Jan 08, 2021

Methanex Corporation (MEOH)

$48.00 (As of 01/07/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **$50.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:** (Since: 02/04/20) Prior Recommendation: Underperform	**Neutral**
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)	**2-Buy**
	Zacks Style Scores:	VGM:C
	Value: B | Growth: F | Momentum: A	

Summary

Earnings estimates for Methanex for the fourth quarter of 2020 have been going up over the past month. The company's Geismar 3 plant is expected to deliver strong returns on significant capital and operating cost advantages. Further, Methanex remains committed to strengthen its balance sheet. The company's move to defer capital expenditure on its Geismar 3 project is anticipated to bolster its balance sheet. It should also gain from a recovery in methanol demand. The company has also outperformed the industry it belongs to over the past year. However, Methanex is exposed to a challenging methanol pricing environment. Lower methanol prices are expected to remain a headwind for the company. Moreover, production outages are affecting the company's operations. Methanex's high debt levels is another concern.

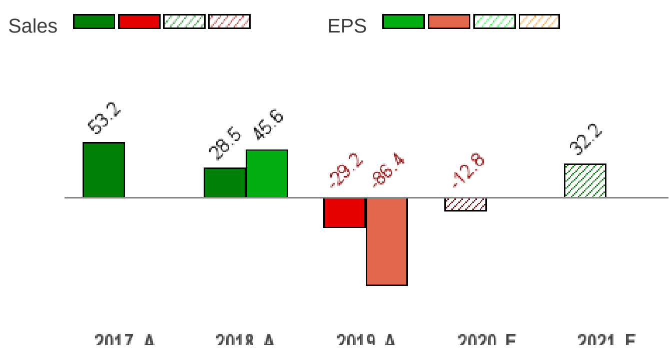
Price, Consensus & Surprise

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	**$49.27 - $9.10**
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	**275,575**
Market Cap	**$3.7 B**
Year-To-Date Price Change	**4.2%**
Beta	**2.20**
Dividend / Dividend Yield	**$0.15 / 0.3%**
Industry	**Chemical - Diversified**
Zacks Industry Rank	**Top 33% (84 out of 253)**
Last EPS Surprise	**-9.6%**
Last Sales Surprise	**31.5%**
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	**356.4%**
Expected Report Date	**02/03/2021**
Earnings ESP	**35.3%**
P/E TTM	**NA**
P/E F1	**21.2**
PEG F1	**1.4**
P/S TTM	**1.5**

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates (millions of $)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	950 E	764 E	727 E	801 E	3,210 E
2020	745 A	512 A	581 A	693 E	2,429 E
2019	733 A	734 A	650 A	659 A	2,784 A

EPS Estimates

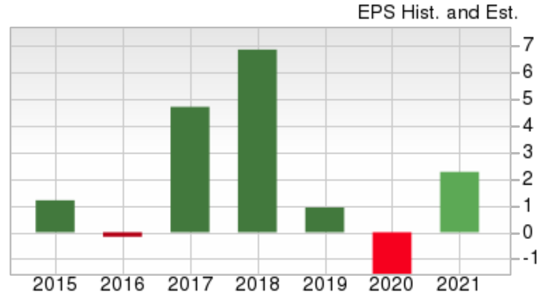
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	$1.06 E	$0.18 E	$0.13 E	$0.90 E	$2.27 E
2020	$0.10 A	-$0.84 A	-$1.03 A	$0.20 E	-$1.56 E
2019	$0.73 A	$0.34 A	-$0.27 A	$0.13 A	$0.93 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

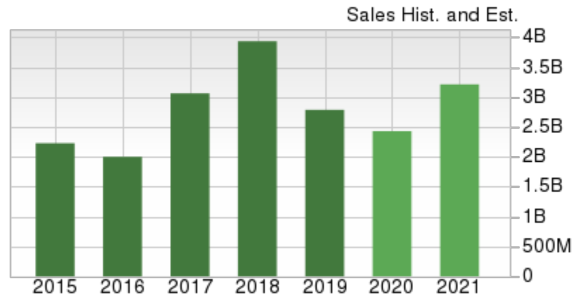
The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 01/07/2021. The reports text is as of 01/08/2021.

Overview

Headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, Methanex Corporation is the world's largest supplier of methanol to North America, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America. Around two-thirds of all methanol demand is used to produce traditional chemical derivatives including formaldehyde, acetic acid and a variety of other chemicals that form the basis of a large number of chemical derivatives for which demand is influenced by levels of global economic activity. The remaining one-third of methanol demand comes from energy related applications. Methanol is also used to produce methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE), a gasoline component, and an emerging application is for methanol demand into olefins.



Methanex generated $2,784 million in revenues in 2019. Its sales volume was 11.1 million tons of methanol for 2019.



Methanex's total annual production capacity, including its equity interests in jointly owned plants, is 7.6 million tons. Methanex purchases methanol from others under contract and on the spot market to meet customer requirements. The company sells methanol through a global marketing and distribution system.

Methanex currently operates production sites in New Zealand, the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Egypt, Canada and Chile. It has marketing rights for 100% of the production from the jointly-owned plants in Trinidad and Egypt that provides it with an additional 1.3 million tons of methanol offtake supply annually when the plants are operating at full capacity.

Apart from the methanol made at its production sites, the company also purchases methanol manufactured by others under methanol offtake contracts and on the spot market. This gives it the flexibility in managing supply chain while continuing to address customer needs.

Methanex completed the restart of its Chile IV plant in October 2018. The plant had been idle since 2007. In August 2018, Methanex signed natural gas supply agreements for its Chile operations. Notably, the gas agreements will allow the company for a two-plant operation in Chile during summer months in the southern hemisphere and up to a maximum of 75% of a two-plant operation annually till mid-2020. Methanex expects to secure sufficient gas supply without seasonal restrictions to continue its two-plant operation.

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

Methanex's Geismar 3 plant is expected to deliver strong returns. The company is also committed to strenghen its balance sheet. It should also gain from a recovery in methanol demand.

- Methanex has outperformed the industry it belongs to in the past year. The company's shares rose 27% in this period against the industry's rise of 22.5%. Methanex has completed the restart of its Chile IV plant and produced first methanol from the 0.8-million-ton plant that has been idle since 2007. The Argentine Government has also granted permits for export of natural gas from Argentina to Chile. Methanex has started receiving natural gas from Argentina. These achievements represent a significant step towards a two-plant operation in Chile. The startup of Chile IV plant will help to fulfill growing methanol demand. Moreover, Methanex produced 480,000 tons in Geismar in the fourth quarter of 2019. It plans to complete the additional work required at the Geismar 2 plant. The company's board of directors has also reached a unanimous final investment decision for a 1.8 million tons methanol plant, the Geismar 3 project, which will be located adjacent to the Geismar 1 and Geismar 2 facilities. The company anticipates its Geismar 3 plant to deliver strong returns on significant capital and operating cost advantages. Notably, Geismar 3 project is expected to strengthen global leadership position and significantly enhance asset portfolio with additional low-cost production.

- The company is seeing a recovery in demand for methanol after substantial declines through the first half of 2020 on account of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and a low oil price environment. Global methanol demand rose 9% sequentially in the third quarter of 2020 on the back of a recovery in economic activities. Moreover, methanol demand into traditional chemical applications rose as manufacturing activities rebounded, especially in the automotive and construction markets. Energy-related applications' demand also recovered on account of improving ground transportation and fuel demand. The recovery in methanol demand is likely to continue moving ahead.

- In an effort to boost its balance sheet and maintain liquidity, Methanex has deferred roughly $500 million in capital expenditure on its Geismar 3 project for up to 18 months due to substantial uncertainty, arising from the coronavirus pandemic. The company has also cut its maintenance capital spending for 2020 by $30 million. These moves are expected to help the company to generate $100 million in annualized cash savings. The company remains focused on enhancing its financial flexibility and preserving cash amid the prevailing environment and continues to assess all capital and operating spending.

Reasons To Sell:

Methanex is still exposed to a challenging methanol pricing environment. Production outages are also affecting its operations. High debt level is another concern.

- Methanex is witnessing weakness in the methanol pricing. Trade tensions, decline in oil prices along with fears around global economic growth led to volatility in methanol pricing in 2019. Methanol prices fell roughly 27% year over year in 2019. Also, in a declining price environment the company's margins tend to be lower compared with a stable price environment. Lower methanol prices (down around 20% year over year) hurt the company's bottom line in third-quarter 2020. Pricing weakness on a year-over-year basis is likely to continue over the near term.

- Production outages are also affecting the company's operations. There have been various unplanned outages in Iran, Southeast Asia and the United States in fourth-quarter 2019. The Trinidad outage and Geismar 2 facility outage resulted in a decline in production in fourth-quarter 2019. Overall production results in first-quarter 2020 was also lower sequentially mainly on outages in New Zealand, Chile and Egypt. Notably, the company idled its Titan plant in Trinidad and Chile IV plant in respond to lower methanol demand, which also led to a decrease in production volumes in second-quarter 2020. The company also executed turnaround activities at its Medicine Hat and Atlas plants in third-quarter 2020, hurting its production. The Titan facility remains idled due to uncertainties surrounding gas contract as well as methanol demand and supply. This may impact production in Trinidad in the fourth quarter of 2020. Methanex expects planned maintenance capital expenses of roughly $120 million for 2020.

- The company's high debt level is concerning. At the end of the third quarter of 2020, its long-term debt was $2,326 million, up from $2,089 million in the sequentially prior quarter. Moreover, its total debt-to-total capital stood at 63.5% as of Sep 30, 2020, higher than 57.4% as of Jun 30, 2020. As such, the company appears to have a higher default risk.

Last Earnings Report

Methanex's Q3 Earnings Miss Estimates, Revenues Beat

Quarter Ending	09/2020
Report Date	Oct 28, 2020
Sales Surprise	31.45%
EPS Surprise	-9.57%
Quarterly EPS	-1.03
Annual EPS (TTM)	-1.64

Methanex logged a loss (attributable to shareholders) of $88 million or $1.15 per share in the third quarter of 2020, wider than a loss of $10 million or 21 cents per share in the year-ago quarter.

Adjusted loss per share (barring one-time items) in the reported quarter was $1.03, which was wider than the Zacks Consensus Estimate of a loss of 94 cents.

Revenues declined 24% year over year to $581 million in the quarter. The results were impacted by lower year-over-year methanol prices. However, it surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of $442 million. The company saw improved global demand for methanol on a sequential comparison basis in the third quarter on the back of a rebound in activities.

Adjusted EBITDA tumbled roughly 56% year over year to $40 million.

Operational Highlights

Production in the quarter totaled 1,372,000 tons, down around 25% year over year. Total sales volume was 2,678,000 tons, down roughly 5% year over year.

Average realized price for methanol was $217 per ton in the quarter, down roughly 20% from $272 in the prior-year quarter.

Financials

For the reported quarter, cash flow from operating activities was $35 million, down around 51% year over year. The company had cash and cash equivalents of $1,180.2 million at the end of the quarter, up roughly 38% year over year. Long-term debt was $2,325.7 million, up around 34% year over year.

Outlook

Methanex said that methanol prices have increased leading into the fourth quarter, aided by a strong recovery in methanol demand and reduced industry supply resulting in lower global inventory levels. The company is also in the process of restarting its Chile IV plant on improved global demand for methanol.

Methanex also noted that the path and the pace for global economic recovery and methanol demand remains uncertain given the impacts of both the coronavirus pandemic and challenging commodity prices. It remains focused on preserving liquidity and improving financial flexibility.

Recent News

Methanex's Unit Adds Eight Methanol Dual-Fuel Vessels

Methanex's fully-owned subsidiary, Waterfront Shipping Company Ltd., on **Dec 1, 2020** announced the addition of eight new methanol dual-fuel vessels to its fleet. The company frequently replaces older vessels with newer more efficient ones as part of its fleet renewal program, highlighting its commitment to responsible, safe and reliable transport of cargo.

Further, these vessels are in addition to Waterfront Shipping's existing fleet of 11 methanol-fueled ships that are recognized by the marine industry as clean-burning methanol or lower emission fuel. These vessels have been established as viable marine fuel solution, having surpassed more than 90,000 combined operating hours. Per the company, they are also in compliance with the most stringent emissions regulations. Notably, methanol in the form of marine fuel lowers CO2 emissions by up to 15% compared with traditional marine fuels.

Moreover, the new eight 49,999 deadweight ton vessels will be built in Hyundai Mipo Dockyard, South Korea. They will be delivered to Waterfront Shipping between 2021 and 2023. The vessels are designed with the MAN second-generation B&W ME-LGIM two-stroke dual-fuel engines. The dual-fuel engine provides flexibility by enabling them to operate on methanol or traditional marine fuels. Additionally, methanol can be produced from renewable sources. It is the most widely-traded chemicals in the world and it is readily available at around 90% of the top 100 ports worldwide.

Valuation

Methanex's shares are up 27% over the trailing 12-month period. Over the past year, the Zacks Chemical - Diversified industry and Zacks Basic Materials sector are up 22.5% and 30.7%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 17.1% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 16.28X trailing 12-month enterprise value-to EBITDA (EV/EBITDA) ratio, which compares to 10.47X for the Zacks sub-industry, 11.68X for the Zacks sector and 16.98X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 28.26X and as low as 4.26X, with a 5-year median of 8.72X.

Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our $50 price target reflects 2.54X tangible book value.

The table below shows summary valuation data for MEOH:

Valuation Multiples - MEOH

		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	16.28	10.47	11.68	16.98
	5-Year High	28.26	13.12	18.21	17.02
	5-Year Low	4.26	5.19	6.45	9.56
	5-Year Median	8.72	7.63	9.69	13.21
P/B TTM	Current	2.44	2.43	3.44	6.44
	5-Year High	3.68	2.82	3.44	6.46
	5-Year Low	0.45	0.87	1.22	3.74
	5-Year Median	2.01	1.75	2.23	4.94
P/S TTM	Current	1.4	1.73	3.35	4.81
	5-Year High	2.36	3.9	3.35	4.82
	5-Year Low	0.22	0.71	1.4	2.81
	5-Year Median	1.34	1.41	2.61	3.87

As of 01/07/2021 *Source: Zacks Investment Research*

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

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Cabot Corporation **(CBT)**	Outperform	1
Albemarle Corporation **(ALB)**	Neutral	3
Koppers Holdings Inc. **(KOP)**	Neutral	3
Kronos Worldwide Inc **(KRO)**	Neutral	3
Lithium Americas Corp. **(LAC)**	Neutral	3
Stepan Company **(SCL)**	Neutral	3
TOKUYAMA CORP **(TKYMY)**	Neutral	3
Tronox Limited **(TROX)**	Neutral	2

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Chemical - Diversified

				Industry Peers		
	MEOH	X Industry	S&P 500	ALB	CBT	TKYMY
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Outperform	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	2	-	-	3	1	3
VGM Score	C	-	-	F	B	A
Market Cap	3.66 B	3.66 B	27.00 B	19.59 B	2.73 B	1.51 B
# of Analysts	3	3	13	7	4	1
Dividend Yield	0.31%	1.20%	1.43%	0.84%	2.90%	2.23%
Value Score	B	-	-	D	B	A
Cash/Price	0.34	0.11	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.48
EV/EBITDA	8.15	11.47	14.94	26.17	20.63	3.76
PEG F1	1.41	3.74	2.64	3.87	NA	NA
P/B	2.44	2.37	3.75	4.52	3.34	0.84
P/CF	8.82	9.54	14.29	22.79	9.83	4.00
P/E F1	21.15	19.56	20.74	45.95	14.34	7.44
P/S TTM	1.46	1.16	2.97	6.04	1.04	0.53
Earnings Yield	4.73%	4.87%	4.71%	2.17%	6.97%	13.44%
Debt/Equity	1.55	0.68	0.70	0.68	1.34	0.47
Cash Flow ($/share)	5.45	3.13	6.93	8.07	4.91	2.71
Growth Score	F	-	-	F	C	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	23.51%	4.75%	9.71%	8.19%	1.28%	NA
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	245.30%	19.79%	12.21%	1.52%	61.66%	-11.52%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-48.22%	-10.05%	5.22%	6.86%	-27.16%	-6.84%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	-6.33%	4.70%	8.33%	14.46%	-17.14%	NA
Current Ratio	1.91	1.97	1.38	1.38	1.85	2.28
Debt/Capital	60.77%	42.44%	41.97%	40.47%	57.34%	32.09%
Net Margin	-4.84%	4.05%	10.40%	11.77%	-9.10%	6.37%
Return on Equity	-7.82%	9.14%	15.20%	11.96%	11.67%	13.22%
Sales/Assets	0.45	0.69	0.50	0.32	0.87	0.81
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	32.17%	6.01%	5.91%	1.75%	7.27%	-7.71%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	C	D	A
Daily Price Change	1.91%	0.00%	0.85%	5.08%	0.19%	0.00%
1-Week Price Change	-1.03%	0.27%	1.16%	-1.42%	1.26%	1.13%
4-Week Price Change	7.45%	7.45%	3.64%	30.10%	15.53%	-5.97%
12-Week Price Change	71.25%	17.15%	13.45%	95.02%	17.87%	-7.42%
52-Week Price Change	25.92%	11.55%	8.02%	152.96%	5.86%	-18.35%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	275,575	97,439	1,694,173	1,435,013	303,991	28
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	53.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	356.38%	0.00%	0.08%	0.56%	2.28%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	1,346.81%	2.18%	2.45%	-3.06%	26.17%	0.00%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	172.65%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.48%	NA

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	B
Growth Score	F
Momentum Score	A
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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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.