

Kimberly-Clark(KMB)

\$157.76 (As of 08/31/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$166.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 08/20/19)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: C

Growth: A

Momentum: D

Summary

Shares of Kimberly-Clark have outperformed the industry in the past three months. The stock got a boost when the company reported robust second-quarter 2020 results, with the top and the bottom line surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Also, earnings increased year over year. Organic sales rose 4% owing to higher demand amid coronavirus. Management anticipates revenues and earnings growth in 2020. Apart from these, the company is gaining from robust saving plans like Global Restructuring and FORCE programs. Additionally, Kimberly-Clark's focus on its K-C Strategy bodes well. However, soft volumes in the K-C Professional segment in the second quarter stemming from the coronavirus outbreak were a drag on the performance. Further, increased marketing, research and general expenses along with unfavorable currency translations are concerns.

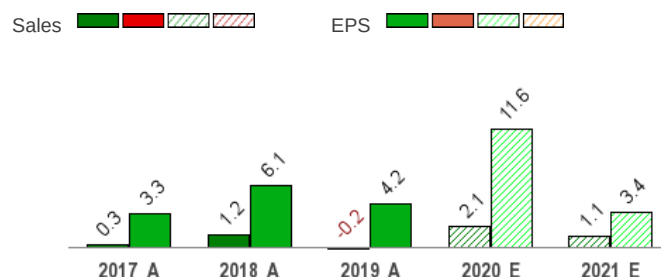
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$160.16 - \$110.66
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,275,874
Market Cap	\$53.8 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	14.7%
Beta	0.47
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$4.28 / 2.7%
Industry	Consumer Products - Staples
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 44% (110 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	20.9%
Last Sales Surprise	2.2%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	10/27/2020
Earnings ESP	0.0%
P/E TTM	20.0
P/E F1	20.5
PEG F1	4.0
P/S TTM	2.9

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	4,753 E	4,674 E	4,717 E	4,761 E	19,042 E
2020	5,009 A	4,612 A	4,600 E	4,610 E	18,838 E
2019	4,633 A	4,594 A	4,640 A	4,583 A	18,450 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$1.99 E	\$2.02 E	\$1.95 E	\$1.89 E	\$7.95 E
2020	\$2.13 A	\$2.20 A	\$1.74 E	\$1.63 E	\$7.69 E
2019	\$1.66 A	\$1.67 A	\$1.84 A	\$1.71 A	\$6.89 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 08/31/2020. The reports text is as of 09/01/2020.

Overview

Incorporated in Delaware in 1928, Kimberly-Clark Corporation is principally engaged in the manufacture and marketing of a wide range of consumer products around the world. The company sells its products to supermarkets; mass merchandisers; drugstores; warehouse clubs; variety and department stores; retail outlets; manufacturing, lodging, office building, food service, and health care establishments; and high volume public facilities.

Based on product grouping, the company conducts its operations in three business segments namely Personal Care, Consumer Tissue, and K-C Professional.

The **Personal Care** segment includes products like disposable diapers, training and youth pants, swimpants, baby wipes, feminine and incontinence care products, and other related products. Products in this segment are sold under the Huggies, Pull-Ups, Little Swimmers, GoodNites, DryNites, Kotex, U by Kotex, Intimus, Depend, Plenitud, Poise and other brand names. Sales from this segment constituted 49% of the top line in full-year 2019.

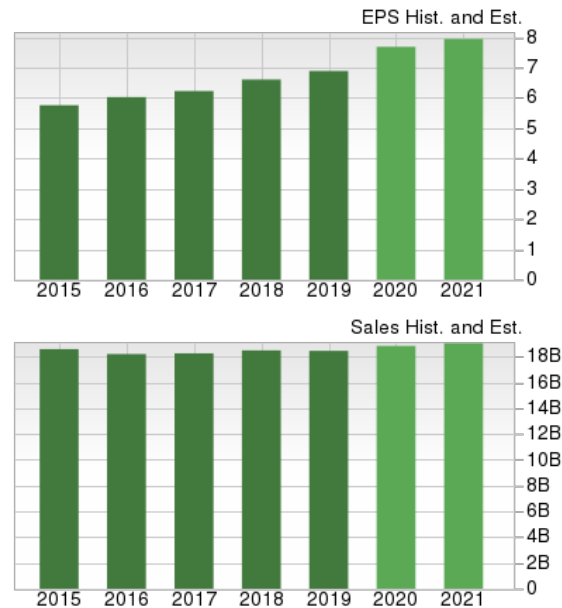
The **Consumer Tissue** segment includes facial and bathroom tissue, paper towels, napkins and related products, which are sold under the Kleenex, Scott, Cottonelle, Viva, Andrex, Scottex, Neve and other brand names. Sales from this segment constituted about 33% of the top line in full-year 2019.

The **K-C Professional** segment consists of apparel, wipers, soaps, sanitizers, tissue and towels. Key brands in this segment include Kleenex, Scott, WypAll, Kimtech and Jackson Safety. Sales from this segment formed 17.7% of the top line in full-year 2019.

The **Corporate and Other** segment contributed 0.3% of full-year 2019 sales.

The company's health care business was spun-off on Oct 31, 2014.

Notably, Kimberly-Clark's net sales to Walmart constituted around 14% of its consolidated sales in 2016, 2017 as well as 2018.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ **Impressive Q2 Performance, Bright Outlook:** Shares of Kimberly-Clark are up 11.9% in the past three months against the industry's decline of 6.3%. The stock got a boost following the company's robust second-quarter 2020 results, with the top and the bottom lines surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Also, earnings increased year over year. The top line improved slightly from the year-ago quarter's level. The quarterly performance reflected sales growth in the Consumer Tissue segment amid the coronavirus outbreak. Also, savings from restructuring plans contributed to the results.

Kimberly-Clark's organic sales rose 4% year over year, owing to higher consumer demand amid coronavirus outbreak during second-quarter, 2020.

Notably, adjusted earnings came in at \$2.20 per share, up 32% from the year-ago quarter's figure. Kimberly-Clark's sales came in at \$4,612 million, up from \$4,594 reported in the year-ago quarter. Volumes rose 2% year over year. Also, net selling prices and product mix inched up 1% each. Moreover, organic sales rose 4% year over year owing to higher demand amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Impressively, management forecasts 2020 net sales to grow in the range of 1-2%. Further, Kimberly-Clark projects organic sales improvement of 4-5% in the same period. Also, it envisions adjusted earnings per share of \$7.40-\$7.60 in 2020, which indicates an increase from \$6.89 reported in 2019.

- ▲ **2018 Global Restructuring & FORCE Programs Drive Savings:** Kimberly-Clark has been taking robust steps to lower costs. This is highlighted by the 2018 Global Restructuring Program as well as the FORCE Program. The 2018 Global Restructuring Program marks the company's biggest restructuring in a long time now. This plan is likely to enhance the company's underlying profitability by simplifying supply chain and manufacturing structures and thereby help it compete better and provide greater flexibility to undertake growth-oriented investments. Until the end of second-quarter 2020, Kimberly-Clark generated cumulative savings worth \$380 million from the 2018 Global Restructuring Program. Management remains on track to generate pre-tax savings of \$500-\$550 million from this program by the end of 2021, backed by production supply-chain efficiencies and reduction in workforce. Although some of these realizations could occur in 2022 due to uncertainties in regard to the coronavirus outbreak. As part of this initiative, the company plans to sell or exit some low-margin businesses that deliver about 1% of net sales.

Moreover, Kimberly-Clark is aggressively cutting costs and enhancing supply-chain productivity through its Focus on Reducing Costs Everywhere or FORCE Program. The program is generating solid cost savings for a while which are in turn driving its performance. During the second quarter, adjusted operating profit came in at \$1,012 million, up from \$789 million in the year-ago quarter. Results gained from higher organic sales and cost savings of \$120 million and \$55 million from the FORCE (Focused On Reducing Costs Everywhere) program and the 2018 Global Restructuring Program, respectively. In 2020, management expects to generate total cost savings of \$510-\$560 million. This includes expected savings of \$390-\$420 million from the FORCE program and \$120-\$140 million from the 2018 Global Restructuring Program.

- ▲ **3 Growth Pillars:** Kimberly-Clark remains committed toward its three key strategic growth pillars. These include focus on improving its core business in the developed markets; speed up growth of Personal Care segment in developing and emerging markets and enhance digital and e-commerce capacities. The company expects to meet these objectives through product development across different categories and leveraging capabilities in marketing and sales. The company has been progressing well with these objectives, which have been aiding portfolio and expanding global business.
- ▲ **K-C Strategy to Boost Growth:** Kimberly-Clark introduced a K-C Strategy 2022 in January 2019. The strategy is focused on generating balanced and sustainable growth to return value to shareholders in a tough environment. The program also concentrates on strengthening the company's brand portfolio, undertaking efficient capital allocation and executing robust cost discipline. In extension, the strategy is aimed toward successfully meeting the aforementioned goals pertaining to FORCE and Global Restructuring as well as the company's three main strategic pillars.
- ▲ **Debt Analysis:** Although Kimberly-Clark's long-term debt of \$7,223 million as on Jun 30, 2020 was up 16.3% sequentially, its debt-to-capitalization ratio improved to 0.94 from 0.98 reported at the end of the previous quarter. Further, the company's times-interest-earned ratio stands at 13.4 at the end of the second quarter, higher than the previous quarter's ratio of 11.2. The times-interest-earned ratio is very important for some companies, as it measures a company's ability to meet its debt obligations based on its current income. Apart from this, the company had current debt of \$850 million as of Jun 30, while its total cash and cash equivalents stood at \$1,448 million.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Softness in K-C Professional:** In second-quarter 2020, sales in the K-C Professional segment decreased 12% year over year. Volumes were down 16% due to coronavirus-led woes. Also, unfavorable currency rates hurt sales by 2%. Sales fell 3% in North America. Volumes in the region declined 9% owing to significant reduction in demand for washroom and safety products. Revenues in the developing and emerging markets fell 35%. Moreover, sales declined 12% in developed markets outside North America. Additionally, operating profit in the segment dropped 4%. The downside was caused by reduced volumes, increased other manufacturing expenses as well as unfavorable currency translations. Management expects these trends to persist all through 2020. Clearly, sluggishness in the K-C Professional segment is a threat to the company's performance.

Kimberly-Clark witnessed a 4% increase in marketing, research and general expenses in the second quarter of 2020. Also, weakness in K-C Professional is a woe.

▼ **Rising Costs:** Kimberly-Clark has been seeing a rise in marketing, research and general expenses for the last few quarters. In the second quarter of 2020, the metric rose 4% to \$844 million. Prior to this, marketing, research and general expenses rose 14% in the first quarter of 2020. We believe that persistence of such trends is a threat to the company's performance in the future.

▼ **Currency Headwinds:** The company remains exposed to unfavorable foreign currency translations as it has a considerable international presence. In the second quarter of 2020, unfavorable currency movements dented sales by 4%. Further, unfavorable currency translations negatively impacted adjusted operating profit in the said period. Management expects currency headwinds to impact net sales by 3% in 2020. Clearly, volatility in exchange rates is a threat to the company's performance.

▼ **Increased Competition in the Diapers Segment:** Kimberly-Clark's diaper segment faces significant competitive activity, which puts the company's market share at risk. The segment has been particularly challenged in South Korea, owing to lower birth rates. Further, price competition in China has been a concern for diaper sales.

Last Earnings Report

Kimberly-Clark Q2 Earnings & Sales Top Estimates

Kimberly-Clark reported second-quarter 2020 results, with the top and the bottom line surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Also, earnings increased year over year. The top line improved slightly from the year-ago quarter's level.

Quarter in Detail

Adjusted earnings came in at \$2.20 per share, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$1.82 and increased 32% from the year-ago quarter's figure.

Kimberly-Clark's sales came in at \$4,612 million, which surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$4,513 million. The top line increased from \$4,594 reported in the year-ago quarter. Unfavorable currency movements put pressure on sales by 4%. Organic sales rose 4% year over year. Volumes rose 2% year over year. Also, net selling prices and product mix inched up 1% each.

In North America, organic sales in consumer products increased 12% but were down 3% in K-C Professional segment. Internationally, organic sales increased 3% across developed markets but fell 3% in developing and emerging markets.

Adjusted operating profit came in at \$1,012 million, up from \$789 million in the year-ago quarter. Results gained from higher organic sales and cost savings of \$120 million and \$55 million from the FORCE (Focused On Reducing Costs Everywhere) program and the 2018 Global Restructuring Program, respectively. Further, lower input costs stemming from decline in pulp costs benefited results. However, unfavorable currency translations, increased advertising expenses and a rise in selling, general and administrative costs negatively impacted adjusted operating profit.

Segment Details

Personal Care Products: Sales of \$2,229 million declined 2% year over year. Both net selling prices and volumes improved slightly while product mix rose up 2% year over year. Also, unfavorable currency rates hurt sales by 5%. Further, sales increased 4% in North America but decreased 9% in developing and emerging markets. The metric fell 8% across developed markets outside North America.

Consumer Tissue: Segment sales of \$1,645 million rose 12% year over year. Net selling prices were up 1% while volumes increased 14% owing to higher demand amid coronavirus pandemic. However, product mix dropped 1%. Also, adverse currency movements hurt sales by 3%. Sales rose 22% in North America but decreased 9% in developing and emerging markets. The metric increased 8% in developed markets outside North America.

K-C Professional (KCP): Segment sales decreased 12% to \$724 million. Volumes were down 16% owing to coronavirus-led woes. Net selling prices were up 4% and product mix increased 3%. Also, currency woes hurt sales by 2%. Sales fell 3% in North America and 35% in developing and emerging markets. The metric declined 12% in developed markets outside North America.

Other Financial Updates

The company ended the quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$1,448 million, long-term debt of \$7,223 million and stockholders' equity of \$495 million.

Further, Kimberly-Clark generated cash from operating activities of \$1,579 million during the quarter under review. Management incurred capital expenditures of \$284 million.

Kimberly-Clark repurchased 0.3 million shares for \$39 million in the quarter. Following this the company had temporarily suspended its share repurchase program effective Apr 24 amid the coronavirus outbreak. Nevertheless, management expects to restart the program from Jul 24.

2020 Outlook

Management forecasts 2020 net sales to grow 1-2% year over year. Further, Kimberly-Clark projects organic sales improvement of 4-5%. The company had earlier anticipated organic net sales growth of 2%. However, currency headwinds are likely to impact net sales by 3%, while business exits related to the 2018 Global Restructuring Program are also expected to slightly affect sales.

Management anticipates adjusted operating profit growth of 6-9% for the year. In 2020, management expects to generate total cost savings of \$510-\$560 million. This includes expected savings of \$390-\$420 million from the FORCE program and \$120-\$140 million from the 2018 Global Restructuring Program. Moreover, the company expects cost of key inputs to drop in the range of \$150-\$250 million. However, other manufacturing costs as well as advertising expenses are anticipated to rise in 2020. The company also expects interest expenses to fall in 2020.

Considering all factors, management envisions 2020 adjusted earnings per share of \$7.40-\$7.60, which indicates an increase from \$6.89 reported in 2019. Earlier, adjusted earnings were anticipated to come in at \$7.10-\$7.35 in 2020.

Quarter Ending	06/2020
Report Date	Jul 23, 2020
Sales Surprise	2.19%
EPS Surprise	20.88%
Quarterly EPS	2.20
Annual EPS (TTM)	7.88

Recent News

Kimberly Clark Declares Dividend – Aug 3, 2020

Kimberly Clark has declared quarterly dividend of \$1.07 per share. This will be payable on Oct 2, 2020 to shareholders of record as on Sep 4.

Valuation

Kimberly Clark shares are up 16.4% in the year-to-date period and 15.3% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are up 2% in the year-to-date period, while the Zacks Consumer Staples sector is down 3.7%. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 3.5%, while the sector declined 1%.

The S&P 500 index is up 4.4% in the year-to-date period and 15.9% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 20.06X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 22.13X for the Zacks sub-industry, 20.45X for the Zacks sector and 23.47X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 22.12X and as low as 13.93X, with a 5-year median of 18.8X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$166 price target reflects 21.11X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for KMB

Valuation Multiples - KMB					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	20.06	22.13	20.45	23.47
	5-Year High	22.12	23	22.37	23.47
	5-Year Low	13.93	13.32	16.63	15.25
	5-Year Median	18.8	18.07	19.62	17.6
P/S F12M	Current	2.84	0.8	9.71	3.84
	5-Year High	2.86	2.06	11.15	3.84
	5-Year Low	1.84	0.79	8.12	2.53
	5-Year Median	2.36	1.82	9.89	3.07
EV/EBITDA F12M	Current	13.1	11.04	35.62	13.9
	5-Year High	13.3	14.44	37.28	14.11
	5-Year Low	9.66	9	25.87	9.15
	5-Year Median	11.99	11.6	33.72	11.04

As of 08/31/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 44% (110 out of 251)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Ollies Bargain Outlet Holdings, Inc. (OLLI)	Outperform	2
Bed Bath&Beyond Inc. (BBBY)	Neutral	4
ChurchDwight Co., Inc. (CHD)	Neutral	3
ColgatePalmolive Company (CL)	Neutral	3
The Clorox Company (CLX)	Neutral	3
Energizer Holdings, Inc. (ENR)	Neutral	4
Newell Brands Inc. (NWL)	Neutral	2
WD40 Company (WDFC)	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Consumer Products - Staples				Industry Peers		
	KMB	X Industry	S&P 500	NWL	OLLI	WDFC
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	2	2	3
VGM Score	B	-	-	A	B	D
Market Cap	53.80 B	3.17 B	23.72 B	6.78 B	6.10 B	2.79 B
# of Analysts	6	5	14	7	7	
Dividend Yield	2.71%	0.00%	1.65%	5.76%	0.00%	1.31%
Value Score	C	-	-	B	D	F
Cash/Price	0.03	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.05	0.03
EV/EBITDA	15.56	9.69	13.28	9.69	32.20	30.86
PEG F1	3.90	2.54	3.03	7.47	1.52	NA
P/B	108.69	3.38	3.17	1.93	5.00	19.32
P/CF	16.40	16.40	12.87	2.70	41.38	44.19
P/E F1	20.11	20.51	21.63	12.92	32.77	49.73
P/S TTM	2.86	1.31	2.53	0.75	3.74	6.92
Earnings Yield	4.87%	4.21%	4.39%	7.76%	3.06%	2.01%
Debt/Equity	14.59	0.70	0.70	1.64	0.26	0.70
Cash Flow (\$/share)	9.62	1.32	6.93	5.91	2.31	4.63
Growth Score	A	-	-	B	A	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	5.37%	2.16%	10.41%	-8.10%	31.68%	5.23%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	11.61%	0.00%	-4.75%	-27.23%	48.76%	0.00%
Current Cash Flow Growth	3.32%	15.07%	5.22%	-76.91%	8.58%	-3.66%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	2.19%	5.06%	8.49%	28.55%	30.96%	5.06%
Current Ratio	0.91	1.56	1.35	1.47	2.72	1.81
Debt/Capital	93.59%	41.63%	42.92%	62.18%	20.73%	41.04%
Net Margin	13.58%	1.59%	10.25%	-11.39%	12.90%	12.30%
Return on Equity	1,319.56%	15.05%	14.66%	16.20%	16.13%	33.97%
Sales/Assets	1.21	1.10	0.50	0.61	0.98	1.21
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	2.11%	4.04%	-1.40%	1.36%	22.99%	0.00%
Momentum Score	D	-	-	B	A	D
Daily Price Change	0.81%	-0.55%	-0.82%	-1.48%	-1.63%	0.98%
1-Week Price Change	-0.51%	0.00%	2.59%	0.75%	-11.14%	1.81%
4-Week Price Change	4.06%	-0.60%	3.55%	-2.50%	-7.49%	5.18%
12-Week Price Change	13.56%	12.64%	-0.44%	-8.27%	-3.18%	4.91%
52-Week Price Change	11.80%	12.45%	2.80%	-3.73%	72.30%	12.11%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,275,874	758,001	1,839,384	2,450,557	1,284,180	67,488
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.45%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	7.18%	6.41%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	1.56%	0.77%	3.87%	14.95%	30.08%	-2.26%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-2.95%	7.51%	0.00%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Zacks Style Scores

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

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

Value Score	C
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	D
VGM Score	B

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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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 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.