

Burlington Stores(BURL)

\$245.16 (As of 12/17/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$257.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 06/02/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

4-Sell

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:D

Value: D

Growth: C

Momentum: D

Summary

Shares of Burlington Stores have underperformed the industry in the past six months. Although the company reported better-than-expected results in third-quarter fiscal 2020, its top line continued to decline year over year. The top line fell year over year mainly owing to soft comparable-store sales. Sales trends were challenging in August due to a deficiency in inventory levels and late back-to-school purchases. Management also stated that the fourth quarter was off to a weak start with comps declining low-double digits through Nov 24. Nonetheless, it saw early encouraging signs with respect to Burlington 2.0 Off-Price Full Potential Strategy. This strategy focuses on improving the execution of the off-price model. Going ahead, it continues to plan the business conservatively, with a focus on tight control over liquidity, inventory and costs.

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$250.89 - \$105.67
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	677,795
Market Cap	\$16.2 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	7.5%
Beta	0.75
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Retail - Discount Stores
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 41% (104 out of 255)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	52.6%
Last Sales Surprise	7.7%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-10.2%
Expected Report Date	03/04/2021
Earnings ESP	-2.9%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	1,637 E	1,632 E	1,944 E	2,407 E	7,734 E
2021	802 A	1,012 A	1,665 A	2,080 E	5,551 E
2020	1,629 A	1,656 A	1,775 A	2,201 A	7,261 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$0.59 E	\$1.14 E	\$1.64 E	\$3.72 E	\$6.97 E
2021	-\$4.76 A	-\$0.56 A	\$0.29 A	\$2.07 E	-\$2.84 E
2020	\$1.26 A	\$1.36 A	\$1.55 A	\$3.25 A	\$7.41 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	NA
P/E F1	NA
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	2.9

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

Overview

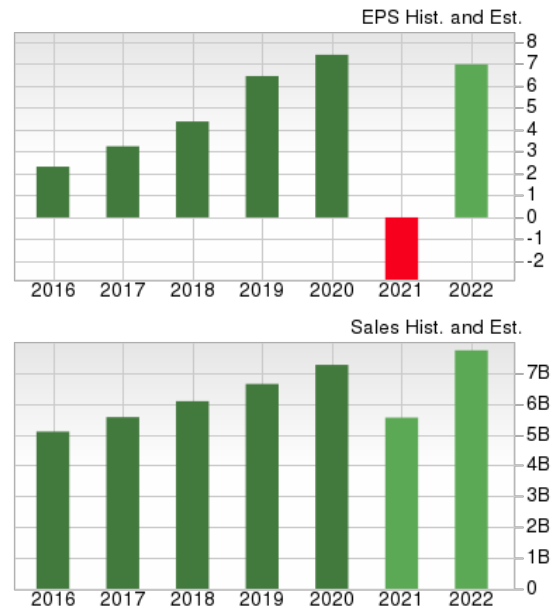
Founded in 1972, and headquartered in New Jersey, Burlington Stores, Inc. functions as a retailer of branded apparel products and is also a Fortune 500 company. It operates in the United States and Puerto Rico. The company offers products such as ladies sportswear, menswear, youth apparel, baby furniture, accessories, home décor and gifts, and coats. The company which started business as a coat-focused off-price retailer is now focusing on “open to buy” off-price model. The current model is helping customers to get nationally branded, fashionable, high quality as well as right priced products.

The company's wider selection provides a broad range of apparel, accessories and furnishings for all age groups. Burlington Stores provide customers a full line of assortments, comprising - women's ready-to-wear apparel, accessories, footwear, menswear, youth apparel, baby, home, coats, beauty, toys and gifts.

In addition, the company purchases both the pre-season and in-season merchandise in order to respond quickly to evolving market conditions and consumer fashion preference. Moreover, Burlington Stores' continues to emphasize rich heritage of coats and outerwear, and are known as the destination for coat shoppers.

Furthermore, Burlington Stores' selection of staple and destination products lures customers from beyond the local trade areas. These products drive higher store traffic and differentiate the company from its competitors.

As of Oct 31, 2020, the company had 769 stores across 45 States and Puerto Rico.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Q3 Highlights:** Burlington Stores reported better-than-expected results for third-quarter fiscal 2020. Further, the company saw early encouraging signs during the quarter with respect to Burlington 2.0 Off-Price Full Potential Strategy. This strategy helped the company with robust opportunistic buys and inventory levels. Moreover, merchandise inventories were \$867 million, down 14% from last year, while comparable store inventories fell 20%. The decline was due to the company's conservative inventory plans on account of volatile consumer demand amid the pandemic. Going ahead, management continues to plan the business conservatively, with a focus on tight control over liquidity, inventory and costs.

In an era of competitive retail landscape, Burlington Stores has made multiple changes to its business model to adapt to the ongoing changes in the industry.

▲ **Strategic Initiatives Bode Well:** In an era of competitive retail landscape, Burlington Stores has made multiple changes to its business model to adapt to the ongoing changes in the industry. The company which started business as a coat-focused off-price retailer is now focusing on "open to buy" off-price model. The current model is helping customers to get nationally branded, fashionable, high quality as well as right priced products. Further, over the years the company has increased vendor counts, made technological advancements, initiated better marketing approach and focused on localized assortments. Burlington Stores' long-term strategies include enhancement of assortments with primary focus on home, beauty and gifts categories, in order to make the business less weather sensitive. With regards to the company's marketing endeavors, it is experiencing favorable results from its multichannel engagement strategy.

Further, the company intends to improve operating margin and lower the gap of the same compared with its peers by augmenting sales, optimizing markdowns, effectively managing inventory and focusing on SG&A expenses. In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, management informed that the company has been cutting down on capital spending and operating costs as well as reducing inventory receipts and managing working capital effectively.

▲ **Burlington 2.0 Off-Price Initiative:** The main objective of Burlington 2.0 initiative is to significantly improve the execution of the off-price model. Via this strategy, the company focuses on three aspects, marketing, merchandising, and store prototype. Under marketing aspect, the company looks to communicate a stronger and more direct off-price value message, and hence deliver this communication in a more cost-effective manner. This new marketing program is expected to leverage the company's marketing reach and expenditure in the upcoming years. With respect to merchandising, management expects investing in the merchandising capabilities to better execute the off-price model and boost growth. This includes a blend of external hires and the development of internal talent. We note that the company is relatively at an early stage of development across many of its merchandising categories.

In relation to the store prototype aspect, management believes that it has an opportunity to significantly enhance store-level productivity and economics by lowering the size of stores. The company's real estate and store operations teams have worked on a 25,000 square-foot store prototype. The economics of this format are favorable, and management anticipates this to be a central part of the latest store opening and relocation programs, particularly from 2022 onwards.

▲ **Store-Expansion Strategy:** In order to drive top-line growth, Burlington Stores is focused on store expansion. The company's store count has increased from 13 in 1980 to 727 stores in fiscal 2019. In fiscal 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, the company opened 24, 28, 30, 68 and 76 stores, respectively.

During the fiscal third quarter of fiscal 2020, the company introduced 30 net new stores, reaching the overall count to 769. This consisted of seven relocations. For fiscal 2020, the company still anticipates opening 62 stores, while relocating or shutting 28 stores. In the fiscal fourth quarter, it does not expect to open stores. However, it does anticipate closing eight stores, resulting in an estimated count of 761 outlets at the end of fiscal 2020.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Top Line Continues to Decline:** Although Burlington Stores reported better-than-expected sales in third-quarter fiscal 2020, its sales continued to decline year over year in the reported quarter. Total revenues fell 6.4% year over year in the reported quarter. Also, net sales plunged 6.2% year over year, while other revenues declined 62.1%. Further, comparable-store sales (comps) fell 11% as sales trends remained challenging in August owing to a deficiency in inventory levels and late back-to-school purchases. However, comps trends improved for the combined September and October period on recovering inventory levels and higher back-to-school demand. Comps were down 4% for the combined period. We note that shares of Burlington Stores have gained 17.8% in the past six months but have underperformed the industry's 28.7% rally.

Burlington Stores continues to grapple with soft sales trend. In third-quarter fiscal 2020, its sales continued to decline year over year on a soft comparable-store sales.

▼ **Outlook:** Management did not issue sales and earnings view for fiscal 2020 due to the volatility regarding the pace of recovery of consumer demand. Management stated that the fourth quarter was off to a weak start with comps declining low-double digits through Nov 24 on a year-over-year basis due to warmer temperatures. Also, the resurgence in COVID-19 cases and related restrictions by government authorities might further affect the trend. For fiscal fourth quarter, gross margin is likely to improve at a lower level than in fiscal third quarter as clearance levels are down year over year. Also, management projects continued deleverage in SG&A and product sourcing expenses for the fourth quarter.

▼ **Financial Analysis:** At the end of third-quarter fiscal 2020 (Oct 31, 2020), Burlington Stores had a long-term debt of \$2,170 million, which increased 0.4% sequentially. Moreover, the company's debt-to-capitalization ratio of 0.88 is quite high when compared to 0.48 for the industry to which it belongs. Again, the company's cash and cash equivalents of \$1,348.7 million at the quarter end looks insufficient to meet the current debt level. Further, cash flow provided by operations was negative \$116.9 million during the first nine months of fiscal 2020.

▼ **Dip in Consumer Sentiment May Impact Sales:** Any dip in consumer confidence – a key determinant of the economy's health – may have serious bearing on spending. The company's customers remain sensitive to macroeconomic factors including interest rate hikes, increase in fuel and energy costs, credit availability, unemployment levels, and high household debt levels, which may negatively impact their sentiment. For now, the novel coronavirus has wreaked havoc. The retail sector, in particular, remains under pressure due to major supply-chain bottlenecks, reduced traffic, an increasing number of store closures and limited hours of working. Again, analysts are expecting job losses as well as lower disposable income due to this catastrophe. This could compel consumers to avoid discretionary spending and focus on necessities for the time being. This may adversely impact the company's growth and profitability.

Last Earnings Report

Burlington Stores Q3 Earnings & Revenues Beat Estimates

Burlington Stores reported better-than-expected results for third-quarter fiscal 2020. However, both top and bottom lines declined year over year on adverse impacts of COVID-19. Nonetheless, the company saw early encouraging signs during the quarter with respect to Burlington 2.0 Off-Price Full Potential Strategy. This strategy helped the company with robust opportunistic buys and inventory levels.

Quarter Ending	10/2020
Report Date	Nov 24, 2020
Sales Surprise	7.68%
EPS Surprise	52.63%
Quarterly EPS	0.29
Annual EPS (TTM)	-1.78

Let's Introspect

The company delivered third-quarter adjusted earnings of 29 cents per share that surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 19 cents. However, the bottom line compared unfavorably with earnings of \$1.53 recorded in the prior-year quarter, mainly due to lower sales coupled with increased product sourcing costs with respect to disruptions related to the pandemic.

Total revenues were \$1,667.2 million, which fell 6.4% year over year. We note that net sales plunged 6.2% year over year to \$1,664.7 million, while other revenues declined 62.1% to \$2.5 million. The Zacks Consensus Estimate was pegged at \$1,546 million.

Further, comparable-store sales (comps) fell 11% as sales trends remained challenging in August owing to a deficiency in inventory levels and late back-to-school purchases. However, comps trends improved for the combined September and October period on recovering inventory levels and higher back-to-school demand. Comps were down 4% for the combined period.

Gross margin expanded 260 basis points (bps) to 45% in the fiscal third quarter, owing to reduced markdowns and higher markup, partly offset by increased freight costs.

Adjusted SG&A expenses were \$495.5 million, up 1.9% year over year on higher store-related and corporate expenses, partly offset by lower marketing costs. The SG&A expenses include product-sourcing costs of \$144 million, which comprise cost of processing goods via supply chain, and buying costs. Further, adjusted EBIT was \$58.6 million during the reported quarter, down 58.1% from the year-ago quarter.

Other Financial Aspects

The company ended the reported quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$1,348.7 million, long-term debt of \$2,169.5 million and shareholders' equity of \$286.6 million. Also, it had \$292 million cash on its ABL facility, having \$250 million outstanding at the end of the quarter.

Moreover, merchandise inventories were \$867 million, down 14% from last year, while comparable store inventories fell 20%. The decline was due to the company's conservative inventory plans on account of volatile consumer demand amid the pandemic.

Meanwhile, net capital expenditures were \$188 million in the first nine months of fiscal 2020. Further, net cash used in operating activities were \$116.9 million in the aforementioned period. For fiscal 2020, capital expenditures, net of landlord allowances, are now envisioned to be at nearly \$245 million.

Store Update

In fiscal third quarter, the company introduced 30 net stores, bringing the overall count to 769. This also consisted of seven relocations.

For fiscal 2020, the company still anticipates opening 62 stores while relocating or shutting 28 stores. In the fiscal fourth quarter, it does not expect to open stores. However, it does anticipate closing eight stores, resulting in an estimated count of 761 outlets at the end of fiscal.

Outlook

Management did not issue sales and earnings view for fiscal 2020 due to the volatility regarding the pace of recovery of consumer demand. Management stated that the fourth quarter was off to a weak start with November-to-date comps declining low-double digits due to warmer temperatures on a year-over-year basis. Also, the resurgence in COVID-19 cases and related restrictions by government authorities might further affect the trend.

For fiscal fourth quarter, gross margin is likely to improve at a lower level than in fiscal third quarter as clearance levels are down year over year. Also, management projects continued deleveraged SG&A and product sourcing expenses for the fourth quarter.

Interest expense, excluding \$24 million non-cash interest on convertible notes, is projected to be \$75 million for the fiscal year.

Valuation

Burlington Stores shares are up 7.5% in the year-to-date period and nearly 8.7% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and Zacks Retail-Wholesale sector are up 23.9% and 41%, respectively, in the year-to-date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 24.3% and 43.1%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 17.6% in the year-to-date period and 18.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 42.19X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 26.28X for the Zacks sub-industry, 31.28X for the Zacks sector and 22.78X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 121.1X and as low as 14.59X, with a 5-year median of 23.57X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$257 price target reflects 44.23X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for BURL

Valuation Multiples - BURL					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	42.19	26.28	31.28	22.78
	5-Year High	121.1	29.98	34.05	23.47
	5-Year Low	14.59	17.93	19.08	15.27
	5-Year Median	23.57	20.23	23.62	17.77
P/S F12M	Current	2.17	1.6	1.33	4.28
	5-Year High	2.24	1.62	1.33	4.3
	5-Year Low	0.57	0.96	0.83	3.17
	5-Year Median	1.38	1.18	1.01	3.67
P/B TTM	Current	56.67	13.54	5.78	6.15
	5-Year High	109.6	13.64	6.46	6.18
	5-Year Low	NA	7.25	3.68	3.74
	5-Year Median	33.83	9.2	5.07	4.94

As of 12/17/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

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



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Target Corporation (TGT)	Outperform	2
Best Buy Co., Inc. (BBY)	Neutral	3
Big Lots, Inc. (BIG)	Neutral	3
Costco Wholesale Corporation (COST)	Neutral	3
Dollar General Corporation (DG)	Neutral	3
Dollar Tree, Inc. (DLTR)	Neutral	3
Five Below, Inc. (FIVE)	Neutral	2
Ollies Bargain Outlet Holdings, Inc. (OLLI)	Neutral	4

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Retail - Discount Stores				Industry Peers		
	BURL	X Industry	S&P 500	BIG	DLTR	TGT
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Outperform
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	4	-	-	3	3	2
VGM Score	D	-	-	B	A	A
Market Cap	16.24 B	21.41 B	26.46 B	1.75 B	26.59 B	85.75 B
# of Analysts	10	11	14	6	10	12
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.49%	2.55%	0.00%	1.59%
Value Score	D	-	-	A	B	B
Cash/Price	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.33	0.04	0.07
EV/EBITDA	20.22	14.30	14.51	2.63	12.89	12.69
PEG F1	NA	2.33	2.83	0.55	1.85	2.33
P/B	56.67	6.44	3.61	1.47	3.82	6.44
P/CF	22.85	20.54	13.93	6.56	12.74	14.71
P/E F1	NA	20.15	22.22	6.05	20.06	19.77
P/S TTM	2.85	1.02	2.79	0.29	1.06	0.97
Earnings Yield	-1.16%	3.82%	4.29%	16.54%	4.99%	5.06%
Debt/Equity	7.57	0.54	0.70	0.03	0.46	0.94
Cash Flow (\$/share)	10.73	6.38	6.94	7.18	8.87	11.64
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	A	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	19.33%	10.07%	9.69%	10.07%	14.77%	8.77%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-138.30%	15.42%	1.21%	111.94%	18.42%	35.52%
Current Cash Flow Growth	7.36%	4.53%	5.22%	0.18%	-55.39%	10.26%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	18.02%	9.69%	8.33%	2.93%	19.78%	3.95%
Current Ratio	1.51	1.35	1.38	1.49	1.28	1.05
Debt/Capital	88.33%	35.07%	42.00%	3.04%	31.66%	48.39%
Net Margin	-2.92%	2.45%	10.44%	10.30%	3.84%	4.31%
Return on Equity	-33.07%	20.81%	14.99%	26.25%	19.05%	34.94%
Sales/Assets	0.89	1.34	0.50	1.63	1.23	1.90
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-23.55%	4.00%	0.35%	16.86%	7.99%	16.55%
Momentum Score	D	-	-	C	C	A
Daily Price Change	4.55%	0.79%	0.62%	1.34%	0.18%	-0.26%
1-Week Price Change	-0.68%	-0.77%	-1.29%	-4.09%	-5.30%	-1.90%
4-Week Price Change	5.18%	5.53%	3.50%	-5.43%	19.57%	-0.08%
12-Week Price Change	26.32%	22.11%	19.48%	3.00%	27.84%	12.66%
52-Week Price Change	7.77%	22.12%	6.72%	61.15%	22.75%	33.05%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	677,795	1,673,559	1,976,201	1,556,902	2,513,454	3,702,305
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	1.46%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-10.21%	5.61%	0.00%	0.69%	7.51%	18.96%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	-15.52%	10.65%	3.94%	14.19%	7.11%	21.07%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-20.00%	1.28%	0.00%	-1.53%	8.17%	15.52%

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	D
VGM Score	D

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.