Masco Corporation (MAS)

$65.52 (As of 05/05/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **$69.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:** (Since: 12/28/20) Prior Recommendation: Outperform	**Neutral**
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5) Zacks Style Scores: Value: C | Growth: C | Momentum: C	**2-Buy** VGM:C

Summary

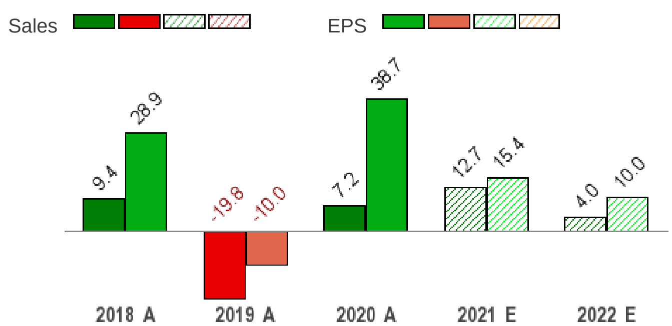
Masco performed pretty well in first-quarter 2021. Earnings and revenues surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 34.9% and 7.8% as well as improved year over year by 89.3% and 24.6%, respectively. Strong Decorative Architectural Products and North American Plumbing segments helped it deliver better-than-expected results. Also, inorganic strategies, cost-saving initiatives and industry-leading branded building products added to the positives. Encouragingly, the last three bolt-on acquisitions added 4% to total net sales for the quarter. Margins also improved significantly from the prior-year quarter. Strong sales growth, improved margins, lower SG&A expenses along with a strong liquidity level aided the company. However, rise in raw material costs and expenses related to new product launches remain potent headwinds.

Price, Consensus & Surprise

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	**$65.81 - $38.98**
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	**1,651,657**
Market Cap	**$16.6 B**
Year-To-Date Price Change	**19.3%**
Beta	**1.34**
Dividend / Dividend Yield	**$0.56 / 0.9%**
Industry	**Building Products - Miscellaneous**
Zacks Industry Rank	**Top 26% (65 out of 254)**
Last EPS Surprise	**34.9%**
Last Sales Surprise	**7.8%**
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	**8.1%**
Expected Report Date	**07/29/2021**
Earnings ESP	**0.8%**
P/E TTM	**18.6**
P/E F1	**18.2**
PEG F1	**2.0**
P/S TTM	**2.2**

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of $)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	1,990 E	2,225 E	2,118 E	2,035 E	8,427 E
2021	1,970 A	2,179 E	2,037 E	1,939 E	8,099 E
2020	1,581 A	1,764 A	1,983 A	1,860 A	7,188 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	$0.89 E	$1.14 E	$1.05 E	$0.88 E	$3.96 E
2021	$0.89 A	$1.06 E	$0.92 E	$0.77 E	$3.60 E
2020	$0.46 A	$0.84 A	$1.04 A	$0.75 A	$3.12 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 05/05/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 05/06/2021.

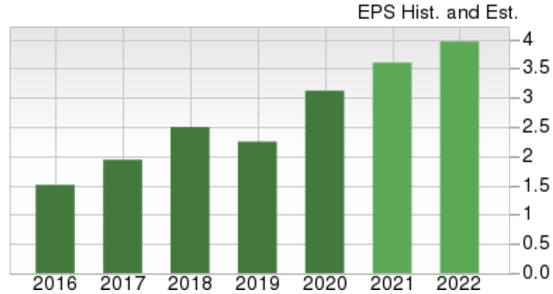
Overview

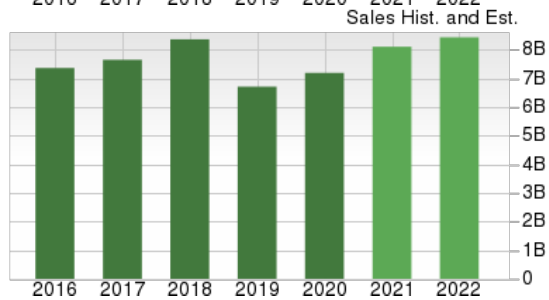
Headquartered in Taylor, MI, Masco Corporation manufactures, sells and installs home improvement and building products. Masco operates through the following two business segments:

Plumbing Products (accounting for 63% of 2020 net sales): The segment manufactures and markets an array of faucets, bathing and showering devices, valves, bathtubs, spas and toilets. This segment provides its products under the Delta, Brizo, Peerless, Hansgrohe, Axor, Ginger, Newport Brass, Brasstech, Waltec, Bristan, Heritage, Mirolin, Ha Ppe, Hot Spring, Caldera, Freeflow Spas, Fantasy Spas, Endless Pools, Brasscraft, Plumb Shop, Cobra, Cobra Pro, And Master Plumber brands.

Decorative Architectural Products (37%): The segment manufactures architectural coatings, including paints, primers, specialty paint products, stains and waterproofing products. These products are sold in the U.S., Canada, China, Mexico and South America. This segment provides its products under the Behr, Kilz, Liberty, Brainerd, Franklin Brass, Kichler, And A Lan brands.

On Nov 14, 2019, Masco signed a definitive agreement with ACProducts, Inc. to sell Masco Cabinetry LLC ("Cabinetry") for approximately $1 billion. On Feb 18, 2020, the company announced the completion of the deal for $850 million in cash at closing and preferred stock of $150 million.





As of Dec 31, 2020, the company had cash and cash investments of $1.3 million, in line with the third quarter-end level. At fourth quarter-end, long-term debt was $2.79 billion, unchanged from third-quarter 2020. The company ended the fourth quarter with approximately $2.3 billion of liquidity, which includes full availability of the $1-billion revolver.

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

Leading brand portfolio, enough liquidity, product launches and inorganic moves bode well

▲ **Leading Brand Portfolio & Improving Housing Market**: Masco operates through various divisions with a large number of products. It holds one of the largest shares in the faucets market. Its popular brands include Behr paint, Delta and Hansgrohe faucets, bath and shower fixtures, Kichler decorative and outdoor lighting, and Hot Spring spas. The Behr brand is the number one brand in the do-it-yourself or DIY market for architectural coatings. DIY paint alone witnessed more than 20% year-over-year growth in 2020. The company has been seeing strong demand for all its market leading brands.

Meanwhile, Robust U.S. housing market fundamentals and repair & remodeling activities have been benefiting Masco. Housing markets have been showing resilience of late, given Fed's dovish stance, low borrowing costs and lack of available supply. With the opening of the economy, demand for housing and building material products has been improving given the increasing trend of consumers to invest more in homes amid the pandemic. Apart from the remarkable recovery in single-family housing construction, repair/remodel activity also has been robust, supported by do-it-yourself and professional activity.

▲ **Strong Balance Sheet & Enough Liquidity**: Masco's balance sheet remains strong, with net debt to EBITDA of 1.3X. It ended first-quarter 2021 with approximately $1.8 billion of balance sheet liquidity, which includes full availability of the $1-billion revolver.

The company's cash & cash investments of $838 million at first quarter 2021-end grew from $767 million at first quarter 2020-end but was lower than $1,326 million recorded at 2020-end. Masco looks quite well placed from the liquidity point of view.

During the fourth quarter of 2020, the company raised its targeted dividend payout ratio from 20% to 30%, reflecting business model strength and cash-generation abilities. The company expects to utilize $800 million for share repurchases or acquisitions in 2021.

▲ **Acquisitions & Divestitures to Accelerate Growth**: Masco continues to expand its portfolio with acquisitions. In first-quarter 2021, Masco acquired a 75.1% equity interest in Easy Sanitary Solutions B.V. ("ESS") for approximately $58 million. ESS is a manufacturer of shower channel drains, and offers a wide range of products for barrier-free showering and bathroom wall niches. Included in the Plumbing Products segment, ESS mainly focuses on innovation and design. The buyout will expand the company's presence in the sanitary solutions business.

During the fourth quarter 2020, Masco executed few bolt-on acquisitions, which it expects to contribute approximately 3% top line growth in 2021. The largest was the acquisition of Kraus, an online plumbing fixture company focused on modern, high-quality sinks faucets and related products. Kraus will operate as an affiliate of Delta Faucet Company and this brand will complement Masco's online capabilities in the fast growing e-commerce channel. Also, within the Decorative Architectural segment, the company acquired Work Tools international, a leading manufacturer of high-quality paint tools and accessories, including brushes rollers, and mini rollers, for both DIY and professional painters under the WHIZZ, and Elder & Jenks brand names. Notably, its three recent buyouts helped it generate 4% additional sales growth for first-quarter 2021.

In the first quarter of 2020, Masco acquired entire share capital of SmarTap A.Y Ltd. ("SmarTap"), a developer of a smart bathing system that monitors and controls the temperature and flow of water. SmarTap is included in the Plumbing Products segment and provides an adaptable solution for a wide range of products as it is compatible with all showerheads, hand showers, spouts and shower jets.

Moreover, Masco regularly divests its less profitable and underperforming businesses to focus on its core areas to accelerate growth and improve shareholder value. Masco completed the sale of its Cabinetry business unit in the first quarter of 2020, in line with its portfolio transformation strategy that it announced a year ago. Notably, in March 2019, Masco announced that it was undertaking "strategic alternatives" for cabinetry and window businesses.

▲ **Cost-Saving Initiatives**: Masco's cost-saving initiatives include business consolidations, system implementations, plant closures, branch closures, improvement in the global supply chain and headcount reductions. These initiatives target company-wide annual savings through reduction of corporate expense and simplification of Masco's organizational structure. Masco remains well positioned to capitalize on the robust demand to drive strong growth and margin expansion in the near future. Certain pandemic-related cost containment initiatives have resulted in a year-over-year contraction in variable costs, as a percentage of sales, in 2020. The company also expects to take pricing actions to mitigate the impact of raw material inflation.

In order to mitigate tariff-related woes, Masco continues to work with suppliers and internal teams on cost-reduction opportunities and has started moving limited production out of China as a longer-term solution.

Reasons To Sell:

▼ **Cost Pressures**: Masco purchases several commodities like brass, resins, titanium dioxide, and zinc to manufacture products. Fluctuations in the availability and prices of these commodities might increase the cost of production. Any trade dispute between the United States and China may result in increased tariffs, which will result in a rise in the cost of certain materials. Any discontinuity of these materials may significantly increase costs. Although the company has been working to recover higher commodity costs, the current inflation pressure, mainly in plumbing and painting costs, remains a concern. Rising energy costs could also increase production and transportation costs.

Uncertainty in the economy and tariff-related headwinds are pressing concerns for the future.

Apart from raw material costs, the company bears expenses related to new product launches. If Masco is unable to offset these costs through price increases or supply chain initiatives then that may adversely affect profits.

▼ **Federal Government Actions**: As the Masco's business prospects are highly correlated with U.S. housing market conditions and repair and remodeling activity, any slowdown in the U.S. housing market may prove detrimental. The housing industry is cyclical and is affected by consumer confidence levels, prevailing economic conditions and interest rates. The federal government's actions related to economic stimulus, taxation and borrowing limits could affect consumer confidence and spending levels, which in turn could hurt both the economy and the housing market.

Last Earnings Report

Masco Q1 Earnings & Sales Top Estimates

Quarter Ending	03/2021
Report Date	Apr 28, 2021
Sales Surprise	7.81%
EPS Surprise	34.85%
Quarterly EPS	0.89
Annual EPS (TTM)	3.52

Masco Corporation reported impressive results for first-quarter 2021. Both earnings and revenues surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate as well as improved year over year. Strong Decorative Architectural Products and North American Plumbing segments helped it deliver better-than-expected results.

"Our markets remain strong, and we continue to demonstrate our ability to execute extremely well in this dynamic environment. We have taken actions and developed further plans to offset the raw material and logistics inflation that we are experiencing. While we anticipate these challenges will continue for the next few quarters, we believe we are well prepared and will continue to adjust to deliver value for our customers and our shareholders." said Masco President and CEO, Keith Allman.

Inside the Headlines

Masco reported adjusted earnings of 89 cents per share, which topped the consensus mark of 66 cents by 34.9%. Its bottom line grew an impressive 89.3% from year-ago figure of 46 cents per share.

Net sales of $1,970 million topped the consensus estimate of $1,827.3 million by 7.8%. On a year-over-year basis, the top line increased 24.6%. Notably, net sales jumped 22% year over year in local currency. In local currency, sales in the North American region increased 21% from prior-year figure and 27% internationally.

Segmental Analysis

Plumbing Products: Sales in the segment rose 31% year over year to $1,249 million. In local currency, the segment's sales (excluding acquisitions) increased 22% year over year. Adjusted operating margin expanded 370 basis points (bps) year over year to 20.3%. Adjusted EBITDA increased 55.9% year over year to $279 million.

Decorative Architectural Products: The segment reported sales of $721 million, up 15% from the prior-year period. Adjusted operating margin expanded 440 bps to 19.7%. Adjusted EBITDA also improved 42.1% from the prior-year period to $152 million.

Margins Performance

Adjusted gross margin came in at 35.6%, which expanded 80 bps from the prior year. Selling, general and administrative expenses — as a percentage of net sales — were down 340 bps from the year-ago figure.

Adjusted operating margin expanded 420 bps on a year-over-year basis to 18.6%. Adjusted EBITDA also increased 56.7% year over year to $409 million.

Financials

At quarter-end, the company had cash and cash investments of $838 million compared with $1,326 million recorded at 2020-end. Long-term debt was $2.96 billion, up from $2.79 billion at 2020-end. Net cash for operating activities was $89 million for the first three months of 2021 compared with $92 million in the comparable year-ago period.

It repurchased 5.5 million shares for approximately $303 million during the quarter.

Lifted 2021 Projections

The company expects earnings for 2021 in the range of $1.52-$1.72 per share, as reported. Adjusted earnings are now projected within $3.50-$3.70 per share, up from prior expectation of $3.25-$3.45. In 2020, adjusted earnings were $3.12 per share.

Valuation

Masco shares are up 19.6% in the year-to-date period and 59.9% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Construction sector are up 19% and 25.9% in the year-to-date, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 87.5% and 95.8%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 12.2% in the year-to-date and 51% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 17.59X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 17.65X for the Zacks sub-industry, 17.18X for the Zacks sector and 22.02X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 22.61X and as low as 9.74X, with a 5-year median of 17.32X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our $69 price target reflects 18.52X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for MAS.

Valuation Multiples - MAS

		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	17.59	17.65	17.18	22.02
	5-Year High	22.61	19.29	19.03	23.83
	5-Year Low	9.74	7.1	10.82	15.3
	5-Year Median	17.32	13.69	16.2	18.01
P/S F12M	Current	2.03	1.66	2.46	4.71
	5-Year High	2.25	3.58	2.46	4.71
	5-Year Low	0.95	0.76	1.23	3.21
	5-Year Median	1.49	1.06	1.66	3.71
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	11.35	23.56	26.67	16.35
	5-Year High	13.35	30.5	26.67	17.7
	5-Year Low	7.62	12.56	11.61	9.61
	5-Year Median	10.93	22.79	17.58	13.38

As of 05/05/2021 *Source: Zacks Investment Research*

Industry Analysis **Zacks Industry Rank:** Top 26% (65 out of 254)

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Acuity Brands Inc **(AYI)**	Outperform	2
Fortune Brands Home & Security, Inc. **(FBHS)**	Outperform	2
LouisianaPacific Corporation **(LPX)**	Outperform	1
Owens Corning Inc **(OC)**	Outperform	1
Patrick Industries, Inc. **(PATK)**	Outperform	1
Armstrong World Industries, Inc. **(AWI)**	Neutral	3
Gibraltar Industries, Inc. **(ROCK)**	Neutral	3
Simpson Manufacturing Company, Inc. **(SSD)**	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Building Products - Miscellaneous

Industry Peers

	MAS	X Industry	S&P 500	AWI	LPX	OC
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Outperform
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	3	1	1
VGM Score	C	-	-	D	A	B
Market Cap	16.63 B	2.73 B	30.33 B	5.00 B	7.43 B	10.63 B
# of Analysts	7	2.5	12	4	4	6
Dividend Yield	0.85%	0.00%	1.27%	0.80%	0.92%	1.02%
Value Score	C	-	-	D	B	B
Cash/Price	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.06
EV/EBITDA	13.29	12.85	17.38	-300.28	9.65	9.72
PEG F1	1.96	2.07	2.28	2.00	NA	0.92
P/B	76.63	2.68	4.11	10.57	5.29	2.68
P/CF	17.88	15.79	17.76	19.31	12.86	5.39
P/E F1	18.20	24.25	22.08	26.90	7.94	12.90
P/S TTM	2.19	2.17	3.49	5.32	2.31	1.44
Earnings Yield	5.49%	4.06%	4.47%	3.71%	12.59%	7.75%
Debt/Equity	13.62	0.35	0.66	1.48	0.25	0.79
Cash Flow ($/share)	3.66	2.00	6.78	5.41	5.42	18.90
Growth Score	C	-	-	C	B	C
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	18.48%	17.97%	9.70%	18.27%	13.14%	7.95%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	15.38%	21.90%	18.79%	7.02%	103.77%	51.44%
Current Cash Flow Growth	17.24%	6.12%	0.61%	-16.93%	252.98%	113.79%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	11.44%	10.06%	7.37%	1.26%	60.37%	27.64%
Current Ratio	1.83	2.00	1.39	2.03	3.41	1.87
Debt/Capital	93.21%	32.21%	41.55%	59.74%	20.18%	44.22%
Net Margin	10.40%	5.70%	11.70%	17.28%	24.41%	10.10%
Return on Equity	361.42%	11.66%	15.89%	37.17%	63.93%	17.38%
Sales/Assets	1.36	0.90	0.51	0.57	1.57	0.78
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	12.68%	8.86%	8.55%	12.50%	15.53%	12.75%
Momentum Score	C	-	-	B	A	B
Daily Price Change	-0.03%	0.00%	0.18%	-1.74%	-3.25%	0.89%
1-Week Price Change	-1.34%	-0.41%	0.07%	4.07%	-2.54%	1.00%
4-Week Price Change	7.23%	5.10%	3.65%	9.77%	16.13%	5.14%
12-Week Price Change	18.52%	12.36%	11.89%	27.24%	65.50%	19.85%
52-Week Price Change	58.68%	70.04%	56.64%	42.68%	243.31%	147.57%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,651,657	207,992	1,795,059	290,462	2,103,260	794,344
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.85%	6.53%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	8.11%	0.00%	0.97%	-1.15%	20.85%	20.34%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	12.99%	4.42%	2.39%	-1.02%	91.86%	40.52%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	3.08%	0.00%	0.72%	9.49%	35.45%	24.30%

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	C
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	C
VGM Score	C

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

Disclosures

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ZIR uses the following rating system for the securities it covers. **Outperform-** ZIR expects that the subject company will outperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Neutral-** ZIR expects that the company will perform in line with the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months. **Underperform-** ZIR expects the company will underperform the broader U.S. equities markets over the next six to twelve months.

Additional Disclosure

This material represents an assessment of the market and economic environment at a specific point in time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events, or a guarantee of future results. Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Any statements that refer to expectations, projections or characterizations of future events or circumstances, including any underlying assumptions, are forwardlooking statements. Actual results, performance, or achievements may differ materially from those expressed or implied.

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.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company’s expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company’s current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company’s current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every $1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company’s enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as a the per share market value of a company divided by the value of its tangible assets (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks – intangible assets) per share. Tangible book value is the same thing as book value except it excludes the value of intangible assets to get a step closer to the baseline value of the company.

P/CF Ratio: The price-to-cash flow ratio measures a company's per share market price relative to its trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow per share. This metric is used to determine whether a company is undervalued or overvalued relative to another stock, industry or sector. And like the P/E ratio, a lower number is typically considered better from the value perspective.

One of the reasons why P/CF ratio is often preferred over P/E ratio is the fact that operating cash flow adds back non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization to net income. This feature helps valuing stocks that have positive cash flow but are not profitable because of large noncash charges.

P/FCF Ratio: The price-to-free cash flow ratio is an extension of P/CF ratio, which uses trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow per share instead of operating cash flow per share. This metric is considered a more exact measure than P/CF ratio, as free cash flow subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding activities that generate additional revenues.

Earnings Yield: The earnings yield is calculated as current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by the company's current share price. The ratio, which is the inverse of the P/E ratio, measures the anticipated yield (or return) from earnings for each dollar invested in a stock today.

For example, earnings yield for a stock, which is trading at $35 and expected to earn $3 per share in the current fiscal year (F1), would be 0.0857 (3/35 = 0.0857) or 8.57%. In other words, for $1 invested in the stock today, the yield from earnings is anticipated to be 8.57 cents.

Investors most commonly compare the earnings yield of a stock to that of a broad market index (such as the S&P 500) and prevailing interest rates, such as the current 10-year Treasury yield. Since bonds and stocks compete for investors' dollars, stock investors typically demand a higher yield for the extra risk they assume compared to investors of U.S. Treasury-backed securities that offer virtually risk-free returns. This additional return is referred to as the risk premium.

Debt/Equity Ratio: The debt-to-equity ratio is calculated as a company's total liabilities divided by its shareholder equity. This metric is used to gauge a company's financial leverage. In other words, it is a measure of the degree to which a company is financing its operations through debt versus its own funds. The higher the ratio, the higher the risk for shareholders.

However, this ratio is difficult to compare across industry groups where ideal amounts of debt vary. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-equity ratio should be compared with other companies in the same industry.

Cash Flow ($/share): Cash flow per share is calculated as operating cash flow (after-tax earnings + depreciation + other non-cash charges) divided by common shares outstanding. It is used by many investors as a measure of a company's financial strength. Since cash flow per share takes into consideration a company's ability to generate cash by adding back non-cash expenses, it is regarded by some as a more accurate measure of a company's financial situation than earnings per share, which could be artificially deflated.

Current Ratio: The current ratio or liquidity ratio is a company's current assets divided by its current liabilities. It measures a company's ability to pay short-term obligations. A current ratio that is in line with the industry average or slightly higher is generally considered acceptable. A current ratio that is lower than the industry average would indicate a higher risk of distress or default. A higher number is usually better. However, a very high current ratio compared to the industry average could be an indication of inefficient use of assets by management.

Debt/Capital Ratio: Debt-to-capital ratio is a company's total debt (interest-bearing debt + both short- and long-term liabilities) divided its total capital (interest-bearing debt + shareholders' equity). It is a measure of a company's financial leverage. All else being equal, the higher the debt-to-capital ratio, the riskier the stock.

However, this ratio can vary widely from industry to industry, the ideal amount of required debt being different. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-capital ratio should be compared with the same for its industry.

Net Margin: Net margin is calculated as net income divided by sales. It shows how much of each dollar in sales generated by a company translates into profit. For example, if a company's net margin is 15%, its net income is 15 cents for every $1 of sales it makes.

A change in margin can reflect either a change in business conditions, or a company's cost controls, or both. If a company's expenses are growing faster than sales, its net margin will decline. However, different net margin rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare net margin rates of companies in the same industry group.

Return on Equity: Return on equity (ROE) is calculated as trailing-12-month net income divided by trailing-12-month average shareholder equity (including reinvested earnings). This metric is considered a measure of how effectively management is using a company's assets to generate profits. For example, if a company's ROE is 10%, it creates 10 cents profits for every $1 shareholder equity, which is basically the company's assets minus debt. A company's ROE deemed good or bad depends on what's normal for its peers or industry group.

Sales/Assets Ratio: The sales-to-assets ratio or asset utilization ratio or asset turnover ratio is calculated as a company's annual sales divided by average assets (average of assets at the beginning of the year and at the year's end). This metric helps investors understand how effectively a company is using its assets to generate sales. For example, a sales-to-assets ratio of 2.5 indicates that the company generated $2.50 in sales for every $1 of assets on its books.

The higher the sales-to-assets ratio, the better the company is performing. However, similar to many other ratios, the asset turnover ratio tends to be higher for companies in certain industries/sectors than in others. So, a company's sales-to-assets ratio should be compared with the same for its industry/sector.

Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years): This is the average annual (trailing-12-month) EPS growth rate over the last 3-5 years. This metric helps investors see how a company's EPS has grown from a long-term perspective.

Note: There are many factors that can influence short-term numbers — a recession will reduce this number, while a recovery will inflate it. The longterm perspective helps smooth out short-term events.

Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0): This is the estimated EPS growth rate for the current financial year. It is calculated as the consensus estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported EPS for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Current Cash Flow Growth: It measures the latest year-over-year change in operating cash flow. Cash flow growth tells an investor how quickly a company is generating inflows of cash from operations. A positive change in the cash flow is desired and shows that more 'cash' is coming in than going out.

Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years): This is the annualized change in cash flow over the last 3-5 years. The change in a longer period helps put the current reading into proper perspective. By looking at the rate, rather than the actual dollar value, the comparison across the industry and peers becomes easier.

Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0): This metric looks at the estimated sales growth for the current year. It is calculated as sales estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported sales for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Like EPS growth, a higher rate is better for sales growth. A look at a company's projected sales growth instantly tells you what the outlook is for their products and services. However, different sales growth rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare sales growth rates of companies in the same industry group.

EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past week. The change in a company's consensus EPS estimate (or earnings estimate revision) has proven to be strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares. It is an integral part of the Zacks Rank.

If a stock's consensus EPS estimate is $1.10 now versus $1.00 a week ago, that will be reflected as a 10% upward revision. If, on the other hand, it went from $1.00 to 90 cents, that would be a 10% downward revision.

EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past four weeks.

A stock's earnings estimate revision in a 1-week period is important. But it's more meaningful to look at the longer-term revision. And, of course, the 4-week change helps put the 1-week change into proper perspective.

EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past 12 weeks.

This metric essentially shows how the consensus EPS estimate has changed over a period longer than 1 week or 4 weeks.

EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal quarter over the past four weeks.

While the revision in consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year is strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares, the estimate revision for the current fiscal quarter is an important metric as well, especially over the short term, and particularly as a stock approaches its earnings date. If a stock's Q1 EPS estimate decreases ahead of its earnings release, it's usually a negative sign, whereas an increase is a positive sign.