Southwest Airlines(LUV)

$58.13 (As of 02/26/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **$61.00**

|		
Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:**	**Neutral**
	(Since: 05/05/20)	
	Prior Recommendation: Underperform	
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)	**4-Sell**
	Zacks Style Scores:	VGM:F
	Value: D | Growth: F	Momentum: F

Summary

Amid coronavirus-led weak air-travel demand, Southwest Airlines incurred adjusted net loss of $3.5 billion in 2020. Total revenues dropped 59.7% in the year with 63.1% fall in passenger revenues. Rising coronavirus cases further hurt travel demand in January. Additionally, the airline's cash burn forecast for the first quarter is bleak. Cash burn is expected to be $15 million per day in the current quarter, worse than $12 million in fourth-quarter 2020. However, cost-reduction efforts and modest fuel prices are partly offsetting the revenue declines. Southwest Airlines' sound liquidity position is encouraging. Under the Payroll Support Program Extension agreement, the airline is set to receive $1.7 billion ($864 million has already been received). Due to these tailwinds, shares of the company have outperformed its industry in a year.
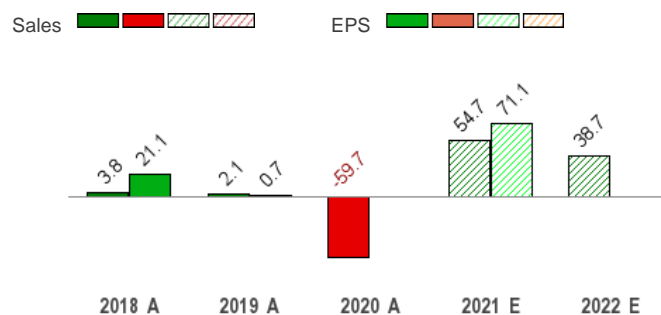
Price, Consensus & Surprise

Source: Zacks Investment Research
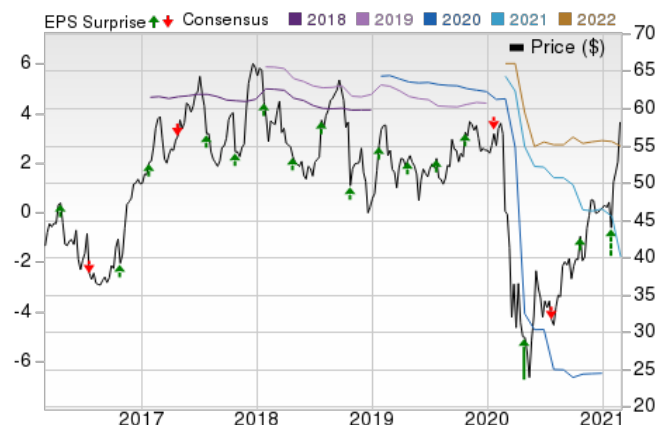
Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	**$59.84 - $22.47**
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	**8,260,151**
Market Cap	**$34.3 B**
Year-To-Date Price Change	**24.7%**
Beta	**1.20**
Dividend / Dividend Yield	**$0.00 / 0.0%**
Industry	**Transportation - Airline**
Zacks Industry Rank	**Bottom 4% (243 out of 253)**
Last EPS Surprise	**23.7%**
Last Sales Surprise	**-4.9%**
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	**-958.8%**
Expected Report Date	**NA**
Earnings ESP	**-2.5%**
P/E TTM	**NA**
P/E F1	**NA**
PEG F1	**NA**
P/S TTM	**3.8**

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)

Sales Estimates (millions of $)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	4,224 E	4,874 E	5,065 E	5,345 E	19,413 E
2021	1,983 E	3,195 E	3,934 E	4,500 E	13,993 E
2020	4,234 A	1,008 A	1,793 A	2,013 A	9,048 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	$0.10 E	$0.75 E	$0.82 E	$1.02 E	$2.66 E
2021	-$1.87 E	-$0.78 E	$-0.00 E	$0.52 E	-$1.80 E
2020	-$0.15 A	-$2.67 A	-$1.99 A	-$1.29 A	-$6.22 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 02/26/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 03/01/2021.

Overview

Based in Dallas, TX, Southwest Airlines is a passenger airline that provides scheduled air transportation in the United States and 'ten near-international' markets. The company, incorporated in Texas in 1967, commenced operations on Jun 18, 1971, with three Boeing 737 jets serving the cities of Dallas, Houston and San Antonio.

Per the U.S. Department of Transportation's latest available data, Southwest Airlines has emerged as the largest domestic air carrier (measured in terms of the number of domestic originating passengers boarded) in the United States. During 2018, the carrier commenced operating flights from Indianapolis, San Jose, Sacramento, Columbus, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, and Raleigh-Durham.
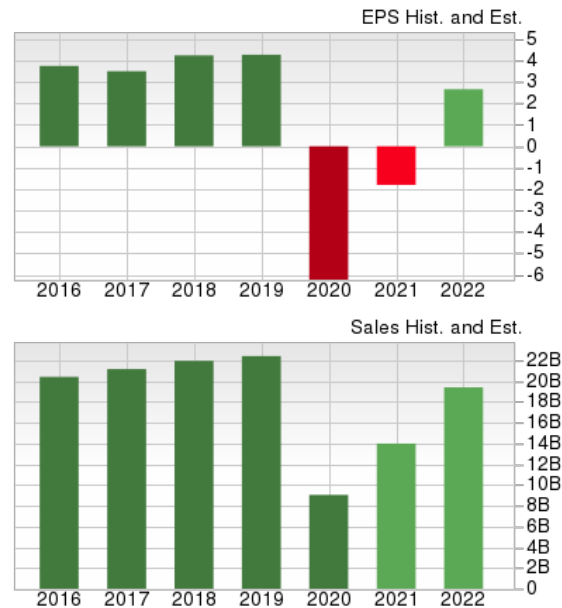
Additionally, during 2018, the carrier started shipping cargo to international destinations like Mexico City, Cancun, Cabo San Lucas/Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta, Montego Bay, and San Jose, Costa Rica.

The company is constantly looking to modernize its fleet. At 2019-end, Southwest Airlines had 747 Boeing 737 jets in its fleet. The carrier used its fleet to serve101 destinations in 40 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and ten near-international countries: Mexico, Jamaica, The Bahamas, Aruba, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Belize, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos. As part of its expansion efforts, Southwest Airlines started operating flights to Hawaii from March 2019.

EPS Hist. and Est.

Sales Hist. and Est.

Southwest Airlines provides short-haul, high frequency, point-to-point and low-fare services. The company's point-to-point route structure includes services to and from many secondary or downtown airports such as Dallas Love Field, Houston Hobby, Chicago Midway, Baltimore-Washington International and Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood. In fact, roughly 77% of the carrier's passengers flew nonstop during 2019. The carrier served 720 non-stop city pairs as of Dec 31, 2019.

The company also offers long-haul nonstop service between markets like Oakland and Orlando, Los Angeles and Nashville, Las Vegas and Orlando, San Diego and Baltimore, Houston and New York LaGuardia, Los Angeles and Tampa, Oakland and Baltimore, San Diego and Newark.

Passenger revenues account for the bulk (92.6% in 2019) of the top line at Southwest Airlines. Freight revenues accounted for 0.8% and the remaining came from other sources.

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Please see important disclosures and definitions at the end of this report.

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Reasons To Buy:

▲ With fuel costs comprising a major chunk of airline expenditures, modest fuel prices are a boon to Southwest. Fuel price per gallon (inclusive of fuel tax: economic) declined 28.7% year over year to $1.49 in 2020. The company estimates fuel price in the range of $1.6-$1.7 per gallon in the first quarter of 2020 compared with $1.9 in the year-ago period. The savings on fuel expenses are supporting the bottom line.

Low fuel prices and cost-cutting measures are aiding Southwest Airlines' bottom line.

▲ Southwest Airlines' cost-reduction efforts to mitigate the effects of weak travel demand are encouraging. During 2020, the company realized cost savings of $565 million from its voluntary leave programs for its employees. This year, the airline anticipates additional $600 million in savings from these programs. The carrier anticipates operating expenses (excluding fuel and oil expenses and special items) to decline 15-20% year over year in the first quarter primarily due to lower capacity as well as an estimated $400 million of cost savings from voluntary separation and extended leave programs. From 2022 and beyond, the company expects to generate annual run rate savings of approximately $500 million from its voluntary separation program.

▲ With Boeing's 737 MAX aircraft having been cleared to fly again after being grounded for 20 months, Southwest Airlines expects to begin commercial operations on the aircraft from Mar 11 onward. Thanks to the reintroduction of this fuel-efficient aircraft, the airline's fleet modernization efforts and lower utilization of its 737-700 aircraft, the carrier expects fuel efficiency to improve 5-6% year over year in the first quarter of 2021.

▲ Southwest Airlines' sound liquidity position raises optimism in the stock. At the end of the fourth quarter, the carrier's cash and cash equivalents stood at $11,063 million, much higher than the current debt of $220 million, implying that the company has sufficient cash to meet its current debt obligations. Moreover, the company is set to receive approximately $1.7 billion under the Payroll Support Program Extension agreement with the U.S. Treasury Department. Of the total amount, $864 million has already been received. The carrier is expected to receive the remaining amount later in the first quarter. $1.2 billion of the total proceeds is in the form of cash, while $488 million is in the form of loan. The additional funds, meant to help the airline cover its payroll expenses, further bolster its liquidity position.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ Amid coronavirus-led suppressed air-travel demand, Southwest Airlines incurred an annual loss in 2020, for the first time since 1972. Net loss (excluding special items) was $3.5 billion in the year. Due to significant decline in travel demand, passenger revenues fell 63.1% year over year in 2020, in turn leading to 59.7% drop in operating revenues. Additionally, with rise in coronavirus cases, the airline witnessed further deceleration in travel demand in January. In January, Southwest's operating revenues declined 66% year over year (decreased 65% compared with January 2019). The same is expected to have plunged 65-70% in February both year over year as well as from the February 2019 level. Operating revenues for March are estimated to drop 20-30% year over year and 55-65% from the 2019 levels.

▼ While leisure travel demand has gradually improved from the dramatic lows, business travel demand continues to be significantly weak. Southwest Airlines management stated that its corporate-managed travel declined 87% in the fourth quarter. The airline anticipates business travel demand to be significantly low this year as well. Southwest estimates business travel to be 50-60% less than the 2019 levels even at the end of 2021.

▼ With continued softness in travel demand as well as seasonally weak travel period in January and February, the company predicts average core cash burn to worsen in the first quarter to approximately $15 million per day from approximately $12 million per day in fourth-quarter 2020. Additionally, the airline expects first-quarter capacity to reduce by around 35% year over year and by 38% from the 2019 levels due to the low-demand scenario.

Amid coronavirus-led suppressed air-travel demand, Southwest Airlines incurred an adjusted net loss of $3.5 billion in 2020.

Last Earnings Report

Narrower Than Expected Loss in Q4

Southwest Airlines incurred a loss of $1.29 per share (excluding 25 cents from non-recurring items) in the fourth quarter of 2020, narrower than the Zacks Consensus Estimate of a loss of $1.69. In the year-ago period, the company had reported earnings of 98 cents per share. Results were affected by significant decline in passenger revenues as a result of persistent weakness in air-travel demand amid coronavirus concerns.

Quarter Ending	12/2020
Report Date	Jan 28, 2021
Sales Surprise	-4.94%
EPS Surprise	23.67%
Quarterly EPS	-1.29
Annual EPS (TTM)	-6.10

Meanwhile, operating revenues of $2,013 million lagged the Zacks Consensus Estimate of $2,117.5 million. The top line declined 64.9% year over year, with passenger revenues accounting for bulk (82.6%) of the top line, sliding 68.7%.

Operating Statistics

Airline traffic, measured in revenue passenger miles, declined 61.5% year over year to 12.78 billion in the quarter under review. With reduced passenger demand as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, capacity or available seat miles (ASMs) fell 40.6% to 23.76 billion. Load factor (percentage of seats filled by passengers) came in at 53.8%, down 2930 basis points on a year-over-year basis as the decline in traffic was wider than the capacity contraction.

Passenger revenue per available seat mile (PRASM: a key measure of unit revenues) dropped 47.3% to 7 cents. Moreover, revenue per available seat mile (RASM) declined 40.8% year over year to 8.48 cents, owing to decline in load factor and passenger revenue yield.

Operating Expenses & Income

In the fourth quarter, operating loss totaled $1,169 million against operating income of $665 million in the year-ago quarter. Total adjusted operating expenses (excluding profit sharing, special items, fuel and oil expenses) dropped 23.1%, thanks to the company's cost-cutting measures and reduction in salaries, wages and benefits, among other expenses.

Fuel cost per gallon (inclusive of fuel tax: economic) was down 40.2% to $1.25. However, consolidated unit cost or cost per available seat mile (CASM) excluding fuel, oil and profit-sharing expenses, and special items, increased 29.4% year over year to 11.96 cents due to significant reduction in capacity.

Liquidity

This company had cash and cash equivalents of $11,063 million at the end of the fourth quarter, compared with $2,548 million at the end of 2019. As of Dec 31, 2020, the company had long-term debt (less current maturities) of $10,111 million compared with $1,846 million at 2019-end.

Outlook

Southwest stated that demand for January and February has stalled primarily due to continued rise in coronavirus cases as well as seasonal softness in leisure travel demand. However, with trip cancellations having stabilized, the airline anticipates operating revenues to decline 65-70% in January from the 2019 levels, compared with a decrease of 65-75% anticipated previously. The same is expected to drop 65-75% from the 2019 levels in February. The carrier expects capacity to decline approximately 41% year over year in January. The same is anticipated to fall 46% in February and 16% in March. With continued softness in travel demand as well as seasonally weak travel period in January and February, the company predicts average core cash burn to worsen in the first quarter to approximately $17 million per day from approximately $12 million per day in fourth-quarter 2020.

Thanks to the airline's fleet modernization efforts, lower utilization of its 737-700 aircraft as well as anticipated benefits of the reintroduction of the MAX aircraft, the carrier expects fuel efficiency to improve 5-6% year over year in the first quarter of 2021.

Economic fuel costs per gallon are expected to be in the band of $1.60-$1.70 in the first quarter of 2021, compared with $1.90 in the year-ago period. The same for 2021 is anticipated in the range of $1.65-$1.75, compared with $1.49 in 2020.

The carrier anticipates operating expenses (excluding fuel and oil expenses and special items) to decline 15-20% year-over-year in the first quarter primarily due to lower capacity as well as an estimated $400 million of cost savings from voluntary separation and extended leave programs. Having realized approximately $565 million of cost savings in 2020, the company expects additional savings of $600 million in the current year, owing to reduction in salaries, wages and benefits of approximately $1.2 billion from the 2019 levels. The company, having reduced capital expenditures significantly, does not expect the same to be more than $500 million.

Recent News

Expansion Update — Feb 26, 2021

Southwest Airlines will start operating flight services to Destin-Fort Walton Beach airport in Florida from May 6, 2021 onward. Additionally, it will begin daily flights connecting Destin/Ft. Walton Beach and Baltimore/Washington, Dallas (Love Field) as well as Nashville. From Jun 6 onward, the carrier will start operating daily flights connecting Destin/Ft. Walton Beach and Chicago (Midway) airport. While flights on the Nashville route will be operated thrice a week (each way), the remaining routes will have one weekly flight either way. Further, Southwest Airlines will introduce two daily nonstop flights (each way) on the Bozeman-Denver and Bozeman- Las Vegas routes on May 27.

Revision of Emotional Support Animals Policy — Jan 26, 2021

Southwest Airlines has revised its policy pertaining to emotional support animals on flights. From Mar 1, 2021, the carrier will allow only trained service dogs to accompany its passengers on flights. Per this updated policy, the airline will no longer permit emotional support animals on board. However, passengers can be ferried with some animals as part of the carrier's existing pets program for a fee. But this is possible only if the animals satisfy all applicable requirements regarding in-cabin stowage and species. Per the DOT's new ruling, only dogs qualify as service animals. Going by this more stringent regulation, a service animal is defined as a "dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability".

Valuation

Southwest Airlines shares are up 24.7% and 23.8% in the year-to-date period and over the trailing 12-month period respectively. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Transportation sector are up 16.5% and 3.5% in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 11.1% and 33.7% respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 1.9% and 25.5% in the year-to-date period and in the past year respectively.

The stock is currently trading at 2.31X forward 12-month price to sales, which compares to 1.05X for the Zacks sub-industry, 1.59X for the Zacks sector and 4.44X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 2.35X and as low as 0.69X, with a 5-year median of 1.34X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our $61 price target reflects 2.42X forward 12-month sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for LUV

Valuation Multiples - LUV		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/S F 12M	Current	2.31	1.05	1.59	4.44
	5-Year High	2.35	1.05	1.59	4.44
	5-Year Low	0.69	0.37	0.86	3.21
	5-Year Median	1.34	0.72	1.25	3.68
EV/S TTM	Current	3.47	2.18	2.28	4.52
	5-Year High	3.55	2.18	2.28	4.68
	5-Year Low	0.42	0.45	1.13	2.64
	5-Year Median	1.43	0.92	1.63	3.6

As of 02/26/2021   Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 4% (243 out of 253)
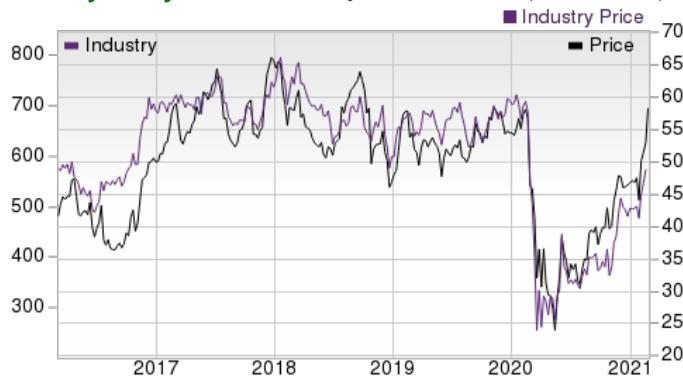
Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Alaska Air Group, Inc. (ALK)	Neutral	4
Delta Air Lines, Inc. (DAL)	Neutral	3
Hawaiian Holdings, Inc. (HA)	Neutral	4
JetBlue Airways Corporation (JBLU)	Neutral	4
Spirit Airlines, Inc. (SAVE)	Neutral	4
United Airlines Holdings Inc (UAL)	Neutral	4
Controladora Vuela Compania de Aviacion, S.A.B. de C.V. (VLRS)	Neutral	3
Allegiant Travel Company (ALGT)	Underperform	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Transportation - Airline   Industry Peers

	LUV	X Industry	S&P 500	HA	JBLU	SAVE
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	4	-	-	4	4	4
VGM Score	F	-	-	F	D	F
Market Cap	34.34 B	5.44 B	27.20 B	1.30 B	5.80 B	3.51 B
# of Analysts	15	4	13	5	8	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	D	-	-	D	B	D
Cash/Price	0.43	0.43	0.06	0.73	0.55	0.57
EV/EBITDA	-11.69	3.21	14.95	-4.00	5.31	-21.70
PEG F1	NA	NA	2.32	NA	NA	NA
P/B	3.87	1.81	3.80	2.17	1.35	1.56
P/CF	NA	4.15	15.39	NA	NA	NA
P/E F1	NA	54.62	20.41	NA	NA	NA
P/S TTM	3.79	0.98	3.10	1.54	1.96	1.94
Earnings Yield	-3.10%	-4.55%	4.82%	-18.83%	-12.32%	-9.09%
Debt/Equity	1.17	0.80	0.68	1.93	1.19	1.36
Cash Flow ($/share)	-3.82	0.86	6.62	-6.27	-3.31	-4.39
Growth Score	F	-	-	F	F	F
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	3.05%	1.39%	9.34%	-1.31%	-9.35%	3.00%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	71.06%	73.48%	14.09%	57.76%	60.10%	61.54%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-164.14%	-20.67%	0.52%	-175.71%	-195.24%	-173.53%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	NA%	4.91%	7.62%	NA	NA	NA
Current Ratio	2.02	0.95	1.39	1.11	1.23	1.76
Debt/Capital	54.00%	54.00%	41.42%	65.81%	54.43%	57.68%
Net Margin	-33.97%	-36.91%	10.59%	-60.48%	-46.08%	-23.69%
Return on Equity	-36.43%	-23.15%	14.65%	-72.27%	-38.80%	-31.10%
Sales/Assets	0.27	0.31	0.51	0.21	0.22	0.23
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	54.65%	52.06%	6.75%	110.08%	74.02%	70.87%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	D	D	C
Daily Price Change	-0.31%	-0.15%	-0.84%	0.98%	-0.32%	1.21%
1-Week Price Change	2.86%	5.36%	-0.16%	8.16%	5.71%	16.30%
4-Week Price Change	30.34%	21.09%	2.75%	30.01%	25.80%	34.33%
12-Week Price Change	21.56%	17.25%	5.58%	28.33%	15.98%	46.27%
52-Week Price Change	24.66%	4.53%	20.43%	21.52%	13.28%	20.61%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	8,260,151	155,474	2,018,241	1,043,638	9,023,771	6,144,016
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	-2.08%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-958.82%	-37.56%	0.45%	-35.73%	-136.68%	-290.92%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	-2,084.25%	-91.33%	1.88%	-152.10%	-664.98%	-1,496.50%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-63.96%	-21.61%	0.21%	-16.51%	-32.57%	-52.76%

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	F
Momentum Score	F
VGM Score	F

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 mediumterm 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 mostrecent 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.