

## Berry Global Group (BERY)

**\$50.13** (As of 10/06/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$53.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:**

**Neutral**

(Since: 10/06/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)

**3-Hold**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: A

Momentum: F

### Summary

Berry Global's diversified business structure enables it to mitigate the adverse impacts of weakness in one end market, with strength across others. The company is likely to gain from acquisitions it made over time. The RPC Group buyout has been enhancing growth opportunities in the plastic and recycled packaging industry. Its focus on improving operational productivity, along with its cost-reduction actions and partnerships across the value chain, is likely to be beneficial. In the past three months, its shares have outperformed the industry. However, the pandemic-induced market downturn and weakness in the industrial markets are concerning. Rising costs and expenses might weigh on its margins in the quarters ahead. High debt levels may raise its financial obligations and hurt profitability. The stock looks more leveraged than the industry.

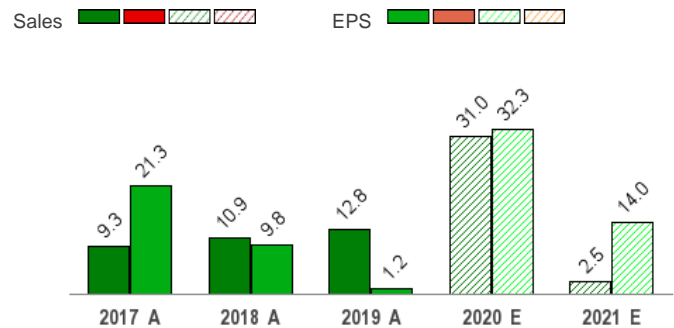
### Price, Consensus & Surprise



### Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	<b>\$54.98 - \$25.00</b>
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	<b>993,370</b>
Market Cap	<b>\$6.6 B</b>
Year-To-Date Price Change	<b>5.6%</b>
Beta	<b>1.36</b>
Dividend / Dividend Yield	<b>\$0.00 / 0.0%</b>
Industry	<b>Containers - Paper and Packaging</b>
Zacks Industry Rank	<b>Top 22% (55 out of 252)</b>

### Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	<b>28.8%</b>
Last Sales Surprise	<b>-3.6%</b>
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	<b>-0.1%</b>
Expected Report Date	<b>11/19/2020</b>
Earnings ESP	<b>0.6%</b>
P/E TTM	<b>12.0</b>
P/E F1	<b>9.8</b>
PEG F1	<b>1.0</b>
P/S TTM	<b>0.6</b>

### Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	2,864 E	3,115 E	3,162 E	3,042 E	11,925 E
2020	2,816 A	2,975 A	2,910 A	2,947 E	11,631 E
2019	1,972 A	1,950 A	1,937 A	3,019 A	8,878 A

### EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$0.88 E	\$1.41 E	\$1.59 E	\$1.32 E	\$5.14 E
2020	\$0.56 A	\$1.19 A	\$1.52 A	\$1.24 E	\$4.51 E
2019	\$0.77 A	\$0.84 A	\$0.90 A	\$0.90 A	\$3.41 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 10/06/2020. The reports text is as of 10/07/2020.

## Overview

**Berry Global Group, Inc.** manufactures and distributes nonwoven specialty materials, engineered materials and consumer packaging products in the market. The company services personal care, healthcare as well as beverage and food markets in South America, North America, Asia and Europe.

This Evansville, IN-based company was formerly known as Berry Plastics Group, Inc., but changed its official name to Berry Global Group, Inc. in April 2017. The company employs more than 47,000 people globally (as the end of third-quarter fiscal 2020).

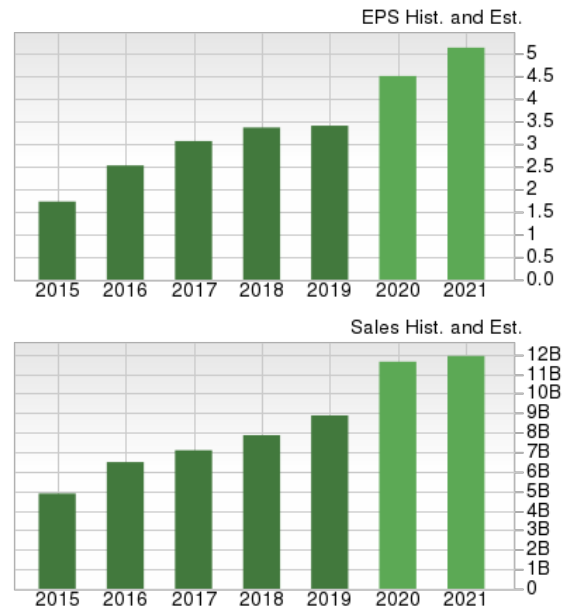
In July 2019, the company acquired United Kingdom-based RPC Group Plc. The latter specializes in providing recycled solutions and plastic packaging. Its products are mainly used by customers, both in the non-packaging and packaging markets. With the completion of the RPC Group buyout, Berry Global revised its business segments from the earlier three segments (Engineered Materials; Health, Hygiene & Specialties; and Consumer Packaging) to four segments — Consumer Packaging - International; Consumer Packaging - North America; Engineered Materials; and Health, Hygiene, and Specialties.

**Consumer Packaging – International** segment (35.1% revenues in third-quarter fiscal 2020): This segment consists of the international businesses of acquired RPC Group. It is engaged in manufacturing several products under products groups of bottles and canisters, containers, polythene films, pharmaceutical devices and technical components.

**Consumer Packaging — North America** segment (24.7%): The segment incorporates the company's legacy Consumer Packaging business and the U.S. portion of the acquired RPC Group business. It offers various products under groups like containers and pails, foodservice, closures and overcaps, bottles and prescription vials and tubes.

**Engineered Materials** segment (19.3%): This segment is comprised of product groups like stretch and shrink films, converter films, tape products, food and consumer films, retail bags, PVC and agriculture films.

**Health, Hygiene & Specialties** segment (20.9%): This segment consists of several product groups including health products, hygiene products and specialties products.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

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## Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Berry Global has a diversified business structure, with strong portfolio of products, with bulk of it being consumer non-discretionary products. This allows it to mitigate the adverse impacts of weakness in one end-market, with strength across others. Going forward, the company expects its Consumer Packaging — North America segment to benefit despite the coronavirus outbreak-led global market downturn, backed by persistent strength across the healthcare, hygiene and grocery end-markets as well as recovery in the food service space. Going forward, the Health, Hygiene & Specialties segment is also likely to benefit from higher demand for its healthcare products. For the fiscal fourth quarter, the company expects sales volume from the Consumer Packaging — North America and the Health, Hygiene & Specialties segments to grow in the range of low-single digits and low-double digits, respectively, on a year-over-year basis. In the past three months, its shares have gained 13.9% compared with the industry's growth of 9.6%. Also, in the past 60 days, the company's earnings estimates increased 1.3% for fiscal 2020 and 0.8% for fiscal 2021.
- ▲ Over time, Berry Global solidified its product portfolio and leveraged business opportunities through the addition of assets. In July 2019, the company completed the acquisition of RPC Group Plc. The buyout has been enhancing Berry Global's growth opportunities in the plastic and recycled packaging industry. Notably, in the first, second and third quarters of fiscal 2020, the buyout contributed 38.4%, 39.5% and 37.5%, respectively, to sales. Notably, the company continues to expect the deal to generate annual cost synergies of \$150 million, with \$85 million of it expected to be realized in fiscal 2020. Berry Global noted that the RPC integration-related activities are on track. Moreover, the company noted that its organic growth investments have been benefiting its Health, Hygiene & Specialties segment.
- ▲ Berry Global follows a balanced capital allocation strategy. It utilizes its cash flow for improving organic growth capabilities, acquisitions, repaying debts and repurchasing shares. In the first nine months of fiscal 2020, the company repaid its long-term debt of \$1,859 million. Notably, Berry Global stated that it used the net proceeds of \$325 million, realized from the sale of its SFL business (in July 2019), to repay debt. In the fiscal third quarter, the company's free cash flow surged 113.2% to \$290 million on a year-over-year basis. Further improvement in cash flows is likely to effectively support the company's capital-allocation strategies. For fiscal 2020, Berry Global anticipates cash flow from operations of \$1,450 million, capital expenditure of \$620 million and free cash flow of \$830 million. In addition, its focus on improving operational productivity along with its cost-reduction initiatives and partnerships across the value chain are likely to continue improve margins and its financial performance in the quarters ahead. Notably, in the fiscal third quarter, the company's adjusted operating margin climbed 120 basis points to 13%. Moreover, it revised its business segments from the earlier three (Engineered Materials; Health, Hygiene & Specialties; and Consumer Packaging) to four (Health, Hygiene and Specialties; Consumer Packaging - International; Engineered Materials; and Consumer Packaging - North America). The move, announced following the completion of the RPC Global buyout, will continue to enable Berry Global to offer better services to customers and enhance shareholder value.

Diversified products portfolio, anticipated synergistic gains from acquired assets and sound capital-allocation strategies will likely be beneficial for Berry Global.

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## Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Berry Global is experiencing a persistent weak operational performance across its Engineered Materials segment. Notably, in third-quarter fiscal 2020, the Engineered Materials segment's sales declined 10.5% year over year due to a fall in selling prices and volume decline amid the coronavirus outbreak-led market downturn. Also, softness across automotive and industrial end markets remains concerning for the Consumer Packaging – International segment in the near term. For fiscal fourth quarter, the company expects sales volume from the Engineered Materials and the Consumer Packaging – International segments to decline in mid-single digits and low-single digits, respectively, on a year-over-year basis.
- ▼ Escalating cost of goods sold has been a major cause of concern for Berry Global over time. In the last five fiscal years (2015-2019), the company's cost of goods sold increased 12.6% (CAGR). Notably, in the second and third quarters of fiscal 2020, the metric surged 51.5% and 45.7%, respectively, on a year-over-year basis despite its cost-reduction initiatives. In addition, in the fiscal second and third quarters, the company's selling, general and administrative expenses jumped 42.7% and 58.4%, respectively. Rise in expenses (on account of high operating and restructuring related costs) has been elevating its aggregate costs of late. Notably, in fiscal 2020, the company anticipates to incur restructuring-related and other costs of \$50 million. Further, escalation in costs might weigh on Berry Global's margins in the quarters ahead.
- ▼ The company's long-term debt in the last five fiscal years (2015-2019) increased 25.3% (CAGR). Despite its efforts to reduce debt leverage, its current and long-term debt remained high at \$10,760 million at the end of the third quarter of fiscal 2020. For fiscal 2020, Berry Global predicts interest expenses of \$430 million. Further, increase in debt levels can raise the company's financial obligations. Berry Global's stock looks more leveraged than the industry. Its debt/capital ratio is currently pegged at 0.85, significantly higher than 0.56 of the industry. This makes us cautious toward the stock.

Escalating costs, high debt levels, and coronavirus-led market downturn might be detrimental to Berry Global in the quarters ahead.

## Last Earnings Report

### Berry Global Beats Q3 Earnings Estimates, Updates View

Berry Global reported mixed third-quarter fiscal 2020 (ended Jun 27, 2020) results. Its earnings surpassed estimates by 28.81% — this being the fourth consecutive quarter of earnings beat. However, the quarter's sales lagged estimates by 3.56%.

The company's adjusted earnings in the reported quarter of \$1.52 per share surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.18. Also, the bottom line rose 68.9% from the year-ago number of 90 cents.

Quarter Ending 06/2020

Report Date	Jul 31, 2020
Sales Surprise	-3.56%
EPS Surprise	28.81%
Quarterly EPS	1.52
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.17

### Revenue Details

In the quarter under review, Berry Global's net sales were \$2,910 million, reflecting year-over-year growth of 50.2%. The improvement was driven by \$1,092 million contributions from acquired assets and 2% growth in organic volumes, partially offset by \$99 million adverse impacts of a decline in selling prices. Notably, unfavorable movements in foreign currencies and divestitures adversely impacted sales by \$19 million and \$34 million, respectively.

However, the top line lagged the consensus estimate of \$3,018 million.

The company reports results under four segments — Consumer Packaging—International, Consumer Packaging—North America, Health, Hygiene & Specialties, and Engineered Materials. A brief snapshot of fiscal third-quarter segmental sales is provided below:

Consumer Packaging—International's sales were \$1,020 million compared with \$52 million in the year-ago quarter. The increase was driven by the significant contribution of net sales from the RPC acquisition. It accounted for 35.1% of the quarter's net sales.

Consumer Packaging—North America's sales were \$718 million, up 10.1% year over year. The increase was attributable to gains from acquired assets, partially offset by lower selling prices. It accounted for 24.7% of the quarter's net sales.

Revenues generated from Health, Hygiene & Specialties amounted to \$608 million, up 0.8% year over year. The improvement was driven by volume growth, partially offset by lower selling prices, forex woes and divestiture impact. It accounted for 20.9% of the quarter's net sales.

Revenues from Engineered Materials declined 10.5% year over year to \$564 million. The fall was due to lower selling prices and volume decline, partially offset by gains from acquisitions.

### Margin Profile

In the fiscal third quarter, Berry Global's cost of goods sold increased 45.7% to \$2,272 million. It represented 78.1% of net sales compared with 80.5% in the year-ago quarter. Selling, general and administrative expenses rose 58.4% to \$198 million and represented 6.8% of net sales.

Adjusted operating income in the quarter increased 65.8% to \$378 million. Also, adjusted operating margin came in at 13%, up 120 basis points year over year. Interest expenses were \$110 million, up 54.9% year over year.

### Balance Sheet & Cash Flow

Exiting third-quarter fiscal 2020, Berry Global's cash and cash equivalents were \$906 million, down 4.9% from \$953 million in the previous quarter. Current and long-term debt decreased 3.2% to \$10,760 million from the previously reported quarter.

In the first three quarters of fiscal 2020, the company repaid \$1,859 million of borrowings. Its proceeds from borrowings totaled \$1,202 million.

In the reported quarter, it generated net cash of \$446 million from operating activities, up 85.8% from the year-ago quarter. Capital expenditure in the period totaled \$156 million, increasing 50% from \$104 million spent in the year-ago quarter.

Free cash flow surged 113.2% year over year to \$290 million.

### Outlook

Berry Global is focused on creating organic growth opportunities, improving balance sheet and integrating and realizing the benefits from the buyout of RPC Group Plc (completed in July 2019). The company expects RPC Group to yield cost synergies of \$85 million in fiscal 2020.

For fiscal 2020 (ending September 2020), Berry Global predicts a free cash flow of \$830 million, with cash flow from operations of \$1,450 million and capital expenditure of \$620 million. Notably, the company earlier predicted free cash of more than \$800 million, capital expenditure of \$600 million and cash flow from operating activities of \$1.4 billion.

Moreover, interest expenses for fiscal 2020 are predicted to be \$430 million, while cash taxes are estimated to be \$170 million. In addition, working capital, restructuring and other costs are anticipated to be \$50 million.

## Recent News

### Berry Global Facility Awarded ISCC Plus Certification

On **Oct 1, 2020**, Berry Global announced that its Biesheim, France, facility has received the International Sustainability and Carbon Certificate. This will facilitate the company in the production of sustainable nonwovens for hygiene and medical applications.

## Valuation

Berry Global's shares increased 5.5% and 33.5% in the year-to-date period and over the trailing 12 months, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 1.4% in the year-to-date period, while the Zacks Industrial Products sector is up 1.9%. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry increased 10.9%, while the sector grew by 19.1%.

The S&P 500 Index has moved up 4.5% in the year-to-date period and increased 16.5% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 9.73x forward 12-month earnings per share, which compares to 15.64x for the Zacks sub-industry, 22.79x for the Zacks sector and 21.97x for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 19.43x and as low as 6.19x, with a 5-year median of 14.05x. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our price target of \$53 reflects 10.29x forward 12-month earnings per share.

The table below shows summary valuation data for BERY.

Valuation Multiples - BERY					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	9.73	15.64	22.79	21.97
	5-Year High	19.43	18.95	22.79	23.47
	5-Year Low	6.19	7.13	12.55	15.27
	5-Year Median	14.05	16	17.68	17.7
P/Sales F12M	Current	0.56	2.46	3.04	4.04
	5-Year High	1.08	5.06	3.04	4.3
	5-Year Low	0.29	1.46	1.6	3.18
	5-Year Median	0.79	1.83	2.07	3.67

As of 10/06/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 22% (55 out of 252)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Sealed Air Corporation (SEE)	Outperform	2
AptarGroup, Inc. (ATR)	Neutral	4
Greif, Inc. (GEF)	Neutral	4
Graphic Packaging Holding Company (GPK)	Neutral	2
3M Company (MMM)	Neutral	3
Packaging Corporation of America (PKG)	Neutral	2
Silgan Holdings Inc. (SLGN)	Neutral	2
Sonoco Products Company (SON)	Neutral	2

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Containers - Paper And Packaging				Industry Peers		
	BERY	X Industry	S&P 500	GEF	GPK	MMM
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	4	2	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	A	B
Market Cap	6.65 B	5.88 B	23.33 B	1.89 B	3.96 B	93.45 B
# of Analysts	7	6	14	4	9	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	2.13%	1.65%	4.50%	2.11%	3.62%
Value Score	A	-	-	A	A	C
Cash/Price	0.14	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.02	0.05
EV/EBITDA	11.47	8.82	13.33	7.46	7.29	14.82
PEG F1	0.98	2.20	2.84	1.25	0.53	2.07
P/B	3.55	2.73	3.43	1.59	1.94	8.56
P/CF	6.18	8.77	13.07	4.29	5.82	13.49
P/E F1	9.84	15.91	21.41	12.53	13.33	19.63
P/S TTM	0.57	1.01	2.59	0.41	0.63	2.98
Earnings Yield	10.25%	6.26%	4.47%	7.98%	7.47%	5.10%
Debt/Equity	5.72	1.09	0.70	2.13	1.49	1.77
Cash Flow (\$/share)	8.12	3.82	6.92	9.12	2.44	12.02
Growth Score	A	-	-	A	A	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	16.23%	11.82%	10.45%	15.15%	5.77%	4.06%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	13.90%	-1.17%	-2.97%	-21.21%	22.34%	-9.17%
Current Cash Flow Growth	7.93%	7.93%	5.47%	31.14%	3.10%	-11.15%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	15.70%	7.51%	8.50%	8.37%	6.65%	1.67%
Current Ratio	1.93	1.43	1.35	1.43	1.27	1.94
Debt/Capital	85.12%	56.26%	42.90%	68.27%	60.14%	63.85%
Net Margin	5.06%	5.06%	10.28%	2.82%	1.97%	16.38%
Return on Equity	32.39%	18.39%	14.79%	18.39%	14.13%	46.86%
Sales/Assets	0.70	0.85	0.51	0.82	0.85	0.70
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	2.53%	-0.83%	-0.62%	-1.88%	4.49%	-1.38%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	D	C	C
Daily Price Change	-0.12%	-0.23%	-1.00%	-0.33%	-1.46%	-0.32%
1-Week Price Change	5.36%	1.60%	2.13%	4.79%	1.45%	0.06%
4-Week Price Change	-2.28%	1.76%	1.65%	9.50%	1.28%	-0.58%
12-Week Price Change	11.20%	6.18%	6.15%	11.53%	1.36%	2.33%
52-Week Price Change	33.61%	4.05%	5.99%	8.52%	0.85%	7.62%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	993,370	230,971	2,153,235	234,831	3,153,767	2,338,531
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	-0.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.14%	0.00%	0.00%	-3.18%	0.00%	0.19%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	11.43%	4.04%	3.50%	-10.28%	11.14%	4.52%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-3.77%	0.00%	0.00%

Source: Zacks Investment Research



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## 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.

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### 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	A
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	F
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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## Disclosures

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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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.