

LabCorp (LH)

\$167.48 (As of 01/02/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$176.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:
Neutral

(Since: 02/08/19)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: B

Momentum: C

Summary

Over the past three months, shares of LabCorp have outpaced its industry. Its Diagnostics grew organically in terms of both revenue and volume despite additional price reductions due to PAMA and the loss of exclusivity in two managed care contracts. In the last reported quarter, it also exhibited strong underlying and organic growth across its Drug Development business banking on solid execution of three fundamental strategies. The recently-completed business swap transaction with Envigo also buoys optimism. LabCorp put up a robust show in the third quarter of 2019 with better-than-expected results. However, the disposition of businesses and the implementation of the PAMA dented growth. Unfavorable currency transaction continues to remain as a major headwind. The company expects the rest of 2019 to continue to witness similar hurdles.

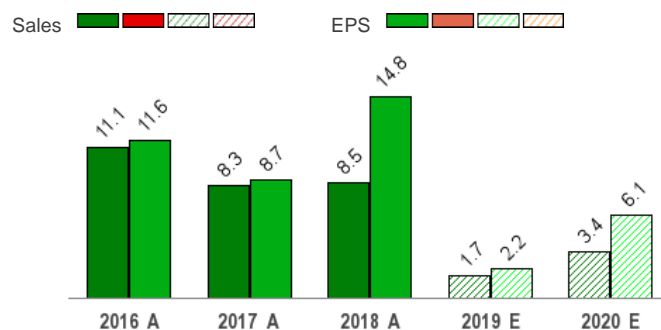
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	\$178.44 - \$124.89
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	482,486
Market Cap	\$16.3 B
YTD Price Change	-1.0%
Beta	1.02
Dividend / Div Yld	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Medical - Dental Supplies
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 33% (84 out of 253)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	2.1%
Last Sales Surprise	0.7%
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	-0.0%
Expected Report Date	02/06/2020
Earnings ESP	0.0%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2020	2,904 E	2,991 E	3,024 E	3,028 E	11,920 E
2019	2,791 A	2,882 A	2,929 A	2,928 E	11,528 E
2018	2,848 A	2,866 A	2,831 A	2,788 A	11,333 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2020	\$2.72 E	\$3.13 E	\$3.04 E	\$3.01 E	\$11.95 E
2019	\$2.62 A	\$2.93 A	\$2.90 A	\$2.80 E	\$11.26 E
2018	\$2.78 A	\$2.98 A	\$2.74 A	\$2.52 A	\$11.02 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	15.3
P/E F1	14.0
PEG F1	1.6
P/S TTM	1.4

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 01/02/2020. The reports text is as of 01/03/2020.

Overview

Headquartered in Burlington, NC, Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings or LabCorp is a leading healthcare diagnostics company, providing comprehensive clinical laboratory services and end-to-end drug development support.

In 2015, LabCorp acquired NJ based Covance, a drug development services company providing a wide range of early stage and late stage product development services on a worldwide basis primarily to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. With this, currently LabCorp reports under two operating segments:

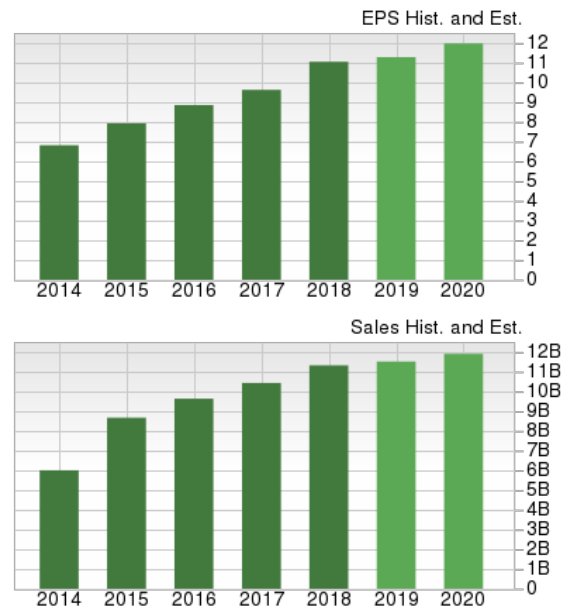
LabCorp Diagnostics (62% of total revenues in 2018): Includes LabCorp's legacy business except for its clinical trial services business, which is now part of Covance Drug Development, and includes the nutritional chemistry and food safety business, which was previously part of Covance. This business registered 2.5% revenue growth in 2018 from the year-ago period.

Covance Drug Development (38%): Includes Covance's legacy business except for its nutritional chemistry and food safety business, which is now part of LabCorp Diagnostics, and includes LabCorp's legacy clinical trial services business. This business reported 24.9% revenue growth in 2018.

Company Strategy

LabCorp has adopted a five-pillar strategy to achieve growth in its businesses. These five strategic pillars are:

- Deploy capital to investments
- Enhance IT capabilities to improve physician, patient experience
- Improve efficiency to remain the most efficient and highest value provider of laboratory services
- Continue scientific innovation to offer tests at reasonable pricing
- Development of alternative delivery models to improve patient outcome and reduce cost of care



Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Share Price Movement:** Over the past three months, shares of LabCorp increased 0.2% compared to the industry's 8.7% rise. LabCorp exited the third quarter on a strong note, with better-than-expected results. In third-quarter 2019, the company reported strong underlying performance and organic revenue growth across both Diagnostics and Drug Development businesses banking on solid execution of three fundamental strategies which are delivering advanced diagnostics, bringing new medicines to patients faster and using technology to improve patient care. During the quarter, Diagnostics business grew organically in terms of both revenue and volume despite additional price reductions due to Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) and the loss of exclusivity in two of the company's largest managed care contracts. Within Diagnostics, the company registered strong revenue per requisition and solid execution of its LaunchPad 2 initiatives.

Covance Drug Development also grew organically despite adverse impact of foreign currency translation. Of late, the company enhanced Covance's offerings through strategic acquisitions like MI Bioresearch that brings specialized preclinical capabilities in cell and gene therapy and oncology testing. The company is also hopeful about its recently-completed business swap transaction with Envigo. The transaction provides Covance with enhanced global non-clinical research capabilities, while maintaining access to a bigger research models and services through a multi-year renewable supply agreement. Right now, LabCorp is on track to deliver \$10 million of net costs in synergies from the integration and Envigo by the end of 2021. This apart, the Covance LaunchPad initiative is well on track to deliver \$150 million of net savings by the end of 2020.

▲ **Covance Drug Development Expands Well:** LabCorp's Covance Drug Development is the only CRO to combine early development, central lab and clinical services in an end-to-end offering. Under this business, LabCorp is full on force to expand the company's range of diagnostic offerings and create a new industry leader in both laboratory testing and CRO spaces who will act as a leading provider of medical testing besides operating as a premier full-service drug development organization. Chiltern integration has significantly strengthened the company's strategic position in clinical development and is accelerating revenue and profit growth within Covance.

In this regard, of late, LabCorp is enhancing Covance's offerings through strategic acquisitions. The acquisition of MI Bioresearch is expected to create opportunity for Covance to move from preclinical to clinical development. We are also optimistic about the company's plans to acquire Regulatory and Clinical Research Institute (RCRI), a device focused CRO with strong regulatory consulting expertise. This apart, in June, the company completed an innovative business swap transaction with Envigo.

In addition, the company has progressed with the Covance LaunchPad initiative. At the end of the third quarter 2019, LabCorp remains on track to deliver \$150 million of net savings from Covance LaunchPad by the end of 2020. This apart, the company has completed the \$30 million in cost synergies from the integration of Chiltern that it had committed to deliver in 2020 and expects to achieve \$10 million in net cost synergies from the integration of Envigo by the end of 2021.

▲ **LaunchPad in Diagnostics May Help Rebound Growth:** On the heels of a successful execution of the company's LaunchPad cost saving initiative in its drug development business, LabCorp has now introduced this program within its Diagnostics arm which is facing severe headwinds over the recent term. This Phase II of LaunchPad initiative in Diagnostics is expected to deliver \$200 million of savings by the end of 2021. This initiative focuses on eliminating manual processes; digitizing the business; using technology to improve quality, operations and service; enhancing the consumer experience and bringing LabCorp's services closer to the customer. Phase II of LaunchPad is expected to streamline its business, unlock new avenues for growth and contribute to improvement in the long-term margins.

▲ **Meaningful Acquisitions to Add Value:** LabCorp continues to add complementary capabilities through targeted acquisitions. The latest in the list is an innovative business swap transaction with Envigo, a provider of nonclinical contract research services and research models. In this transaction, the company has purchased Envigo's non-clinical contract research service business, while sell them Covance Research Products business. The company also enhanced its value by acquiring the diagnostic clinical laboratory testing business of South Bend Medical Foundation (SBMF), considerably enhancing the scope of local services that LabCorp offers to hospitals, physicians, and patients across Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois.

▲ **Strategic Plans to Drive Growth:** As part of its three key strategic plans, LabCorp is working hard on new innovations with academic institutions in order to capture the growing lab testing market with its advanced assays and tools. In Diagnostics, the company successfully continues to provide the foundation for new collaborations with health systems, large physician groups and managed care partners. LabCorp has also created growth opportunities in women's health, medical drug monitoring, genetics and oncology testing, as well as in critical collaborations with players like Walgreens and 23andMe. Also, its partnerships with UnitedHealthcare and Aetna have helped LabCorp to become a contracted laboratory provider for all major national plans.

Within Covance Drug Development, the company's ongoing strategic investments in precision medicine, therapeutic expertise, FSP solutions and biologic drug development capabilities continue to increase its win rate with existing partners and new customers. The acquisition of Chiltern is significantly strengthening LabCorp's strategic position in clinical development and accelerating revenue and profit growth within Covance. This apart, the company's recent strategic technology contract with QIAGEN is expected to garner positive outcome down the line.

▲ **Progress on Strategic Collaborations:** LabCorp has strengthened its foothold in the diagnostics space through both organic and inorganic means and plans to collaborate with leading companies and academic institutions to provide a wider portfolio of tests. Among the company's recent alliances, worth mentioning are the company's team ups with UnitedHealthcare and Aetna which have helped LabCorp to become a contracted laboratory provider for all major national plans. Jul 1, 2019 onward, all of the LabCorp brands are included in the UnitedHealthcare's preferred lab network. The company is optimistic about the opportunity to grow volume with UnitedHealthcare through the PLN in 2020 and beyond. Further, in the third quarter, LabCorp partnered with the New Jersey Primary Care Association, which represents 23 community health centers. It has also finalized several new partnerships with health systems in the quarter. The company is also progressing well under its broad collaboration agreement with Walgreens on patient engagement, health and wellness offerings and creation of a next-generation CRO.

The solid revenue and earnings outlook for 2019 holds optimism indicating improving industry trends along with ongoing positive synergy from the Covance integration.

▲ **Stable Liquidity Position:** LabCorp is well capitalized having exited the third quarter 2019 with cash and cash equivalents of \$361.1 million compared with \$265.4 million at the end of the second quarter. The company has been using its cash balance to make strategic acquisitions and has been rewarding its shareholders through share repurchases. LabCorp noted interest in acquisitions in the field of contract research and pathology, including hematopathology, at an attractive valuation. During the third quarter, the company returned \$100 million to shareholders via share repurchases. LabCorp currently has \$950 million of authorization remaining under its existing share buyback plan.

The company's cash flow trends also remain robust. year to date, Year to date, operating cash flow was \$874.9 million, up from \$819 million in the year-ago period. Additionally, free cash flow was at \$602.9 million in the quarter, up from \$561.4 million a year ago.

In addition, free cash flow guidance for 2019 has been anticipated in the band of \$950 million-\$1.05 billion. Going forward, LabCorp expects to deploy half of the free cash flow to acquisitions and half to share buybacks.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Exposed to Currency Headwind:** With LabCorp deriving a huge share of its revenues internationally, it remains highly exposed to currency fluctuations. Unfavorable currency movements have been a major dampener over the last few quarters, as in the case of other important MedTech players too. While the trend has shown some sort of improvement in the reported quarter, sustainability remains a matter of question. In the third quarter, revenue dropped 30 basis points on account of unfavorable foreign currency translation. The 2019 guidance assumes a negative impact of 60 basis points from currency translation.

▼ **Competitive Landscape:** LabCorp faces intense competition from its major competitor, Quest Diagnostics, and other commercial laboratories and hospitals. In a \$55 billion U.S. lab market, hospitals control an estimated 55% of the diagnostic test market, compared to LabCorp's 10% share. While pricing is an important factor in choosing a testing lab, hospital-affiliated physicians expect a high level of service, including accurate and rapid turnaround of testing results. As a result, LabCorp and other commercial labs compete with hospital-affiliated labs primarily on the basis of quality of service.

▼ **Reimbursement Cut to Have a Negative Impact:** Changes in governmental regulations had a significant impact on LabCorp's operations. Particularly, in the last couple of years, the company faced several reimbursement issues hurting its revenues. The company is concerned about the CMS' (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) latest Medicare reimbursement reduction as a result of the implementation of Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA). Notably, 2018 was the opening year operating under the clinical IP schedule.

We are quite apprehensive about the entire scenario. With latest clinical lab fee schedule getting implemented without any amendment in favor of the testing laboratories, the benefit from Chiltern, the benefit from PAML and Mount Sinai and the Covance LaunchPad process are also getting offset to PAMA reductions.

The year 2019 is so far challenging for LabCorp due to the ongoing impact of PAMA. In the second quarter, the company announced significant revenue loss on lower Medicare pricing as a result of the implementation of PAMA. More specifically, PAMA had 90 basis points negative impact on LabCorp's top line during this period.

The current economic uncertainty including challenging volume environment for testing laboratories and utilization weaknesses are looming headwinds.

Last Earnings Report

Business Disposition and Currency Translation Dent LabCorp's Growth in Q3

Laboratory Corporation of America Holdings or LabCorp, reported third-quarter 2019 adjusted earnings per share of \$2.90, up 5.8% from the year-ago quarter. Also, the bottom line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 2.1%.

On a GAAP basis, net earnings were \$2.25 per share, declining 27.4% from the year-earlier figure.

Revenues in the quarter under review grew 3.4% year over year to \$2.93 billion. The top line also beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$2.91 billion by 0.7%.

The marginal year-over-year improvement was primarily led by 2.8% growth from acquisitions and 2.2% organic growth (which includes the negative impact of Protecting Access to Medicare Act or PAMA of 0.9%), partially offset by 1.3% negative impact of business dispositions and approximately 0.3% adverse foreign currency translation.

Quarter in Detail

LabCorp reports results under two operating segments — **LabCorp Diagnostics** and **Covance Drug Development**.

In the third quarter, **LabCorp Diagnostics** reported revenues of \$1.76 billion, reflecting a 0.4% uptick year over year. The upside primarily resulted from 0.9% organic growth and 0.8% favorable contribution from acquisitions, offset by 1.3% headwind from business dispositions. Organic revenue growth in the quarter included a 1.5% negative impact from the implementation of the PAMA.

Excluding business dispositions, the company witnessed 0.7% rise in total volume (measured by requisition) and 1% improvement in revenue per requisition in the third quarter.

Covance Drug Development's revenues improved 8.7% to \$1.18 billion in the third quarter. The upside was primarily attributed to 6% growth from acquisitions and 4.7% organic growth, partially offset by 0.8% adverse impact of foreign currency translation and business disposition of 1.2%.

Gross margin remained flat year over year at 27.9% in the reported quarter. Also, adjusted operating income rose 1.9% year over year to \$430.5 million. However, adjusted operating margin contracted 22 bps from the year-ago quarter to 21.5%.

LabCorp exited the third quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$361.1 million compared with \$265.4 million at the end of the second quarter. Year to date, operating cash flow was \$874.9 million, up from \$819 million in the year-ago period. Additionally, free cash flow was at \$602.9 million in the quarter, up from \$561.4 million a year ago.

In the third quarter, the company returned \$100 million to shareholders via share repurchases. LabCorp currently has \$950 million of authorization remaining under its existing share buyback plan.

Outlook

The company has revised its 2019 guidance.

It now expects year-over-year revenue growth of 1.5-2% compared with 1-2% mentioned earlier. This includes a projected adverse impact of 1.5% from the disposition of businesses and a negative foreign currency movement of roughly 0.6%. The Zacks Consensus Estimate for revenues is pegged at \$11.48 billion for the current year.

Adjusted earnings per share estimate for 2019 has been narrowed to \$11.20-\$11.30 from \$11.10-\$11.40 mentioned earlier, indicating 1.6-2.5% rise from the 2018 adjusted earnings per share figure. The Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$11.29 for the same is close to the high end of the company's guidance.

Free cash flow is predicted to be \$950-\$1.05 billion (unchanged).

Quarter Ending **09/2019**

Report Date	Oct 24, 2019
Sales Surprise	0.66%
EPS Surprise	2.11%
Quarterly EPS	2.90
Annual EPS (TTM)	10.97

Recent News

On **Oct 22, 2019**, LabCorp announced that, it has completed its acquisition of the diagnostic clinical laboratory testing business of South Bend Medical Foundation (SBMF).

On **Oct 21, 2019**, LabCorp, along with HealthEC, LLC, a 2019 Best in KLAS provider of population health management solutions, and the New Jersey Primary Care Association (NJPCA), announced the development of a database and information exchange platform supporting participating NJPCA health centers.

Valuation

LabCorp shares are down 4.9% in the six-months period and up 30.9% in the trailing 12-month periods. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 12.7% while the Zacks Medical sector are up 4.5% in the six-months period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 6.4% and sector is up 8.7%.

The S&P 500 index is up 8.3% in the six-months period and up 26.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 14.9X Forward 12-months earnings, which compares to 18.4X for the Zacks sub-industry, 21.7X for the Zacks sector and 19.1X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 17.1X and as low as 10.8X, with a 5-year median 14.4X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$176 price target reflects 15.6x forward 12-months earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for LH.

Valuation Multiples - LH					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	14.87	18.35	21.74	19.07
	5-Year High	17.11	19.99	21.74	19.34
	5-Year Low	10.75	13.70	15.91	15.17
	5-Year Median	14.40	16.63	18.97	17.44
P/S F12M	Current	1.41	0.35	2.88	3.46
	5-Year High	1.69	0.35	3.80	3.46
	5-Year Low	1.06	0.23	2.42	2.54
	5-Year Median	1.41	0.28	2.94	3.00
P/B TTM	Current	2.25	4.44	4.59	4.41
	5-Year High	3.84	4.93	5.01	4.42
	5-Year Low	1.68	2.53	3.42	2.85
	5-Year Median	2.51	3.45	4.27	3.60

As of 01/02/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 33% (84 out of 253)



Top Peers

DaVita Inc. (DVA)	Outperform
Exact Sciences Corporation (EXAS)	Outperform
Align Technology, Inc. (ALGN)	Neutral
Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc. (BIO)	Neutral
Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (DGX)	Neutral
NeoGenomics, Inc. (NEO)	Neutral
OPKO Health, Inc. (OPK)	Neutral
Myriad Genetics, Inc. (MYGN)	Underperform

Industry Comparison Industry: Medical - Dental Supplies				Industry Peers		
	LH Neutral	X Industry	S&P 500	DGX Neutral	EXAS Outperform	NEO Neutral
VGM Score	A	-	-	B	D	B
Market Cap	16.26 B	1.46 B	23.76 B	14.24 B	12.41 B	3.03 B
# of Analysts	9	5.5	13	9	8	5
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.78%	2.01%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	A	-	-	B	D	D
Cash/Price	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.09	0.06
EV/EBITDA	10.96	11.03	13.97	12.12	-126.46	92.03
PEG Ratio	1.63	2.00	2.02	2.08	NA	NA
Price/Book (P/B)	2.25	3.88	3.38	2.52	16.58	6.07
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	10.04	12.14	13.70	13.00	NA	89.81
P/E (F1)	13.98	21.34	18.83	15.69	NA	78.09
Price/Sales (P/S)	1.43	1.39	2.68	1.86	17.15	8.01
Earnings Yield	7.14%	4.16%	5.30%	6.37%	-0.45%	1.27%
Debt/Equity	0.93	0.32	0.72	0.56	0.67	0.24
Cash Flow (\$/share)	16.68	1.80	6.94	8.14	-0.99	0.32
Growth Score	B	-	-	C	D	B
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	11.29%	8.77%	10.56%	9.46%	NA	56.53%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	6.17%	13.35%	7.41%	3.78%	73.31%	33.81%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	9.98%	9.29%	14.83%	9.93%	20.69%	-21.26%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	14.10%	12.58%	9.00%	4.34%	NA	36.02%
Current Ratio	1.17	1.72	1.23	0.88	2.75	4.24
Debt/Capital	48.26%	26.85%	42.92%	36.60%	40.09%	19.56%
Net Margin	6.63%	3.65%	11.08%	9.58%	-29.84%	0.55%
Return on Equity	15.33%	15.73%	17.10%	15.32%	-29.06%	4.60%
Sales/Assets	0.66	1.02	0.55	0.65	0.42	0.62
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	3.41%	5.44%	4.20%	2.25%	98.48%	11.69%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	D	A	A
Daily Price Chg	-1.00%	0.00%	0.33%	-0.99%	3.35%	-0.68%
1 Week Price Chg	0.92%	0.00%	0.13%	-0.25%	-3.67%	4.06%
4 Week Price Chg	-2.04%	1.45%	3.31%	-0.40%	14.32%	11.43%
12 Week Price Chg	1.81%	8.77%	9.70%	2.65%	5.59%	47.84%
52 Week Price Chg	35.39%	16.31%	30.28%	31.05%	54.21%	139.29%
20 Day Average Volume	482,486	196,091	1,603,615	663,331	1,604,199	729,950
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	-0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.30%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	-1.12%	0.00%	-0.57%	-0.79%	42.17%	9.43%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Zacks Stock Rating System

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

Zacks Recommendation

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

Zacks Rank

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

Zacks Style Scores

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

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

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

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

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