

Abercrombie & Fitch (ANF)

\$20.66 (As of 12/17/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$22.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 04/14/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: C

Growth: A

Momentum: A

Summary

Shares of Abercrombie have risen over the past three months. Markedly, the company is gaining from efficient expense management actions. This aided bottom-line growth during third-quarter fiscal 2020. Adjusted earnings surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate and also improved year on year. Moreover, gross margin witnessed considerable expansion. Additionally, the company is gaining from strong digital sales, backed by higher traffic. This along with store optimization plans is likely to be an upside in the near term. Nevertheless, the coronavirus pandemic has been taking a toll on the company's top line. Markedly, sales fell during the third quarter mainly due to soft traffic trends. Revenues were dismal across both Hollister and Abercrombie brands. Management expects such trends to persist in the fourth quarter as well.

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$23.82 - \$7.42
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	2,080,712
Market Cap	\$1.3 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	19.5%
Beta	1.81
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Retail - Apparel and Shoes
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 41% (104 out of 255)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	1,620.0%
Last Sales Surprise	11.5%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	28.6%
Expected Report Date	03/03/2021
Earnings ESP	-4.2%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	678 E	802 E	864 E	1,165 E	3,454 E
2021	485 A	698 A	820 A	1,126 E	3,123 E
2020	734 A	841 A	863 A	1,185 A	3,623 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	-\$0.56 E	-\$0.09 E	\$0.46 E	\$1.18 E	\$1.02 E
2021	-\$3.29 A	\$0.23 A	\$0.76 A	\$0.97 E	-\$1.38 E
2020	-\$0.29 A	-\$0.48 A	\$0.23 A	\$1.31 A	\$0.73 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	NA
P/E F1	NA
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	0.4

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 12/17/2020. The reports text is as of 12/18/2020.

Overview

Abercrombie & Fitch Co. operates as a specialty retailer of premium, high-quality casual apparel for men, women, and kids through a network of approximately 850 stores across North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Abercrombie's product portfolio includes knit and woven shirts, graphic T-shirts, fleece, jeans and woven pants, shorts, sweaters, outerwear, personal care products and accessories for men, women and kids, under the Abercrombie & Fitch, abercrombie kids and Hollister brands.

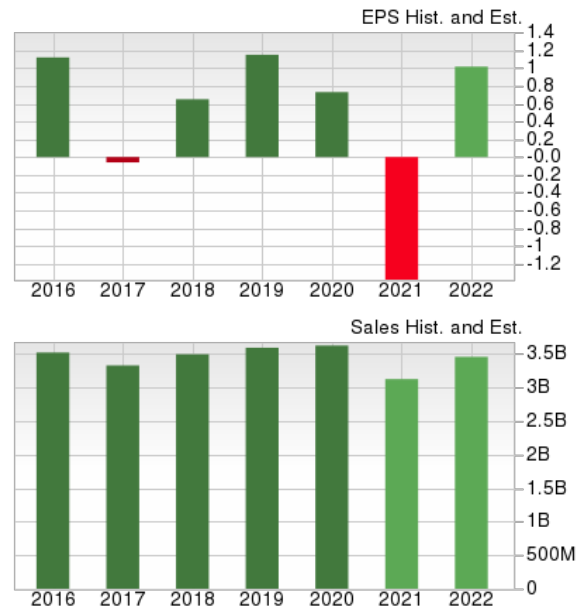
Additionally, the company sells inner wear, personal care products, sleepwear and at-home products for girls through direct-to-consumer operations and Hollister stores under the Gilly Hicks brand. It also sells products through its e-commerce platform.

Region-wise, Abercrombie reports its sales under two segments - U.S. Stores and International Stores.

- **U.S. Stores** includes the results from store operations and direct-to-consumer business in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.
- **International Stores** includes the store operations and direct-to-consumer business in Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

Brand-wise, Abercrombie reports in two segments - Abercrombie and Hollister.

- **Abercrombie** includes the Abercrombie & Fitch and abercrombie kids brands. Abercrombie & Fitch, targeted at the college-going crowd, is positioned as a luxury lifestyle concept that uses the finest materials to create high-quality casual wear. abercrombie kids, themed as "classic cool", is aimed at pre-teens and is the children's version of Abercrombie & Fitch.
- **Hollister** is based on a South California theme, and targets youth in their late teens. Stores under this brand also offer intimate products of the Gilly Hicks brand.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Q3 Results Beat Expectations, Gross Margin Strong:** Abercrombie & Fitch delivered better-than-expected results in third-quarter fiscal 2020. Moreover, the bottom line improved year on year. Prudent expense management efforts aided the quarter's outcome. Additionally, management is impressed with growth in gross margin, stemming from prudent inventory management strategies. Gross margin expanded 390 basis points (bps) to 64% gaining from increased average unit retail and reduced average unit cost as well as favorable impacts from inventory shrink and foreign currency exchange rates. Adjusted operating income totaled \$65 million compared with \$25 million in the year-ago quarter. Tight control over expenses boosted operating income in the reported quarter. Shares of the company have gained 40.6% in the past three months, while the industry gained 67.1%.

Impressive digital sales have been aiding Abercrombie's performance. It is also on track with store fleet optimization.

▲ **Focus on Digital & Omni-Channel:** Abercrombie is making significant progress in expanding digital and omni-channel capabilities to better engage with consumers. The company witnessed strong online show amid the coronavirus pandemic, which continued in third-quarter fiscal 2020. Digital net sales surged 43% year over year to \$382 million. Markedly, digital sales reflected robust growth in every month of the quarter. Improved traffic across the company's websites and apps along with higher conversion and new customer acquisition were the primary drivers to this upside. Going ahead, the company remains encouraged with its strong online presence and expects to keep gaining from this platform. The company plans to continue investing toward bolstering omni-channel capabilities including curbside and ship from store services. It is also striving to optimize capacity at its distribution centers to meet increased digital demand.

▲ **Store Optimization Plans:** The company is working toward rationalizing its store base by reducing dependence on underperforming tourist driven locations. As part of its store optimization plans, Abercrombie plans to reposition larger format flagship locations to smaller omni-channel enabled stores. Progressing on these efforts, the company plans to close four European flagship locations, before their natural lease expirations. Markedly, the Dusseldorf flagship store was shuttered during the third quarter, while the London, Munich and Paris flagships will close by the end of January, 2021. Additionally, flagship stores at Brussels, Madrid and Fukuoka will close in early January, due to natural lease expirations. On a fiscal year to date basis (as on Nov 24, 2020) the company opened 12 new stores while shuttering 17. At the end of the third quarter (as of Oct 31, 2020) the company's total store base included 641 stores in the United States and 208 stores internationally. Going ahead the company remains focused on closing more such stores, which do not meet its terms and conditions, especially after the disruptions caused by the coronavirus situation.

Additionally, we note that the company has been adjusting its store reopening strategies from time-to-time so as to ensure compliance with government regulatory measures as well as to ensure safety of employees and customers. During the third quarter, the company had 97% of their global store base open. These stores operated with reduced working hours and at approximately 75% productivity.

▲ **Cost Optimization Efforts:** Abercrombie has been on track with its cost minimization measures. In fact prudent expense management strategies aided the company's performance during the third quarter of fiscal 2020. We note that in its first-quarter fiscal 2020 earnings call, the company had mentioned plans to reduce expenses by nearly \$200 million this year. We expect that the company will be able to achieve such goals by undertaking measures like occupancy cost reduction through store closures and right-sizing.

▲ **Financial Strength:** Abercrombie's balance sheet had cash and cash equivalents of \$813 million and long-term gross borrowings (under senior secured notes) of \$350 million at the end of the third quarter of fiscal 2020. For the year-to-date period ended Oct 31, net cash provided by operating activities amounted to \$159 million. Net cash used for investing activities amounted to \$92 million. Management expects capital expenditures for fiscal 2020 to be nearly \$110 million compared with \$203 million in fiscal 2019.

Moreover, management has suspended its share repurchase program and dividend payouts in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to this, it returned roughly \$28 million to shareholders in the forms of share repurchases and dividends. That said, the company boasts a liquidity of \$1.2 billion as of Oct 31 compared with liquidity of \$770 million as of Nov 2, 2019. The company's liquidity comprises cash and equivalents as well as borrowings available under the senior-secured asset-based revolving credit facility of nearly \$345 million.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Unimpressive Sales Picture:** Abercrombie's top-line has been dismal for a while, thanks to adversities stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. During third-quarter fiscal 2020, net sales totaled \$819.7 million reflecting 5% decline from the year-ago quarter's figure. This was mainly due to sluggish store traffic owing to the pandemic. Although store traffic reflected a sequential improvement, the same had declined on a year-over-year basis. Moreover, in August nearly 80% of the company's stores were closed in California, which is one of the largest markets of the company. This also weighed on the top-line results during the third quarter. Prior to this, during the second-quarter fiscal 2020, the company's top line had declined 17% year over year, mainly due to weak store traffic trends.

Abercrombie's top-line in third-quarter fiscal 2020 was weighed down by adversities stemming from COVID-19. The trend is likely to continue in the fourth quarter as well.

Brand-wise, net sales declined 7% and 2% to \$476.7 million and \$343 million for the Hollister and Abercrombie brands, respectively. From a geographical viewpoint, net sales fell 4% in the United States and dropped 6% in International markets.

- ▼ **Cautious Outlook:** For fourth-quarter fiscal 2020, management expects net sales to be down in the range of 5-10% owing to deceleration of current trends. Management is cautious regarding the economic uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. With rising number of cases, the company anticipates a potential change in apparel demand. Additionally, store traffic is likely to remain soft. Also, the company is apprehensive regarding any possible pandemic-led store restrictions and closures as well as increases in shipping, handling and freight costs. Moreover, the company expects gross margin to be up only slightly on a year-over-year basis.
- ▼ **Competitive Pressure:** We believe that a challenging retail landscape, aggressive promotional strategies and waning store traffic are a threat to Abercrombie's performance. The company faces intense competition from a diverse group of competitors, including online retailers, mass merchants, specialty retailers, and numerous direct-to-consumer service providers. This may adversely impact its sales.
- ▼ **Dip in Consumer Sentiment May Impact Sales:** Any dip in consumer confidence – a key determinant of the economy's health – may have serious bearing on spending. The company's customers remain sensitive to macroeconomic factors including interest rate hikes, increase in fuel and energy costs, credit availability, unemployment levels as well as high household debt levels, which may affect their sentiment. For now, the novel coronavirus has wreaked havoc. The retail sector, in particular, remains under pressure. Again, job losses as well as lower disposable income due to this catastrophe are making things worse. Consumers are avoiding discretionary spending and focusing on necessities for the time being.
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Last Earnings Report

Abercrombie's Q3 Earnings Top Estimates, Sales Down Y/Y

Abercrombie reported third-quarter fiscal 2020 results, with the top and the bottom line surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimates. Moreover, the bottom line improved year on year. However, management continued to witness adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on stores that put pressure on the top line.

Nevertheless, the company's digital platform remained strong, backed by improved traffic, conversions and new customer acquisition. Additionally, management is impressed with growth in gross margin, stemming from prudent inventory management strategies. Also, control over expenses aided the quarterly performance.

Going ahead, the company plans to continue boosting omni-channel capabilities. The company is working toward rationalizing its store base by reducing dependence on underperforming tourist driven locations.

Quarter Ending	10/2020
Report Date	Nov 24, 2020
Sales Surprise	11.48%
EPS Surprise	1,620.00%
Quarterly EPS	0.76
Annual EPS (TTM)	-0.99

Q3 Highlights

Abercrombie delivered adjusted earnings of 76 cents per share in fiscal third quarter compared with earnings of 23 cents in the year-ago quarter. The Zacks Consensus Estimate was pegged at a loss of 5 cents.

Net sales totaled \$819.7 million, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$735.3 million. However, the top line declined 5% from the year-ago quarter's figure due to adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on store sales.

Digital net sales were strong during the quarter, surging 43% year over year to \$382 million. Markedly, digital sales reflected robust growth in every month of the quarter.

Brand-wise, net sales declined 7% and 2% to \$476.7 million and \$343 million for the Hollister and Abercrombie brands, respectively. From a geographical viewpoint, net sales fell 4% in the United States and dropped 6% in International markets.

Margins

Gross margin expanded 390 basis points (bps) to 64% gaining from increased average unit retail and reduced average unit cost as well as favorable impacts from inventory shrink and foreign currency exchange rates.

Adjusted operating income totaled \$65 million as compared to \$25 million in the year-ago quarter. Tight expense management boosted operating income in the reported quarter.

Other Financials

Abercrombie ended the quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$813 million and long-term gross borrowings (under senior secured notes) of \$350 million. Also, inventories were \$546 million, down 8% from the prior-year quarter's levels. For the year-to-date period ended Oct 31, 2020, net cash provided by operating activities amounted to \$159 million. Net cash used for investing activities amounted to \$92 million. Management expects capital expenditures for fiscal 2020 to be nearly \$110 million.

We note that management suspended its share repurchase program and dividend payouts in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to this, it returned nearly \$28 million to shareholders in the forms of share repurchases and dividends. That said, the company boasts a liquidity of \$1.2 billion as of Oct 31, 2020, compared with liquidity of \$770 million as of Nov 2, 2019. The company's liquidity comprises cash and equivalents as well as borrowings available under the senior-secured asset-based revolving credit facility of nearly \$345 million.

Store Update

As part of its store optimization plans, Abercrombie plans to reposition larger format flagship locations to smaller omni-channel enabled stores. Progressing on these efforts, the company will close four European flagship locations, before their natural lease expirations. Markedly, the Dusseldorf flagship store was shuttered during the third quarter, while the London, Munich and Paris flagships will close by the end of January, 2021. Additionally, flagship stores at Brussels, Madrid and Fukuoka will close in early January, owing to natural lease expirations. As of Oct 31, 2020, the company's total store base included 641 stores in the United States and 208 stores internationally.

Outlook

For fourth-quarter fiscal 2020, management expects net sales to be down in the range of 5-10% owing to deceleration of current trends. Management is cautious regarding the economic uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. With rising number of cases, the company anticipates a potential change in apparel demand. Additionally, store traffic is likely to remain soft. Also, the company is apprehensive regarding any possible pandemic-led store restrictions and closures as well as increases in shipping, handling and freight costs. Moreover, the company expects gross margin to be up only slightly on a year-over-year basis.

Valuation

Abercrombie shares are up 18.4% in the year-to-date period and nearly 29.9% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Retail-Wholesale sector are up 18.1% and 33.3% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector is up 28% and 39.9%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 11.2% in the year-to-date period and 15.5% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 0.38X forward 12-month sales, which compares to 1.01X for the Zacks sub-industry, 1.33X for the Zacks sector and 4.3X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 0.62X and as low as 0.14X, with a 5-year median of 0.32X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$22 price target reflects 0.40X forward 12-month sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for ANF

Valuation Multiples - ANF					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/S F12M	Current	0.38	1.01	1.33	4.3
	5-Year High	0.62	1.1	1.33	4.3
	5-Year Low	0.14	0.33	0.83	3.17
	5-Year Median	0.32	0.82	1.01	3.68
P/B TTM	Current	1.5	7.26	5.78	6.3
	5-Year High	1.84	7.26	6.46	6.3
	5-Year Low	0.47	1.38	3.68	3.74
	5-Year Median	1.06	4.39	5.07	4.92
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	3.86	24.62	19.44	16.59
	5-Year High	7.24	24.62	20.69	16.59
	5-Year Low	0.25	3.25	11.13	9.54
	5-Year Median	3.58	6.36	13.03	13.17

As of 12/17/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 41% (104 out of 255)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Tapestry, Inc. (TPR)	Outperform	1
American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. (AEO)	Neutral	3
Burberry Group PLC (BURBY)	Neutral	3
Designer Brands Inc. (DBI)	Neutral	3
Foot Locker, Inc. (FL)	Neutral	3
Genesco Inc. (GCO)	Neutral	3
Urban Outfitters, Inc. (URBN)	Neutral	3
Chicos FAS, Inc. (CHS)	Underperform	5

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Retail - Apparel And Shoes				Industry Peers		
	ANF	X Industry	S&P 500	BURBY	DBI	URBN
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	B	B	A
Market Cap	1.29 B	666.34 M	26.46 B	10.19 B	542.43 M	2.63 B
# of Analysts	9	4	14	2	4	10
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.49%	0.56%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	C	-	-	C	A	B
Cash/Price	0.63	0.24	0.06	0.12	0.22	0.24
EV/EBITDA	3.36	4.11	14.51	14.03	3.26	5.49
PEG F1	NA	4.57	2.83	NA	NA	12.59
P/B	1.50	2.67	3.61	6.57	1.46	1.84
P/CF	5.85	5.99	13.93	12.23	2.68	8.15
P/E F1	NA	29.23	22.22	40.94	NA	144.84
P/S TTM	0.40	0.54	2.79	NA	0.22	0.75
Earnings Yield	-6.68%	2.32%	4.29%	2.46%	-51.47%	0.71%
Debt/Equity	0.40	0.20	0.70	0.25	0.74	0.00
Cash Flow (\$/share)	3.53	1.68	6.94	2.03	2.80	3.30
Growth Score	A	-	-	A	D	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	11.89%	-3.92%	9.69%	NA	3.90%	-24.38%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-288.74%	-47.36%	1.21%	-40.10%	-351.96%	-90.56%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-6.25%	-0.52%	5.22%	39.78%	-6.06%	-22.87%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	-5.89%	1.68%	8.33%	1.72%	-2.77%	-2.66%
Current Ratio	1.60	1.46	1.38	2.31	0.93	1.45
Debt/Capital	28.57%	24.90%	42.00%	19.75%	42.57%	0.00%
Net Margin	-3.55%	-5.50%	10.44%	NA	-14.76%	-0.22%
Return on Equity	-6.61%	-2.15%	14.99%	NA	-49.38%	2.30%
Sales/Assets	0.95	1.03	0.50	NA	1.04	1.04
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-13.80%	-4.37%	0.35%	-12.16%	-35.23%	-11.76%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	F	F	A
Daily Price Change	1.87%	0.56%	0.62%	-1.59%	3.02%	1.01%
1-Week Price Change	-2.73%	-1.97%	-1.29%	-1.11%	-17.98%	-6.59%
4-Week Price Change	0.93%	3.31%	3.50%	15.26%	-0.66%	-7.04%
12-Week Price Change	42.88%	31.40%	19.48%	26.77%	35.62%	31.86%
52-Week Price Change	20.89%	-5.87%	6.72%	-12.87%	-52.83%	-2.71%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	2,080,712	380,853	1,976,201	34,092	2,155,692	1,825,971
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	28.61%	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%	2.65%	481.61%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	28.07%	16.03%	3.94%	-3.46%	1.85%	486.38%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-19.02%	-3.93%	0.00%	NA	-17.65%	3.22%

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	C
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	A

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

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Additional Disclosure

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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.