

Brown & Brown Inc.(BRO)

\$49.62 (As of 04/16/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$52.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 01/11/21)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

2-Buy

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:F

Value: D

Growth: C

Momentum: F

Summary

Brown & Brown's compelling portfolio with an impressive growth trajectory driven by organic and inorganic initiatives bode well. Buyouts and collaborations enhanced its existing capabilities and extended its geographic foothold. Strategic efforts continue to drive commission and fees. The company's solid capital position, backed by strong operational environment, places it well for long-term growth. Brown & Brown's sturdy performance has been driving cash flow, enabling it to deploy capital in shareholder-friendly moves. The company boasts a strong balance sheet backed by a solid cash position. Shares of the company have underperformed its industry year to date. However, high costs are likely to affect the company's margin expansion. Poor return on equity implies inefficient utilization of shareholders' funds.

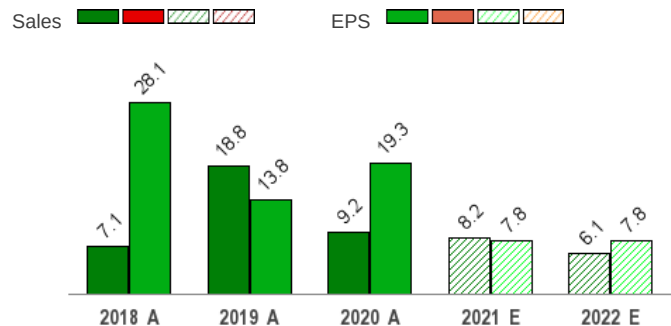
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$49.75 - \$34.06
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	987,571
Market Cap	\$14.0 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	4.5%
Beta	0.64
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.37 / 0.7%
Industry	Insurance - Brokerage
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 39% (98 out of 254)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	14.3%
Last Sales Surprise	3.6%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.1%
Expected Report Date	04/26/2021
Earnings ESP	5.7%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	798 E	699 E	774 E	740 E	2,998 E
2021	748 E	652 E	727 E	689 E	2,826 E
2020	699 A	599 A	674 A	642 A	2,613 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$0.61 E	\$0.43 E	\$0.53 E	\$0.39 E	\$1.94 E
2021	\$0.56 E	\$0.39 E	\$0.50 E	\$0.36 E	\$1.80 E
2020	\$0.51 A	\$0.34 A	\$0.52 A	\$0.32 A	\$1.67 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	29.3
P/E F1	27.6
PEG F1	2.8
P/S TTM	5.4

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 04/16/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 04/19/2021.

Overview

Headquartered in Daytona Beach, FL and founded in 1939, Brown & Brown, Inc. markets and sells insurance products and services primarily in the United States, as well as in London, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands.

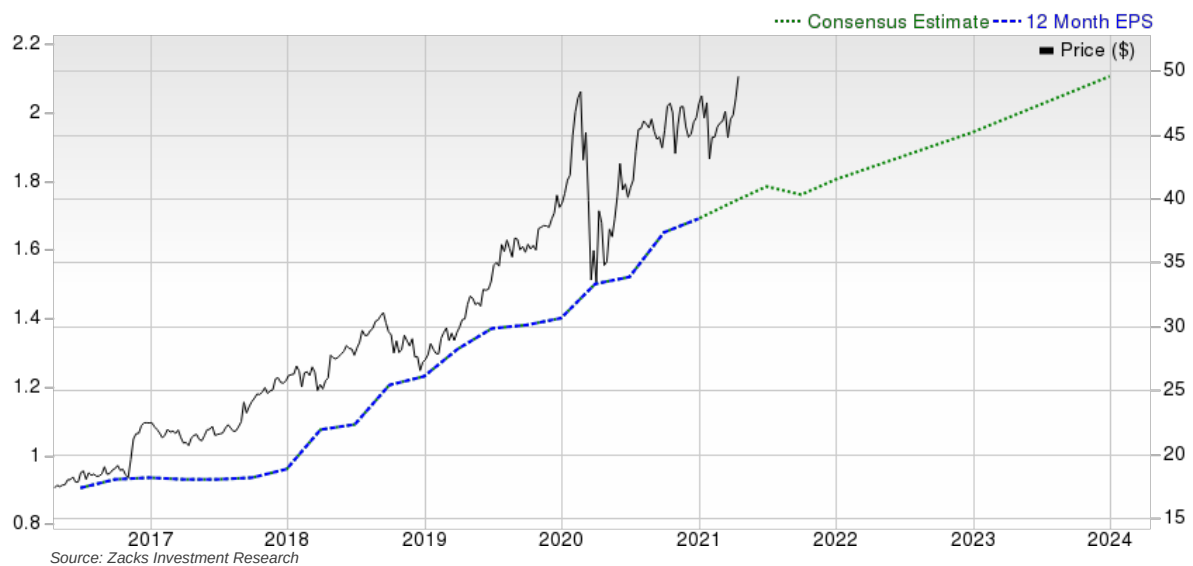
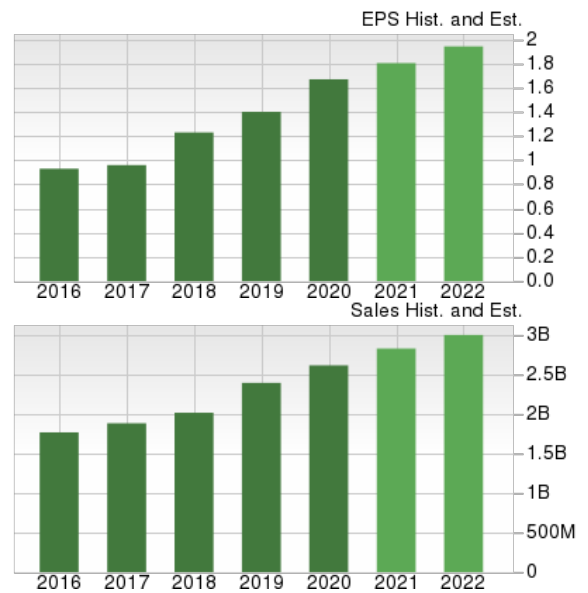
The company reports through four segments:

The Retail segment (56.5% of 2020 commissions and fees) provides a broad range of insurance products and services to commercial, public and quasi-public entities, and to professional and individual customers. The categories of insurance it principally sells include commercial packages, group medical, workers' compensation, property risk and general liability. It also sells and services group and individual life, accident, disability, health, hospitalization, medical, dental and other ancillary insurance products. Approximately 85.9% of the Retail Segment's commissions and fees revenues are commission based.

The National Programs segment (23.4%) provides professional liability and related package products for certain professionals through nationwide networks of independent agents. The segment offers more than 51 programs, which can be grouped into five broad categories namely Professional Programs, Personal Lines Programs, Commercial Programs, Public Entity-Related Programs and the National Flood Program.

The Wholesale Brokerage segment (13.5%) markets and sells excess and surplus commercial and personal lines insurance, primarily through independent agents and brokers. The Wholesale Brokerage Segment offices represent various U.S. and U.K. surplus lines insurance companies. Additionally, certain offices are also Lloyd's of London correspondents.

The Services segment (6.7%) markets and sells excess and surplus commercial and personal lines insurance, primarily through independent agents and brokers. It offers third-party claims administration and medical utilization management services in the workers' compensation and all-lines liability arenas, Medicare Set-aside, Social Security disability, Medicare benefits advocacy and claims adjusting services.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Shares of Brown & Brown have gained 4.5% on a year-to-date basis compared with the industry's increase of 10.3%. Nevertheless, solid fundamentals are likely to drive the stock in the days ahead.
- ▲ Brown & Brown's impressive growth is driven by organic and inorganic means across all segments. Also, strategic acquisitions and mergers help it spread its operations. In over a span of a more than two decades, the company has acquired about 500 insurance intermediary operations. In 2020, it closed 25 transactions with estimated annual revenues of \$197 million. Brown & Brown intends to make consistent investments in boosting organic growth and margin expansion. Solid earnings have allowed the company to expand its capabilities with the buyouts extending the company's geographic footprint.
- ▲ Revenues in the Retail segment have contributed a lion's share to the total revenues of the company. The metric in this segment have been increasing over the past few years driven by higher core commissions and fees, profit-sharing contingent commissions, guaranteed supplemental commissions and investment income. The momentum continued through the fourth quarter of 2020, with total revenue growth of 7.2%, driven by acquisition activity and organic revenue growth of 1.5%. The fourth quarter performance was fueled by new business, better customer retention and premium rate increases, but was impacted by lower exposure units resulting from the pandemic. Organic revenues grew 3.8% in 2020 and 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020. Increased new business, higher customer retention and increasing premium rates across most lines of business will continue to drive the momentum going forward.
- ▲ Further, revenues in the Wholesale Brokerage segment were driven by higher core commissions and fees, profit-sharing contingent commissions, guaranteed supplemental commissions and investment income. Wholesale Brokerage segment delivered total revenue growth of 19.2% and organic revenue growth of 5.8%. Total revenue grew faster than organic revenue due to recent acquisitions with contingent commissions substantially flat year-over-year. In 2020, Wholesale Brokerage segment grew 5.5% organically. Net new business, increase in exposure units, increased rates seen across most lines of business, investment income are likely to drive the momentum going forward.
- ▲ Strategic efforts drove commission and fees, which witnessed a five-year CAGR of 9.6% during 2015-2020. Commission and fees increased 9.4% year over year to about \$2.5 billion in 2020 driven by new and renewal business, acquisitions. Cash received for profit-sharing contingent commissions, core commissions and fees from acquisitions that have no comparable revenues, net new and renewal business, commissions, and fees from businesses or books of business will continue to drive commission and fees in the near term.
- ▲ Backed by a sustained operational performance, Brown & Brown has maintained a strong liquidity position, with \$817 million of cash and cash equivalents as well as \$800 million of accessible capital on revolver. Moreover, consistent operational results have helped Brown & Brown generate solid cash flows to be deployed in strategic initiatives as well as for shareholder-friendly moves. Brown & Brown had a strong year for cash conversion due to the strength of operating model and diversity of businesses. It delivered \$721.6 million of cash flow from operations, representing a continued strong conversion rate of 27.6% as a percentage of revenues.
- ▲ The strong capital and liquidity position enables Brown & Brown to enhance shareholder value via dividend increases and share buybacks. With respect to dividend payments, the company has increased dividend for the last 27 years at a five-year CAGR of 9.7%. Dividend currently yields 0.8% to the company. On May 2019, the company approved an additional repurchase authorization amount of \$372.5 million to bring the total available share repurchase authorization to approximately \$500 million. Between January 2014 and September 2020, the company repurchased shares of \$543.6 million. The company has about \$454 million remaining under its authorization.
- ▲ Brown & Brown has a strong balance sheet by virtue of its solid cash position. It remains well positioned with low leverage and the capital on its balance sheet, as well as access to additional capital on M&A activity. Though the company has long-term debt amounting to \$2 billion as of Dec 31, 2020, of which \$70 million is in current portion, cash and cash equivalents came in at \$817 million for the same period. This suggests that the company has sufficient cash reserves to meet its short-term debt obligations. With additional capital, revolving line of credit and strong generation of cash, the company remains well liquidated. Its debt to capital compared favorably with industry average of 52.3, however, the same deteriorated 330 bps at fourth quarter end from 2019 end. Further, the company's times interest earned of 11.6 in the fourth quarter end was good when compared with the year-ago figure of 9.3, implying that its earnings are sufficient to cover interest obligations.

Brown & Brown boasts impressive growth driven by organic means and impressive inorganic story. Strategic efforts continue to drive commission and fees. Sturdy performance is boosting cash flow.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Brown & Brown has been experiencing rising expenses due to higher employee compensation and benefits, amortization, change in estimated acquisition earn-out payables as well as other operating expenses and interest expense. Total expenses witnessed a CAGR of 9.6% in the past five years (2015-2020). In 2020, expenses increased 6.6% year over year. Such expenses continue to weigh on the bottom line.
- ▼ For interest expense, the company estimates \$7 million and \$9 million increase in 2021, from 2020 due to the new bonds, which were issued in September 2020. It also expects CapEx to decrease in 2021 to approximately \$40 million to \$45 million as it has substantially completed the development of new Daytona Beach campus.
- ▼ Return on equity, a profitability measure, reflecting how effectively the company is utilizing its shareholders fund is lower than the industry average. The company's return on equity is 13.2% while that of the industry is 26.9%.
- ▼ Organic revenues for the Services segment decreased 10.9% year over year in 2020. The decline was attributable to lower claims for our social security advocacy business, certain terminated customer contracts and the impact of the pandemic. The organic revenue decreased 50 basis points in the fourth quarter of 2020. The company expects to deliver modest organic growth in 2021.
- ▼ Brown & Brown has expanded its operations internationally to United Kingdom, Hamilton, Bermuda and George Town, Cayman Islands. Its operations are therefore subject to changes in trade regulations, profit repatriation regulations, foreign currency exchange rate fluctuations, and the economic condition of the country.

Brown & Brown's rising expenses attributable to higher compensation and operating expenses weighing on margin expansion and foreign currency exchange rate fluctuations remain a concern.

Last Earnings Report

Brown & Brown Q4 Earnings & Revenues Top, Rise Y/Y

Brown & Brown reported adjusted fourth-quarter 2020 earnings of 32 cents per share, which came ahead of the Zacks Consensus Estimate as well as the year-ago figure by 14.3%.

The results reflect improved organic growth and margin expansion.

Behind the Headlines

Adjusted revenues of \$642 million beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 3.6%. Moreover, the top line rose 10.9% year over year on higher commissions and fees. Organic revenues increased 4.7% in the reported quarter.

Commissions and fees grew 10.9% year over year to \$581.4 million. Investment income however plunged 33.3% year over year to \$1 million.

Total expenses increased 7.2% to \$511.2 million due to a rise in employee compensation and amortization and depreciation as well as interest expense.

EBITDAC was \$173.9 million, up 11.3% year over year. EBITDAC margin expanded 10 basis points (bps) to 27.1%.

Full-Year Update

Full-year 2020 adjusted income of \$1.67 per share beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.64. The bottom line increased 19.3% year over year.

Total revenues increased 9.2% from the year-ago quarter to \$2.61 billion and beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2.59 billion.

EBITDAC was \$813.4 million, up 13.5% from 2019 with margin expanding 110 bps to 31.1%.

Financial Update

Brown & Brown exited 2020 with cash and cash equivalents of \$1.3 billion, up about 32.1% from 2019-end level. Long-term debt of \$2 billion as of Dec 31, 2020 was up 35% from 2019 end. Net cash provided by operating activities in 2020 was \$721.6 million, up 6.4% year over year.

Dividend Update

The company paid out cash dividend of 9.3 cents per share in the fourth quarter.

Quarter Ending 12/2020

Report Date	Jan 25, 2021
Sales Surprise	3.62%
EPS Surprise	14.29%
Quarterly EPS	0.32
Annual EPS (TTM)	1.69

Recent News

Brown & Brown Boosts Insurance Service With Leon Silver — Apr 14, 2021

Brown & Brown's subsidiary Bridge Specialty Group, LLC has acquired substantially all assets of Leon Silver Associates, LLC (Leon Silver). With the acquisition, Brown & Brown and its subsidiary will leverage the expertise of Leon Silver in offering high-quality products and services. The acquisition is expected to enhance the acquirer's insurance services and cater to the retail agents with better services.

Valuation

Brown & Brown's shares are up 4.5% and up 32.8% in the year-to-date period and over the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Finance sector are up 10.3% and 12.3% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 32.7% and 51.2%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index are up 13.9% in the year-to-date period and 51.2% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 26.85x forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 21.73x for the Zacks sub-industry, 17.1x for the Zacks sector and 23.29x for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 31.16x and as low as 18.64x, with a 5-year median of 23.01x. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$52 price target reflects 28.11x forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for BRO

Valuation Multiples - BRO					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	26.85	21.73	17.1	23.29
	5-Year High	31.16	21.73	17.16	23.83
	5-Year Low	18.64	15.59	11.6	15.3
	5-Year Median	23.01	17.73	14.82	18.01
P/S F12M	Current	4.88	3.58	7.89	4.83
	5-Year High	5.28	3.58	7.89	4.83
	5-Year Low	2.67	2.11	5.03	3.21
	5-Year Median	3.74	2.63	6.16	3.71
P/B TTM	Current	3.74	6.44	3.21	7.11
	5-Year High	4.07	6.85	3.21	7.11
	5-Year Low	2.19	3.64	1.74	3.83
	5-Year Median	2.81	4.84	2.61	4.99

As of 04/16/2021 Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 39% (98 out of 254)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
eHealth, Inc. (EHTH)	Outperform	1
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. (AJG)	Neutral	3
Aon plc (AON)	Neutral	3
Erie Indemnity Company (ERIE)	Neutral	3
Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc. (MMC)	Neutral	3
Robert Half International Inc. (RHI)	Neutral	2
RLI Corp. (RLI)	Neutral	2
Willis Towers Watson Public Limited Company (WLTW)	Neutral	4

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Insurance - Brokerage				Industry Peers		
	BRO	X Industry	S&P 500	AJG	AON	MMC
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	F	-	-	B	C	A
Market Cap	14.05 B	1.82 B	30.15 B	26.70 B	54.04 B	64.76 B
# of Analysts	5	6	12	7	7	8
Dividend Yield	0.75%	0.76%	1.28%	1.40%	0.77%	1.46%
Value Score	D	-	-	C	C	C
Cash/Price	0.10	0.09	0.06	0.14	0.02	0.03
EV/EBITDA	18.02	18.08	17.10	16.81	18.72	18.15
PEG F1	2.76	2.90	2.40	2.26	NA	3.54
P/B	3.75	2.83	4.08	4.22	15.26	6.98
P/CF	22.99	18.71	17.07	17.73	20.25	19.70
P/E F1	27.57	23.97	22.39	27.72	21.84	23.97
P/S TTM	5.37	3.22	3.46	3.81	4.88	3.76
Earnings Yield	3.63%	4.17%	4.41%	3.60%	4.58%	4.17%
Debt/Equity	0.54	0.29	0.66	0.68	2.03	1.17
Cash Flow (\$/share)	2.15	2.15	6.78	7.72	11.81	6.47
Growth Score	C	-	-	B	C	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	15.88%	12.47%	9.34%	11.99%	11.53%	10.97%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	8.02%	9.88%	15.70%	4.54%	11.61%	6.99%
Current Cash Flow Growth	15.66%	-11.26%	0.61%	27.08%	-2.60%	8.32%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	11.61%	11.17%	7.37%	14.11%	5.24%	9.78%
Current Ratio	1.03	1.54	1.39	1.10	1.73	1.24
Debt/Capital	35.05%	22.47%	41.26%	40.63%	67.02%	53.83%
Net Margin	18.39%	9.41%	10.59%	11.69%	17.79%	11.70%
Return on Equity	13.24%	13.24%	14.98%	16.44%	64.56%	30.01%
Sales/Assets	0.31	0.35	0.51	0.32	0.35	0.53
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	8.15%	3.91%	7.43%	8.16%	3.93%	5.07%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	A	C	A
Daily Price Change	1.18%	1.11%	0.49%	1.29%	1.11%	0.38%
1-Week Price Change	2.82%	0.00%	1.54%	4.69%	2.24%	2.46%
4-Week Price Change	8.40%	6.49%	5.18%	8.07%	6.49%	6.81%
12-Week Price Change	4.40%	13.93%	11.23%	14.87%	14.15%	13.96%
52-Week Price Change	32.31%	31.08%	59.10%	69.33%	28.39%	31.08%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	987,571	115,983	1,960,937	831,809	1,580,630	1,571,817
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	-0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.07%	0.09%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.11%	0.00%	0.04%	1.27%	-0.07%	0.09%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	4.89%	1.63%	1.93%	4.00%	3.51%	2.16%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-0.52%	0.00%	0.00%	1.99%	-0.07%	0.10%

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	D
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	F
VGM Score	F

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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Returns quoted represent past performance which is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate so that when shares are redeemed, they may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown.

Investing involves risk; principal loss is possible. There is no guarantee that companies that can issue dividends will declare, continue to pay or increase dividends.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

52-Week High-Low: The range of the highest and lowest prices at which a stock has traded during the past year. This range is determined based on the stock's daily closing price which may differ from the intra-day high or low. Many investors use it as a technical indicator to determine a stock's current value and future price movement. The idea here is that if price breaks out from the 52-week range, in either direction, the momentum may continue in the same direction.

20-Day Average Volume (Shares): The average number of shares of a company traded in a day over the last 20 days. It is a direct indication of a security's overall liquidity. The higher the average daily trading volume, the easier it is to enter or exit the stock at a desired price with more buyers and sellers being available.

Daily Price Change: This is the percentage difference between a trading day's closing price and the prior trading day's closing price. This item is updated at 9 p.m. EST each day.

1-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 5 trading days. This change reflects the collective buying and selling sentiment over the 1-week period.

A strong weekly price increase for the stock, especially when accompanied by increased volume, is an indication of it gaining momentum.

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term price change metric and an indication of the stock gaining momentum.

12-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change of a stock's closing price over the last 60 trading days or past 12 weeks. Similar to 4-week price change, this is a medium-term price change metric. It shows whether a stock has been enjoying strong investor demand, or if it has been in consolidation, or distress over this period.

52-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 260 trading days or past 52 weeks. This long-term price change metric is a good reference point for investors. Some investors seek stocks with the best percentage price change over the last 52 weeks, expecting the momentum to continue.

Market Cap: The number of outstanding common shares of a company times its latest price per share. This figure represents a company's size, which indicates various characteristics, including price stability and risk, in which investors could be interested.

Year-To-Date Price Change: Change in a stock's daily closing price in the period of time beginning the first day of the current calendar year through to the previous trading day.

of Analysts: Number of EPS estimates used in calculating the current-quarter consensus. These estimates come from the brokerage analysts tracking this stock. However, the number of such analysts tracking this stock may not match the number of estimates, as all brokerage analysts may not come up with an estimate or provide it to us.

Beta: A measure of risk commonly used to compare the volatility of a stock to the overall market. The S&P 500 Index is the base for calculating beta and carries a value of 1. A stock with beta below 1 is less risky than the market as a whole. And a stock with beta above 1 is riskier.

Dividend: The portion of earnings a company is expected to distribute to its common shareholders in the next 12 months for each share they own. Dividends are usually paid quarterly. Dividend payments reflect positively on a company and help maintain investors' trust. Investors typically find dividend-paying stocks appealing because the dividend adds to any market price appreciation to result in higher return on investment (ROI). Moreover, a steady or increasing dividend payment provides investors a cushion in a down market.

Dividend Yield: The ratio of a company's annual dividend to its share price. The annual dividend used in the ratio is calculated based on the most recent dividend paid by the company. Dividend yield is an estimate of the dividend-only return from a stock in the next 12 months. Since dividend itself doesn't change frequently, dividend yield usually changes with a stock's price movement. As a result, often an unusually high dividend yield is a result of weak stock price.

S&P 500 Index: The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. It is a market-capitalization-weighted index of stocks of the 500 largest U.S. companies. Each stock's weight in the index is proportionate to its market value.

Industry: One of the 250+ groups that Zacks classifies all stocks into based on the nature of business. These groups are termed as expanded (aka "X") industries and map to their respective (economic) sectors; Zacks has 16 sectors.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company's expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company's current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every \$1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as a the per share market value of a company divided by the value of its tangible assets (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks – intangible assets) per share. Tangible book value is the same thing as book value except it excludes the value of intangible assets to get a step closer to the baseline value of the company.

P/CF Ratio: The price-to-cash flow ratio measures a company's per share market price relative to its trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow per share. This metric is used to determine whether a company is undervalued or overvalued relative to another stock, industry or sector. And like the P/E ratio, a lower number is typically considered better from the value perspective.

One of the reasons why P/CF ratio is often preferred over P/E ratio is the fact that operating cash flow adds back non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization to net income. This feature helps valuing stocks that have positive cash flow but are not profitable because of large noncash charges.

P/FCF Ratio: The price-to-free cash flow ratio is an extension of P/CF ratio, which uses trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow per share instead of operating cash flow per share. This metric is considered a more exact measure than P/CF ratio, as free cash flow subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding activities that generate additional revenues.

Earnings Yield: The earnings yield is calculated as current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by the company's current share price. The ratio, which is the inverse of the P/E ratio, measures the anticipated yield (or return) from earnings for each dollar invested in a stock today.

For example, earnings yield for a stock, which is trading at \$35 and expected to earn \$3 per share in the current fiscal year (F1), would be 0.0857 ($3/35 = 0.0857$) or 8.57%. In other words, for \$1 invested in the stock today, the yield from earnings is anticipated to be 8.57 cents.

Investors most commonly compare the earnings yield of a stock to that of a broad market index (such as the S&P 500) and prevailing interest rates, such as the current 10-year Treasury yield. Since bonds and stocks compete for investors' dollars, stock investors typically demand a higher yield for the extra risk they assume compared to investors of U.S. Treasury-backed securities that offer virtually risk-free returns. This additional return is referred to as the risk premium.

Debt/Equity Ratio: The debt-to-equity ratio is calculated as a company's total liabilities divided by its shareholder equity. This metric is used to gauge a company's financial leverage. In other words, it is a measure of the degree to which a company is financing its operations through debt versus its own funds. The higher the ratio, the higher the risk for shareholders.

However, this ratio is difficult to compare across industry groups where ideal amounts of debt vary. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-equity ratio should be compared with other companies in the same industry.

Cash Flow (\$/share): Cash flow per share is calculated as operating cash flow (after-tax earnings + depreciation + other non-cash charges) divided by common shares outstanding. It is used by many investors as a measure of a company's financial strength. Since cash flow per share takes into consideration a company's ability to generate cash by adding back non-cash expenses, it is regarded by some as a more accurate measure of a company's financial situation than earnings per share, which could be artificially deflated.

Current Ratio: The current ratio or liquidity ratio is a company's current assets divided by its current liabilities. It measures a company's ability to pay short-term obligations. A current ratio that is in line with the industry average or slightly higher is generally considered acceptable. A current ratio that is lower than the industry average would indicate a higher risk of distress or default. A higher number is usually better. However, a very high current ratio compared to the industry average could be an indication of inefficient use of assets by management.

Debt/Capital Ratio: Debt-to-capital ratio is a company's total debt (interest-bearing debt + both short- and long-term liabilities) divided its total capital (interest-bearing debt + shareholders' equity). It is a measure of a company's financial leverage. All else being equal, the higher the debt-to-capital ratio, the riskier the stock.

However, this ratio can vary widely from industry to industry, the ideal amount of required debt being different. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-capital ratio should be compared with the same for its industry.

Net Margin: Net margin is calculated as net income divided by sales. It shows how much of each dollar in sales generated by a company translates into profit. For example, if a company's net margin is 15%, its net income is 15 cents for every \$1 of sales it makes.

A change in margin can reflect either a change in business conditions, or a company's cost controls, or both. If a company's expenses are growing faster than sales, its net margin will decline. However, different net margin rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare net margin rates of companies in the same industry group.

Return on Equity: Return on equity (ROE) is calculated as trailing-12-month net income divided by trailing-12-month average shareholder equity (including reinvested earnings). This metric is considered a measure of how effectively management is using a company's assets to generate profits. For example, if a company's ROE is 10%, it creates 10 cents profits for every \$1 shareholder equity, which is basically the company's assets minus debt. A company's ROE deemed good or bad depends on what's normal for its peers or industry group.

Sales/Assets Ratio: The sales-to-assets ratio or asset utilization ratio or asset turnover ratio is calculated as a company's annual sales divided by average assets (average of assets at the beginning of the year and at the year's end). This metric helps investors understand how effectively a company is using its assets to generate sales. For example, a sales-to-assets ratio of 2.5 indicates that the company generated \$2.50 in sales for every \$1 of assets on its books.

The higher the sales-to-assets ratio, the better the company is performing. However, similar to many other ratios, the asset turnover ratio tends to be higher for companies in certain industries/sectors than in others. So, a company's sales-to-assets ratio should be compared with the same for its industry/sector.

Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years): This is the average annual (trailing-12-month) EPS growth rate over the last 3-5 years. This metric helps investors see how a company's EPS has grown from a long-term perspective.

Note: There are many factors that can influence short-term numbers — a recession will reduce this number, while a recovery will inflate it. The longterm perspective helps smooth out short-term events.

Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0): This is the estimated EPS growth rate for the current financial year. It is calculated as the consensus estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported EPS for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Current Cash Flow Growth: It measures the latest year-over-year change in operating cash flow. Cash flow growth tells an investor how quickly a company is generating inflows of cash from operations. A positive change in the cash flow is desired and shows that more 'cash' is coming in than going out.

Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years): This is the annualized change in cash flow over the last 3-5 years. The change in a longer period helps put the current reading into proper perspective. By looking at the rate, rather than the actual dollar value, the comparison across the industry and peers becomes easier.

Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0): This metric looks at the estimated sales growth for the current year. It is calculated as sales estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported sales for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Like EPS growth, a higher rate is better for sales growth. A look at a company's projected sales growth instantly tells you what the outlook is for their products and services. However, different sales growth rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare sales growth rates of companies in the same industry group.

EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past week. The change in a company's consensus EPS estimate (or earnings estimate revision) has proven to be strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares. It is an integral part of the Zacks Rank.

If a stock's consensus EPS estimate is \$1.10 now versus \$1.00 a week ago, that will be reflected as a 10% upward revision. If, on the other hand, it went from \$1.00 to 90 cents, that would be a 10% downward revision.

EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past four weeks.

A stock's earnings estimate revision in a 1-week period is important. But it's more meaningful to look at the longer-term revision. And, of course, the 4-week change helps put the 1-week change into proper perspective.

EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past 12 weeks.

This metric essentially shows how the consensus EPS estimate has changed over a period longer than 1 week or 4 weeks.

EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal quarter over the past four weeks.

While the revision in consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year is strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares, the estimate revision for the current fiscal quarter is an important metric as well, especially over the short term, and particularly as a stock approaches its earnings date. If a stock's Q1 EPS estimate decreases ahead of its earnings release, it's usually a negative sign, whereas an increase is a positive sign.