

Crown Holdings Inc. (CCK)

\$98.26 (As of 12/07/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$113.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Outperform

(Since: 10/22/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

2-Buy

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: C

Growth: A

Momentum: F

Summary

Crown Holdings' earnings estimates for the current quarter and current year have been stable of late. The company expects adjusted earnings per share in the range of \$5.65 to \$5.70 for the ongoing year. It will benefit from rising global beverage can demand as consumers are favoring cans over other packaging formats. The company remains poised to capitalize on beverage can demand through capacity additions and building new plants in existing markets as well as strategic acquisitions. Moreover, the company's European Food and Asia-Pacific segment will gain from solid demand and several can capacity extension projects in the near term. This will fuel the company's results in the current year. Crown Holdings is focused on implementing its capacity-expansion projects with strong liquidity and sound capital structure.

Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$99.86 - \$42.97
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	674,550
Market Cap	\$13.2 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	35.5%
Beta	1.13
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Containers - Metal and Glass
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 3% (8 out of 254)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	22.5%
Last Sales Surprise	3.5%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	02/02/2021
Earnings ESP	-1.2%
P/E TTM	18.0
P/E F1	17.2
PEG F1	2.5
P/S TTM	1.2

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	2,840 E	2,949 E	3,346 E	3,000 E	12,139 E
2020	2,757 A	2,689 A	3,167 A	2,871 E	11,478 E
2019	2,755 A	3,035 A	3,084 A	2,791 A	11,665 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.30 E	\$1.59 E	\$2.03 E	\$1.42 E	\$6.36 E
2020	\$1.13 A	\$1.33 A	\$1.96 A	\$1.29 E	\$5.71 E
2019	\$1.05 A	\$1.46 A	\$1.56 A	\$1.04 A	\$5.11 A

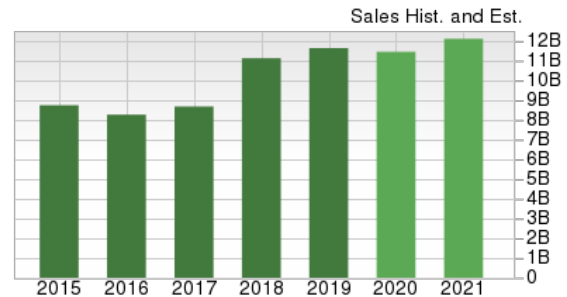
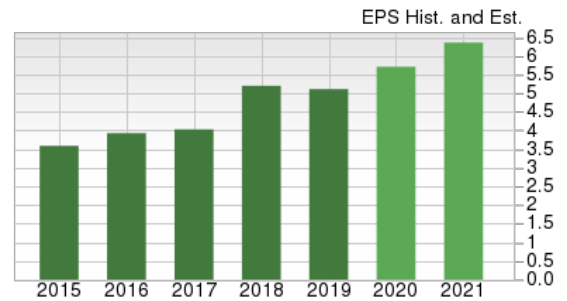
*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 12/07/2020. The reports text is as of 12/08/2020.

Overview

Headquartered at Philadelphia, PA, Crown Holdings is a leading global manufacturer of packaging products for consumer goods. Crown makes a wide variety of steel and aluminum cans for food, beverage, household, and other consumer products and metal vacuum closures, steel crowns and caps. The company reports its performance in five operating segments.

- **Americas Beverage** (33% of fiscal 2019 revenues) — The division manufactures aluminum beverage cans and ends, steel crowns, glass bottles and aluminum closures and supplies a variety of customers from its operations in the United States, Brazil, Canada, Colombia and Mexico.
- **European Beverage** (15%) — The segment manufactures steel and aluminum beverage cans, and ends and supplies a variety of customers from its operations throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.
- **European Food** (18%) — The segment manufactures steel and aluminum food cans, ends and metal vacuum closures, and supplies a variety of customers from its operations throughout Europe and Africa.
- **Asia-Pacific** (13%) — The segment primarily consists of beverage can operations in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam and also includes the company's non-beverage can operations, primarily food cans and specialty packaging in China, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
- **Transit Packaging** (22%) — In April 2018, the company completed acquisition of Signode, which is reported as the Transit Packaging segment. The Transit Packaging segment includes the company's global industrial and protective solutions and equipment and tools businesses.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ The company expects the North American market to remain solid in the current year backed by strong beverage can demand. Beverage can volumes remained strong in Brazil, Europe and the United States, as consumers continue to increasingly prefer cans over other packaging formats. Sales unit volumes in the European food segment increased 10% during the September-end quarter. The European food can demand will continue to be strong, reflecting solid crop performance. Consumer activity in Latin America is strong on robust demand. Moreover, sales unit volumes in Asia Pacific is improving gradually as demand picks up across the region. The company expects robust demand for can packaging and several can capacity extension projects will fuel its results in the current year. Crown Holdings' products are significant part of food and beverage supply chains, and also provide critical support to the transportation industry.
- ▲ Crown Holdings is anticipated to gain from a rise in global beverage-can demand. Developing markets such as Mexico and Brazil have experienced higher growth rates due to rising per capita income and the consequent increase in beverage consumption. While the economies in Europe and North America are more mature, there are still growth opportunities aided by beverages, such as energy drinks, teas, juices, sparkling water and craft beer, and an increased preference for cans over certain other forms of beverage packaging. With its many inherent benefits, including being infinitely recyclable, the beverage can continue to become the increasingly preferred package for marketers and consumers globally.
- ▲ Crown Holdings continues to implement several numbers of beverage-can capacity-expansion projects in a bid to meet the surging beverage-can demand. In the ongoing year, the company already has commercialized more than 2 billion units of annual capacity across the Americas Beverage businesses, and will add more than 4.5 billion units of annual production capacity in 2021. Construction is underway at a new state-of-the-art beverage can facility in Bowling Green, Kentucky, which is expected to start in second-quarter 2021. Backed by rising demand expectations, the company announced that it will add a second line to that facility that will come online in late third-quarter 2021. To meet the expanding requirements of specialty cans in the Pacific Northwest, the company will construct a third line in the Olympia, Washington plant, which is scheduled to commence production during the third quarter of 2021. The company will add a second line in its recently-constructed facility in Rio Verde which is expected to commence operations during the third quarter of 2021.
- ▲ Crown Holdings is focused on disciplined pricing, cost control and capital allocation. Through the current year, the company's primary capital-allocation focus will be to reduce leverage while still investing in its business. Crown Holdings continues to pursue growth opportunities through capacity additions to existing plants, new plants in existing markets, along with strategic acquisitions in geographic areas and product lines. The company is also focused on maintaining strong liquidity position and a sound capital structure. At the end of the third quarter, the company had cash in hand of \$613 million, up from year-earlier quarter's \$339 million. The company projects adjusted free cash flow of approximately \$550 million and capital expenditures of \$600 million for 2020. As of the quarter's end, Crown Holdings' long-term debt decreased to \$8,039 million from \$8,042 million as of end of the prior-year quarter. With ample liquidity and solid free cash flow, Crown Holdings is well poised to sail through the current turbulent situation.

Crown Holdings will benefit from investment in capacity to meet solid global beverage-can demand, acquisitions to increase geographic presence and product line as well as focus on cost control.

Risks

- The company now expects fourth-quarter adjusted EPS between \$1.22 and \$1.27, down from the prior guided range of \$1.50 to \$1.60. For the current year, the company expects adjusted EPS in the range of \$5.65 to \$5.70. However, pandemic-induced uncertainties might impact the company's results.
 - Even though the Transit Packaging segment's performance improved in the third quarter, it remains below the pre-pandemic levels due to soft industrial demand. Per the Institute for Supply Management's report, the U.S. Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) came in at 57.5% in November, indicating consecutive six months of expansion. It remains to be seen whether the recovery will sustain, considering the second wave of coronavirus cases in Europe and parts of the United States. Notably, the PMI had plunged to 41.5% in April thanks to the impact of the pandemic — the lowest since April 2009 when it registered 39.9%.
 - Crown Holdings uses various raw materials, such as steel, aluminum, tin, water, natural gas, electricity and other processed energy, in its manufacturing operations. Signode, which its subsidiary now, also uses steel and materials derived from crude oil and natural gas, such as polyethylene and polypropylene resins. The prices of certain raw materials used by the company, such as steel, aluminum and processed energy, have historically been subject to volatility. Also, the company is subject to fluctuations in the cost of these raw materials due to the tariffs imposed in the United States, which may escalate costs. The company may not be able to pass through the rise in raw materials costs to its customers, without suffering loss in unit volume, revenues and operating income.
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Last Earnings Report

Crown Holdings Q3 Earnings & Sales Top Estimates, Up Y/Y

Crown Holdings reported third-quarter 2020 adjusted earnings per share of \$1.96, surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.60. The bottom-line figure increased 25.6% year over year.

Including one-time items, earnings per share improved 17% year over year to \$1.59 in the reported quarter.

Net sales in the quarter came in at \$3,167 million, up from the year-ago quarter's \$3,084 million. The top line increased on solid beverage-can and food-can volumes, partly offset by the pass through of lower material costs. The reported figure also beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$3,060 million.

Quarter Ending 09/2020

Report Date	Oct 19, 2020
Sales Surprise	3.49%
EPS Surprise	22.50%
Quarterly EPS	1.96
Annual EPS (TTM)	5.46

Cost and Margins

Cost of products sold was up 0.9% year over year to \$2,478 million. On a year-over-year basis, gross profit climbed 9.5% to \$689 million. Gross margin expanded to 21.8% from the year-ago quarter's 20.4%.

Selling and administrative expenses declined 2.6% year over year to \$152 million. Segment operating income increased 16.7% year over year to \$461 million during the September-end quarter. Operating margin came in at 14.6% compared with the 12.8% recorded in the prior-year quarter.

Segment Performance

Net sales in the Americas Beverage segment came in at \$960 million, up 15% year over year. Segment operating profit jumped 44% year over year to \$193 million.

The European Beverage segment's sales inched up 0.5% year over year to \$418 million. Operating income came in at \$76 million, up 18.7% year on year.

Revenues in the European Food segment climbed 7.2% year over year to \$623 million. Segment operating profit increased 14% year over year to \$90 million.

The Asia-Pacific segment's revenues declined 12% year over year to \$281 million. Operating profit fell 12.7% year over year to \$41 million.

Revenues in the Transit Packaging segment totaled \$511 million compared with the year-ago quarter's \$564 million. Operating profit was down 2.7% year over year to \$72 million.

Financial Update

Crown Holdings had cash and cash equivalents of \$613 million at the end of the reported quarter compared with the year-earlier quarter's \$339 million. The company generated \$309 million cash in operating activities during the first nine months of 2020 compared with the \$201 million witnessed in the comparable period in 2019.

As of the July-September quarter's end, Crown Holdings' long-term debt decreased to \$8,039 million from \$8,042 million as of end of the prior-year quarter.

The company plans to initiate a quarterly dividend of at least 20 cents per share. It will make the first payment in the first quarter of 2021.

Outlook

Crown Holdings now expects fourth-quarter adjusted earnings per share between \$1.22 and \$1.27. For the current year, the company now expects adjusted EPS in the range of \$5.65 to \$5.70. Management projects adjusted free cash flow of approximately \$550 million and capital expenditures of \$600 million for 2020.

The company's products are significant part of the food and beverage supply chains, and also provide critical support to the transportation industry. It is focused on ensuring that its manufacturing facilities across the globe remain operational while continuing to meet the evolving customer demand by delivering high quality products.

Crown Holdings continues to implement several numbers of beverage-can capacity-expansion projects in a bid to meet the surging beverage-can demand. Also, it is committed to implement the previously-announced capacity-expansion projects with its strong liquidity position and sound capital structure.

Valuation

Crown Holdings' shares are up 35.5% in the year-to-date period and 33.1% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks Containers - Metals and Glass industry and the Industrial Products sector are up 39.3% and 16.2% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 39.6% and 19.5%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 15.1% in the year-to-date period and 18.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 15.55X forward 12-month earnings, which compares with 21.10X for the Zacks sub-industry, 23.18X for the Zacks sector and 22.90X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 16.26X and as low as 7.02X, with a 5-year median of 12.85X.

Our Outperform recommendation indicates that the stock will perform better than the market. Our \$113 price target reflects 17.88X Forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for CCK:

Valuation Multiples - CCK					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	15.55	21.1	23.18	22.9
	5-Year High	16.26	21.13	23.18	23.47
	5-Year Low	7.02	11.41	12.61	15.27
	5-Year Median	12.85	16.1	17.76	17.77
P/S F12M	Current	1.1	1.83	3.33	4.31
	5-Year High	1.1	1.83	3.33	4.31
	5-Year Low	0.45	0.89	1.6	3.17
	5-Year Median	0.82	1.17	2.11	3.68
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	11.86	15.31	22.45	16.52
	5-Year High	11.86	16.66	22.57	16.52
	5-Year Low	7.46	8.9	11.1	9.54
	5-Year Median	9.71	12.44	15.12	13.14

As of 12/07/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 3% (8 out of 254)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Ball Corporation (BLL)	Outperform	2
Sealed Air Corporation (SEE)	Outperform	2
Amcor PLC (AMCR)	Neutral	3
AptarGroup, Inc. (ATR)	Neutral	2
Berry Global Group, Inc. (BERY)	Neutral	3
Graphic Packaging Holding Company (GPK)	Neutral	3
Silgan Holdings Inc. (SLGN)	Neutral	2
Sonoco Products Company (SON)	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Containers - Metal And Glass				Industry Peers		
	CCK	X Industry	S&P 500	BLL	SEE	SLGN
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Outperform	-	-	Outperform	Outperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	2	2	2
VGM Score	B	-	-	D	B	A
Market Cap	13.24 B	13.24 B	26.33 B	31.24 B	6.96 B	3.87 B
# of Analysts	8	8	13	9	8	6
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.63%	1.5%	0.63%	1.43%	1.37%
Value Score	C	-	-	D	B	B
Cash/Price	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.05
EV/EBITDA	12.31	12.31	14.68	23.69	14.69	12.05
PEG F1	2.46	3.44	2.79	6.50	1.83	2.35
P/B	5.71	5.71	3.61	10.56	284.21	3.18
P/CF	11.06	11.06	13.93	20.30	11.76	8.60
P/E F1	17.21	17.20	22.05	32.52	14.53	11.75
P/S TTM	1.16	1.16	2.84	2.74	1.43	0.82
Earnings Yield	5.81%	5.81%	4.36%	3.08%	6.89%	8.51%
Debt/Equity	3.47	2.60	0.70	2.60	151.43	2.60
Cash Flow (\$/share)	8.88	4.70	6.94	4.70	3.82	4.07
Growth Score	A	-	-	C	A	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	9.53%	11.52%	9.69%	11.52%	3.85%	15.42%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	11.77%	17.27%	1.00%	16.08%	9.53%	37.88%
Current Cash Flow Growth	7.40%	5.44%	5.22%	4.20%	10.79%	5.44%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	12.67%	12.67%	8.33%	13.04%	-2.40%	4.92%
Current Ratio	1.19	1.19	1.38	1.07	1.27	1.47
Debt/Capital	77.62%	72.22%	42.00%	72.22%	99.34%	72.19%
Net Margin	4.52%	4.54%	10.40%	4.54%	9.57%	5.98%
Return on Equity	33.90%	33.14%	14.99%	33.14%	-453.43%	29.13%
Sales/Assets	0.74	0.74	0.50	0.68	0.84	0.81
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-1.60%	1.42%	0.35%	1.42%	1.39%	8.70%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	B	D	C
Daily Price Change	0.01%	0.37%	-0.49%	1.42%	-2.31%	0.37%
1-Week Price Change	2.81%	2.17%	1.73%	-2.28%	3.17%	2.17%
4-Week Price Change	7.56%	2.71%	4.72%	2.71%	4.69%	2.13%
12-Week Price Change	29.73%	14.67%	13.55%	14.67%	14.29%	-4.66%
52-Week Price Change	33.11%	33.11%	6.52%	48.92%	15.28%	14.79%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	674,550	674,550	1,975,294	1,692,464	1,123,338	442,397
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.04%	0.11%	0.00%	2.36%	0.00%	0.11%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	10.01%	6.16%	3.94%	6.16%	5.73%	4.72%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.19%	0.63%	0.00%	2.75%	0.00%	0.63%

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	C
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	F
VGM Score	B

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

Disclosures

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

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

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Periods:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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