libre's accuracy and performance into the world's smallest fitness disposable sensor) and Libre Sense Glucose Sport (which is Abbott's initial step in a very intentional approach to pursue mass market biosensor opportunities beyond diabetes).

Reasons To Sell:

▼ Coronavirus Puts Emerging Market Medical Device, Pediatric Nutrition Into Gloom:

Within Medical Device, the company registered lower sales in cardiovascular and neuromodulation businesses due to challenging conditions related to COVID case rates surge in certain geographies towards the end of the fourth quarter. Within Pediatric Nutrition, internationally, growth in Southeast Asia was offset by continued challenging conditions in Greater China.

▼ Tension in China Continues:

Abbott, though trying to expand its nutrition business in emerging markets, is facing weaknesses in Greater China on challenging market dynamics.

Especially, in pediatric nutrition, the company is apprehensive about the new food safety regulations and a consequent oversupply of product in the market.

Outside of China, the company is witnessing soft market conditions across a few international markets. This may continue hurting the top line in the upcoming quarter as well.

This apart, we are also worried about the ongoing tensions between the United States and China regarding the imposition of tariffs on imports. This has raised concerns for major MedTech players like Abbott as any adverse move may affect their sales performance in China in near term.

▼ Weak Rhythm Management Sales Ail:

Within Rhythm Management, during the fourth quarter, sales in the United States as well as the rest of the world were soft and declined 4.2% year over year organically. Worldwide sales growth was negatively impacted by reduced procedure volumes due to COVID-19. Although, Abbott is coming up with certain strategic measurements including organizational changes and new product innovations, the near-term outlook is bleak.

▼ Foreign Exchange Translation Impacts Sales:

Foreign exchange is a major headwind for Abbott due to considerable percentage of its revenues coming from outside the U.S. The strengthening of Euro and some other developed market currencies has been constantly hampering the company's performance in the international markets.

The business environment continues to be challenging. Slow growth in the nutrition business in China will continue dampening top-line growth.

Last Earnings Report

Abbott Posts Q4 Earnings and Revenues Beat

Abbott reported fourth-quarter 2020 adjusted earnings from continuing operations of \$1.45 per share, which exceeded the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 6.6%. The adjusted figure improved 52.6% from the prior-year quarter.

The quarter's adjustments include certain non-recurring intangible amortization expense and other expense primarily associated with acquisitions and restructuring actions among others.

Reported earnings from continuing operations came in at \$1.20, reflecting 103.4% rise year on year.

Full-year adjusted earnings per share was \$3.65, a 12.7% improvement from the year-ago period. This exceeded the company provided adjusted earnings per share guidance of at least \$3.55 for 2020 as well as the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$3.57 per share.

Fourth-quarter worldwide sales of \$10.7 billion were up 28.7% year over year on a reported basis. The top line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 7.9%. On an organic basis (adjusting for the impact of foreign exchange), sales improved 28.4% year over year in the reported quarter.

For 2020, worldwide revenues were \$34.61 billion, up 8.5% on a reported basis and up 9.8% organically from the year-ago period. This too exceeded the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$33.83 billion.

Quarter in Detail

Abbott operates through four segments — EPD, Medical Devices, Nutrition, and Diagnostics.

In the fourth quarter, EPD sales declined 2.3% on a reported basis (up 3.4% on an organic basis) to \$1.15 billion. Organic sales in key emerging markets improved 1.1%, year over year. According to Abbott, organic sales growth in India, Russia and Brazil were partially offset by market softness across several countries as a result of COVID-19.

Medical Devices business sales improved 1.7% on a reported basis to \$3.26 billion. On an organic basis, sales declined 0.4%. Barring Diabetes Care, all other sub segments reported organic revenues decline in the quarter.

Diabetes Care reported organic growth of 29% led by FreeStyle Libre, which grew 41.3% on a reported basis and 37.1% on an organic basis. However, poor cardiovascular and neuromodulation procedure volumes and lower Vascular sales in China, as a result of a new national tender program in that country impacted the overall performance of Medical Devices arm.

Nutrition sales were up 3.6% year over year on a reported basis (up 4.4% on an organic basis) to \$1.94 billion. Pediatric Nutrition sales declined 2.2% on an organic basis. Adult Nutrition sales improved 12.7% organically. According to the company, Adult Nutrition sales benefited from improved sales performance of Abbott's complete and balanced nutrition brand Ensure and diabetes nutrition brand Glucerna.

In Pediatric Nutrition, however, U.S. growth of its infant formula brand, Similac was offset by challenging conditions in Greater China.

Diagnostics sales were up 111.1%, year over year on a reported basis (up 108.9% on an organic basis) to \$4.35 billion. Core Laboratory Diagnostics sales were up 5.1% on an organic basis. Molecular Diagnostics surged 308.3% on an organic basis. Rapid Diagnostics sales too improved 329% on an organic basis in the December-end quarter. However, Point of Care Diagnostics sales declined 6% on an organic basis.

2021 Guidance

The company provided its earnings guidance for 2021.

The company now projects adjusted earnings per share from continuing operations to be at least \$5 for 2021. The current Zacks Consensus Estimate is pegged at \$4.38.

Quarter Ending	12/2020
Report Date	Jan 27, 2021
Sales Surprise	8.00%
EPS Surprise	6.62%
Quarterly EPS	1.45
Annual EPS (TTM)	3.65

Recent News

Panbio Rapid Antigen Test Gets CE Mark: Jan 26, 2021

Abbott announced the receipt of CE Mark for two new uses of its Panbio COVID-19 Ag Rapid Test Device for the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus: asymptomatic testing and self-swabbing.

New MitraClip Gets Expanded Medicare Reimbursement: Jan 20, 2021

Abbott noted that, the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) revised its National Coverage Determination (NCD) to expand coverage for transcatheter edge-to-edge repair (TEER), also referred to as transcatheter mitral valve repair (TMVr), to include patients with secondary (or functional) mitral regurgitation (MR) resulting from heart failure. According to Abbott, this increases the number of people eligible for insurance coverage for mitral valve repair with MitraClip, enabling broader access to the device.

Abbott Fulfills 150 Million BinaxNOW Test Purchase Deal By Government: Jan 12, 2021

Abbott Announced the fulfillment of the federal government's order of 150 million BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag tests. These rapid tests were distributed through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to states, territories and targeted entities, such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health and hospice agencies, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and the Indian Health Service.

First Handheld Blood Test for Concussions Gets 510K Clearance: Jan 11, 2021

Abbott gets 510(k) clearance for the first rapid handheld traumatic brain injury (TBI) blood test to assess individuals with suspected mild TBIs, including concussions. The test will run on Abbott's handheld i-STAT Alinity platform. Tests results are available within 15 minutes after plasma is placed in the test cartridge.

HeartMate 3 Gets Approval for Labeling Update: Dec 17, 2020

Abbott's HeartMate 3 heart pump's updated labeling got the FDA's approval to be used in pediatric patients with advanced refractory left ventricular heart failure. With the updated labeling, there will be additional options for treating this underserved population awaiting a heart transplant or for those not eligible to receive a transplant as a result of potential complications or risk related to the procedure.

Abbott's BinaxNow Gets FDA EUA for Virtually Guided Service: Dec 16, 2020

The FDA has issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for virtually guided at-home use of its BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card rapid test for detection of COVID-19 infection. The \$25 cost for the test and service is the lowest currently available for at-home testing.

CE Mark for IgG Antibody Test: Dec 15, 2020

Abbott received CE Mark for its new quantitative SARS-CoV-2 IgG (Immunoglobulin G) lab-based serology test. IgG antibody testing provides important insights to people as they recover from COVID-19 and helps evaluate a person's immune response to a vaccine.

Valuation

Abbott shares are up 10.3% and up 48.9% in the year-to-date period and the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 6% while the Zacks Medical sector is up 2.6% in the year-to-date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 14.6% and sector is up 9.6%.

The S&P 500 index is up 3.6% in the year-to-date period and up 26.1% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 23.7X Forward 12-months earnings, which compares to 26.5X for the Zacks sub-industry, 22.1X for the Zacks sector and 22.5X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 32.9X and as low as 15.6X, with a 5-year median of 21.3X.

Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$127 price target reflects 24.9X forward 12-months earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for ABT.

Valuation Multiples - ABT					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	23.65	26.47	22.08	22.49
	5-Year High	32.96	31.03	22.86	23.80
	5-Year Low	15.56	17.09	15.90	15.30
	5-Year Median	21.28	21.08	19.13	17.84
P/S F12M	Current	5.05	4.01	2.77	4.53
	5-Year High	5.61	4.01	3.17	4.53
	5-Year Low	2.51	2.90	2.26	3.21
	5-Year Median	3.62	3.37	2.83	3.68
P/B TTM	Current	6.78	3.56	4.38	6.87
	5-Year High	7.19	3.70	5.11	6.97

	5-Year Low	2.34	2.28	3.02	3.84
	5-Year Median	3.78	2.96	4.38	4.97

As of 02/23/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 37% (160 out of 253)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Baxter International Inc. (BAX)	Neutral	3
EssilorLuxottica Un-sponsored ADR (ESLOY)	Neutral	2
Medtronic PLC (MDT)	Neutral	3
Owens & Minor, Inc. (OMI)	Neutral	3
Stryker Corporation (SYK)	Neutral	3
Terumo Corp. (TRUMY)	Neutral	3
Zimmer Biomet Holdings, Inc. (ZBH)	Neutral	4
Boston Scientific Corporation (BSX)	Underperform	4

The positions listed should not be deemed a recommendation to buy, hold or sell.

Industry Comparison Industry: Medical - Products				Industry Peers		
	ABT	X Industry	S&P 500	ESLOY	MDT	SYK
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	2	3	3
VGM Score	C	-	-	B	D	B
Market Cap	217.10 B	681.36 M	27.70 B	36.32 B	155.80 B	91.47 B
# of Analysts	10	3	13	2	14	15
Dividend Yield	1.47%	0.00%	1.43%	0.65%	2.00%	1.04%
Value Score	D	-	-	B	C	C
Cash/Price	0.02	0.09	0.06	0.23	0.09	0.03
EV/EBITDA	29.35	-0.82	15.15	NA	21.90	37.22
PEG F1	1.69	2.55	2.38	22.06	3.56	2.80
P/B	6.58	4.33	3.87	0.96	3.09	6.98
P/CF	21.67	23.85	15.75	7.99	17.83	25.46
P/E F1	23.83	30.76	20.80	34.64	27.53	26.87
P/S TTM	6.27	6.96	3.10	NA	5.59	6.37
Earnings Yield	4.14%	0.70%	4.73%	2.89%	3.63%	3.72%
Debt/Equity	0.56	0.08	0.66	0.27	0.52	1.01
Cash Flow (\$/share)	5.57	0.00	6.65	10.41	6.62	9.68
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	D	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	11.59%	8.43%	9.34%	NA	1.02%	8.45%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	38.85%	33.33%	14.09%	144.90%	-8.39%	21.79%
Current Cash Flow Growth	11.96%	6.91%	1.92%	46.37%	-9.02%	-7.10%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	12.92%	8.04%	7.62%	27.87%	7.68%	9.18%
Current Ratio	1.72	3.21	1.39	2.25	2.16	1.93
Debt/Capital	35.95%	14.50%	41.22%	21.45%	34.04%	50.28%
Net Margin	12.99%	-10.13%	10.60%	NA	12.69%	11.14%
Return on Equity	20.83%	-3.55%	14.86%	NA	9.71%	21.77%
Sales/Assets	0.50	0.52	0.51	NA	0.30	0.45
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	22.64%	18.90%	6.63%	17.08%	4.00%	18.93%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	C	B
Daily Price Change	-1.43%	-1.44%	0.01%	0.08%	1.94%	1.40%
1-Week Price Change	-4.05%	-2.10%	-0.16%	-0.85%	-5.35%	-2.44%
4-Week Price Change	5.29%	4.57%	2.51%	12.81%	1.07%	3.60%
12-Week Price Change	11.35%	24.69%	7.83%	9.66%	5.23%	6.74%
52-Week Price Change	48.90%	48.95%	12.31%	17.83%	8.73%	19.51%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	5,478,833	352,272	2,026,525	80,159	4,793,643	1,384,991
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.05%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	15.63%	0.00%	0.64%	1.27%	-0.08%	-0.47%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	15.89%	0.00%	1.96%	1.27%	0.39%	-0.42%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	25.00%	0.00%	0.27%	NA	-0.38%	-0.95%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Zacks Stock Rating System

We offer two rating systems that take into account investors' holding horizons: Zacks Rank and Zacks Recommendation. Each provides valuable insights into the future profitability of the stock and can be used separately or in combination with each other depending on your investment style.

Zacks Recommendation

The Zacks Recommendation aims to predict performance over the next 6 to 12 months. The foundation for the quantitatively determined Zacks Recommendation is trends in the company's estimate revisions and earnings outlook. The Zacks Recommendation is broken down into 3 Levels; Outperform, Neutral and Underperform. Unlike many Wall Street firms, we maintain a balance between the number of Outperform and Neutral recommendations. Our team of 70 analysts are fully versed in the benefits of earnings estimate revisions and how that is harnessed through the Zacks quantitative rating system. But we have given our analysts the ability to override the Zacks Recommendation for the 1200 stocks that they follow. The reason for the analyst over-rides is that there are often factors such as valuation, industry conditions and management effectiveness that a trained investment professional can spot better than a quantitative model.

Zacks Rank

The Zacks Rank is our short-term rating system that is most effective over the one- to three-month holding horizon. The underlying driver for the quantitatively-determined Zacks Rank is the same as the Zacks Recommendation, and reflects trends in earnings estimate revisions.

Zacks Style Scores

The Zacks Style Score is as a complementary indicator to the Zacks rating system, giving investors a way to focus on the highest rated stocks that best fit their own stock picking preferences.

Academic research has proven that stocks with the best Value, Growth and Momentum characteristics outperform the market. The Zacks Style Scores rate stocks on each of these individual styles and assigns a rating of A, B, C, D and F. We also produce the VGM Score (V for Value, G for Growth and M for Momentum), which combines the weighted average of the individual Style Scores into one score. This is perfectly suited for those who want their stocks to have the best scores across the board.

Value Score	D
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	B
VGM Score	C

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

Disclosures

This report contains independent commentary to be used for informational purposes only. The analysts contributing to this report do not hold any shares of this stock. The analysts contributing to this report do not serve on the board of the company that issued this stock. The EPS and revenue forecasts are the Zacks Consensus estimates, unless indicated otherwise on the reports first page. Additionally, the analysts contributing to this report certify that the views expressed herein accurately reflect the analysts personal views as to the subject securities and issuers. ZIR certifies that no part of the analysts compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendation or views expressed by the analyst in the report.

Additional information on the securities mentioned in this report is available upon request. This report is based on data obtained from sources we believe to be reliable, but is not guaranteed as to accuracy and does not purport to be complete. Any opinions expressed herein are subject to change.

ZIR is not an investment advisor and the report should not be construed as advice designed to meet the particular investment needs of any investor. Prior to making any investment decision, you are advised to consult with your broker, investment advisor, or other appropriate tax or financial professional to determine the suitability of any investment. This report and others like it are published regularly and not in response to episodic market activity or events affecting the securities industry.

This report is not to be construed as an offer or the solicitation of an offer to buy or sell the securities herein mentioned. ZIR or its officers, employees or customers may have a position long or short in the securities mentioned and buy or sell the securities from time to time. ZIR is not a broker-dealer. ZIR may enter into arms-length agreements with broker-dealers to provide this research to their clients. Zacks and its staff are not involved in investment banking activities for the stock issuer covered in this report.

ZIR uses the following rating system for the securities it covers. **Outperform-** ZIR expects that the subject company will outperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Neutral-** ZIR expects that the company will perform in line with the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Underperform-** ZIR expects the company will underperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months.

No part of this report can be reprinted, republished or transmitted electronically without the prior written authorization of ZIR.

Additional Disclosure

This material represents an assessment of the market and economic environment at a specific point in time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events, or a guarantee of future results. Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Any statements that refer to expectations, projections or characterizations of future events or circumstances, including any underlying assumptions, are forward-looking statements. Actual results, performance, or achievements may differ materially from those expressed or implied.

Returns quoted represent past performance which is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate so that when shares are redeemed, they may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown.

Investing involves risk; principal loss is possible. There is no guarantee that companies that can issue dividends will declare, continue to pay or increase dividends.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

52-Week High-Low: The range of the highest and lowest prices at which a stock has traded during the past year. This range is determined based on the stock's daily closing price which may differ from the intra-day high or low. Many investors use it as a technical indicator to determine a stock's current value and future price movement. The idea here is that if price breaks out from the 52-week range, in either direction, the momentum may continue in the same direction.

20-Day Average Volume (Shares): The average number of shares of a company traded in a day over the last 20 days. It is a direct indication of a security's overall liquidity. The higher the average daily trading volume, the easier it is to enter or exit the stock at a desired price with more buyers and sellers being available.

Daily Price Change: This is the percentage difference between a trading day's closing price and the prior trading day's closing price. This item is updated at 9 p.m. EST each day.

1-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 5 trading days. This change reflects the collective buying and selling sentiment over the 1-week period.

A strong weekly price increase for the stock, especially when accompanied by increased volume, is an indication of it gaining momentum.

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term price change metric and an indication of the stock gaining momentum.

12-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change of a stock's closing price over the last 60 trading days or past 12 weeks. Similar to 4-week price change, this is a medium-term price change metric. It shows whether a stock has been enjoying strong investor demand, or if it has been in consolidation, or distress over this period.

52-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 260 trading days or past 52 weeks. This long-term price change metric is a good reference point for investors. Some investors seek stocks with the best percentage price change over the last 52 weeks, expecting the momentum to continue.

Market Cap: The number of outstanding common shares of a company times its latest price per share. This figure represents a company's size, which indicates various characteristics, including price stability and risk, in which investors could be interested.

Year-To-Date Price Change: Change in a stock's daily closing price in the period of time beginning the first day of the current calendar year through to the previous trading day.

of Analysts: Number of EPS estimates used in calculating the current-quarter consensus. These estimates come from the brokerage analysts tracking this stock. However, the number of such analysts tracking this stock may not match the number of estimates, as all brokerage analysts may not come up with an estimate or provide it to us.

Beta: A measure of risk commonly used to compare the volatility of a stock to the overall market. The S&P 500 Index is the base for calculating beta and carries a value of 1. A stock with beta below 1 is less risky than the market as a whole. And a stock with beta above 1 is riskier.

Dividend: The portion of earnings a company is expected to distribute to its common shareholders in the next 12 months for each share they own. Dividends are usually paid quarterly. Dividend payments reflect positively on a company and help maintain investors' trust. Investors typically find dividend-paying stocks appealing because the dividend adds to any market price appreciation to result in higher return on investment (ROI). Moreover, a steady or increasing dividend payment provides investors a cushion in a down market.

Dividend Yield: The ratio of a company's annual dividend to its share price. The annual dividend used in the ratio is calculated based on the most recent dividend paid by the company. Dividend yield is an estimate of the dividend-only return from a stock in the next 12 months. Since dividend itself doesn't change frequently, dividend yield usually changes with a stock's price movement. As a result, often an unusually high dividend yield is a result of weak stock price.

S&P 500 Index: The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. It is a market-capitalization-weighted index of stocks of the 500 largest U.S. companies. Each stock's weight in the index is proportionate to its market value.

Industry: One of the 250+ groups that Zacks classifies all stocks into based on the nature of business. These groups are termed as expanded (aka "X") industries and map to their respective (economic) sectors; Zacks has 16 sectors.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company's expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company's current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every \$1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as the per share market value of a company divided by the value of its tangible assets (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks – intangible assets) per share. Tangible book value is the same thing as book value except it excludes the value of intangible assets to get a step closer to the baseline value of the company.

P/CF Ratio: The price-to-cash flow ratio measures a company's per share market price relative to its trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow per share. This metric is used to determine whether a company is undervalued or overvalued relative to another stock, industry or sector. And like the P/E ratio, a lower number is typically considered better from the value perspective.

One of the reasons why P/CF ratio is often preferred over P/E ratio is the fact that operating cash flow adds back non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization to net income. This feature helps valuing stocks that have positive cash flow but are not profitable because of large noncash charges.

P/FCF Ratio: The price-to-free cash flow ratio is an extension of P/CF ratio, which uses trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow per share instead of operating cash flow per share. This metric is considered a more exact measure than P/CF ratio, as free cash flow subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding activities that generate additional revenues.

Earnings Yield: The earnings yield is calculated as current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by the company's current share price. The ratio, which is the inverse of the P/E ratio, measures the anticipated yield (or return) from earnings for each dollar invested in a stock today.

For example, earnings yield for a stock, which is trading at \$35 and expected to earn \$3 per share in the current fiscal year (F1), would be 0.0857 ($3/35 = 0.0857$) or 8.57%. In other words, for \$1 invested in the stock today, the yield from earnings is anticipated to be 8.57 cents.

Investors most commonly compare the earnings yield of a stock to that of a broad market index (such as the S&P 500) and prevailing interest rates, such as the current 10-year Treasury yield. Since bonds and stocks compete for investors' dollars, stock investors typically demand a higher yield for the extra risk they assume compared to investors of U.S. Treasury-backed securities that offer virtually risk-free returns. This additional return is referred to as the risk premium.

Debt/Equity Ratio: The debt-to-equity ratio is calculated as a company's total liabilities divided by its shareholder equity. This metric is used to gauge a company's financial leverage. In other words, it is a measure of the degree to which a company is financing its operations through debt versus its own funds. The higher the ratio, the higher the risk for shareholders.

However, this ratio is difficult to compare across industry groups where ideal amounts of debt vary. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-equity ratio should be compared with other companies in the same industry.

Cash Flow (\$/share): Cash flow per share is calculated as operating cash flow (after-tax earnings + depreciation + other non-cash charges) divided by common shares outstanding. It is used by many investors as a measure of a company's financial strength. Since cash flow per share takes into consideration a company's ability to generate cash by adding back non-cash expenses, it is regarded by some as a more accurate measure of a company's financial situation than earnings per share, which could be artificially deflated.

Current Ratio: The current ratio or liquidity ratio is a company's current assets divided by its current liabilities. It measures a company's ability to pay short-term obligations. A current ratio that is in line with the industry average or slightly higher is generally considered acceptable. A current ratio that is lower than the industry average would indicate a higher risk of distress or default. A higher number is usually better. However, a very high current ratio compared to the industry average could be an indication of inefficient use of assets by management.

Debt/Capital Ratio: Debt-to-capital ratio is a company's total debt (interest-bearing debt + both short- and long-term liabilities) divided its total capital (interest-bearing debt + shareholders' equity). It is a measure of a company's financial leverage. All else being equal, the higher the debt-to-capital ratio, the riskier the stock.

However, this ratio can vary widely from industry to industry, the ideal amount of required debt being different. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-capital ratio should be compared with the same for its industry.

Net Margin: Net margin is calculated as net income divided by sales. It shows how much of each dollar in sales generated by a company translates into profit. For example, if a company's net margin is 15%, its net income is 15 cents for every \$1 of sales it makes.

A change in margin can reflect either a change in business conditions, or a company's cost controls, or both. If a company's expenses are growing faster than sales, its net margin will decline. However, different net margin rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare net margin rates of companies in the same industry group.

Return on Equity: Return on equity (ROE) is calculated as trailing-12-month net income divided by trailing-12-month average shareholder equity (including reinvested earnings). This metric is considered a measure of how effectively management is using a company's assets to generate profits. For example, if a company's ROE is 10%, it creates 10 cents profits for every \$1 shareholder equity, which is basically the company's assets minus debt. A company's ROE deemed good or bad depends on what's normal for its peers or industry group.

Sales/Assets Ratio: The sales-to-assets ratio or asset utilization ratio or asset turnover ratio is calculated as a company's annual sales divided by average assets (average of assets at the beginning of the year and at the year's end). This metric helps investors understand how effectively a company is using its assets to generate sales. For example, a sales-to-assets ratio of 2.5 indicates that the company generated \$2.50 in sales for every \$1 of assets on its books.

The higher the sales-to-assets ratio, the better the company is performing. However, similar to many other ratios, the asset turnover ratio tends to be higher for companies in certain industries/sectors than in others. So, a company's sales-to-assets ratio should be compared with the same for its industry/sector.

Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years): This is the average annual (trailing-12-month) EPS growth rate over the last 3-5 years. This metric helps investors see how a company's EPS has grown from a long-term perspective.

Note: There are many factors that can influence short-term numbers — a recession will reduce this number, while a recovery will inflate it. The longterm perspective helps smooth out short-term events.

Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0): This is the estimated EPS growth rate for the current financial year. It is calculated as the consensus estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported EPS for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Current Cash Flow Growth: It measures the latest year-over-year change in operating cash flow. Cash flow growth tells an investor how quickly a company is generating inflows of cash from operations. A positive change in the cash flow is desired and shows that more 'cash' is coming in than going out.

Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years): This is the annualized change in cash flow over the last 3-5 years. The change in a longer period helps put the current reading into proper perspective. By looking at the rate, rather than the actual dollar value, the comparison across the industry and peers becomes easier.

Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0): This metric looks at the estimated sales growth for the current year. It is calculated as sales estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported sales for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Like EPS growth, a higher rate is better for sales growth. A look at a company's projected sales growth instantly tells you what the outlook is for their products and services. However, different sales growth rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare sales growth rates of companies in the same industry group.

EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past week. The change in a company's consensus EPS estimate (or earnings estimate revision) has proven to be strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares. It is an integral part of the Zacks Rank.

If a stock's consensus EPS estimate is \$1.10 now versus \$1.00 a week ago, that will be reflected as a 10% upward revision. If, on the other hand, it went from \$1.00 to 90 cents, that would be a 10% downward revision.

EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past four weeks.

A stock's earnings estimate revision in a 1-week period is important. But it's more meaningful to look at the longer-term revision. And, of course, the 4-week change helps put the 1-week change into proper perspective.

EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past 12 weeks.

This metric essentially shows how the consensus EPS estimate has changed over a period longer than 1 week or 4 weeks.

EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal quarter over the past four weeks.

While the revision in consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year is strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares, the estimate revision for the current fiscal quarter is an important metric as well, especially over the short term, and particularly as a stock approaches its earnings date. If a stock's Q1 EPS estimate decreases ahead of its earnings release, it's usually a negative sign, whereas an increase is a positive sign.