

## International Paper (IP)

**\$35.75** (As of 04/28/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$30.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

**Zacks Recommendation:** Underperform

(Since: 02/10/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

Short Term: 1-3 Months

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

**4-Sell**

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: B

Momentum: A

## Summary

International Paper's first-quarter 2020 results are likely have reflected the impact of lower price and unfavorable mix and higher maintenance outages in its segments. The company is facing structural challenges in its Industrial Packaging segment owing to the impact of tariffs, strong U.S. dollar and weak demand. In the first quarter, price and mix might have lowered owing to the impact of prior index movement in North America. For Industrial Packaging and Printing Paper segment, volume is anticipated to have muted on lower seasonal demand in North America and Brazil. In the Global Cellulose Fibers segment, reduced price and mix is likely to have hurt bottom-line in the first-quarter due to the impact of prior index movement. Consequently, the company's earnings estimates for the first quarter have undergone downward revisions lately.

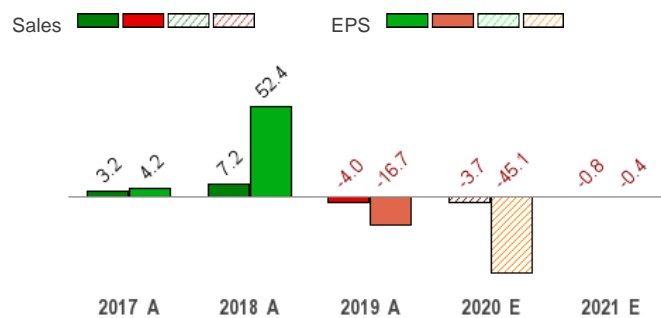
## Price, Consensus & Surprise



## Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	\$47.64 - \$26.38
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	4,130,214
Market Cap	\$14.1 B
YTD Price Change	-22.4%
Beta	1.43
Dividend / Div Yld	\$2.05 / 5.7%
Industry	<a href="#">Paper and Related Products</a>
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 42% (147 out of 253)

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



Last EPS Surprise	6.9%
Last Sales Surprise	-1.4%
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	-3.8%
Expected Report Date	04/30/2020
Earnings ESP	-13.5%

## Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021					21,387 E
2020	5,227 E	5,255 E	5,347 E	5,267 E	21,552 E
2019	5,643 A	5,667 A	5,568 A	5,498 A	22,376 A

## EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021					\$2.42 E
2020	\$0.43 E	\$0.42 E	\$0.85 E	\$0.84 E	\$2.43 E
2019	\$1.11 A	\$1.15 A	\$1.09 A	\$1.09 A	\$4.43 A

\*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	8.1
P/E F1	14.8
PEG F1	3.0
P/S TTM	0.6

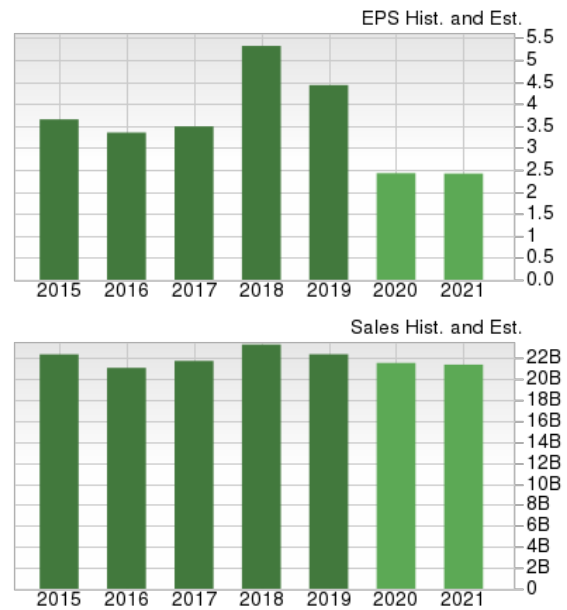
The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 04/28/2020. The reports text is as of 04/29/2020.

## Overview

Incorporated in 1941, Headquartered in Memphis, TN, International Paper Company is a global producer of renewable fiber-based packaging, pulp and paper products with manufacturing operations in North America, Europe, Latin America, Russia, Asia, and North Africa. The company employs approximately 53,000 people and is strategically located in more than 150 countries serving customers worldwide.

The company currently has three operating segments as discussed hereunder.

- The **Industrial Packaging** segment (accounting for 68% of 2019 revenues) manufactures containerboard in the United States. Products include linerboard, medium, whitetop, recycled linerboard, recycled medium and saturating kraft. Additionally, the company recycle around \$1 million tons of OCC and mixed and white paper through 18 recycling plants. Container plants are supported by regional design centers, which offer total packaging solutions and supply chain initiatives. In EMEA, the company's operations include one recycled fiber containerboard mill in Morocco, a recycled containerboard mill in Spain and 26 container plants in France, Italy, Spain, Morocco and Turkey. Brazil operations include three containerboard mills and four box plants.
- The **Printing Papers** segment (19%) produces papers for use in copiers, desktop and laser printers and digital imaging. The primary product in this segment is uncoated papers. End-use applications include promotional materials like brochures and pamphlets.
- The **Global Cellulose Fibers** segment (13%) primarily makes pulp and represents the combined businesses of legacy pulp operations and acquired pulp business. Cellulose fibers product portfolio includes fluff, market and specialty pulps. The company's market pulp is used for tissue and paper products. Its products are made in the United States, Canada, France, Poland, and Russia and are sold around the world. International Paper facilities have annual dried pulp capacity of about 4 million metric tons.



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## Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ International Paper executes a high cold outage cycle. It has completed two cold outages in 2019, while eight cold outages are planned for this year. Consequently, the company is expected to have reflected higher maintenance outages across all of its business segments in the current quarter. It also anticipates around \$80 million of cost related to the Riverdale conversion in 2020, including the impact of unabsorbed fixed cost.
- ▼ In the Industrial Packaging segment, the company is facing structural challenges due to the impact of tariffs and a strong U.S. dollar in addition to weaker demand due to the recession in Turkey, which is a major importer of U.S. containerboard. In the first quarter, price and mix is likely to have lowered owing to the impact of prior index movement in North America. Volume might have reduced on lower seasonal demand in North America. Maintenance outage expense and input costs are also expected to be higher.
- ▼ In the Global Cellulose Fibers segment, reduced price and mix is expected to have hurt bottom-line due to the impact of prior index movement in first-quarter 2020. Maintenance outage as well as operations and costs are also anticipated to have impacted the segment's results. In the Printing Papers business, volume is expected to have been reduced, primarily on lower seasonal demand in Brazil, while maintenance outages is likely to have increased.
- ▼ The company depends heavily on raw materials such as wood fiber, purchased in the form of pulpwood, wood chips and old corrugated containers ("OCC"), and certain chemicals, including caustic soda and starch, and energy sources, principally natural gas, coal and fuel oil. Elevated input costs (fiber, chemicals, energy, and freight) will suppress margins in the near term. Further, distribution costs are trending upwards lately due to a very tight truck and rail availability as well as higher diesel fuel cost. This will affect the company's margins in the near term.

Lower price and unfavorable mix, weak volume, maintenance outages in its segments, rising raw material and distribution costs as well as unfavorable foreign currency translation remain concerns.

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## Risks

- International Paper delivered solid earnings and generated strong operating cash flow in 2019 by efficiently managing costs across all business segments. The company guides adjusted EBITDA between \$3 billion and \$3.2 billion and free cash flow is projected at \$1.7 billion for the current year. In the North American Industrial Packaging business, box demand remains strong aided by strong e-commerce growth and export volume of containerboard. Further, the company's focus to serve the rapidly-growing segments will be an important contributor to the strong performance. In the Global Cellulose Fibers business, the company continues to improve fluff pulp shipments. Also, fluff pulp demand and volume are expected to grow. New product introductions in the fluff pulp segment as well as the company's optimization initiatives are likely to drive results.
  - International Paper is undergoing restructuring initiatives to transform itself into a core packaging company. The company has strategically offloaded businesses in China to focus more on its U.S. operations. It believes that it could cater to the Chinese and Asian markets more effectively by supplying globally competitive products primarily through its Ilim joint venture in Russia and through exports from the United States and other parts of the world. International Paper also completed the divestiture of its consumer packaging business in North America to Graphic Packaging. The divestiture helped the company to maximize the value of North American Consumer Packaging business by combining it with Graphic Packaging while also focusing on its core businesses and strengthen its balance sheet. The company intends to invest significantly to improve its North American containerboard mill system, enhance product quality, and reduce manufacturing and delivery costs.
  - Mergers and acquisitions are a key strategy for International Paper to strengthen its packaging business. In North America, the company envisions a large opportunity within its industrial packaging businesses, which continue to generate the best margins in the industry. The company is taking initiatives to drive further margin expansion over time across the business. International Paper has completed the acquisition of leading timberland owner Weyerhaeuser Co.'s pulp, which has strengthened International Paper's position in the global fluff pulp market and augmented its operating cash flow. The acquisition provides the company with a higher flexibility to manage a wide portfolio of products to meet customer needs through superior R&D capabilities and priceless patent portfolio.
  - The company's efforts to reduce its debt levels appear encouraging. International Paper's total debt was around \$9.6 billion as of 2019 end. This has been lowered from \$10 billion at the end of 2018. Its debt-to-capital ratio stands at 0.56, lower than its industry's 0.70. This favorable reading indicates that International Paper is not a very leveraged company. The company's times interest earned ratio was 4.3 in the end of 2019, better than the industry's 0.8. This further underscores International Paper's ability to meet debt obligations. It aims to utilize its sound cash flow by investing in high-return capital projects, reducing total debt and returning greater proportion of cash to shareholders through increased dividend payouts and share repurchases.
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## Last Earnings Report

### International Paper Q4 Earnings Top, Sales Lag Estimates

International Paper reported fourth-quarter 2019 adjusted earnings of \$1.09 per share, down 34% year over year. However, the bottom line outpaced the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.02.

Including one-time items, earnings during the fourth quarter came in at 42 cents compared with the year-ago quarter figure of 78 cents.

Net sales declined to \$5,498 million in the reported quarter from \$5,951 million in the year-ago quarter. Further, the reported figure missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$5,576 million.

Adjusted cost of sales was \$3,620 million, down from the \$3,795 million in the prior-year quarter. Gross profit declined 13% year over year to \$1,878 million. Selling and administrative expenses declined 0.9% year over year to \$442 million in the quarter. Adjusted operating earnings came in at \$669 million, reflecting a year-over-year decline of 29%.

### Segment Performance

**Industrial Packaging:** Sales in this segment fell to \$3,810 million in the reported quarter from \$4,017 million in the year-earlier quarter. Adjusted operating profit declined 6% year over year to \$605 million.

**Printing Papers:** This segment's sales were \$1,067 million in the fourth quarter, down 8% from \$1,160 million in the prior-year quarter. Adjusted operating profit for the segment was \$109 million compared with \$197 million in the year-ago period.

**Global Cellulose Fibers:** Sales of this segment came in at \$577 million compared with \$736 million in the prior-year quarter. The segment reported adjusted operating loss of \$45 million in fourth-quarter 2019 against an operating profit of \$93 million in the year-ago period.

### Balance Sheet

Cash and temporary investments aggregated \$511 million at the end of 2019 compared with \$589 million at the end of the 2018. As of the 2019 end, long-term debt was \$9.6 billion compared with \$10.0 billion as of Dec 31, 2018.

Cash flow from operating activities was \$3.6 billion in 2019 compared with \$3.2 billion generated in the prior year. Free cash flow was \$2.3 billion during 2019 compared with \$1.7 billion last year.

The company continues to strengthen packaging business through targeted investments. It is also prudently managing costs, capital spending and working capital to generate strong cash flows in 2020, despite earnings headwinds.

International Paper repurchased shares worth \$485 million during 2019 and paid dividends worth \$796 million.

### 2019 Results

International Paper reported adjusted earnings per share of \$4.43 in 2019, down 17% from the prior-year figure of \$5.32. The bottom line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$4.37. Including one-time items, earnings came in at \$3.07, declining 37% from \$4.85 reported in 2018.

Sales declined 4% year over year to \$22.4 billion from the prior-year figure of \$23.3 billion. However, the top line outpaced the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$22.5 billion.

Quarter Ending **12/2019**

Report Date	Jan 30, 2020
Sales Surprise	-1.41%
EPS Surprise	6.86%
Quarterly EPS	1.09
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.44

## Recent News

### International Paper to Divest Brazilian Packaging Business - Mar 30, 2020

International Paper has entered into an agreement to divest its corrugated packaging business in Brazil to Klabin S.A. for R\$330 million (\$64 million), out of which R\$280 million (\$54 million) will be paid on closing of the transaction, while the balance will be paid a year after the deal's closure. The deal is likely to close in the second half of the current year.

Notably, the transaction includes three containerboard mills and four box plants. The move supports International Paper's previously-announced strategic review of the packaging business in Brazil. The company considered to sell its Brazilian containerboard and corrugated packaging business as the unit could not perform profitably. In fact, International Paper's existing business structure was not competitive enough on the Brazilian packaging market. However, the company will continue to operate its Papers and Forestry businesses in Brazil.

## Valuation

International Paper's shares are down 23.7% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks Paper and Related Products industry and the Zacks Basics Materials sector are down 32.2% and 18.9% respectively, over the past year.

The S&P 500 index has lost 3.4% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 13.37X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 7.19X for the Zacks sub-industry, 13.83X for the Zacks sector and 20.17X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 17.51X and as low as 6.59X, with a 5-year median of 11.72X.

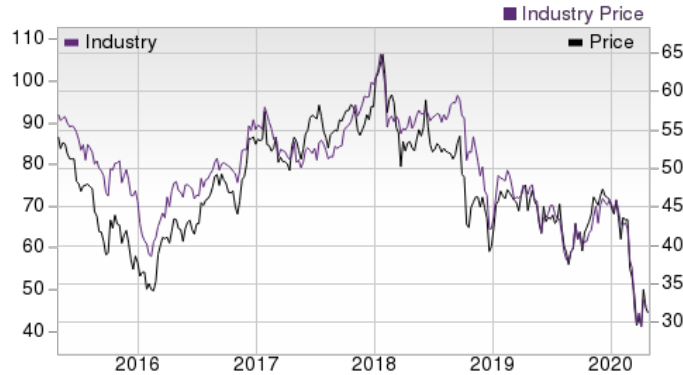
Our Underperform recommendation indicates that the stock will perform worse than the market. Our \$30 price target reflects 11.22X forward 12-month earnings per share.

The table below shows summary valuation data for IP:

Valuation Multiples - IP					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	13.37	7.19	13.83	20.17
	5-Year High	17.51	14.45	21.06	20.17
	5-Year Low	6.59	4.15	9.79	15.19
	5-Year Median	11.72	11.32	13.49	17.45
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	4.82	8.75	8.54	10.45
	5-Year High	11.55	15.56	18.31	12.87
	5-Year Low	4.07	4.6	6.5	8.27
	5-Year Median	6.58	7.82	10.55	10.78
P/B TTM	Current	1.82	2.54	1.69	3.78
	5-Year High	5.47	6.73	3.57	4.55
	5-Year Low	1.35	1.5	1.22	2.84
	5-Year Median	3.74	2.3	2.17	3.64

As of 04/28/2020

## Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 42% (147 out of 253)



## Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Clearwater Paper Corporation (CLW)	Outperform	2
Verso Corporation (VRS)	Outperform	3
Glatfelter (GLT)	Neutral	3
Neenah Paper, Inc. (NP)	Neutral	3
Packaging Corporation of America (PKG)	Neutral	3
Domtar Corporation (UFS)	Neutral	3
Veritiv Corporation (VRTV)	Neutral	3
WestRock Company (WRK)	Neutral	4

Industry Comparison Industry: Paper And Related Products				Industry Peers		
	IP	X Industry	S&P 500	NP	PKG	WRK
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Underperform	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	4	-	-	3	3	4
VGM Score	A	-	-	B	B	B
Market Cap	14.07 B	823.58 M	20.14 B	823.58 M	9.32 B	8.50 B
# of Analysts	4	1	14	1	6	6
Dividend Yield	5.73%	0.00%	2.13%	3.83%	3.21%	5.65%
Value Score	A	-	-	B	C	B
Cash/Price	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.02
EV/EBITDA	6.90	6.03	12.15	8.75	7.71	5.83
PEG Ratio	3.02	0.76	2.43	NA	3.56	NA
Price/Book (P/B)	1.82	1.03	2.68	2.03	3.03	0.72
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	4.56	4.97	10.78	8.42	8.19	3.33
P/E (F1)	15.09	16.43	19.06	17.21	17.81	11.41
Price/Sales (P/S)	0.63	0.55	2.12	0.88	1.34	0.46
Earnings Yield	6.77%	5.81%	5.11%	5.81%	5.62%	8.75%
Debt/Equity	1.28	0.79	0.72	0.52	0.87	0.81
Cash Flow (\$/share)	7.84	1.65	7.01	5.82	12.01	9.89
Growth Score	B	-	-	B	B	C
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	11.46%	5.39%	10.88%	-2.57%	16.61%	12.85%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-45.26%	-26.68%	-6.33%	-17.87%	-27.87%	-27.56%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	-13.00%	-12.25%	5.92%	1.98%	-3.69%	9.85%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	2.55%	-3.82%	8.55%	2.65%	5.99%	23.04%
Current Ratio	0.77	1.65	1.23	2.52	3.42	1.44
Debt/Capital	56.19%	44.06%	43.90%	34.20%	46.51%	44.91%
Net Margin	5.47%	2.32%	11.13%	5.90%	9.39%	4.69%
Return on Equity	23.49%	6.10%	16.47%	14.64%	22.63%	8.23%
Sales/Assets	0.66	0.76	0.55	1.11	0.97	0.60
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-3.68%	0.00%	-1.35%	0.00%	-3.14%	-0.70%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	F	C	A
Daily Price Chg	8.96%	1.28%	1.10%	3.77%	9.02%	7.90%
1 Week Price Chg	-2.26%	-0.61%	-1.74%	0.84%	-5.34%	-5.90%
4 Week Price Chg	14.84%	12.85%	11.80%	13.73%	13.20%	16.42%
12 Week Price Chg	-14.39%	-16.88%	-17.28%	-29.10%	-1.19%	-17.13%
52 Week Price Chg	-23.63%	-27.71%	-10.69%	-27.71%	-0.88%	-14.28%
20 Day Average Volume	4,130,214	123,506	2,660,864	118,207	899,990	2,557,638
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	-3.81%	-6.90%	-6.46%	-23.18%	-6.60%	-6.84%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	-26.99%	-24.20%	-12.81%	-24.20%	-19.28%	-11.83%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	-9.68%	-9.84%	-10.84%	NA	-0.93%	0.00%

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## Zacks Stock Rating System

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

### Zacks Recommendation

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

### Zacks Rank

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

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### Zacks Style Scores

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

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

Value Score	A
Growth Score	B
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	A

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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