

Berry Global Group (BERY)

\$67.01 (As of 06/11/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$71.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 10/06/20)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

2-Buy

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: C

Momentum: A

Summary

Berry Global's diversified business structure enables it to mitigate the adverse impacts of weakness in one end market with strength across others. Also, the RPC Group buyout is enhancing growth opportunities in the plastic and recycled packaging industry. The company's focus on improving operational productivity, along with its partnerships across the value chain, is likely to benefit it. Further, reduction of debt remains its priority. In the past six months, the stock has outperformed the industry. However, escalating costs might put pressure on the company's margins in the quarters ahead. Also, high debt levels are expected to raise the company's financial obligations and hurt profitability. The stock looks more leveraged than the industry. In addition, foreign exchange headwinds are likely to affect its performance.

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$70.90 - \$40.08
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	789,449
Market Cap	\$9.0 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	19.3%
Beta	1.33
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Containers - Paper and Packaging
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 34% (86 out of 250)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	21.4%
Last Sales Surprise	6.5%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	1.2%
Expected Report Date	07/30/2021
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	11.5
P/E F1	11.7
PEG F1	1.2
P/S TTM	0.7

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	3,307 E	3,393 E	3,246 E	3,216 E	13,025 E
2021	3,136 A	3,370 A	3,187 E	3,226 E	12,954 E
2020	2,816 A	2,975 A	2,910 A	3,008 A	11,709 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$1.27 E	\$1.68 E	\$1.76 E	\$1.60 E	\$6.25 E
2021	\$1.12 A	\$1.59 A	\$1.51 E	\$1.54 E	\$5.75 E
2020	\$0.56 A	\$1.19 A	\$1.52 A	\$1.59 A	\$4.85 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 06/11/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 06/14/2021.

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 approximately 47,000 people globally (as the end of fiscal 2020).

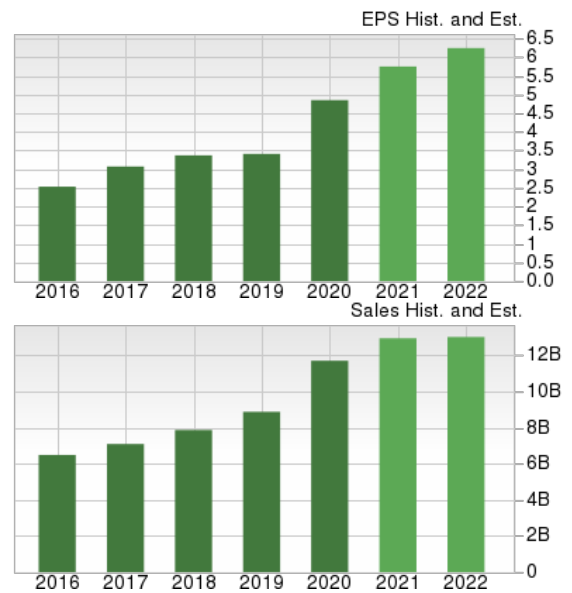
In July 2019, the company acquired United Kingdom-based RPC Group Plc. The latter specializes in providing recycled solutions and plastic packaging. Its products are mainly used by customers, both in the non-packaging and packaging markets. With the completion of the RPC Group buyout, Berry Global revised 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 (31.3% revenues in second-quarter fiscal 2021): 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 (21.7%): 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 (23.9%): 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 (23.1%): This segment consists of several product groups including health products, hygiene products and specialties products.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Berry Global has a diversified business structure, which allows it to mitigate the adverse impacts of weakness in one end market with strength across others. Also, the company boasts a strong portfolio of products, bulk of which includes consumer non-discretionary products. Going forward, the company expects its Consumer Packaging — North America segment to benefit from strength across the grocery and consumer-centric end markets. The Health, Hygiene & Specialties segment is likely to continue benefiting from organic growth investments and strong demand for its healthcare products. Strength across grocery end market and improvement in industrial and automotive end markets will be beneficial for the Consumer Packaging — International segment. The Engineered Materials segment is likely to gain from strength in consumer films, including snacking and e-commerce end markets, and recovery of other end markets. For fiscal 2021, the company anticipates overall organic sales growth of 5%, higher than 4% anticipated earlier. In the past six months, its shares have gained 23.6% compared with the industry's growth of 13.8%.

Diversified products portfolio, anticipated synergistic gains from acquired assets and sound capital-allocation strategies are likely to be beneficial for Berry Global.
- ▲ 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 fiscal 2020 and first-half fiscal 2021, the company repaid long-term debt of \$2,436 million and \$2,683 million, respectively. Further, improvement in cash flows is likely to support the company's capital-allocation strategies. For fiscal 2021, Berry Global anticipates cash flow from operations of \$1,575-\$1,675 million, capital expenditures of \$700 million and free cash flow of \$875-\$975 million. In addition, its focus on improving operational productivity and partnerships across the value chain is likely to continue improving margins and its financial performance in the quarters ahead. In the fiscal second quarter, the company's adjusted operating margin climbed 20 basis points on a year-over-year basis to 11.4%. Moreover, in October 2020, it reorganized portions of its four business segments, which will enable it to better align its several businesses for long-term growth.
- ▲ Over time, Berry Global has strengthened its product portfolio and leveraged business opportunities through the addition of assets. The company's acquired business of RPC Group (July 2019) has been enhancing its growth opportunities in the plastic and recycled packaging industry. Notably, the company expects this acquired business to generate annual cost synergies of \$150 million, with \$50 million of it expected to be realized in fiscal 2021. In fiscal 2020, buyouts contributed 28.6% to the company's net sales. In addition, analysts have increasingly become bullish on the company, as evident from positive earnings estimate revisions. In the past 60 days, the company's earnings estimates have been revised upward 2.7% and 3.4%, respectively, for the third and fourth quarters of fiscal 2021.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Escalating cost of goods sold has been a major cause of concern for Berry Global over time. In the last five fiscal years (2016-2020), the company's cost of goods sold increased 12.3% (CAGR). Notably, in fiscal 2020 and second-quarter fiscal 2021, the metric jumped 28.1% and 13.1%, respectively, on a year-over-year basis, despite its cost-reduction initiatives. Also, in fiscal 2020 and second-quarter fiscal 2021, the company's selling, general and administrative expenses jumped 45.8% and 7.8%, respectively. High operating and inflation related costs elevated its aggregate costs. We believe, if unchecked, higher costs and operating expenses will continue affecting its margins and profitability.
- ▼ Berry Global's long-term debt in the last five fiscal years (2016-2020) increased 12.2% (CAGR). Despite its efforts to reduce debt leverage, its current and long-term debt remained high at \$9,882 million at the end of second-quarter fiscal 2021. Any 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 0.79, substantially higher than 0.60 of the industry. This makes us cautious toward the stock.
- ▼ Berry Global has a significant presence in international markets. As a result, its financial performance is subject to various risks like foreign currency exchange rate, interest rate fluctuations and hyperinflation in some foreign countries. As a result, an increase in the value of the U.S. dollar relative to the local currencies of foreign markets might affect the company's top line in the quarters ahead.

Escalating costs and high debt levels might be detrimental to Berry Global in the quarters ahead.

Last Earnings Report

Berry Global Q2 Earnings & Revenues Beat Estimates

Berry Global reported better-than-expected second-quarter fiscal 2021 (ended Apr 3, 2021) results. Its earnings surpassed estimates by 21.37% — this being the seventh consecutive quarter of earnings beat. Also, the quarter's sales topped estimates by 6.47%.

The company's adjusted earnings of \$1.59 per share surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.31. Also, the bottom line increased 34% the year-ago number of \$1.19.

Quarter Ending 03/2021

Report Date	May 04, 2021
Sales Surprise	6.47%
EPS Surprise	21.37%
Quarterly EPS	1.59
Annual EPS (TTM)	5.82

Revenue Details

In the quarter under review, Berry Global's net sales were \$3,370 million, reflecting year-over-year increase of 13.3%. The improvement was driven by 5% growth in organic volumes, positive impact of \$92 million from favorable movements in foreign currencies, higher selling prices of \$192 million owing to the pass through of higher resin costs, partially offset by \$53 million of divestiture sales.

Further, the top line surpassed the consensus estimate of \$3,165 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 second-quarter segmental sales is provided below:

Consumer Packaging–International's sales were \$1,060 million compared with \$970 million in the year-ago quarter. The increase was attributable to 4% growth in organic volumes and positive impact of \$71 million from favorable movements in foreign currencies. It accounted for 31.3% of the quarter's net sales.

Consumer Packaging–North America's sales were \$731 million, up 15.5% year over year. The increase was attributable to 5% rise in organic volumes and positive impact of \$60 million from favorable movements in foreign currencies. It accounted for 21.7% of the quarter's net sales.

Revenues generated from **Health, Hygiene & Specialties** amounted to \$781 million, up 21.3% year over year. The improvement was driven by 8% increase in organic volumes and positive impact of \$83 million from higher selling prices. It accounted for 23.1% of the quarter's net sales.

Revenues from **Engineered Materials** increased 9.6% year over year to \$798 million. The rise was driven by 3% increase in organic volumes, positive impact of \$15 million from favorable movements in foreign currencies and positive impact of \$69 million from higher selling prices, partially offset by \$43 million of divestiture sales. It accounted for 23.9% of the quarter's net sales.

Margin Profile

In the fiscal second quarter, Berry Global's cost of goods sold increased 13.1% to \$2,706 million. It represented 80.3% of net sales compared with 80.4% in the year-ago quarter. Selling, general and administrative expenses rose 7.8% to \$220 million and represented 6.5% of net sales.

Adjusted operating income in the quarter increased 15.7% to \$384 million. Also, adjusted operating margin came in at 11.4%, up 20 basis points year over year. Net interest expenses were \$84 million, down 24.3%.

Balance Sheet & Cash Flow

Exiting fiscal second quarter, Berry Global's cash and cash equivalents were \$843 million, down 0.5% from \$847 million in the previous quarter. Current and long-term debt decreased 2% to \$9,882 million sequentially.

In the first six months of fiscal 2021, the company repaid \$2,683 million of borrowings. Its proceeds from borrowings totaled \$2,316 million.

In the first half of fiscal 2021, it generated net cash of \$638 million from operating activities, up 19.7% from the year-ago period.

Outlook

For fiscal 2021 (ending September 2021), Berry Global anticipates witnessing organic sales growth of 5% on a year-over-year basis. Also, the company raised operating EBITDA guidance at mid-point from the previous projection by \$50 million to \$2.25 billion

For fiscal 2021, Berry Global predicts a free cash flow in the range of \$875-\$975 million, with cash flow from operations of \$1,575-\$1,675 million and capital expenditure of \$700 million.

Recent News

Berry Global Prices \$400M Senior Notes in Private Offering

On **Jun 8, 2021**, Berry Global announced the pricing of \$400 million principal amount of first priority senior secured notes due 2027 in a private placement.

Interest on the senior notes have been set at 1.65% and will be paid out semi-annually — in cash in arrears — on Jan 15 and Jul 15 of every year. The first interest payment will be made on Jan 15, 2022, while the maturity of the notes will occur on Jan 15, 2027. The company expects the net proceeds from this offering to be used for prepaying part of certain term loans. The remaining net proceeds will be used for meeting certain fees and expenses associated with the offering.

Berry Global Collaborates With Borealis

On **Apr 28, 2021**, Berry Global announced its collaboration with Borealis for the supply of its circular polyolefins prepared from chemical recycling. This will add to Berry Global's access to 600 million pounds of post-consumer recycled content by 2025.

Berry Global's Investment in Nonwovens Capacity

On **Mar 23, 2021**, Berry Global announced its investment in its European nonwovens capacity. The company's investment will add to its current Spunlace platform, thereby expanding its sustainable wipes portfolio.

Berry Global Issues Senior Notes

On **Mar 4, 2021**, Berry Global completed the issuance of \$775 million worth of first-priority senior secured notes. The notes were offered by Berry Global, Inc. — a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Berry Global Group.

As noted, the notes offered are due to mature in 2026, and carry a 1.57% coupon rate.

Berry Global's Investment in Wipe Substrate Capabilities

On **Feb 4, 2021**, Berry Global announced its investment of more than \$70 million in its United States wipe substrate capabilities. The company's investment includes a new line and additional manufacturing capacity of its business.

Berry Global Issues \$800M Senior Notes

On **Jan 15, 2021**, Berry Global completed the issuance of \$800 million worth of first-priority senior secured notes. The notes were offered to private investors by Berry Global, Inc. — a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Berry Global Group.

As noted, the notes offered are due to mature on Feb 15, 2024, and carry a 0.95% coupon rate. The interest will be paid out semi-annually, with instalments made each year on Feb 15 and Aug 15. The first interest payment will be made on Aug 15, 2021.

Valuation

Berry Global's shares are up 19.2% in the year-to-date period and increased 52.8% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 11.1% in the year-to-date period, while that in the Zacks Industrial Products sector increased 13.4%. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 42.7% and 52.7%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index has moved up 13.8% in the year-to-date period, while increased 40.6% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 10.99x forward 12-month earnings per share, which compares to 16.92x for the Zacks sub-industry, 21.84x for the Zacks sector and 21.86x 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 12.82x. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our price target of \$71 reflects 11.65x 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	10.99	16.92	21.84	21.86
	5-Year High	19.43	18.98	23.57	23.83
	5-Year Low	6.19	7.2	12.65	15.31
	5-Year Median	12.82	16.04	18.29	18.05
P/Sales F12M	Current	0.69	3.08	3.55	4.73
	5-Year High	1.08	5.08	3.58	4.74
	5-Year Low	0.29	1.49	1.61	3.21
	5-Year Median	0.70	3.00	3.44	3.70

	5-Year Median	0.79	2.02	2.11	3.72
As of 06/11/2021	Source: Zacks Investment Research				

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 34% (86 out of 250)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Amcor PLC (AMCR)	Neutral	3
Brambles Ltd. (BXLBY)	Neutral	3
Greif, Inc. (GEF)	Neutral	2
Graphic Packaging Holding Company (GPK)	Neutral	3
NINE DRAGONS (NDGPY)	Neutral	3
Packaging Corporation of America (PKG)	Neutral	3
Sealed Air Corporation (SEE)	Neutral	3
Sonoco Products Company (SON)	Neutral	3

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	AMCR	NDGPY	PKG
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	C	A	A
Market Cap	8.98 B	6.75 B	30.51 B	19.12 B	6.75 B	13.66 B
# of Analysts	7	4	12	5	1	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	1.88%	1.28%	3.84%	4.33%	2.78%
Value Score	A	-	-	B	A	B
Cash/Price	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.04	NA	0.08
EV/EBITDA	9.01	12.60	17.43	14.73	NA	12.63
PEG F1	1.17	2.02	2.13	1.83	NA	3.88
P/B	3.39	3.80	4.16	4.06	1.16	4.10
P/CF	5.92	11.45	17.74	11.63	7.25	13.40
P/E F1	11.65	17.74	21.48	16.54	5.41	19.39
P/S TTM	0.72	1.40	3.50	1.52	NA	2.02
Earnings Yield	8.58%	5.64%	4.57%	6.05%	18.50%	5.16%
Debt/Equity	3.71	1.38	0.66	1.38	NA	0.75
Cash Flow (\$/share)	11.31	4.15	6.83	1.05	3.97	10.73
Growth Score	C	-	-	D	B	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	15.71%	9.06%	9.44%	NA	NA	7.84%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	18.59%	26.81%	21.49%	15.63%	110.28%	28.35%
Current Cash Flow Growth	39.89%	1.62%	0.86%	42.95%	-1.66%	-10.45%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	21.65%	9.59%	7.28%	32.85%	NA	4.75%
Current Ratio	1.73	1.45	1.39	1.30	NA	3.55
Debt/Capital	78.78%	58.00%	41.51%	58.00%	NA	42.81%
Net Margin	5.61%	6.48%	11.95%	6.88%	NA	7.19%
Return on Equity	34.88%	16.78%	16.36%	20.36%	NA	17.85%
Sales/Assets	0.73	0.85	0.51	0.76	NA	0.91
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	10.63%	7.85%	9.41%	1.85%	41.75%	9.48%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	C	B	B
Daily Price Change	1.41%	0.84%	0.19%	1.41%	0.00%	0.86%
1-Week Price Change	-2.43%	0.37%	0.41%	0.74%	0.91%	-1.98%
4-Week Price Change	-3.15%	-0.77%	1.76%	-1.05%	-12.94%	-6.74%
12-Week Price Change	14.70%	6.41%	8.54%	8.32%	-12.24%	9.79%
52-Week Price Change	55.15%	55.15%	39.66%	24.77%	55.46%	45.42%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	789,449	156,929	1,744,383	6,184,086	129	588,681
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	1.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	1.21%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	6.21%	3.41%	3.52%	2.54%	NA	10.51%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.67%	0.00%	0.00%	1.15%	NA	0.00%

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	A
Growth Score	C
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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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.