

American Equity(AEL)

\$23.32 (As of 07/10/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$25.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 04/20/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:D

Value: B

Growth: F

Momentum: F

Summary

Shares of American Equity have outperformed the industry year to date. With the fixed index and fixed rate annuity products guarantying principal protection, competitive rates of credited interest, tax-deferred growth, guaranteed lifetime income and alternative payout options American Equity is poised to benefit given its targeted demography. This premier fixed-index annuity producer in the independent agent channel also remains focused on capitalizing on increasing popularity of index products. It has been strengthening its balance sheet with its cash balance increasing over the last few years and debt to capital ratio improving. It also remains committed to boosting shareholders' value. However, low interest rate environment has been weighing on the company's earned yield. Also, rising expenses induce margin contraction concern.

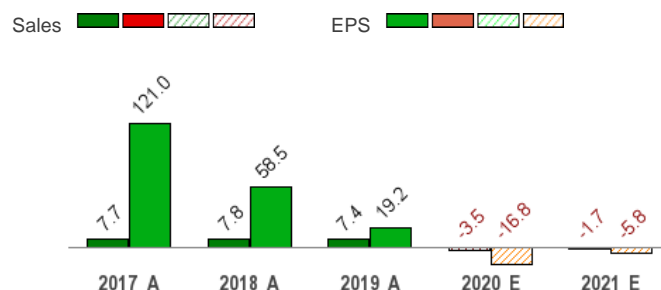
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	\$34.16 - \$9.07
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	782,918
Market Cap	\$2.1 B
YTD Price Change	-22.1%
Beta	1.79
Dividend / Div Yld	\$0.30 / 1.3%
Industry	Insurance - Life Insurance
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 38% (156 out of 252)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	45.2%
Last Sales Surprise	-2.7%
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	-1.1%
Expected Report Date	08/03/2020
Earnings ESP	0.8%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	572 E	573 E	574 E	579 E	2,190 E
2020	573 A	554 E	552 E	548 E	2,228 E
2019	558 A	571 A	590 A	588 A	2,308 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.15 E	\$1.19 E	\$1.19 E	\$1.19 E	\$4.68 E
2020	\$1.67 A	\$1.15 E	\$1.07 E	\$1.08 E	\$4.97 E
2019	\$0.97 A	\$1.09 A	\$2.54 A	\$1.37 A	\$5.97 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	3.5
P/E F1	4.7
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	0.6

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 07/10/2020. The reports text is as of 07/13/2020.

Overview

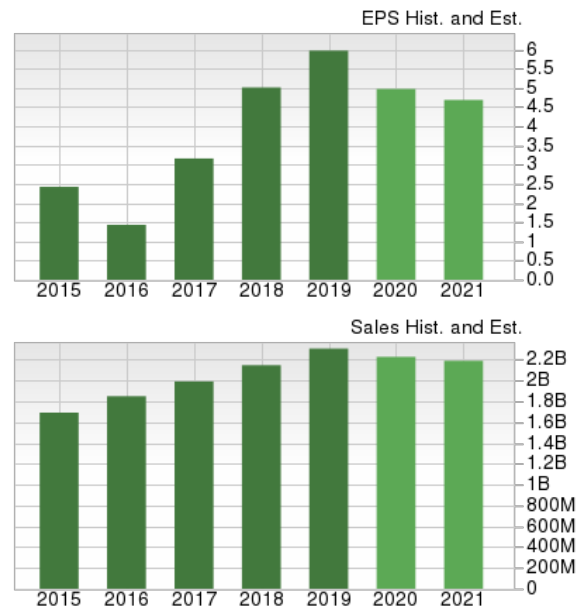
Incorporated in the state of Iowa on Dec 15, 1995, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company is a leader in the development and sale of fixed index and fixed rate annuity products. The company issues fixed annuity products through its wholly-owned life insurance subsidiaries, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company of New York and Eagle Life Insurance Company.

Annuities offer policyholders a tax-deferred means of accumulating retirement savings, as well as a reliable source of income during the payout period.

American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company's products include Fixed index annuities, Annual reset fixed rate annuities, Multi-year fixed rate annuities and Single premium immediate annuities.

American Equity markets its products through a variable cost distribution network, including independent agents through national marketing organizations, broker/dealers, banks and registered investment advisors.

Investment activities are an integral part of the company's business, and net investment income is a significant component of total revenues. Profitability of annuity products is significantly affected by spreads between interest yields on investments, the cost of options to fund the index credits on fixed index annuities and rates credited on fixed-rate annuities and the fixed rate strategy in fixed index annuities.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Shares of American Equity have lost 22.1%, narrower than the industry's decline of 22.6%. Solid fundamentals should help the shares to bounce back.
- ▲ American Equity's target market includes individuals in the age group of 45-75, seeking to accumulate tax-deferred savings or create guaranteed lifetime income. Per the U.S. Census Bureau, Americans aged 65 and older will represent 20% of the total population by 2030 from 13% in 2010. With the company's fixed index and fixed rate annuity products guarantying principal protection, competitive rates of credited interest, tax-deferred growth, guaranteed lifetime income and alternative payout options, American Equity is poised to benefit from this demography.

This premier fixed index annuity producer in the independent agent channel also remains focused on capitalizing on increasing popularity of index products.

- ▲ Net investment income has increased at a five year (2015-2019) CAGR of 6.4% driven by growth in annuity business and increases in invested assets. The momentum continued through the first quarter of 2020 as the metric increased 2.7%. We expect the momentum to continue given increasing popularity of the company's index products. Average yield earned on average invested assets increased to 4.52 in 2019 from 4.46% in 2015, driven by opportunistic replacement of lower yielding securities with higher yielding securities
- ▲ The company's balance sheet has strengthened with its cash balance increasing over the last few years and debt to capital ratio improved. Though its senior debt to capital ratio was 14 at first-quarter 2020 end, higher than the industry average of 13, times interest earned, identifying how efficiently the company can service debt of 17.1% is higher than the industry average of 14.6%.

The company's times interest earned ratio has been improving over the years. The improvement in this ratio indicates that the firm will be able to meet current obligations in the near future without any difficulties. At a time when every entity is looking forward to preserve liquidity amid uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, an improving ratio is reassuring for investors. The company also enjoys strong credit ratings from credit rating agencies.

- ▲ Since the company went public, in 2003, it has increased dividend each year, reflecting operational excellence and the company's commitment to return value to its shareholders. Dividends witnessed a 17-year CAGR of 6.7%.
 - ▲ Return on equity, a profitability measure to identify how efficiently the company is utilizing its shareholders fund, has been improving over the last several years. Also, ROE of 15.8% betters the industry average of 11.8%.
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American Equity is set to benefit from increasing popularity of index products in the market that includes individuals in the age group of 45-75, a solid balance sheet and effective capital usage.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ The majority of American Equity's income is derived from investment spread — the difference between the earned yield of investments and the liability cost of policies. A sustained low rate environment along with higher cash balances has been weighing on earned yield.
- ▼ Total benefits and expenses increased 166% in a five-year span (2015-2019), attributable to increase in interest sensitive and index product benefits, interest expenses as well as other operating costs and expense. Increasing expenses weigh on margins. Net margin contracted 740 basis points over the same time frame. The company must strive to lower expenses else margins will continue to erode.
- ▼ The company's return on assets of 0.9% compares unfavorably with the industry average of 1.1%. The return on assets shows the percentage of how profitable a company's assets are in generating revenues.

A low interest rate environment, which weighs on earned yield, and rising expenses that induce margin contraction are likely to weigh on American Equity's performance.

Last Earnings Report

American Equity Q1 Earnings Top, Revenues Miss

American Equity reported first-quarter 2020 adjusted net earnings of \$1.67 per share, which beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 45.2%. Moreover, the bottom line increased 72.2% on a year-over-year basis.

Operational Update

Total revenues were \$573 million, up 2.7% year over year. Top line missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 2.7%.

Annuity sales of \$705 million decreased 43% year over year.

Total benefits were \$593.9 million, compared with expenses of \$1 billion.

Investment spread was 2.64%, up from 2.58% in the year ago quarter.

Policyholder funds under management of \$53.3 billion at quarter end, up 0.2% from 2019 end.

Estimated risk-based capital ratio was 396% pro forma.

The company had \$1.3 billion of liquidity as of Mar 31, 2020.

Quarter Ending **03/2020**

Report Date	May 06, 2020
Sales Surprise	-2.66%
EPS Surprise	45.22%
Quarterly EPS	1.67
Annual EPS (TTM)	6.67

Recent News

American Equity, Unit Rating Gets Reiterated by AM Best – Jun 26, 2020

American Equity's Long Term ICR of 'bbb-' and existing Long Term Issue Credit Ratings (Long-Term IRs) has been reiterated by AM Best. Concurrently, the Financial Strength Rating (FSR) of A- (Excellent) and the Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings (Long-Term ICR) of 'a-' of American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company (AEILIC) and its subsidiaries, American Equity Investment Life Insurance Company of New York and Eagle Life Insurance Company has been affirmed. The outlook for all of these Credit Ratings (ratings) is stable

Valuation

American Equity shares are up nearly 22.1% in the year-to-date period and 12.8% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Finance sector are down 22.6% and 20% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are down 18.4% and 15.8%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is down nearly 0.7% in the year-to-date period but up 6.4% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 0.61X trailing 12-month book value, which compares to 1.33X for the Zacks sub-industry, 2.34X for the Zacks sector and 4.37X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 1.4X and as low as 0.23X, with a 5-year median of 0.9X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$25 price target reflects 0.65X trailing 12-month book value.

The table below shows summary valuation data for AEL

Valuation Multiples -AEL					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/B TTM	Current	0.61	1.33	2.34	4.37
	5-Year High	1.4	2.47	2.91	4.56
	5-Year Low	0.23	0.91	1.71	2.83
	5-Year Median	0.9	1.81	2.53	3.7
P/S F12M	Current	0.97	1.82	6.04	3.55
	5-Year High	1.57	10.81	6.66	3.55
	5-Year Low	0.45	1.69	4.96	2.53
	5-Year Median	1.1	3.33	6.06	3.02
P/E F12M	Current	4.84	7.96	16.17	22.71
	5-Year High	16.6	14.89	16.19	22.71
	5-Year Low	2.34	5.51	11.59	15.25
	5-Year Median	8.41	10.34	14.16	17.52

As of 07/10/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 38% (156 out of 252)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Athene Holding Ltd. (ATH)	Neutral	3
Brighthouse Financial, Inc. (BHF)	Neutral	3
BRP Group, Inc. (BRP)	Neutral	3
Lincoln National Corporation (LNC)	Neutral	3
Manulife Financial Corp (MFC)	Neutral	2
Primerica, Inc. (PRI)	Neutral	3
Sun Life Financial Inc. (SLF)	Neutral	3
Voya Financial, Inc. (VOYA)	Neutral	3

Industry Comparison Industry: Insurance - Life Insurance				Industry Peers		
	AEL	X Industry	S&P 500	ATH	LNC	PRI
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	D	-	-	B	C	A
Market Cap	2.13 B	3.49 B	21.61 B	6.01 B	6.72 B	4.54 B
# of Analysts	5	4	14	4	5	2
Dividend Yield	1.29%	0.00%	1.92%	0.00%	4.60%	1.41%
Value Score	B	-	-	A	C	B
Cash/Price	0.88	0.54	0.07	12.71	2.19	0.07
EV/EBITDA	1.55	3.37	12.75	-20.97	-0.96	5.50
PEG Ratio	NA	0.99	2.87	1.14	NA	NA
Price/Book (P/B)	0.61	0.62	3.01	0.57	0.41	3.04
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	2.81	5.48	11.53	2.40	5.21	7.42
P/E (F1)	4.70	10.34	21.07	6.39	4.09	12.71
Price/Sales (P/S)	0.62	0.62	2.23	0.37	0.38	2.18
Earnings Yield	21.31%	9.67%	4.48%	15.64%	24.44%	7.87%
Debt/Equity	0.16	0.16	0.76	0.09	0.41	0.04
Cash Flow (\$/share)	8.29	2.39	6.94	12.88	6.68	15.25
Growth Score	F	-	-	D	C	A
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	27.75%	9.89%	10.90%	3.61%	13.10%	23.51%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-16.75%	-12.95%	-9.99%	-30.26%	93.97%	5.58%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	-24.46%	13.17%	5.51%	90.17%	-29.24%	9.74%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	9.46%	8.98%	8.55%	27.22%	-2.94%	13.51%
Current Ratio	0.12	0.23	1.30	0.64	0.23	0.53
Debt/Capital	13.99%	13.78%	44.46%	8.56%	28.93%	3.49%
Net Margin	7.10%	6.20%	10.62%	13.50%	3.72%	17.27%
Return on Equity	15.77%	7.19%	15.75%	7.50%	10.01%	23.10%
Sales/Assets	0.05	0.11	0.55	0.11	0.05	0.16
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-3.44%	0.00%	-2.52%	-5.13%	4.23%	5.12%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	A	B	B
Daily Price Chg	4.34%	2.59%	1.51%	4.85%	6.33%	3.52%
1 Week Price Chg	5.06%	1.23%	3.66%	1.00%	-0.12%	1.24%
4 Week Price Chg	8.16%	-1.06%	1.85%	3.58%	-9.50%	1.30%
12 Week Price Chg	25.71%	17.23%	12.57%	30.88%	25.88%	23.00%
52 Week Price Chg	-14.55%	-16.80%	-7.10%	-27.68%	-47.39%	-7.06%
20 Day Average Volume	782,918	177,857	2,339,510	2,378,475	2,174,204	186,153
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	-0.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.71%	-1.74%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	-1.06%	0.00%	0.00%	9.21%	-2.08%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	4.31%	-7.01%	-7.77%	-14.23%	-10.60%	-0.84%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	-1.62%	0.00%	0.00%	3.13%	0.90%	0.00%

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 have an excellent 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	B
Growth Score	F
Momentum Score	F
VGM Score	D

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.

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