

IDEXX Laboratories (IDXX)

\$485.36 (As of 02/03/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$558.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation: **Outperform**
(Since: 11/13/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

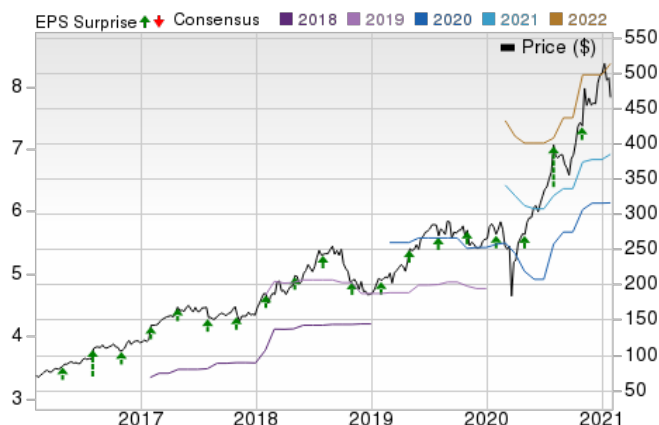
Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5) **2-Buy**
Zacks Style Scores: VGM:C
Value: F | Growth: B | Momentum: A

Summary

IDEXX exited the fourth quarter with better-than-expected results. Solid organic-revenue growth is impressive. Strong sales at the CAG and LPD businesses drove the top line in the quarter. Sustained strong global trends in pet healthcare supported sturdy gains in CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues. Robust performance in major geographies and margin expansions are also encouraging. IDEXX's OPTI Medical Systems' COVID-19 human PCR testing also drove the top line. The company's strong outlook for 2021 also instills investors' confidence. Over the past six months, IDEXX's shares have outperformed its industry. Yet, the pandemic-led constraint on new CAG instrument placement levels and a weak capital structure are worrying. Other issues like foreign exchange fluctuations and impact of third-party distribution persist.

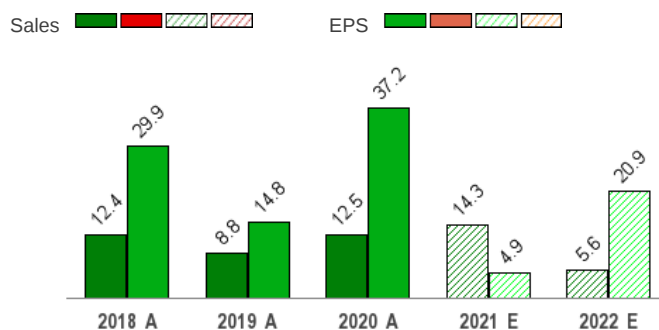
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$522.90 - \$168.65
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	400,729
Market Cap	\$41.4 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	-2.9%
Beta	0.88
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Medical - Instruments
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 29% (179 out of 253)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	40.6%
Last Sales Surprise	5.8%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	11.3%
Expected Report Date	04/29/2021
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	72.3
P/E F1	68.9
PEG F1	4.5
P/S TTM	15.3

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	791 E	826 E	867 E	833 E	3,268 E
2021	722 E	759 E	785 E	759 E	3,095 E
2020	626 A	638 A	722 A	721 A	2,707 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$1.91 E	\$2.38 E	\$2.42 E	\$2.12 E	\$8.51 E
2021	\$1.71 E	\$2.10 E	\$2.02 E	\$1.80 E	\$7.04 E
2020	\$1.29 A	\$1.72 A	\$1.69 A	\$2.01 A	\$6.71 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 02/03/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 02/04/2021.

Overview

Headquartered in Delaware NJ, IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. is a developer, manufacturer and distributor of products and services primarily for the companion animal veterinary, livestock and poultry, water testing and dairy markets. The company also sells a series of portable electrolytes and blood gas analyzers for the human point-of-care medical diagnostics market.

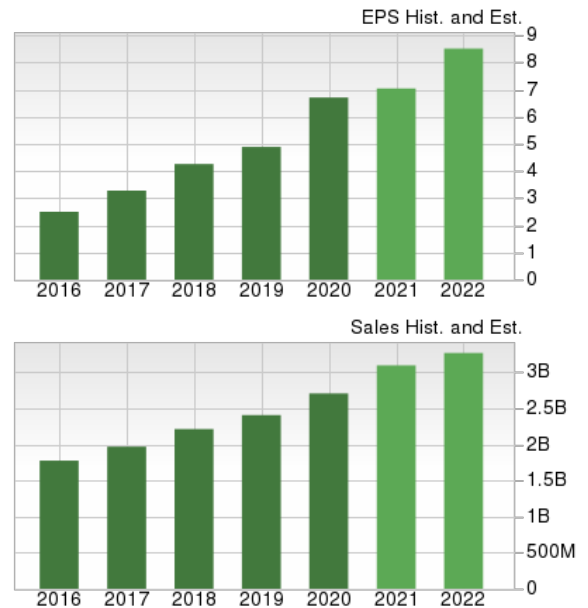
IDEXX operates through four segments:

Companion Animal Group (CAG) (88.1% of revenues in 2020, up 12.6% from 2019): This segment provides veterinarians with diagnostic capabilities and information management solutions that enhance the health and well-being of pets. The complementary nature of these products and services provides a unique competitive advantage known as the IDEXX Diagnostic Advantage, providing vets with tools and services necessary to offer advanced veterinary medical care.

Water (4.8%, down 3.2 %): Through this segment, IDEXX provides innovative testing solutions for easy, rapid and accurate detection and quantification of various microbiological parameters in water, helping to ensure water safety for people around the world.

Livestock, Poultry and Dairy (LPD) (5.4%, up 10%): Within this segment, IDEXX provides diagnostic tests and related instrumentation required to manage the health status of livestock and poultry, to improve bovine reproductive efficiency, and to ensure the quality and safety of milk and food. These products are purchased by government and private laboratories that provide testing services to cattle, swine and poultry veterinarians, producers and processors. this segment).

Other (1.7%, up 108.7%): The company's OPTI Medical operating segment has been combined and presented with the remaining pharmaceutical product line and the out-licensing arrangements in an 'Other' category, primarily because they do not meet the quantitative or qualitative thresholds for reportable segments.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Share Price Movement:** Over the past six months, IDEXX has been outperforming its industry with respect to share price movement. The stock has gained 22.7% compared with the 6.4% rise of the industry. IDEXX exited the fourth quarter with better-than-expected results. Solid organic-revenue growth is encouraging. The top line was driven by strong sales at the CAG and LPD businesses. The company witnessed sturdy gains in CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues, supported by sustained strong global trends in pet healthcare in the quarter under review. The company's performance in major geographies is also encouraging. Further, the company's human health business, OPTI Medical Systems' COVID-19 human Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing, also contributed to the top line. The upbeat initial financial outlook for 2021 provided by the company also instills investors' confidence on the stock. Margin expansions look encouraging.

▲ **Strong Global Performance:** IDEXX continues to demonstrate solid growth globally. International revenues in the fourth quarter of 2020 were up 16.5% organically, aided by a 21% rise in CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues. This reflected robust gains across the United States as well as international markets.

Global Reference Lab revenues increased 18.9% organically, reflecting nearly 20% organic growth in the United States and mid to high teens organic gains in international markets. Gains in Reference lab revenues continue to be driven by high same-store volume growth along with strong gains across testing categories. Gains across testing categories include support from high levels of wellness testing in the United States and benefits from the expansion of IDEXX 360 program agreements in international markets. Notably, the company's newest reference lab in Kornwestheim, Germany, is fully functional now and is currently serving across Europe. Further, the announcement of ProCyt One Hematology Analyzer has been favorably received by customers.

Regulatory Approvals: IDEXX's subsidiary OPTI Medical Systems achieved the CE mark for its OPTI SARS-CoV-2 Reverse Transcription PCR (RT-PCR) laboratory test kit, which is aimed at detecting the SARS-CoV-2, in June. This development came on the heels of the validation of the test by the Institute Pasteur of France as well as Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA in the United States. These regulatory validations buoy optimism on the stock.

▲ **CAG Continues to Perform Well Despite Coronavirus:** IDEXX derives the lion's share of its revenues from the CAG segment. The company registered stellar fourth-quarter revenue growth within CAG.

In the fourth quarter, CAG revenues rose 18.9% (up 17% organically) year over year, driven by 23% reported and 21% organic growth in global CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues. This reflects 16.6% organic growth in the United States and 17.8% organic growth in the international markets. Continued strength in clinical visits and increased utilization of diagnostics aided CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues during the reported quarter.

Amid the pandemic-led restrictions, IDEXX witnessed a sequential improvement in CAG instrument placements during the fourth quarter. Further, the quality of CAG instrument placements remained high despite the constraint on overall placement levels. Globally, IDEXX placed 414 Catalysts at new and competitive accounts in North America and 1,092 new and competitive placements in international markets. The company also placed 525 second Catalysts globally, indicating higher levels of diagnostics utilization by the clinics. IDEXX achieved 1,224 premium hematology placements in the fourth quarter, thus supporting a 10% year-over-year expansion in its premium hematology-installed base.

IDEXX also placed 671 SediVue analyzers, which took the global SediVue installed base to nearly 10,700 instruments, reflecting an uptick of 20% year over year.

Rapid assay revenues increased 19.6% organically in the reported quarter, primarily resulting from high-growth in the United States. The business continued to gain from SNAP 4Dx Plus Tests, feline and specialty rapid assay test volumes, which in turn benefited from strong overall market conditions including high demand for both wellness and non-wellness testing.

IDEXX VetLab consumables generated revenue growths of 27.2% and 24.8% on reported and organic basis, respectively. This reflected high growth across the U.S. and international markets. Further, the revenue uptick was supported by ongoing expansion of the company's global instrument-installed base, continued strong customer retention and increases in testing utilization.

Veterinary software, services and diagnostic imaging systems' revenues also grew 1.5% on a reported and 1.2% on an organic basis, driven by double-digit growth in recurring service revenues and strength in new software system placements.

OPTI Medical Systems' COVID-19 human PCR testing contributed about 1.5% to the fourth-quarter top line.

IDEXX's robust worldwide commercial capabilities and best-in-class products, which include the next-generation chemistry analyzer – Catalyst One, are the key growth drivers over the near term.

Risks

- **Impact of Third-Party Distribution:** The instrument consumables and rapid assay products in the company's CAG segment are sold domestically and in certain other geographies by third party distributors, who purchase products from IDEXX and sell them to veterinary practices, which are the end users. As a result, distributor purchasing dynamics have an impact on the company's reported sales of these products. Distributor purchasing dynamics can be affected by many factors which may not be directly related to the underlying end-user demand for the products. Consequently, reported results may reflect fluctuations in inventory levels held by distributors and may not necessarily mirror changes in the underlying end-user demand.
- **Foreign Exchange Headwind:** Majority of IDEXX's consolidated revenues are derived from sale of products in international markets. Thus, the strengthening of the rate of exchange for the U.S. dollar relative to other currencies had a negative impact on the company's revenues derived in currencies other than the U.S. dollar and on profits from products manufactured in the U.S. and sold internationally.
- **Weak Solvency and Capital Structure:** IDEXX exited the fourth quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$383.9 million compared with \$176 million at the end of the third quarter. Meanwhile, total debt was \$908.5 million for the period, reflecting a surge from \$903 million in the preceding quarter. This figure, however, was much higher than the year-end cash and cash equivalent level.

The quarter's total debt-to-capital ratio of 0.59 indicates a leveraged balance sheet. However, it represents a sequential decrease from 0.67 at the end of the third quarter. The overall data shows a difficult solvency position for IDEXX.

The times interest earned for the company stands at 21.1%, representing a sequential increase from 19.1% at the end of third-quarter 2020.

Last Earnings Report

IDEXX Earnings Beat Estimates in Q4, Margins Rise

IDEXX posted fourth-quarter 2020 earnings per share of \$2.01, reflecting a 93.3% year-over-year rise. The figure surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 40.6%.

Comparable-constant-currency earnings per share growth was 43.4%, which excludes an impact of 25 cents per share from the enactment of tax reform in Switzerland and tax benefits from share-based compensation of 13 cents per share.

Full-year adjusted earnings per share was \$6.71, reflecting a 37.2% increase from the year-ago period. Again, the metric surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 9.5%.

Revenues in Detail

Fourth-quarter revenues grew 19.1% year over year to \$720.9 million. Organically, growth was 17.2%. The metric exceeded the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 5.8%.

The year-over-year upside was primarily driven by 23% reported and 21% organic growth in global CAG Diagnostics' recurring revenue. Sustained strong growth in the LPD business also drove the top line. OPTI Medical Systems' COVID-19 human PCR testing contributed about 1.5% to the fourth-quarter top line.

However, fourth-quarter results were impacted by a fall in new CAG instrument placement levels and Water business revenues, including pressure on non-compliance water testing, impacted by factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Full-year revenues were \$2.71 billion, reflecting a 12.5% increase from the year-ago period. Organically, growth was 12%. Revenues surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 1.5%.

Segmental Analysis

IDEXX derives revenues from four operating segments — CAG, Water, LPD and Other.

In the fourth quarter, CAG revenues rose 18.9% (up 17% organically) year over year to \$629.7 million. The Water segment's revenues were up 0.7% (up 0.4% organically) year over year to \$33.1 million. LPD revenues rose 15.9% (up 12.7% organically) to \$42.5 million. Revenues at the Other segment grew 156.2% on reported and organic basis to \$15.7 million.

Margins

Gross profit in the fourth quarter rose 23.7% to \$409.5 million. Gross margin expanded 211 basis points (bps) to 56.8% despite a 13.5% rise in cost of revenues to \$311.4 million.

Sales and marketing expenses rose 9.7% to \$115.9 million, while general and administrative expenses moved down 6.6% to \$69.7 million. Research and development expenses climbed 10.3% to \$38.8 million.

Operating profit in the reported quarter was \$185.1 million, reflecting an improvement of 60.1% year over year. Operating margin in the quarter expanded 658 bps to 25.7%.

Financial Position

IDEXX exited 2020 with cash and cash equivalents of \$383.9 million compared with \$90.3 million recorded at the end of 2019. Total debt (including current portion) for the company at the end of 2020 was \$908.5 million compared with total debt of \$698.9 million at the end of 2019.

Cumulative net cash provided by operating activities at the end of the year was \$648.1 million compared with \$459.2 million a year ago.

2021 Outlook

IDEXX, boosted by the ongoing business recovery and strong performances in the reported quarter, has provided the initial financial outlook for 2021.

The company projects the revenues for the year to be in the range of \$3.07-\$3.12 billion, reflecting growth of 13-15.5% on a reported basis. Organic growth is expected in the range of 11.5-13.5%. The Zacks Consensus Estimate for the same is currently pegged at \$2.98 billion.

The CAG Diagnostics recurring revenues for 2021 are expected to reflect a growth of 13.5-16% on a reported basis and 12-14.5% on an organic basis.

Further, IDEXX projects full-year earnings per share to be in the range of \$7.39-\$7.71, reflecting growth of 10-14% on a reported basis. The comparable constant currency growth is expected in the range of 15-20%. The Zacks Consensus Estimate for the same is currently pegged at \$6.91.

Quarter Ending 12/2020

Report Date	Feb 02, 2021
Sales Surprise	5.79%
EPS Surprise	40.56%
Quarterly EPS	2.01
Annual EPS (TTM)	6.71

Valuation

IDEXX shares are down 2.9% in the year to date period and up 76.9% in the trailing 12-month periods. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 2.2% while the Zacks Medical sector rose 3.4% in the year to date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 23.4% and sector is up 4.3%.

The S&P 500 index is up 2.5% in the year to date period and rose 17.2% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 68.8X Forward 12-months earnings, which compares to 35.2X for the Zacks sub-industry, 22.7X for the Zacks sector and 22.6X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 73.9X and as low as 31.1X, with a 5-year median 47.4X. Our Outperform recommendation indicates that the stock will perform above the market. Our \$558 price target reflects 79.1X forward 12-months earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for IDEXX.

Valuation Multiples - IDEXX					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	68.83	35.23	22.69	22.55
	5-Year High	73.90	41.61	22.86	23.80
	5-Year Low	31.06	22.91	15.90	15.30
	5-Year Median	47.42	29.67	19.13	17.83
P/S F12M	Current	13.76	4.72	2.84	4.47
	5-Year High	14.65	4.72	3.17	4.47
	5-Year Low	3.56	2.56	2.26	3.20
	5-Year Median	7.42	3.33	2.84	3.68
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	59.59	20.25	10.35	17.32
	5-Year High	62.96	22.22	11.70	17.38
	5-Year Low	16.97	13.48	8.43	9.55
	5-Year Median	32.60	17.38	10.27	13.24

As of 02/03/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 29% (179 out of 253)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Hologic, Inc. (HOLX)	Outperform	1
Fresenius Medical Care AG & Co. KGaA (FMS)	Neutral	4
Integra LifeSciences Holdings Corporation (IART)	Neutral	3
Semler Scientific Inc. (SMLR)	Neutral	3
SONOVA HOLDING (SONVY)	Neutral	3
STERIS plc (STE)	Neutral	3
Teleflex Incorporated (TFX)	Underperform	4
Varian Medical Systems, Inc. (VAR)	Underperform	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Medical - Instruments				Industry Peers		
	IDXX	X Industry	S&P 500	HOLX	SONVY	TFX
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Outperform	-	-	Outperform	Neutral	Underperform
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	1	3	4
VGM Score	C	-	-	A	B	D
Market Cap	41.40 B	331.42 M	26.72 B	21.21 B	15.88 B	18.13 B
# of Analysts	5	2	13	8	1	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.47%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%
Value Score	F	-	-	B	C	C
Cash/Price	0.00	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.10	0.02
EV/EBITDA	65.62	-3.85	14.76	15.42	NA	31.03
PEG F1	4.50	3.86	2.38	0.61	NA	2.57
P/B	65.43	5.39	3.66	6.49	6.43	5.60
P/CF	63.88	27.48	15.11	14.92	23.33	24.24
P/E F1	68.94	42.94	20.08	9.34	33.56	30.84
P/S TTM	15.30	6.76	2.94	4.68	NA	7.23
Earnings Yield	1.45%	-0.92%	4.89%	10.70%	2.98%	3.24%
Debt/Equity	1.36	0.06	0.68	0.83	0.69	0.63
Cash Flow (\$/share)	7.60	-0.14	6.78	5.52	2.11	16.06
Growth Score	B	-	-	A	B	D
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	24.61%	7.61%	9.46%	15.90%	NA	13.39%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	4.98%	34.58%	13.31%	121.45%	-1.34%	20.66%
Current Cash Flow Growth	25.66%	5.75%	4.57%	27.33%	14.96%	9.60%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	14.54%	10.34%	8.19%	7.92%	NA	14.47%
Current Ratio	1.82	3.25	1.38	2.46	2.57	2.99
Debt/Capital	57.57%	9.67%	41.49%	45.29%	40.86%	38.62%
Net Margin	21.49%	-21.88%	10.47%	30.50%	NA	14.66%
Return on Equity	159.90%	-19.83%	14.92%	63.50%	NA	16.33%
Sales/Assets	1.32	0.51	0.51	0.64	NA	0.38
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	11.59%	19.52%	6.17%	50.83%	-4.21%	13.03%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	A	B	C
Daily Price Change	-4.20%	0.14%	0.04%	0.22%	-1.40%	-0.54%
1-Week Price Change	-2.88%	-2.99%	-4.02%	5.32%	-4.84%	-2.28%
4-Week Price Change	0.36%	12.98%	-0.72%	5.50%	-5.13%	-3.89%
12-Week Price Change	6.66%	32.63%	6.66%	17.87%	-6.27%	7.25%
52-Week Price Change	76.88%	24.58%	6.16%	51.55%	-2.65%	0.99%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	400,729	232,448	2,065,421	1,970,162	16,854	198,765
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	9.95%	0.00%	0.00%	15.70%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	11.31%	0.00%	0.38%	25.28%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	11.97%	0.00%	1.33%	42.19%	3.52%	-1.42%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	9.97%	0.00%	0.08%	34.42%	NA	0.00%

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

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

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Periods:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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