

## Intercontinental(ICE)

**\$111.66** (As of 02/10/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$118.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:**

**Neutral**

(Since: 01/13/19)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

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

**3-Hold**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM: C

Value: C

Growth: D

Momentum: A

### Summary

Intercontinental Exchange's shares have outperformed its industry in the past year. Its top line was driven by the compelling product and service portfolio, broad range of risk management services and strength in global data services. Continued strength in its energy franchise, improving recurring market data revenues and ongoing initiatives are likely to keep growth on track. Strategic buyouts help it achieve cost synergies that are in sync with its aim of generating long-term value for shareholders. It is well-poised for growth on the back of accelerated digitization. A strong balance sheet helps in effective capital deployment. However, its expenses are likely to remain elevated in the near term. Foreign currency fluctuations and stricter regulations raise concerns. Increasing interest expenses and high leverage raise financial risk.

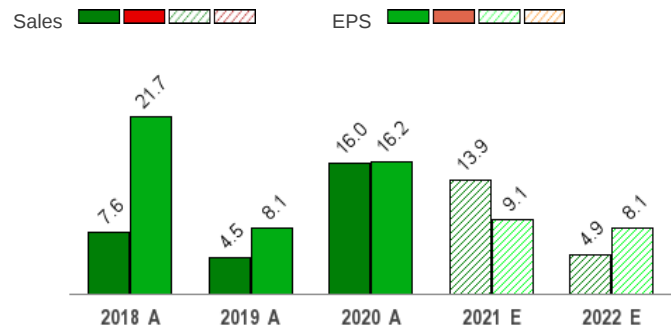
### Price, Consensus & Surprise



### Data Overview

|                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 52-Week High-Low               | <b>\$119.02 - \$63.51</b>       |
| 20-Day Average Volume (Shares) | <b>2,343,044</b>                |
| Market Cap                     | <b>\$62.7 B</b>                 |
| Year-To-Date Price Change      | <b>-3.2%</b>                    |
| Beta                           | <b>0.72</b>                     |
| Dividend / Dividend Yield      | <b>\$1.32 / 1.1%</b>            |
| Industry                       | <b>Securities and Exchanges</b> |
| Zacks Industry Rank            | <b>Top 46% (116 out of 253)</b> |

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



|                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Last EPS Surprise             | <b>3.7%</b>       |
| Last Sales Surprise           | <b>2.6%</b>       |
| EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change | <b>2.5%</b>       |
| Expected Report Date          | <b>04/29/2021</b> |
| Earnings ESP                  | <b>-0.4%</b>      |

### Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

|      | Q1      | Q2      | Q3      | Q4      | Annual* |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2022 | 1,796 E | 1,819 E | 1,829 E | 1,827 E | 7,210 E |
| 2021 | 1,726 E | 1,724 E | 1,708 E | 1,715 E | 6,873 E |
| 2020 | 1,559 A | 1,395 A | 1,411 A | 1,671 A | 6,036 A |

### EPS Estimates

|      | Q1       | Q2       | Q3       | Q4       | Annual*  |
|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2022 | \$1.29 E | \$1.31 E | \$1.31 E | \$1.31 E | \$5.32 E |
| 2021 | \$1.21 E | \$1.23 E | \$1.22 E | \$1.25 E | \$4.92 E |
| 2020 | \$1.28 A | \$1.07 A | \$1.03 A | \$1.13 A | \$4.51 A |

\*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

|         |             |
|---------|-------------|
| P/E TTM | <b>24.8</b> |
| P/E F1  | <b>22.7</b> |
| PEG F1  | <b>2.8</b>  |
| P/S TTM | <b>7.6</b>  |

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 02/10/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 02/11/2021.

## Overview

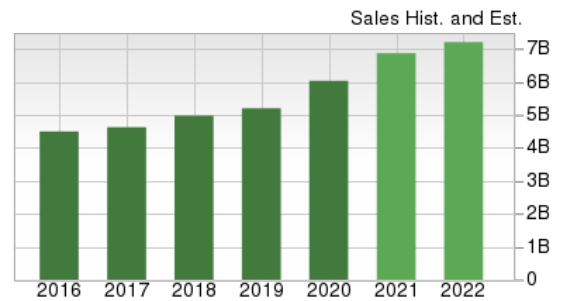
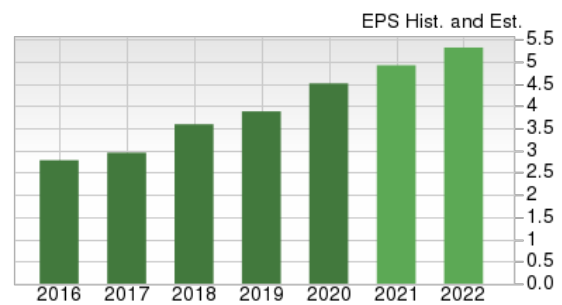
Established in 2000, a Fortune 500 company, Intercontinental Exchange, Inc. is a leading global operator of regulated exchanges, clearing houses and listings venues, and a provider of data services for commodity, financial, fixed income and equity markets. The company completed its initial public offering in November 2005.

Intercontinental Exchange has evolved and grown over the past two decades primarily on buyouts and collaborations. The company's buyouts have expanded its data services for meeting customers' demands for real-time information. ICE Data Pricing & Reference Data offers evaluated pricing services and reference data solutions.

The company enhances its product suite and services continually, thereby, engaging in consistent efforts to upgrade its technology and software capabilities. The ICE Trading Platform and Technology offers comprehensive data services to support trading, investment, risk management and connectivity needs of customers around the world and across major asset classes.

The business is conducted through two reportable business segments: **Trading and Clearing Segment** provides execution and risk management services to businesses, investors and traders across major asset classes, such as commodities, interest rates, credit, foreign exchange, equities and mortgage-related products. Revenues in the segment can be susceptible to seasonal fluctuations.

**Data and Listings Segment** provides a range of data and listing services for global financial and commodity markets. Revenues in Data and Listings segment are largely subscription-based and recurring in nature stemming from Pricing and Analytics, Exchange Data and Feeds, Desktops and Connectivity and Listings.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

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## Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Shares of Intercontinental Exchange have gained 18.3% in the past year, outperforming the industry's increase of 9.1%. Strong fundamentals are likely to sustain momentum in the long run.
- ▲ Intercontinental Exchange has a decent history of acquisitions that have not only fueled its growth but have also led to achieving expense synergies. Such initiatives enhanced the company's product suite and services, which, in turn, aided bottom-line growth. The acquisitions are also in line with its aim of generating long-term value for shareholders. In September 2020, the company purchased mortgage-software firm Ellie Mae for \$11 billion in a stock-cash transaction to execute well in a \$10 billion addressable market. The acquisition of Ellie Mae was 3% accretive to 2020 earnings and is expected to realize run-rate cost synergies of \$50 million to \$65 million by the end of the third year.
- ▲ Intercontinental Exchange remains well-poised for growth on the back of accelerated digitization taking place in the US residential mortgage industry to overcome several inefficiencies existing across mortgage origination workflow. While the company already boasts of the largest mortgage network across the United States, the integration of Ellie Mae into ICE Mortgage Technology is likely to help the company in boosting its mortgage business. Thus, management estimates revenues in the first quarter of 2021 to be between \$122 million and \$127 million, up 30% year over year.
- ▲ Intercontinental Exchange develops and offers an array of products along with a broad range of risk management services including trade execution, market data, pre and post-trade processing and clearing services on an integrated platform. Its compelling product and service suite along with strategic acquisitions helped ICE boost its revenue stream. We believe that the company will retain its revenue momentum in the coming quarters, given its strength in global data services. In fact, the fourth quarter marked the 44th consecutive quarter of year-over-year data services revenue increase. Year 2020 marked 12 straight years of year-over-year rise. Management estimates recurring revenues in Fixed Income and Data Services segment to grow 5% to 6% on a constant currency basis in 2021, including \$395 million to \$400 million in the first quarter of 2021. Continued strength in the pricing and analytics business driven by strong customer demand for the company's pricing and reference data products, and connectivity offerings are likely to boost its data revenues in the days ahead. Notably, the company estimates pricing and analytics business to witness growth of nearly 6% in the fourth quarter.
- ▲ With over 5,000 indices representing more than \$1 trillion in benchmark assets under management, the company boasts being the second-largest fixed income provider globally. In the third quarter, revenues in the company's fixed income credit business have been driven by ICE Mortgage Technology. This was owing to accelerated usage of digital mortgage solutions, robust refinancing trend, and buyer and builder segment. Notably, volume growth continues to drive trading and clearing segment revenues. The company remains well-positioned for growth on the back of its solid energy franchise, increasing recurring market data revenues and strategic initiatives. Also, the company launched the ICE ETF Hub last year to serve the \$1 trillion fixed income ETF industry with four new market makers recently joining the pilot program unveiled by ETF Hub this July.
- ▲ Further, Intercontinental Exchange possesses a strong balance sheet with a solid cash and capital position. Riding high on operational strength, the company generated free cash flow of \$2.4 billion (up 4% over 2019) and returned \$1.9 million to shareholders through dividends and share repurchases. Infact the company recently raised its dividend by 10%. The company has undertaken substantial investments of \$11 million for expanding its mortgage network through Ellie Mae buyout by virtue of its robust financial position. Further, it plans to invest \$25 million to \$30 million in 2021 to enhance its Mortgage Technology platforms. A healthy and minimal risk-based balance sheet is likely to continue providing stability and buoyancy to the company over the medium to long term while supporting strategic investments.

Compelling portfolio, broad range of risk management services, timely achievement of cost synergies and solid capital position strengthens ICE's growth.

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## Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Intercontinental Exchange's debt has increased 17.3% over the last five years. Long-term debt of \$14.9 billion more than doubled in 2020 from 2019-end level. Also, times interest earned, a measure to identify the company ability to service debt, decreased in the last five years. Times interest earned was 8.7 in 2020, down 100 basis points (bps) from 2019.

Also, its increased debt balance resulted in increased interest expense, which weighed on margins. While interest expenses increased nearly three-fold, net margin contracted 100 basis points (bps) over the last five years. Interest expenses increased 0.4% in 2020. Also, net margin contracted 260 bps year over year in third-quarter 2020.

- ▼ Total operating expenses increased 62.3% in the last five years. In 2020, operating expenses increased 12.3% from the year-ago comparable period, primarily owing to higher compensation and benefits; professional services; acquisition-related transaction and integration cost; technology and communication expenses, rent and occupancy; selling, general and administrative expenses; depreciation and amortization costs. For first-quarter 2021, adjusted operating expenses are expected to be \$720-\$730 million, while adjusted non-operating expense is estimated to be \$105 - \$110 million. For 2022, adjusted operating expenses are expected to be \$2.83-\$2.88 billion. We believe that expenses are likely to remain elevated in the near term, given the several strategic initiatives including product launches, technology upgrade as well as higher debt and integration expenses, capital and infrastructural costs, rebates and compensation and benefits expenses. Capital expenditures for 2021 are anticipated between \$400 million and \$430 million.
- ▼ Moreover, Intercontinental Exchange continues to face a challenging global operating environment as arch-rivals are rapidly evolving through new, innovative product and service launches in order to gain market share and stay ahead in the competition. The vast outlay of growth plans by dominant players through acquisitions and setting up of clearing houses, along with product and service initiations in the derivatives market have already pointed out the swiftly changing dynamics of the exchange industry. Such aggressive industry efforts are not only keeping management on its toes but are also directly threatening its operations and competitive position. Hence, we believe that management should make productive endeavors as well as manage cash and liquidity position proactively, in order to retain and improve its industry position. Also, lower interest rates have been putting pressure on the company's retail and mini trading activity.

High leverage inducing rising interest expense, increasing operating expenses due to several strategic initiatives undertaken, challenging regulations and volatile industry trends raise concerns.

## Last Earnings Report

### Intercontinental Exchange Q4 Earnings Top, Dividend Up

Intercontinental Exchange reported fourth-quarter 2020 adjusted earnings per share of \$1.13, which beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.09. Also, the bottom line improved 18.9% on a year-over-year basis.

The company witnessed persistent revenue growth driven by strong Exchanges, Fixed Income and Data Services, and Mortgage Technology.

Quarter Ending 12/2020

| Report Date      | Feb 04, 2021 |
|------------------|--------------|
| Sales Surprise   | 2.58%        |
| EPS Surprise     | 3.67%        |
| Quarterly EPS    | 1.13         |
| Annual EPS (TTM) | 4.51         |

### Performance in Detail

Intercontinental Exchange's revenues of \$1.7 billion increased 29% year over year on higher revenues from Exchanges, Fixed Income, and Data Services and Mortgage Technology. Moreover, the top line outpaced the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.6 billion.

Net revenues from Exchanges were \$871 million, up 7% year over year, while Fixed Income and Data Services revenues were \$450 million, which increased 3% year over year. Mortgage Technology revenues increased more than seven fold to \$350 million.

Total operating expenses rose 31.8% year over year to \$891 million, primarily due to higher compensation and benefits, professional services, acquisition-related transaction and integration costs, technology and communication expenses, rent and occupancy, along with selling, general and administrative expenses. Adjusted operating expenses were \$712 million for the fourth quarter, up 24.9% from the year-ago figure.

Adjusted operating income improved 31.7% year over year to \$959 million. Adjusted operating margin expanded 10 basis points (bps) from the year-ago quarter to 57%.

Exchanges' adjusted operating income of \$582 million was up 7.8% year over year. Adjusted operating margin expanded 10 bps to 67%. Fixed Income and Data Services' adjusted operating income rose more than seven fold to \$166 million and adjusted operating margin remained flat year over year at 37%. Mortgage Technology's adjusted operating income of \$582 million was up 2.1% year over year. Adjusted operating margin, however, contracted 10 bps to 60%.

### Financial Update

As of Dec 31, 2020, Intercontinental Exchange had cash and cash equivalents of \$1.6 billion, down 11.3% from the Dec 31, 2019 level. Long-term debt of \$14.9 billion more than doubled from 2019-end level.

Total equity was \$19.5 billion as of Dec 31, 2020, up 13% from 2019-end.

Operating cash flow was \$2.9 billion for 2020, up 8% year over year. Free cash flow was \$2.4 billion, up 4% year over year.

In 2020, the company bought back \$1.2 billion worth shares and paid \$669 million in dividends.

### Full-Year Highlights

Adjusted earnings were \$4.51 per share, up 16% year over year. The bottom line also beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$4.46.

Operating revenues of \$6 billion for 2020 increased 16% year over year and marginally beat the consensus estimate.

This year marks the 15th consecutive year of record revenues and another year of double-digit earnings per share growth.

Adjusted operating margin was 59%, which expanded 10 bps.

### Q1 Guidance

Operating expenses for first-quarter 2021 are projected in the range of \$885-\$895 million. Adjusted operating expenses are expected in the range of \$720-\$730 million.

Adjusted non-operating expense is expected in the range of \$105-\$110 million.

### 2021 View

Operating expenses are projected in the range of \$3.465-\$3.515 billion. Adjusted operating expenses are expected in the range of \$2.83-\$22.88 billion.

Weighted average shares outstanding are anticipated between 562 million and 568 million shares.

Capital expenditures are expected between \$400 million and \$430 million.

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## Recent News

### Intercontinental Exchange Raises Dividend - Feb 4, 2020

The board of directors approved a 10% increase in its quarterly dividend to 33 cents per share. The first quarter cash dividend is payable on Mar 31, 2021 to stockholders of record on Mar 17, 2021.

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## Valuation

Intercontinental Exchange shares are up 12.3% and 18.3% in the last six-months period and over the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Finance sector are up 10.1% and 21% in the last six-months period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 9.1% and 1.6%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index are up 17.1% in the last six-months period and 17.8% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 22.88x forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 26.46x for the Zacks sub-industry, 16.87x for the Zacks sector and 22.85x for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 24.55x and as low as 15.4x, with a 5-year median of 20.24x. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$118 price target reflects 24.25x forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for ICE

| Valuation Multiples - ICE |               |       |              |        |         |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|
|                           |               | Stock | Sub-Industry | Sector | S&P 500 |
| P/E F12M                  | Current       | 22.88 | 26.46        | 16.87  | 22.85   |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 24.55 | 27.47        | 17.12  | 23.8    |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 15.4  | 18.49        | 11.59  | 15.3    |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 20.24 | 22.57        | 14.56  | 17.85   |
| P/S F12M                  | Current       | 9.08  | 11.9         | 7.17   | 4.56    |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 10.06 | 12.94        | 7.17   | 4.56    |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 5.94  | 7.44         | 5.02   | 3.2     |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 8.39  | 10.79        | 6.12   | 3.68    |
| P/B TTM                   | Current       | 3.21  | 4.12         | 3.0    | 6.69    |
|                           | 5-Year High   | 3.41  | 4.32         | 3.02   | 6.7     |
|                           | 5-Year Low    | 1.84  | 1.88         | 1.74   | 3.73    |
|                           | 5-Year Median | 2.53  | 2.78         | 2.59   | 4.95    |

As of 2/10/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 46% (116 out of 253)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

## Top Peers

| Company (Ticker)                 | Rec     | Rank |
|----------------------------------|---------|------|
| Cboe Global Markets, Inc. (CBOE) | Neutral | 3    |
| CME Group Inc. (CME)             | Neutral | 3    |
| Envestnet, Inc (ENV)             | Neutral | 4    |
| Moodys Corporation (MCO)         | Neutral | 3    |
| MarketAxess Holdings Inc. (MKTX) | Neutral | 3    |
| MSCI Inc (MSCI)                  | Neutral | 2    |
| Nasdaq, Inc. (NDAQ)              | Neutral | 3    |
| OTC Markets Group Inc. (OTCM)    | Neutral | 3    |

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

| Industry Comparison Industry: Securities And Exchanges |           |            |           | Industry Peers |           |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------|
|                                                        | ICE       | X Industry | S&P 500   | CBOE           | CME       | NDAQ    |
| Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)                       | Neutral   | -          | -         | Neutral        | Neutral   | Neutral |
| Zacks Rank (Short Term)                                | 3         | -          | -         | 3              | 3         | 3       |
| VGM Score                                              | C         | -          | -         | A              | F         | D       |
| Market Cap                                             | 62.72 B   | 22.20 B    | 27.72 B   | 9.76 B         | 66.48 B   | 23.37 B |
| # of Analysts                                          | 7         | 6          | 13        | 7              | 7         | 7       |
| Dividend Yield                                         | 1.07%     | 1.38%      | 1.42%     | 1.86%          | 1.84%     | 1.38%   |
| Value Score                                            | C         | -          | -         | C              | D         | D       |
| Cash/Price                                             | 0.02      | 0.02       | 0.06      | 0.03           | 0.02      | 0.13    |
| EV/EBITDA                                              | 19.43     | 19.46      | 14.81     | 14.52          | 20.50     | 19.46   |
| PEG F1                                                 | 2.76      | 4.21       | 2.38      | 14.71          | NA        | 5.55    |
| P/B                                                    | 3.21      | 3.63       | 3.81      | 2.91           | 2.52      | 3.63    |
| P/CF                                                   | 19.28     | 19.28      | 15.29     | 13.27          | 23.12     | 18.95   |
| P/E F1                                                 | 22.70     | 22.71      | 20.64     | 18.09          | 28.02     | 22.47   |
| P/S TTM                                                | 7.61      | 7.18       | 3.04      | 2.85           | 13.61     | 4.15    |
| Earnings Yield                                         | 4.41%     | 4.41%      | 4.77%     | 5.53%          | 3.57%     | 4.45%   |
| Debt/Equity                                            | 0.72      | 0.23       | 0.68      | 0.34           | 0.13      | 0.86    |
| Cash Flow (\$/share)                                   | 5.79      | 6.80       | 6.77      | 6.80           | 8.01      | 7.52    |
| Growth Score                                           | D         | -          | -         | A              | F         | D       |
| Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)                      | 13.18%    | 13.18%     | 9.27%     | 22.05%         | 15.96%    | 11.83%  |
| Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)                           | 9.03%     | 6.50%      | 13.85%    | -5.29%         | -1.64%    | 2.59%   |
| Current Cash Flow Growth                               | 13.83%    | 8.97%      | 3.46%     | 2.38%          | -1.11%    | 20.29%  |
| Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)                | 13.71%    | 18.37%     | 7.74%     | 24.56%         | 16.24%    | 11.39%  |
| Current Ratio                                          | 0.99      | 1.11       | 1.38      | 1.19           | 1.01      | 1.56    |
| Debt/Capital                                           | 42.13%    | 18.44%     | 41.31%    | 25.32%         | 11.56%    | 46.26%  |
| Net Margin                                             | 25.34%    | 25.34%     | 10.58%    | 13.63%         | 43.11%    | 16.56%  |
| Return on Equity                                       | 13.78%    | 17.47%     | 14.86%    | 17.35%         | 9.03%     | 17.47%  |
| Sales/Assets                                           | 0.06      | 0.36       | 0.51      | 0.59           | 0.04      | 0.36    |
| Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)                         | 13.87%    | 2.46%      | 6.30%     | 2.46%          | -2.02%    | 4.68%   |
| Momentum Score                                         | A         | -          | -         | B              | D         | A       |
| Daily Price Change                                     | -1.41%    | -1.41%     | 0.21%     | -2.01%         | -3.53%    | -0.46%  |
| 1-Week Price Change                                    | 3.48%     | 3.48%      | 4.58%     | -2.37%         | 5.31%     | 5.41%   |
| 4-Week Price Change                                    | -5.24%    | -2.96%     | 1.11%     | -7.28%         | -6.44%    | -0.01%  |
| 12-Week Price Change                                   | 12.27%    | 11.71%     | 8.61%     | 1.84%          | 11.71%    | 16.08%  |
| 52-Week Price Change                                   | 18.30%    | 10.05%     | 8.77%     | -26.91%        | -10.81%   | 24.91%  |
| 20-Day Average Volume (Shares)                         | 2,343,044 | 735,206    | 2,095,832 | 735,206        | 1,532,359 | 939,867 |
| EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change                          | 2.23%     | 0.00%      | 0.00%     | -2.29%         | 0.00%     | 0.38%   |
| EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change                          | 2.53%     | 0.00%      | 0.59%     | -1.69%         | -0.81%    | 2.52%   |
| EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change                         | 3.67%     | 2.74%      | 1.77%     | 0.84%          | -1.05%    | 3.26%   |
| EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change                         | 0.33%     | 1.77%      | 0.22%     | 3.21%          | -3.62%    | 5.06%   |

Source: Zacks Investment Research

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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 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.

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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    | C |
| Growth Score   | D |
| Momentum Score | A |
| VGM Score      | C |

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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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 forward-looking 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 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.

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**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.

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**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 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.

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**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.