

AutoZone, Inc.(AZO)

\$1,159.33 (As of 02/01/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$1,174.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:
Neutral

(Since: 11/16/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: B

Growth: A

Momentum: A

Summary

AutoZone's high quality products, store-expansion initiatives and omni-channel efforts to improve customer shopping experience are boosting the company's market share. The retailer of automotive aftermarket parts has been generating record revenues since 29 consecutive years on the back of stable growth in the auto parts market and expansion of the store base. Increasing e-commerce efforts and cost-saving efforts amid the coronavirus pandemic, are aiding the company's top line growth. However, fear of a second wave of coronavirus looms large which may mar the firm's near-term revenues and earnings. High debt levels restrict the firm's financial flexibility. Further, increasing operating expenses and tariff woes are expected to clip the company's profits. As such, the stock warrants a cautious stance as of now.

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$1,297.82 - \$684.91
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	230,877
Market Cap	\$25.5 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	-5.7%
Beta	0.83
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Automotive - Retail and Wholesale - Parts
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 48% (132 out of 253)

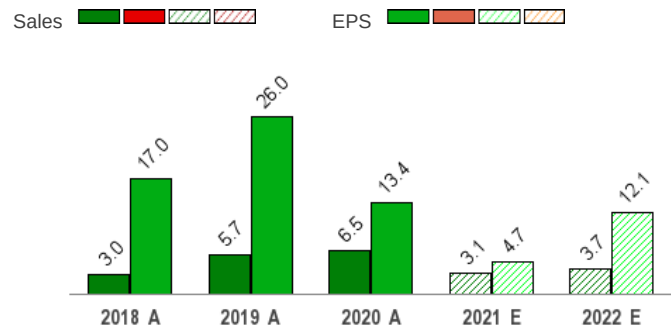
Last EPS Surprise	5.0%
Last Sales Surprise	-0.3%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.3%
Expected Report Date	03/02/2021
Earnings ESP	4.7%
P/E TTM	14.7
P/E F1	15.4
PEG F1	1.3
P/S TTM	2.0

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	3,184 E	2,846 E	3,140 E	4,523 E	13,510 E
2021	3,154 A	2,725 E	3,024 E	4,232 E	13,022 E
2020	2,793 A	2,514 A	2,779 A	4,546 A	12,632 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$19.86 E	\$15.19 E	\$20.32 E	\$31.63 E	\$84.39 E
2021	\$18.61 A	\$12.58 E	\$17.97 E	\$27.38 E	\$75.29 E
2020	\$14.30 A	\$12.39 A	\$14.39 A	\$30.93 A	\$71.93 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 02/01/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 02/01/2021.

Overview

AutoZone, Inc. is one of the nation's leading specialty retailers and distributor of automotive replacement parts and accessories in the United States. It operates in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) retail, Do-It-for-Me auto parts and products markets.

At the end of fiscal 2020, the Company had 5,885 stores in the United States; 621 in Mexico; and 43 in Brazil. Thus, the total store count as of the date stood at 6,549. Each store offers wide-ranging products for cars, sport utility vehicles, vans and light trucks, including new and remanufactured automotive hard parts, maintenance items, accessories, and non-automotive products. The company reported a 6.5% year over year increase in net revenues to \$12.6 billion in fiscal 2020.

Beside opening and acquiring stores, the company divests stores in markets that are less profitable as well as shift stores to existing ones. In fiscal 2019, it opened 209 stores and relocated two to prevailing ones.

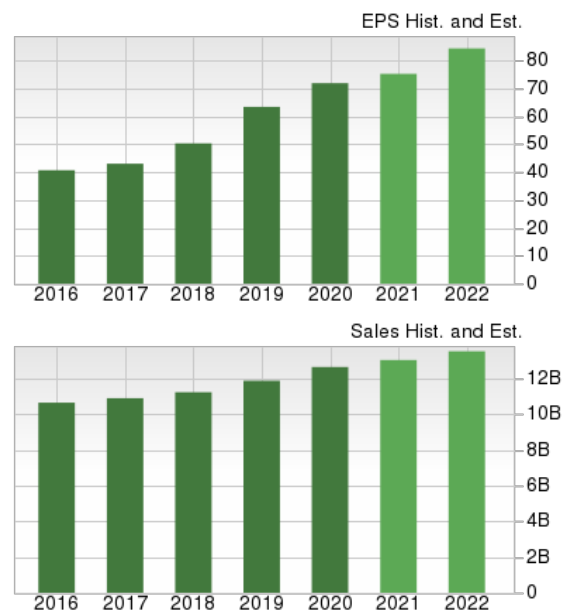
AutoZone selects and purchases merchandise from store support centers situated at Memphis, TN; Monterrey, Mexico; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Also, it has office in Shanghai, China, to support its sourcing efforts in Asia.

Apart from providing automotive products, it also has many commercial sales programs, which provides commercial credit, and delivers parts and other products to local repair garages, dealers and service stations.

Additionally, AutoZone sells the ALLDATA brand's automotive diagnostic and repair software through www.alldata.com and www.alldatadiy.com. This offers comprehensive factory-correct repair information to DIY customers along with ALLDATA repair subscription.

The company has online presence to sell automotive hard parts, maintenance items, accessories and non-automotive products through its website www.autozone.com. For commercial customers, it has www.autozonepro.com to make purchases.

As of Aug 31, 2019, the company had roughly 96,000 employees, of which 58% consisted of full-time employees. Out of the total count, 90% are employed at the AutoZone stores or in direct field supervision. Further, 5% of those work at distribution centers while 5% work at store support and other functions.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ AutoZone's revenue growth is impressive. The retailer of automotive aftermarket parts has been generating record revenues since 29 consecutive years on the back of stable growth in the auto parts market and expansion of the store base. Sales have increased at around 6% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the period of fiscal 2010-2020. AutoZone has been positively impacted by the growing market presence of DIY retail and commercial businesses. Store-expansion initiatives, fast delivery and high-quality products are improving the company's market share. Moreover, AutoZone resumed its share buyback program in first quarter of fiscal 2021, thus boosting investors' confidence.
- ▲ Increasing e-commerce efforts, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, are aiding the company's top line growth. Notably, AutoZone initiated a curbside pick-up option to bolster sales amid the coronavirus-led lockdown. AutoZone's initiatives to enhance in-store systems and website traffic bode well for sales growth. Ship-to-home next day, buy online, pick-up in stores and commercial customer ordering are picking pace, driving traffic to the company's online site. The company's omni-channel efforts to improve customer shopping experience are reaping profits.
- ▲ AutoZone is focusing on expansion of the favorably-located core business and development of the supply-chain network. This will enable it to offer products at the local level, wherein customer demand is immediate and urgent. Inventory-assortment improvements, technological advancements, solid reputation of the Duralast brand across the professional customer base and greater engagement from store-operating teams are supporting the company's growth. Further, in response to the uncertainties caused by the coronavirus pandemic, AutoZone has initiated a series of cost-saving initiatives throughout the enterprise, including substantial staffing adjustments and addition to revolving credit facilities. The focus on cost discipline is anticipated to provide some respite amid the financial crisis. The company's liquidity profile is solid to help it tide over the pandemic. Notably, the company had cash and cash equivalents of \$1,664 million as of Nov 21, 2020, up from \$158.1 million on Nov 23, 2019.

AutoZone's fast deliveries, omnichannel efforts to improve customer shopping experience, high-quality products and supply-chain network bode well.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ The coronavirus pandemic has crippled the auto industry. Spike in the coronavirus infections and fears of subsequent lockdown and depressed demand looms large. In the event of a fresh wave of coronavirus, AutoZone is likely to bear the brunt of the shrinking demand of vehicle purchases. As it is, demand for new vehicles are on the decline. This is likely to put pressure on the firm's revenues and earnings in the coming quarters. Moreover, AutoZone's Mexico stores continue to be impacted by the pandemic.
- ▼ The company's total debt amounted to \$5,514.9 million as of Nov 21, 2020, marking an increase from \$5,287.3 million on Nov 23, 2019. Its total debt-to-capital ratio stands at 1.22, higher than the industry's 0.76. A high total debt-to-capital ratio often indicates that a firm might not be able to generate enough cash to satisfy its debt obligations.
- ▼ High operating and selling, general & administrative (SG&A) expenses are concerning for AutoZone. It expects operating expenses to rise over the next few years on opening of distribution centers, mega hubs and stores; technology investments; along with accelerated wage pressure. Further, AutoZone's technology investments to improve electronic catalogue involve capital expenditure. Notably, the company's operating expenses were \$4.35 billion during fiscal 2020, marking an increasing from \$4.14 billion recorded in the year-ago period. Further, tariff impact on auto parts from China, and looming tariff conflicts from Japan and European Union are expected to clip the company's profits.

High debt levels and soaring operating expenses are major concerns.

Last Earnings Report

AutoZone Q1 Earnings Surpass, Sales Lag Estimates

AutoZone reported diluted earnings of \$18.61 per share for the first quarter of fiscal 2021 (ended Nov 21, 2020), up from the prior-year figure of \$14.3. The bottom line also surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$17.72. Higher-than-expected comparable sales growth led to this outperformance. Net income climbed 26.3% year over year to \$442.4 million. Net sales also increased 12.9% year over year to \$3,154.3 million. The top line, however, marginally missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$3,164 million.

Quarter Ending	11/2020
Report Date	Dec 08, 2020
Sales Surprise	-0.30%
EPS Surprise	5.02%
Quarterly EPS	18.61
Annual EPS (TTM)	76.32

For the reported quarter, domestic commercial sales totaled \$695.3 million, up from the \$621.5 million recorded in the year-ago quarter. The figure, however, lagged the consensus mark of \$721 million. Nonetheless, domestic same-store sales (sales at stores open at least for a year) grew 12.3% year over year, outpacing the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 11.37%.

Gross profit increased to \$1,675.6 million from the prior-year quarter's \$1,501.1 million. Operating profit also surged to \$615.2 million from the \$500 million registered in the year-ago period.

Store Opening & Inventory

During the fiscal first quarter, AutoZone opened 39 stores in the United States and two in Brazil. It exited the quarter with 5,924 stores in the United States, 621 in Mexico and 45 in Brazil. Total store count was 6,590 as of Nov 21, 2020.

AutoZone's inventory improved 3.7% year over year in the reported quarter on store openings and increased product placement. At the end of the quarter, inventory per location was \$702,000, up from the year-ago figure of \$694,000.

Financials and Share Repurchases

AutoZone had cash and cash equivalents of \$1,664 million as of Nov 21, 2020, up from \$158.1 million as of Nov 23, 2019. Total debt amounted to \$5,514.9 million as of Nov 21, 2020, marking an increase from the \$5,287.3 million on Nov 23, 2019.

For the fiscal first quarter, AutoZone repurchased 584,379 shares for \$678.3 million at an average price of \$1,161 per share. The company has shares worth \$117.6 million remaining in the current repurchase authorization.

Valuation

AutoZone's shares are down 7.3% and up 6.5% over the past six months and in the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Over the past six months, stocks in the Zacks Automotive - Retail and Wholesale - Parts industry and the Zacks Auto sector are down 3.7% and up 71.5%, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub industry and sector are up 8.4% and 88.2%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 14% and up 16.1% over the past 6 months and in the past year, respectively.

The stock is currently trading at 14.13X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 16.94X for the Zacks sub-industry, 25.72X for the Zacks sector and 22.02X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 19.5X and as low as 10.41X, with a 5-year median of 15.41X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$1,174 price target reflects 14.83X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for AZO:

Valuation Multiples - AZO					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	14.13	16.94	25.72	22.02
	5-Year High	19.5	20.47	27.65	23.8
	5-Year Low	10.41	12.6	8.24	15.3
	5-Year Median	15.41	17.24	10.25	17.83
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	9.96	22.95	20.44	16.86
	5-Year High	13.64	26.5	21.61	17.54
	5-Year Low	7.82	15.87	6.87	9.53
	5-Year Median	11.28	21.43	9.38	13.24
P/S F12M	Current	1.92	1.95	1.27	4.34
	5-Year High	2.43	2.04	1.27	4.34
	5-Year Low	1.23	1.23	0.47	3.2
	5-Year Median	1.97	1.78	0.6	3.68

As of 01/29/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 48% (132 out of 253)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Advance Auto Parts, Inc. (AAP)	Neutral	3
CarMax, Inc. (KMX)	Neutral	3
O'Reilly Automotive, Inc. (ORLY)	Neutral	3
Marketing Worldwide Corp. (MWWC)	NA	NA

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Automotive - Retail And Wholesale - Parts				Industry Peers		
	AZO	X Industry	S&P 500	AAP	KMX	ORLY
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	A	A
Market Cap	25.45 B	22.30 B	26.06 B	10.12 B	19.14 B	30.82 B
# of Analysts	10	8	13	9	7	12
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.48%	0.67%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	B	-	-	A	B	B
Cash/Price	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.04	0.05
EV/EBITDA	10.37	13.06	14.72	11.01	22.53	15.11
PEG F1	1.26	1.81	2.42	1.19	2.34	1.27
P/B	NA	4.64	3.60	2.74	4.64	44.43
P/CF	12.20	15.00	14.66	12.57	17.43	19.32
P/E F1	15.40	16.91	19.64	15.32	26.84	18.50
P/S TTM	1.96	1.50	2.86	1.03	1.02	2.74
Earnings Yield	6.73%	5.96%	4.98%	6.52%	3.73%	5.41%
Debt/Equity	-5.37	1.89	0.69	0.27	3.51	5.81
Cash Flow (\$/share)	91.69	16.94	6.85	11.86	6.76	22.02
Growth Score	A	-	-	B	A	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	15.51%	13.65%	9.69%	1.77%	11.78%	19.72%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	4.67%	6.51%	12.80%	13.56%	-17.66%	-0.54%
Current Cash Flow Growth	7.31%	7.29%	4.88%	7.27%	7.77%	4.97%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	8.31%	9.01%	8.07%	-0.81%	9.70%	11.32%
Current Ratio	1.06	1.22	1.38	1.38	2.60	0.98
Debt/Capital	NA%	77.82%	41.57%	21.52%	77.82%	85.32%
Net Margin	14.05%	9.45%	10.56%	4.84%	4.01%	14.96%
Return on Equity	-139.08%	18.03%	15.23%	15.75%	20.30%	373.35%
Sales/Assets	0.95	0.93	0.51	0.83	0.90	0.98
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	3.09%	1.45%	5.92%	1.52%	-7.17%	1.37%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	B	A
Daily Price Change	-2.47%	-2.47%	-1.88%	-2.74%	-2.89%	-1.59%
1-Week Price Change	-1.70%	-0.90%	-0.02%	-0.90%	11.46%	-2.01%
4-Week Price Change	-5.66%	-5.31%	-1.48%	-5.31%	24.69%	-5.99%
12-Week Price Change	-2.71%	-3.68%	6.91%	-4.66%	26.21%	-5.47%
52-Week Price Change	2.93%	10.25%	5.65%	10.25%	18.54%	1.33%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	230,877	1,006,051	1,962,643	1,006,051	1,643,204	602,696
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.30%	0.48%	0.26%	0.27%	2.24%	0.66%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	0.49%	2.55%	1.63%	3.56%	4.44%	1.54%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-0.01%	2.29%	0.05%	3.97%	4.52%	0.61%

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	B
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.

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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 a 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.