

Jack Henry & Associate (JKHY)

\$157.25 (As of 04/05/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$165.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 11/06/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:C

Value: D

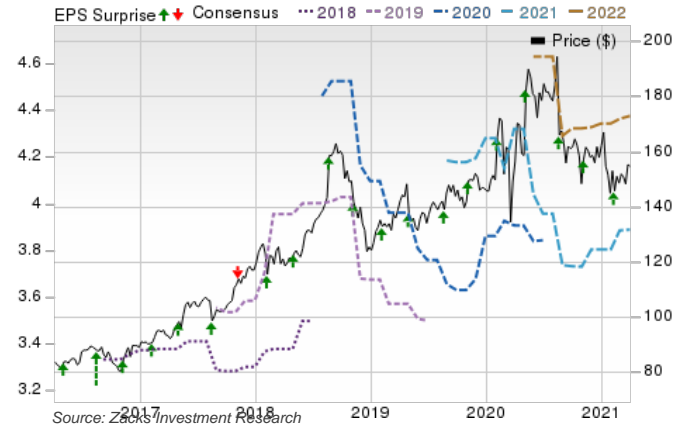
Growth: B

Momentum: B

Summary

Jack Henry & Associates is benefiting from its solid momentum across Core, Payments and Complementary segments. Moreover, growing adoption of these solutions is driving its top-line growth. Further, rising data processing and hosting fees are accelerating services and support revenues. Also, growing Jack Henry digital revenues are contributing well. Additionally, hike in remittance fees and growth in card processing transaction volumes are tailwinds. Also, Paycheck Protection Program lending line remains a major positive for processing revenues. However, rising headcounts and personnel costs are weighing on margin expansion. Further, coronavirus related headwinds especially are major concerns. Additionally, sluggish Corporate segment is an overhang. Notably, the stock has underperformed the industry it belongs to over a year.

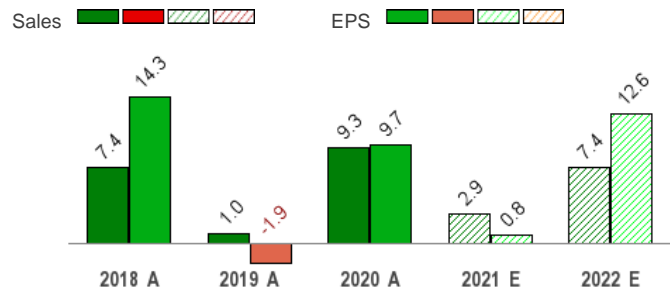
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$200.98 - \$141.65
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	472,138
Market Cap	\$11.8 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	-4.6%
Beta	0.58
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$1.84 / 1.2%
Industry	Electronics - Miscellaneous Services
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 44% (111 out of 253)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	6.8%
Last Sales Surprise	-2.2%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	05/03/2021
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	39.7
P/E F1	40.4
PEG F1	3.5
P/S TTM	6.9

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	485 E	456 E	464 E	467 E	1,875 E
2021	452 A	422 A	437 E	442 E	1,746 E
2020	438 A	419 A	429 A	411 A	1,697 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	\$1.33 E	\$1.07 E	\$0.98 E	\$1.03 E	\$4.38 E
2021	\$1.19 A	\$0.94 A	\$0.86 E	\$0.90 E	\$3.89 E
2020	\$1.16 A	\$0.94 A	\$0.96 A	\$0.80 A	\$3.86 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 04/05/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 04/06/2021.

Overview

Monett, MO-based Jack Henry & Associates, Inc. commonly known as JHA caters to community banks by offering technology solutions and payment processing services. The company's products are available via its three business brands:

Jack Henry Banking serves community banks, multi-billion-dollar institutions and many other financial institutions with assets up to \$50 billion. This brand offers integrated data processing systems, which support both in-house and outsourced operating environments. It also offers more than 140 complementary solutions like business intelligence and bank management, retail and business banking, digital and mobile internet banking, and electronic payment solutions, to name a few.

Symitar provides core data processing solutions, which also support both in-house and outsourced operating environments. The company caters to credit unions of all sizes via this brand. Symitar also offers over 100 complementary solutions that include business intelligence, credit union management, member and member business services.

ProfitStars offers highly specialized core agnostic products and services such as imaging and payments processing, information security and risk management, retail delivery, and online and mobile solutions.

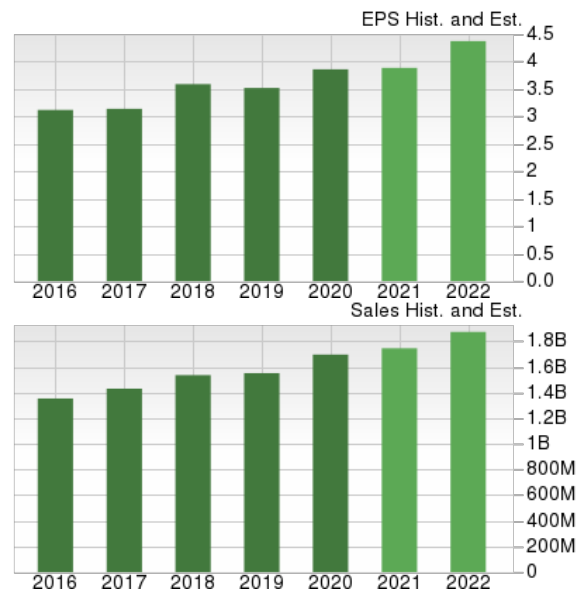
We note that Jack Henry & Associates generated \$1.7 billion revenues in fiscal 2020. The company earns revenues from four organized segments:

Core (34.3% of total revenues) provides core information processing platforms to banks and credit unions via Jack Henry Banking and Symitar brands, which consist of integrated applications required to process deposit, loan, and general ledger transactions, and maintain centralized customer/member information

Payments (35.2%) offers secure payment processing tools and services such as ATM, debit, and credit card processing services, online and mobile bill pay solutions, and risk management solutions.

Complementary (27.3%) offers additional software and services that can be utilized independently or can be integrated with the company's core solutions.

Corporate and Other (3.2%) segment includes hardware revenue and costs. The company offers hardware such as IBM Power Systems, HP servers and workstations, and Digital Check, to name a few, which support software solutions.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ Jack Henry enjoys a strong momentum across commercial banks, credit unions and other financial institutions of all asset sizes with the help of its integrated data processing solutions and systems. Its wide array of products and services provide core operating systems, in-house and outsourced delivery environments. Notably, Symitar business brand offers two functionally distinct core processing systems and 100 complementary solutions to credit unions. Its customer base comprises almost 830 credit unions. Further, the Jack Henry Banking brand provides three functionally distinct core bank processing systems and 140 complementary solutions to the commercial banks. We note that this brand serves 1,030 banks currently. Additionally, the company's ProfitStars serves over 9,000 financial services institutions with specialized solutions for generating additional revenue and growth. All these are constantly driving Jack Henry's organic revenue and earnings growth.
- ▲ Strategic acquisitions have played an important role in defining Jack Henry's growth trajectory over the years. The company has been utilizing the inorganic route to strengthen products and services portfolio and to foray into the new markets of financial services industry. It has completed 33 strategic buyouts since 1999 with the recent ones being BOLTS Technologies and Agiletics, both of which were acquired in 2019. Further, Ensenta buyout expanded Jack Henry's consumer remote deposit capture offerings and ability to conduct real-time transactions with third-party platforms. The acquisition of Vanguard Software has strengthened ProfitStars Lending Solutions Group.
- ▲ The company's strong efforts toward expansion of product portfolio through organic and inorganic initiatives continue to aid its market share growth. Moreover, the company has been exhibiting strong single-digit top-line growth, which indicates good management execution. In fiscal 2020, total revenues of the company improved 9% from the previous year, driven by strong performance of both processing and services & support business lines and acquisition benefits. Moreover, revenues of the company have witnessed a CAGR of 5.2% over a period of last five years. This can be attributed to internal expansion of the business and strengthening bank and credit union clientele.
- ▲ Jack Henry has a solid balance sheet. As of Dec 31, 2020, the company's net cash amounted to \$147.5 million compared with \$195 million as of Sep 30, 2020. Notably, the company's times interest earned was 623.5 as of Dec 31, 2020, up from 586.6 as of Sep 30, 2020. Although declining net cash balance remains a concern, increasing times interest earned is a positive. Moreover, stable balance sheet with strong liquidity position balance will not only help the company pursue strategic acquisitions but will also enable it repurchase shares aggressively in the long haul.

Jack Henry benefits from solid momentum across commercial banks, credit unions and other financial institutions. Strategic acquisitions and strong balance sheet are positives.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Jack Henry operates in an intensely competitive market featuring the likes of Fidelity National Information Services, Fiserv and Finastra, to name a few, for technology solutions for financial institutions. The primary reasons behind rising competition are price, operating flexibility, functionality, customer support and existing customer references. Further, consolidation in the industry remains a headwind. We believe all these factors might hurt the company's market share and pricing power that will eventually affect profitability.
- ▼ The company's customer base primarily includes banks and other financial institutions, which are under severe threat owing to growing adoption of digital payment Solutions, virtual credit/debit cards, peer-to-peer transfer services and mobile wallets. Further, growing banking initiatives by online payment software providers like Square and PayPal are hurting the banking community. Further, tech giants like Apple, Google, Facebook and Amazon are leveraging advanced technologies including AI, blockchain, data analytics, AR, IoT and ML to reach the underbanked customers. Consequently, disruption in banking sector remains a concern.
- ▼ Jack Henry's aggressive acquisition strategy has escalated integration risks. Moreover, we note that the buyouts negatively impacted the company's balance sheet in the form of high level of goodwill and net intangible assets, which comprised almost 28% of total assets as of Jun 30, 2020. Acquisitions have also negatively impacted the company's balance sheet, as high indebtedness adds to the risk of investing in the company. We note that the company had funded the Ensenta buyout by borrowing revolving credit facility.
- ▼ Moreover, the company is trading at premium in terms of Price/Sales (P/S). Jack Henry currently has a trailing 12-month P/S ratio of 6.66. This level compares unfavorably with what the industry witnessed in the last year. Additionally, the ratio is same as the higher end of the valuation range in this period. Consequently, the valuation looks slightly stretched from P/S perspective.

Intensifying market competition is a headwind for Jack Henry. Also, aggressive acquisition strategy and related indebtedness are major concerns.

Last Earnings Report

Jack Henry's Q2 Earnings Beat

Jack Henry & Associates reported second-quarter fiscal 2021 earnings of 94 cents per share, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 6.8%. However, the bottom line fell 21% sequentially and remained flat year over year.

Revenues improved 1% year over year but declined 6.5% sequentially to \$422.4 million. Further, the top line missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$431.9 million.

The company's non-GAAP revenues were \$420.2 million, up 2.4% from the year-ago quarter but down 5.8% from the prior quarter.

Year-over-year revenue growth was driven by strength across Core, Payments and Complementary segments in the reported quarter. Additionally, accelerating processing revenues contributed to the results.

However, sluggishness in the Corporate segment, and declining services and support revenues were overhangs.

Top Line in Detail

Services & Support: The company generated revenues of \$250.9 million from this category (59% of revenues). Notably, the figure declined 2% from the year-ago quarter due to a decrease in deconversion fee revenues. Nevertheless, the company witnessed growth in data processing and hosting fees in the reported quarter.

Processing: The category yielded revenues of \$171.5 million (41% of revenues) in the reported quarter, up 5% year over year. This can be attributed to growth in processing transaction volumes, which led to a hike in digital and remittance revenues.

Segments in Detail

Core: The company generated revenues of \$134.9 million from the segment (32% of total revenues), improving 1% year over year.

Payments: The segment yielded revenues of \$155.2 million (36.7% of total revenues), increasing 2% from the year-ago quarter.

Complementary: The segment generated \$121.4 million revenues (28.7% of total revenues), increasing 3% year over year.

Corporate & Other: The company generated revenues of \$10.8 million from the segment (2.6% of total revenues), down 28.9% from the prior-year quarter.

Operating Details

In second-quarter fiscal 2021, total operating expenses were \$328.7 million, reflecting a year-over-year increase of 1%. This can primarily be attributed to higher personnel costs and rising expenses related to the company's card processing platform.

As a percentage of revenues, the figure expanded 20 basis points year over year to 77.8%.

Notably, operating margin was 22% in the reported quarter, which remained flat on a year-over-year basis.

Balance Sheet

As of Dec 31, 2020, cash and cash equivalents totaled \$147.8 million, which decreased from \$195.3 million as of Sep 30, 2020.

Trade receivables were \$212.9 million in the reported quarter, down from \$223 million in the previous quarter.

Further, the current and long-term debt stood at \$266,000 at the end of the fiscal second quarter compared with \$295,000 at the end of first-quarter fiscal 2021.

Guidance

For fiscal 2021, the company's projection for GAAP revenues remains unchanged at \$1.76 billion-\$1.77 billion.

Further, the company expects non-GAAP revenues between \$1.73 billion and \$1.74 billion.

Further, the company raised the earnings per share outlook for fiscal 2021 from \$3.75-\$3.80 to \$3.85-\$3.90.

Quarter Ending	12/2020
Report Date	Feb 08, 2021
Sales Surprise	-2.21%
EPS Surprise	6.82%
Quarterly EPS	0.94
Annual EPS (TTM)	3.89

Recent News

On **Jan 8, 2021**, Jack Henry added a borrower-facing digital interface to its Paycheck Protection Program loan solution. Along with this, it has added a broker option to the solution. With the new interface, the company strives to aid small businesses seeking loans in uploading their information online seamlessly. Further, the broker option is for helping the institutions in making decisions seamlessly by allowing them to accept loan requests online.

On **Aug 12, 2020**, Jack Henry unveiled Jack Henry Loan Marketplace in a bid to strengthen its lending offerings. Notably, the company strives to help financial institutions in engaging in buying and selling loans via Jack Henry Loan Marketplace.

Valuation

Jack Henry & Associates shares are down 4.9% in the six-month period and 6.5% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Computer & Technology sector are up 1.9% and 22.4% in the six-month period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 3% and 72.3%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 20.5% in the six-month period and 56.2% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 36.9X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 36.68X for the Zacks sub-industry, 28.11X for the Zacks sector and 22.66X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 49.23X and as low as 25.34X, with a 5-year median of 34.55X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$165 price target reflects 38.72X forward 12-month earnings.

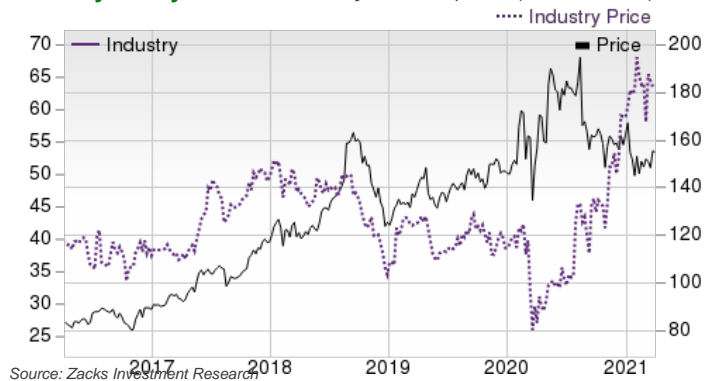
The table below shows summary valuation data for JKHY

Valuation Multiples - JKHY					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	36.9	36.68	28.11	22.66
	5-Year High	49.23	36.68	28.33	23.83
	5-Year Low	25.34	17.52	16.96	15.3
	5-Year Median	34.55	22.68	20.1	18
EV/Sales TTM	Current	6.89	4.53	5.54	4.85
	5-Year High	8.86	5.18	5.79	4.85
	5-Year Low	4.45	2.98	3.07	2.64
	5-Year Median	6.7	3.96	3.95	3.62
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	21.28	16.43	16.49	18.19
	5-Year High	29.67	18.61	17.23	18.19
	5-Year Low	12.13	10.03	9.03	9.62
	5-Year Median	20.75	14.25	12.29	13.35

As of 04/05/2021

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 44% (111 out of 253)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Apple Inc. (AAPL)	Neutral	3
Amazon.com, Inc. (AMZN)	Neutral	3
Fidelity National Information Services, Inc. (FIS)	Neutral	3
Fiserv, Inc. (FISV)	Neutral	3
Alphabet Inc. (GOOGL)	Neutral	2
Intuit Inc. (INTU)	Neutral	3
PayPal Holdings, Inc. (PYPL)	Neutral	3
Square, Inc. (SQ)	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Electronics - Miscellaneous Services				Industry Peers		
	JKHY	X Industry	S&P 500	FISV	GOOGL	SQ
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	2	3
VGM Score	C	-	-	B	B	D
Market Cap	11.76 B	1.42 B	29.75 B	81.79 B	1,435.76 B	104.34 B
# of Analysts	6	3	13	17	16	15
Dividend Yield	1.19%	0.00%	1.31%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	D	-	-	C	D	F
Cash/Price	0.01	0.02	0.06	0.01	0.10	0.04
EV/EBITDA	21.34	18.71	16.95	19.79	22.23	289.18
PEG F1	3.48	3.67	2.35	1.37	1.73	5.52
P/B	7.61	4.98	3.95	2.48	6.45	39.04
P/CF	25.72	20.63	16.86	13.12	27.72	927.16
P/E F1	39.99	33.28	21.87	22.58	30.74	197.17
P/S TTM	6.86	3.88	3.39	5.51	7.87	10.99
Earnings Yield	2.52%	2.52%	4.49%	4.43%	3.25%	0.51%
Debt/Equity	0.00	0.05	0.66	0.61	0.06	0.96
Cash Flow (\$/share)	6.11	3.56	6.78	9.36	80.05	0.25
Growth Score	B	-	-	B	B	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	5.91%	16.30%	9.39%	18.61%	20.71%	NA
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	0.69%	1.16%	15.24%	22.43%	18.20%	38.57%
Current Cash Flow Growth	8.31%	8.31%	0.44%	37.87%	12.89%	-29.68%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	7.25%	17.51%	7.37%	36.23%	20.90%	22.37%
Current Ratio	1.48	1.65	1.39	1.04	3.07	1.88
Debt/Capital	0.01%	8.40%	41.26%	38.34%	5.89%	49.10%
Net Margin	17.41%	3.68%	10.59%	6.45%	22.06%	2.24%
Return on Equity	19.40%	13.94%	14.86%	9.16%	19.03%	1.23%
Sales/Assets	0.74	0.74	0.51	0.20	0.62	1.19
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	2.90%	2.90%	7.36%	8.32%	24.61%	50.55%
Momentum Score	B	-	-	A	B	C
Daily Price Change	1.72%	0.00%	1.04%	0.57%	4.19%	0.19%
1-Week Price Change	-0.39%	6.51%	0.35%	-1.16%	5.19%	7.45%
4-Week Price Change	4.14%	6.58%	5.47%	1.13%	10.53%	13.91%
12-Week Price Change	-4.69%	-4.69%	9.17%	6.80%	26.34%	1.97%
52-Week Price Change	-6.03%	217.24%	61.87%	28.18%	87.54%	356.07%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	472,138	472,138	2,120,273	3,680,728	1,521,983	9,874,668
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.08%	0.00%	1.14%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.10%	0.34%	1.14%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	2.24%	2.24%	2.19%	0.37%	11.02%	30.85%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	-50.00%	0.00%	0.11%	0.57%	-15.94%

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	D
Growth Score	B
Momentum Score	B
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.

Disclosures

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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.