Sep 23, 2020

Hertz Global Holdings (HTZ)

$1.30 (As of 09/22/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **$1.50**

Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:** (Since: 07/15/20) Prior Recommendation: Underperform	**Neutral**
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)	**4-Sell**
	Zacks Style Scores:	VGM:B
	Value: A | Growth: D | Momentum: C	

Summary

Hertz Global filed for bankruptcy as its business has been crippled by the coronavirus-led waning demand for rental-hire services. As a result, the company's shares have declined 89.9% since March. Amid concerns, billionaire investor Carl Icahn sold his entire stake in the company. Weakness in both the U.S. and International Rental Car segments have led to 40.3% decline in the top line in first-half 2020. Frequent management changes also raise concerns. However, filing for bankruptcy protection does not mean the end of the road for Hertz Global. Through the restructuring process, the company expects to emerge financially healthier. Significant cost-control measures should support its bottom line. Notably, operating expenses decreased 11.9% in the first half of 2020. Improvement in the U.S. used-car market is also a boon for the company.

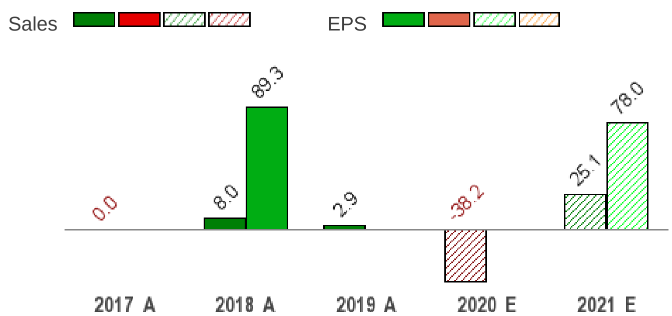
Price, Consensus & Surprise

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	$20.85 - $0.78
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	8,557,740
Market Cap	$203.1 M
Year-To-Date Price Change	-91.8%
Beta	1.38
Dividend / Dividend Yield	$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Transportation - Services
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 37% (92 out of 251)
Last EPS Surprise	-50.6%
Last Sales Surprise	-9.5%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	11/02/2020
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	NA
P/E F1	NA
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	0.0

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of $)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021					7,558 E
2020	1,923 A	832 A	1,668 E	1,528 E	6,040 E
2019	2,107 A	2,511 A	2,836 A	2,326 A	9,779 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021					-$1.14 E
2020	-$1.78 A	-$3.51 A	-$0.47 E	-$0.89 E	-$5.18 E
2019	-$0.99 A	$0.74 A	$1.60 A	-$0.24 A	$1.44 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 09/22/2020. The reports text is as of 09/23/2020.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Please see important disclosures and definitions at the end of this report.

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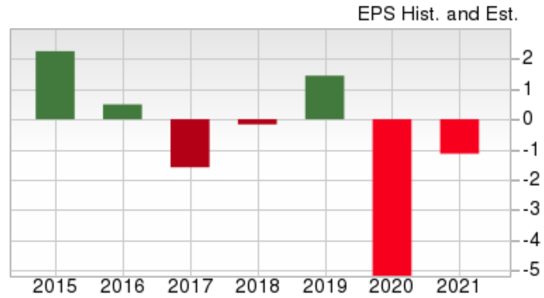
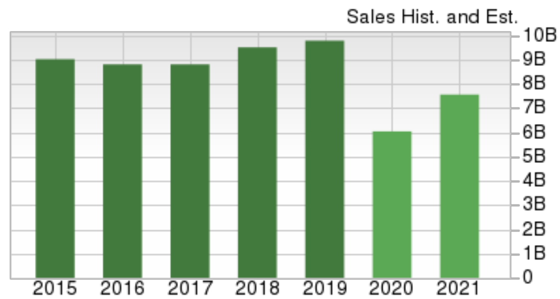
10 S. Riverside Plaza Suite 1600 • Chicago, IL 60606

Overview

Hertz Global Holdings, incorporated in Delaware in 2015, is the holding company for Rental Car Intermediate Holdings, LLC, which owns Hertz, the primary operating company of Hertz Global. Hertz was incorporated in Delaware in 1967.



The company, based in Estero, FL, is a key player in the vehicle rental industry and is responsible for the operation of vehicle rental services under the Hertz, Dollar and Thrifty brands. On Jun 30, 2016, Hertz Global Holdings spun off its equipment rental business. Following the spinoff, a new Hertz Global Holdings, Inc. was formed to focus exclusively on its car rental and related services business.



On May 22, 2020, Hertz Global Holdings filed for bankruptcy as its business is being crippled by the coronavirus-induced waning demand for rental hire services with most people staying indoors. The bankruptcy filing does not include Hertz's operations in Europe, Australia and New Zealand as well as its franchised locations in the United States.

Even though Hertz Global Holdings has filed for bankruptcy protection, it does not mean the end of the road for the company. In fact, by declaring bankruptcy, the company has made it clear that it intends to stay in business while restructuring its debts.

Hertz Global Holdings operates under three segments: **U.S. RAC** (accounted for 70.9% of the company's revenues in 2019), I **nternational RAC** (22.2%) and **All Other Operations** (6.9%).

The U.S. RAC unit is responsible for the rental of vehicles, and sales of value-added products and services in the United States. Internationally, rental and leasing of vehicles as well as sales of value-added products and services are regulated by the International RAC unit.

The above segments offer various brands in order to present customers with a wide range of rental services at different prices, levels of offerings and products.

Geographically, 77.7% of the company's 2019 revenues stemmed from the United States and the rest was generated internationally. Hertz Global Holdings operated a rental fleet of approximately 567,600 vehicles in the United States and 204,000 vehicles internationally.

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

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

We are impressed with the company's efforts to control costs.

- Even though Hertz has filed for bankruptcy protection, it does not mean the end of the road for the company. In fact, by declaring bankruptcy, the company has made it clear that it intends to stay in business while restructuring its debts. By doing so, Hertz intends to emerge as a financially healthier company. Notably, many companies have gone through this bankruptcy process and posted record profits subsequently. Likewise, through the restructuring process, Hertz expects to emerge from the crisis stronger.

- We are also impressed with the company's efforts to control costs. Total expenses have largely been flat year over year in 2019. Moreover, direct vehicle and operating costs at the U.S. and International Rental Car segments declined 24.6% and 34.7% respectively in the first six months of 2020. By cancelling new fleet orders, returning program vehicles, cutting non-essential spending and capital expenses, and consolidating off-airport rental locations, the company reduced total selling, general and administrative expenses by 23.1% year over year in the first half of 2020. Total operating expenses decreased 11.9% in the same period. The company's cost-cutting measures are expected to generate about $2.5 billion in annualized savings.

- With the re-opening of economies, the U.S. used-car market witnessed a strong rebound in May and June. To take advantage of the robust demand and significantly high resale prices, Hertz is boosting its used-car sales efforts in North America. The opening up of countries also had a positive impact on rental demand. Although revenues in April, May and June were down year over year, they showed sequential monthly improvement.

- The bankruptcy filing does not include Hertz's operations in Europe, Australia and New Zealand as well as its franchised locations in the United States. The decision to keep its European business solvent is indicative of its financial strength even in the current situation. Compared to its US operations, a larger proportion of its fleet of cars can be sold back in its European business to automakers at guaranteed prices.

Reasons To Sell:

Coronavirus concerns are weighing significantly on demand for rental cars. Additionally, the company's high debt levels are quite concerning.

- Coronavirus-related woes are weighing significantly on demand for Hertz's rental cars. The top line declined 40.3% year over year in the first six months of 2020 due to weakness in both the U.S. (down 42.1%) and International Rental Car (down 49.4%) segments. Moreover, the spike in coronavirus cases has dampened the modest uptrend in rental demand the company was experiencing with the re-opening of economies.

- On May 22, 2020, Hertz Global filed for bankruptcy as its business is being crippled by the coronavirus-induced waning demand for rental hire services with most people staying indoors. Notably, Hertz failed to pay roughly $500 million to creditors by the deadline of May 4, thereby highlighting its poor financial condition. The company was granted an extension up to May 22 by its lenders. However, creditors of this debt-laden company did not grant any further extension thereby resulting in the filing for bankruptcy protection. Notably, the company exited the June quarter with cash and equivalents of $1.37 billion, whereas its total debt amounted to $12.98 billion. The company is planning to shrink its fleet significantly to repay for debt.

- Few days after the bankruptcy filing, the company's primary stakeholder, the billionaire investor Carl Icahn, sold his entire 55.3 million shares or 39% interest. Icahn decided to divest his owned portion for a significant loss. The exit of such a high-profile investor is a further setback to the company. Moreover, with Hertz Global's shares struggling (down 90.2% year-to-date), the company received a delisting notice from the New York Stock Exchange on May 26. Hertz Global appealed the notice and will remain listed until the issue is resolved. However, the uncertain situation raises grave concerns.

- On May 18, 2020, Hertz named its fourth CEO in six years when its board of directors named Paul Stone as the new president and chief executive officer effective immediately. Prior to being elevated, Stone served as Hertz's executive vice president and chief retail operations for its North American business activities. Management's uncertainty further dampens investors' confidence.

Last Earnings Report

Hertz Global Incurs Wider Than Expected Loss in Q2

Quarter Ending	06/2020
Report Date	**Aug 10, 2020**
Sales Surprise	**-9.46%**
EPS Surprise	**-50.64%**
Quarterly EPS	**-3.51**
Annual EPS (TTM)	**-3.93**

Hertz Global incurred a loss (excluding $2.35 from non-recurring items) of $3.51 per share in second-quarter 2020, wider than the Zacks Consensus Estimate of a loss of $2.33. In the year-ago period, the company reported earnings of 74 cents per share. Similar to the first quarter, second-quarter results were affected by decreased demand for rental cars amid coronavirus concerns. However, the impact in the second quarter is much greater.

Quarterly revenues of $832 million also missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of $918.9 million. The top line declined 66.9% year over year due to weak performance by the U.S. and International Rental Car segments.

Segmental Performance

In the quarter under review, the U.S. Rental Car segment generated revenues of $533 million, down 70% year over year. While airport rental-car volumes declined 82% due to weakness in air-travel demand caused by coronavirus, off airport volumes decreased 47%.

Vehicle utilization declined to 28% from 82% a year ago. Transaction days fell 69% year over year. Total revenue per transaction day ("RPD") decreased 10%. Adjusted EBITDA for the segment was ($470 million) in the second quarter against $156 million a year ago.

Segmental direct-vehicle and operating expenses dropped 47% to $561 million. Meanwhile, interest expenses climbed 8%. However, selling, general and administrative expenses declined 47% year over year. Costs reduced due to strict cost-control measures and low volumes.

The International Rental Car segment generated revenues of $135 million, down 76% year over year. Airport rental-car volumes plunged 84%, while off-airport volumes dropped 47%. Vehicle utilization fell to 36% from 77% in the year-ago quarter. Segmental RPD declined 24% year over year.

Segmental direct vehicle and operating costs fell 59% year over year to $136 million. While interest expenses contracted 3%, selling, general and administrative expenses fell 28% year over year. Adjusted EBITDA for the segment came in at ($127 million) compared with $56 million in second-quarter 2019. Meanwhile, revenues from all other operations dipped 1% to $164 million.

Balance Sheet Highlights

The company exited the second quarter with cash and cash equivalents of $1,366 million compared with $865 million at the end of 2019. Restricted cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period came in at $945 million compared with $495 million at 2019-end. As of Jun 30, 2020, total debt amounted to $12.98 billion compared with $17.09 billion as of Dec 31, 2019.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Please see important disclosures and definitions at the end of this report.

Recent News

New CFO Appointed — Aug 14, 2020

Hertz appointed a new chief financial officer (CFO) named R. Eric Esper to fill in Jamere Jackson's shoes.

Valuation

Hertz Global shares are down 91.8% and 90.4% in the year-to-date period and over the trailing 12-month period respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and stocks in the Zacks Transportation sector are up 1.6% and 0.4% in the year-to-date period, respectively. In the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 9.2% and 6.3% respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 2.9% and 12.2% in the year-to-date period and in the past year, respectively.

The stock is currently trading at 0.27X trailing 12-month price-to-book value compared with 4.11X for the Zacks sub-industry, 3.94X for the Zacks sector and 5.7X for the S&P 500 index.

In the past three years, the stock has traded as high as 2.63X and as low as 0.05X, with a three-year median of 1.23X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line than the market. Our $1.5 price target reflects 0.31X trailing 12-month book value.

The table below shows summary valuation data for HTZ

Valuation Multiples - HTZ

		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/B TTM	Current	0.27	4.11	3.94	5.7
	3-Year High	2.63	5.66	4.07	6.17
	3-Year Low	0.05	2.63	2.13	3.83
	3-Year Median	1.23	3.92	3.42	5.08
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	3.24	13.52	9.74	14.32
	3-Year High	7.02	17.21	11.09	15.61
	3-Year Low	3.24	8.81	5.16	9.51
	3-Year Median	5.02	13.21	7.7	13.39
P/S F12M	Current	0.03	1.67	1.35	4.04
	3-Year High	0.28	1.77	1.41	4.29
	3-Year Low	0.01	1.23	0.85	3.2
	3-Year Median	0.17	1.54	1.18	3.78

As of 09/22/2020 *Source: Zacks Investment Research*

Industry Analysis **Zacks Industry Rank:** Top 37% (92 out of 251)

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
AutoNation, Inc. **(AN)**	Outperform	1
Penske Automotive Group, Inc. **(PAG)**	Outperform	1
Sonic Automotive, Inc. **(SAH)**	Outperform	1
J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. **(JBHT)**	Neutral	2
CarMax, Inc. **(KMX)**	Neutral	3
Ryder System, Inc. **(R)**	Neutral	3
WYNDHAM DESTINATIONS, INC. **(WYND)**	Neutral	3
Avis Budget Group, Inc. **(CAR)**	Underperform	5

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Transportation - Services

	HTZ	X Industry	S&P 500	AN	CAR	KMX
				Industry Peers		
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Outperform	Underperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	4	-	-	1	5	3
VGM Score	B	-	-	A	C	A
Market Cap	203.07 M	1.26 B	23.08 B	4.57 B	2.02 B	17.01 B
# of Analysts	4	2	13.5	7	5	6
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.7%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	A	-	-	A	A	C
Cash/Price	11.21	0.11	0.07	0.06	0.58	0.07
EV/EBITDA	2.81	7.53	12.95	5.84	3.81	20.75
PEG F1	NA	3.28	2.94	1.19	NA	2.62
P/B	0.27	2.62	3.19	1.46	NA	4.75
P/CF	0.06	8.05	12.56	7.82	0.62	15.43
P/E F1	NA	28.68	21.07	9.60	NA	32.49
P/S TTM	0.03	0.92	2.39	0.23	0.27	0.94
Earnings Yield	-398.46%	3.04%	4.51%	10.42%	-26.17%	3.08%
Debt/Equity	19.29	0.62	0.70	0.57	-94.27	4.03
Cash Flow ($/share)	22.61	1.96	6.93	6.70	46.65	6.76
Growth Score	D	-	-	A	F	A
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	NA%	7.94%	10.41%	4.16%	6.99%	13.75%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-459.38%	-39.80%	-4.56%	19.94%	-305.38%	-39.77%
Current Cash Flow Growth	14.79%	-2.60%	5.26%	2.81%	35.37%	7.77%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	3.24%	13.37%	8.49%	2.53%	7.65%	9.70%
Current Ratio	3.06	1.39	1.35	0.92	1.07	2.85
Debt/Capital	95.07%	40.94%	42.95%	36.24%	98.14%	80.11%
Net Margin	-14.55%	0.82%	10.25%	1.51%	-4.15%	3.45%
Return on Equity	-38.47%	8.34%	14.66%	14.20%	-66.36%	18.00%
Sales/Assets	0.32	1.08	0.50	1.97	0.32	0.89
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-38.24%	-0.55%	-1.48%	-6.53%	-41.50%	-9.27%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	A	C	B
Daily Price Change	1.56%	0.00%	0.59%	1.81%	0.28%	3.14%
1-Week Price Change	-2.94%	1.30%	0.79%	-2.81%	-7.23%	1.42%
4-Week Price Change	-9.09%	-8.23%	-3.10%	-9.56%	-14.75%	-2.56%
12-Week Price Change	-7.80%	4.94%	4.54%	39.44%	26.21%	16.47%
52-Week Price Change	-90.44%	3.29%	-0.53%	4.18%	5.82%	20.24%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	8,557,740	114,851	2,077,549	569,585	1,697,589	1,017,601
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.13%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.39%	-0.91%	1.13%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	-2.83%	14.59%	4.08%	76.53%	-25.76%	-1.08%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.69%	-82.86%	-0.76%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Zacks Stock Rating System

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

Zacks Recommendation

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

Zacks Rank

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

Zacks Style Scores

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

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

Value Score	A
Growth Score	D
Momentum Score	C
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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This material represents an assessment of the market and economic environment at a specific point in time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events, or a guarantee of future results. Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Any statements that refer to expectations, projections or characterizations of future events or circumstances, including any underlying assumptions, are forwardlooking statements. Actual results, performance, or achievements may differ materially from those expressed or implied.

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 mediumterm 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 mostrecent 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.