

## Delta Air Lines, Inc. (DAL)

**\$27.32** (As of 04/29/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$23.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:** Underperform

(Since: 04/08/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

Short Term: 1-3 Months

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

**3-Hold**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:F

Value: B

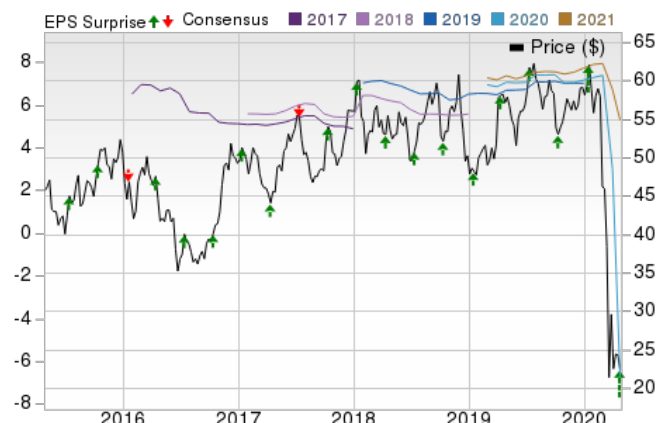
Growth: F

Momentum: F

### Summary

Shares of Delta Air Lines have declined 50% since March as it takes a significant hit from the coronavirus outbreak, which crippled air travel demand. Consequently, the carrier reduced its flight capacity. In fact, the company posted its first quarterly loss since 2010 in first-quarter 2020, due to the coronavirus-induced dwindling passenger revenues (down 18.2%). Moreover, the carrier expects second-quarter 2020 (Apr-Jun) revenues to shrink as much as 90%. The negativity surrounding the stock is evident from the Zacks Consensus Estimate for current-year earnings being revised downward over the past 60 days. However, modest fuel prices should help partly offset the revenue decline. Delta's decision to launch cargo-only flights on the Shanghai-Detroit route is an added positive.

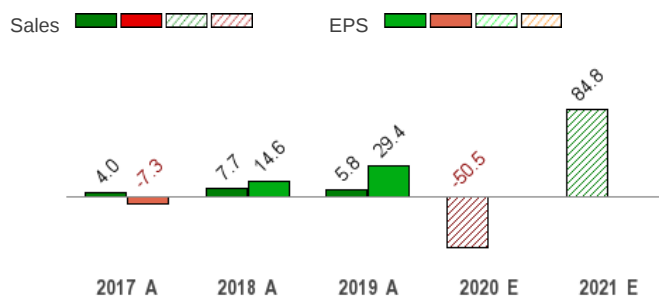
### Price, Consensus & Surprise



### Data Overview

|                            |                                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 52 Week High-Low           | \$63.44 - \$19.10                        |
| 20 Day Average Volume (sh) | 61,605,864                               |
| Market Cap                 | \$17.4 B                                 |
| YTD Price Change           | -53.3%                                   |
| Beta                       | 1.59                                     |
| Dividend / Div Yld         | \$0.00 / 0.0%                            |
| Industry                   | <a href="#">Transportation - Airline</a> |
| Zacks Industry Rank        | Bottom 40% (151 out of 253)              |

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



|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Last EPS Surprise         | 29.2%      |
| Last Sales Surprise       | -10.9%     |
| EPS F1 Est- 4 week change | -326.4%    |
| Expected Report Date      | 07/09/2020 |
| Earnings ESP              | 0.0%       |

### Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

|      | Q1       | Q2       | Q3       | Q4       | Annual*  |
|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2021 | 10,596 E | 12,606 E | 12,602 E | 11,524 E | 43,010 E |
| 2020 | 8,592 A  | 1,603 E  | 9,568 E  | 10,041 E | 23,279 E |
| 2019 | 10,472 A | 12,536 A | 12,560 A | 11,439 A | 47,007 A |

### EPS Estimates

|      | Q1        | Q2        | Q3       | Q4       | Annual*   |
|------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 2021 | \$0.85 E  | \$2.24 E  | \$2.13 E | \$1.48 E | \$5.29 E  |
| 2020 | -\$0.51 A | -\$4.38 E | \$0.60 E | \$0.85 E | -\$6.78 E |
| 2019 | \$0.96 A  | \$2.35 A  | \$2.32 A | \$1.70 A | \$7.31 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 04/29/2020. The reports text is as of 04/30/2020.

## Overview

Delta Air Lines is one of the four carriers that controls majority of the US aviation market (the carriers account for more than 60% of the domestic market share). This development followed a spate of mergers in the industry during the early part of this century.

Delta, the second airline company to have joined the coveted S&P 500 Index, commands more than 17% share of the domestic market.

Bulk of this Atlanta-GA based carrier's revenues are recognized from its airline segment. Evidently, 99.8% of the \$47-billion amount generated in 2019 came from this unit. Balance is represented by the refinery segment, which operates for the benefit of the airline division by providing it with jet fuel from its own production and agreements with third parties.

Moreover, with demand for air travel remaining strong, passenger revenues accounted for the bulk (89.9%) of the top line in 2019. Cargo revenues contributed 1.6% while the rest came from other sources.

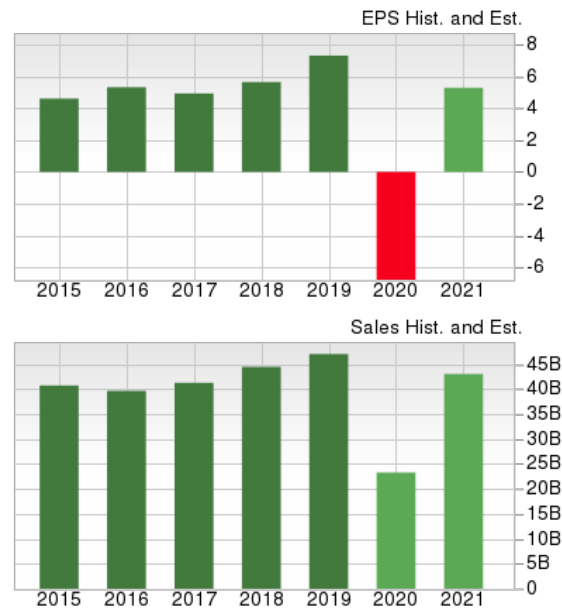
Passenger revenues come from three sources, such as ticket sales, loyalty travel awards and travel-related services. In 2019, 87.3% of passenger revenues are recorded from ticket sales. Loyalty travel awards and travel-related services reflected 6.9% and 5.8% of passenger revenues, respectively, in 2019.

Geographically, passenger revenues are generated by domestic operations in the Atlantic, Latin America and the Pacific region. In 2019, 71.8% of passenger revenues was derived from domestic activities. Operations in the Atlantic, Latin American and the Pacific regions accounted for 15.1%, 7.1% and 6% of 2019's passenger revenues, respectively.

Delta offers more than 5,000 departures per day apart from 15,000 affiliated departures. Also, through its partnerships with the likes of Aeromexico, Air France-KLM, Alitalia, China Eastern, Korean Air, Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Australia and WestJet, Delta aims to improve the travel experience of its passengers and widen its network.

The carrier's hub operations include flights and the network is supported by a fleet of aircraft, which is varied in terms of size and capabilities. Moreover, the absence of Boeing 737 MAX jets in its fleet makes Delta immune to the troubles stemming from prolonged groundings.

The company's fiscal year coincides with the calendar year.



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## Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Delta is taking a significant hit from the coronavirus outbreak, which has crippled air travel demand. Due to tepid demand, the carrier reduced its capacity for April by at least 80% with 115,000 flight cancellations. In fact, the company posted its first quarterly loss since 2010 in first-quarter 2020, due to coronavirus-led dwindling passenger revenues (down 18.2%). Due to this weakness in passenger revenues, Delta's total top line fell 18% in the March quarter. Delta burned \$100 million in cash per day through March-end due to the coronavirus crisis. What is more alarming is that the second quarter 2020 (Apr-Jun) is expected to be even worse as the coronavirus pandemic concerns rise. The company expects its second-quarter revenues to shrink as much as 90% in the face of plummeting passenger revenues.
- ▼ Delta has been suffering from technological snags very often. Evidently, a computer glitch affected Delta's domestic operations on the morning of Apr 1, 2019. Although the computer fault has been resolved, the carrier's record with respect to such disruptions is disappointing. The company had encountered similar issues earlier too. In fact, technical hitches have time and again impeded the players' progress in the airline space. Since airlines spend a lot on the technological infrastructure, their profitability might be hurt in the event of any such malfunctions.
- ▼ Shares of Delta Air Lines have declined 50% since March, as it takes a significant hit from the coronavirus outbreak, which has crippled air travel demand. The negativity surrounding the stock is evident from the fact that the Zacks Consensus Estimate for current year earnings has been revised downward over the past 60 days.
- ▼ Weather-related disruptions hurt Delta's operations frequently of late. In 2019, the company was forced to cancel flights following Hurricane Dorian. Simultaneously, the carrier issued travel waivers for several cities across Florida, Coastal Georgia, the Carolinas and the Bahamas. Such instances of inclement weather might occur in the future as well and in turn, weigh on the airline's profitability.
- ▼ With Delta expected to borrow substantially during 2020 to meet its near-term liquidity obligations apart from anticipations of work-force reductions after Sep 30, 2020, Fitch Ratings lowered its credit default rating on Delta to BB+ from BBB-. Moreover, Fitch assigned a Negative outlook to the company due to the headwinds.

Large-scale flight cancellations due to the coronavirus outbreak may result in substantial revenue loss.

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## Risks

- Even though Delta suspended buybacks and dividends due to the present crisis, we note that the company had an impressive record of dividend payments and share repurchases prior to the outbreak. In 2018, Delta returned \$2.5 billion to shareholders through dividends (\$909 million) and buybacks (\$1.6 billion). Sustaining its shareholder-friendly approach, in 2019, the company returned \$3 billion to shareholders through dividends (\$980 million) and share buybacks (\$2 billion).
  - As the carrier suffers from low travel demand in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, modest fuel prices should provide some support in dealing with the revenue decline. The average fuel price (adjusted) in the first quarter of 2020 was \$1.82 per gallon, down 11%. Notably, the airline expects to save \$2 billion on fuel expenses in 2020. Additionally, Delta is exercising significant cost-controls to offset the adversity from numerous flight cancellations led by the tumbling demand. For instance, the airline has put a halt to hiring and is offering voluntary leave options to employees. The carrier is also grounding wide-body and narrow-body aircraft as well as contemplating early retirement of the older aircraft.
  - With passenger revenues declining due to the coronavirus-induced decline in air-travel demand, the carrier launched cargo-only flights on the Shanghai-Detroit route. The carrier is using a fuel-efficient Airbus A350-900 aircraft (a widebody jet) to ply on the route. The decision is aimed at keeping the supply chain of medical requirements like surgical masks, gloves, gowns and other protective equipment operative between the United States and China. With passenger demand plummeting, the cargo-only operations should help Delta recoup a bit of the lost revenues. Meanwhile, Delta has already received \$2.7 billion out of the \$5.4 billion coronavirus relief grant. Delta is raising more cash. The financial aid to protect the short-term interests of airline employees is praiseworthy. Delta's target to reduce its cash burn rate by 50% in the second quarter is also commendable.
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## Last Earnings Report

### Narrower Than Expected Loss in Q1

The company reported a loss (excluding 33 cents from non-recurring items) of 51 cents in the March-end quarter compared with the Zacks Consensus Estimate of a loss of 72 cents. Delta had reported earnings of 96 cents per share (on an adjusted basis) in the year-ago quarter driven by high passenger revenues as air-travel demand was buoyant at that time. However, with the advent of coronavirus things have changed drastically. Due to the spread of the coronavirus by geometric progression, blanket travel bans are imposed by governments across the globe. With several countries placed under lockdown, most people are debarred from taking trips in a bid to stay safe and avoid contracting the highly contagious disease from a fellow passenger.

As a result of the restrictions, passenger revenues, which account for bulk of Delta's top line (89.1% in the first quarter), have been crippled thereby hurting its top line. Due to the passenger revenue weakness (down 18.2%), Delta's total top line shrunk 18% year over year to \$8,592 million. Additionally, total revenues fell short of the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$9,637.5 million.

### Other Financial Details

Cargo revenues declined 20.8%. Other revenues decreased 15.1%. The average fuel price (adjusted) in the first quarter was \$1.82 per gallon, down 11% on a year-over-year basis.

Revenue passenger miles (a measure of air traffic) decreased 16.6% to 43.1 billion. With Delta making significant capacity-cuts to match the coronavirus-induced sharp decrease in traffic, capacity (measured in available seat miles) contracted 5.7% to 58.88 billion. With the decline in traffic outpacing the fall in capacity, load factor (percentage of seats filled by passengers) declined 960 basis points to 73.1%. Passenger revenue per available seat mile (PRASM) declined 13.3% year over year to 12.85 cents. Passenger mile yield fell 2% to 17.58 cents. On an adjusted basis, total revenue per available seat mile (TRASM) in the first quarter decreased 12.3% year over year to 14.59 cents.

Total operating expenses, including special items, declined 5% year over year to \$9,002 million on the back of low fuel costs. Notably, expenses on aircraft fuel and related taxes declined 19% in the reported quarter. Operating cost per available seat mile (non-fuel or CASM- Ex: on an adjusted basis) increased 9% to 12.58 cents. Delta, which has suspended dividend payouts and share buybacks due to the current crisis, exited the quarter with unrestricted liquidity of \$6 billion.

### Cash Burn Rate for Q2

Delta which burned \$100 million in cash per day through March-end due to the coronavirus-led crisis, expects to bring down the rate to \$50 million per day by the end of the second quarter. Delta expects to cut total system capacity by 85 % in the June-end quarter. While international capacity is likely to be trimmed by 90%, the measure is anticipated to be cut by 80% on the domestic front.

Due to the capacity cuts, low fuel costs and cost management initiatives like parking more than 650 planes, pay cuts and putting a freeze on hiring, Delta expects a 50% (\$5 billion) reduction in second-quarter expenses. Delta expects to end the second quarter of 2020 with roughly \$10 billion in liquidity.

Quarter Ending 03/2020

| Report Date      | Apr 22, 2020 |
|------------------|--------------|
| Sales Surprise   | -10.85%      |
| EPS Surprise     | 29.17%       |
| Quarterly EPS    | -0.51        |
| Annual EPS (TTM) | 5.86         |

## Recent News

### Launch of Cargo-only Flights – Mar 30, 2020

In a bid to keep the supply chain of medical requirements like surgical masks, gloves, gowns and other protective equipment operative between the United States and China, Delta launched cargo-only flights on the Shanghai-Detroit route. The carrier is using a fuel-efficient Airbus A350-900 aircraft (a widebody jet) to ply on the route. The aircraft has the capacity to carry 49 tons of cargo in its hold. On arrival of the cargo in Detroit, it will be transferred to domestic passenger flights to be shipped to various destinations across the United States.

## Valuation

Delta Air Lines shares have been down 53.3% and 52.3% year to date and over the past year, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry have shed 54.2% and 53.1% of value so far this year and in a year's time each. Stocks in the Zacks Transportation sector have declined 22.9% and 21.9% year to date and in the past year, respectively. The S&P 500 Index has lost 11.4% and 2.6% year to date and in the past 12 months, respectively.

The stock is currently trading at 4.66X trailing-month price-to earnings, which compares to 4.98X for the Zacks sub-industry, 12.41X for the Zacks sector and 17.8X for the S&P 500 index.

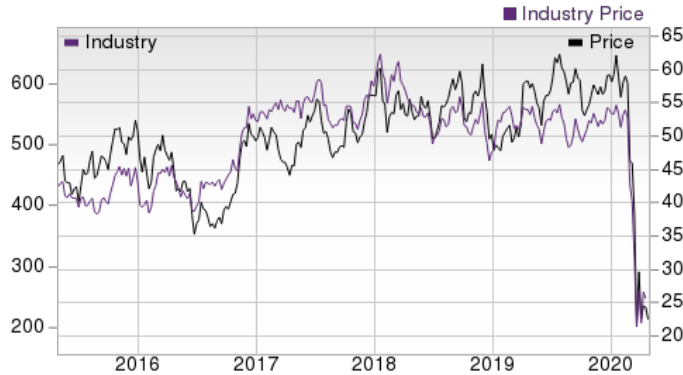
Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 13.66X and as low as 2.91X, with a 5-year median of 9.77X. Our Underperform recommendation indicates that the stock will perform worse than the market. Our \$23 price target reflects 3.92X trailing 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for DAL

| Valuation Multiples - DAL |               |       |              |        |         |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|
|                           |               | Stock | Sub-Industry | Sector | S&P 500 |
| P/E TTM                   | Current       | 4.66  | 4.98         | 12.41  | 17.8    |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 13.66 | 13.2         | 19.58  | 22.17   |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 2.91  | 4.98         | 11.63  | 15.91   |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 9.77  | 10.79        | 15.56  | 18.9    |
| EV/EBITDA TTM             | Current       | 4.26  | 3.87         | 6.59   | 10.45   |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 6.9   | 7.03         | 11.16  | 12.87   |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 3.06  | 3.4          | 5.61   | 8.27    |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 5.39  | 5.98         | 7.37   | 10.78   |
| P/S F 12M                 | Current       | 0.59  | 0.55         | 1.09   | 3.3     |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 1     | 0.98         | 1.42   | 3.44    |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 0.28  | 0.39         | 0.85   | 2.54    |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 0.83  | 0.77         | 1.21   | 3.01    |

As of 04/29/2020

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 40% (151 out of 253)



## Top Peers

| Company (Ticker)                                     | Rec          | Rank |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------|
| American Airlines Group Inc. (AAL)                   | Neutral      | 3    |
| Air France-KLM SA (AFLLY)                            | Neutral      | 3    |
| Alaska Air Group, Inc. (ALK)                         | Neutral      | 3    |
| Deutsche Lufthansa AG (DLAKY)                        | Neutral      | 3    |
| International Consolidated Airlines Group SA (ICAGY) | Neutral      | 3    |
| United Airlines Holdings Inc (UAL)                   | Neutral      | 3    |
| China Southern Airlines Company Limited (ZNH)        | Neutral      | 3    |
| Southwest Airlines Co. (LUV)                         | Underperform | 3    |

| Industry Comparison Industry: Transportation - Airline |              |            |           | Industry Peers |          |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------------|
|                                                        | DAL          | X Industry | S&P 500   | AAL            | DLAKY    | UAL        |
| Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)                       | Underperform | -          | -         | Neutral        | Neutral  | Neutral    |
| Zacks Rank (Short Term)                                | 3            | -          | -         | 3              | 3        | 3          |
| VGM Score                                              | F            | -          | -         | D              | B        | B          |
| Market Cap                                             | 17.43 B      | 2.33 B     | 20.82 B   | 5.34 B         | 4.44 B   | 7.74 B     |
| # of Analysts                                          | 6            | 4          | 14        | 6              | 1        | 6          |
| Dividend Yield                                         | 0.00%        | 0.00%      | 2.07%     | 3.17%          | 6.92%    | 0.00%      |
| Value Score                                            | B            | -          | -         | C              | A        | B          |
| Cash/Price                                             | 0.42         | 0.62       | 0.06      | 0.91           | 1.18     | 0.78       |
| EV/EBITDA                                              | 3.23         | 3.45       | 12.12     | 4.02           | 1.46     | 3.08       |
| PEG Ratio                                              | NA           | 2.30       | 2.51      | NA             | NA       | NA         |
| Price/Book (P/B)                                       | 1.22         | 0.71       | 2.74      | NA             | 0.44     | 0.68       |
| Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)                                 | 2.40         | 2.33       | 11.23     | 1.23           | 0.86     | 1.46       |
| P/E (F1)                                               | NA           | 22.33      | 19.26     | NA             | NA       | NA         |
| Price/Sales (P/S)                                      | 0.39         | 0.32       | 2.16      | 0.12           | 0.11     | 0.18       |
| Earnings Yield                                         | -24.82%      | -19.33%    | 5.03%     | -99.68%        | -78.64%  | -54.69%    |
| Debt/Equity                                            | 1.25         | 0.68       | 0.72      | -181.81        | 0.90     | 1.59       |
| Cash Flow (\$/share)                                   | 11.37        | 4.14       | 7.01      | 10.27          | 10.85    | 21.42      |
| Growth Score                                           | F            | -          | -         | C              | C        | A          |
| Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)                             | 8.27%        | 4.00%      | 10.88%    | -14.34%        | -9.29%   | 0.79%      |
| Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)                               | -192.68%     | -193.69%   | -6.94%    | -356.88%       | -354.90% | -241.63%   |
| Curr. Cash Flow Growth                                 | 17.74%       | 12.49%     | 5.92%     | 5.17%          | 4.30%    | 15.52%     |
| Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)                       | 10.18%       | 9.63%      | 8.55%     | -4.04%         | 13.45%   | 8.25%      |
| Current Ratio                                          | 0.53         | 0.68       | 1.23      | 0.45           | 0.68     | 0.55       |
| Debt/Capital                                           | 55.53%       | 47.44%     | 43.90%    | 99.27%         | 47.44%   | 61.36%     |
| Net Margin                                             | 7.76%        | 6.69%      | 11.15%    | 3.68%          | 3.34%    | 6.96%      |
| Return on Equity                                       | 25.95%       | 12.61%     | 16.47%    | -1,414.94%     | 13.10%   | 29.16%     |
| Sales/Assets                                           | 0.70         | 0.64       | 0.54      | 0.75           | 0.84     | 0.83       |
| Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)                             | -50.48%      | -33.30%    | -1.52%    | -42.81%        | 0.00%    | -45.54%    |
| Momentum Score                                         | F            | -          | -         | F              | F        | F          |
| Daily Price Chg                                        | 12.24%       | 5.27%      | 2.91%     | 12.17%         | 6.24%    | 12.10%     |
| 1 Week Price Chg                                       | -7.66%       | -4.56%     | -1.74%    | -10.89%        | -12.33%  | -12.10%    |
| 4 Week Price Chg                                       | 14.45%       | 20.18%     | 21.33%    | 18.15%         | 5.46%    | 21.68%     |
| 12 Week Price Chg                                      | -53.61%      | -47.27%    | -16.28%   | -56.60%        | -44.19%  | -61.87%    |
| 52 Week Price Chg                                      | -52.22%      | -45.37%    | -7.57%    | -62.75%        | -61.53%  | -64.51%    |
| 20 Day Average Volume                                  | 61,605,864   | 185,378    | 2,658,107 | 79,946,488     | 185,378  | 38,761,608 |
| (F1) EPS Est 1 week change                             | -17.79%      | 0.00%      | 0.00%     | -7.62%         | -12.85%  | 0.00%      |
| (F1) EPS Est 4 week change                             | -326.36%     | -215.10%   | -6.32%    | -987.14%       | -972.06% | -749.10%   |
| (F1) EPS Est 12 week change                            | -192.96%     | -166.37%   | -12.93%   | -352.66%       | -304.20% | -235.58%   |
| (Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg                                 | -567.91%     | -386.43%   | -11.84%   | -139,099.30%   | NA       | -1,643.94% |

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## Zacks Stock Rating System

We offer two rating systems that take into account investors' holding horizons: Zacks Rank and Zacks Recommendation. Each provides valuable insights into the future profitability of the stock and can be used separately or in combination with each other depending on your investment style.

### Zacks Recommendation

The Zacks Recommendation aims to predict performance over the next 6 to 12 months. The foundation for the quantitatively determined Zacks Recommendation is trends in the company's estimate revisions and earnings outlook. The Zacks Recommendation is broken down into 3 Levels; Outperform, Neutral and Underperform. Unlike many Wall Street firms, we have an excellent balance between the number of Outperform and Neutral recommendations. Our team of 70 analysts are fully versed in the benefits of earnings estimate revisions and how that is harnessed through the Zacks quantitative rating system. But we have given our analysts the ability to override the Zacks Recommendation for the 1200 stocks that they follow. The reason for the analyst over-rides is that there are often factors such as valuation, industry conditions and management effectiveness that a trained investment professional can spot better than a quantitative model.

### Zacks Rank

The Zacks Rank is our short-term rating system that is most effective over the one- to three-month holding horizon. The underlying driver for the quantitatively-determined Zacks Rank is the same as the Zacks Recommendation, and reflects trends in earnings estimate revisions.

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### Zacks Style Scores

The Zacks Style Score is as a complementary indicator to the Zacks rating system, giving investors a way to focus on the highest rated stocks that best fit their own stock picking preferences.

Academic research has proven that stocks with the best Value, Growth and Momentum characteristics outperform the market. The Zacks Style Scores rate stocks on each of these individual styles and assigns a rating of A, B, C, D and F. We also produce the VGM Score (V for Value, G for Growth and M for Momentum), which combines the weighted average of the individual Style Scores into one score. This is perfectly suited for those who want their stocks to have the best scores across the board.

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Value Score    | <b>B</b> |
| Growth Score   | <b>F</b> |
| Momentum Score | <b>F</b> |
| VGM Score      | <b>F</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.

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### Disclosures

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