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Feb 04, 2021

The Michaels Companies (MIK)

$15.25 (As of 02/03/21)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **$16.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months	**Zacks Recommendation:** (Since: 02/02/21) Prior Recommendation: Outperform	**Neutral**
Short Term: 1-3 Months	**Zacks Rank:** (1-5)	**4-Sell**
	Zacks Style Scores:	VGM:A
	Value: A | Growth: A | Momentum: A	

Summary

Although shares of Michaels have outperformed the industry in the past three months, higher SG&A expenses remain a concern. The company is witnessing higher SG&A expense due to compensation-based incentives and salary hikes related to several initiatives undertaken in the recent times to drive sales. Also, stiff competition remains a concern. However, the company's third-quarter fiscal 2020 earnings surpassed estimates. Results gained from expanded omni-channel capabilities, customized marketing strategy and Maker-centric branding. Strength in the core arts and crafts business also contributed to growth. Moreover, the initial fourth-quarter sales trend were encouraging, recording mid-single digits growth. Its e-commerce channel witnessed significant growth, backed by growth in capabilities like BOPIS, curbside pick-up and same-day delivery.

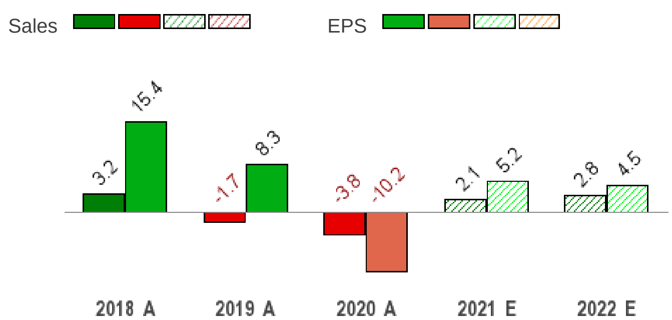
Price, Consensus & Surprise

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	**$17.90 - $1.00**
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	**5,618,535**
Market Cap	**$2.3 B**
Year-To-Date Price Change	**17.2%**
Beta	**3.23**
Dividend / Dividend Yield	**$0.00 / 0.0%**
Industry	**Retail - Miscellaneous**
Zacks Industry Rank	**Bottom 21% (199 out of 253)**
Last EPS Surprise	**45.8%**
Last Sales Surprise	**-0.9%**
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	**0.0%**
Expected Report Date	**03/16/2021**
Earnings ESP	**0.0%**
P/E TTM	**7.7**
P/E F1	**6.6**
PEG F1	**5.2**
P/S TTM	**0.4**

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Sales Estimates **(millions of $)**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	1,072 E	1,102 E	1,294 E	1,854 E	5,323 E
2021	800 A	1,148 A	1,406 A	1,816 E	5,178 E
2020	1,094 A	1,034 A	1,222 A	1,723 A	5,072 A

EPS Estimates

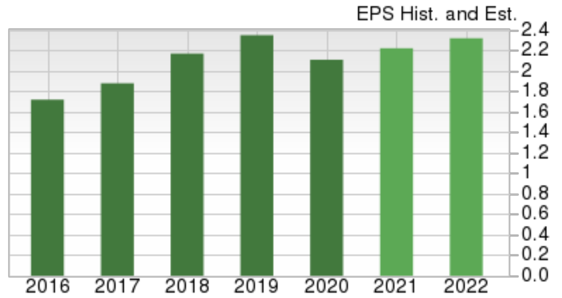
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	$0.32 E	$0.20 E	$0.56 E	$1.47 E	$2.32 E
2021	-$0.43 A	$0.30 A	$0.86 A	$1.46 E	$2.22 E
2020	$0.31 A	$0.19 A	$0.40 A	$1.26 A	$2.11 A

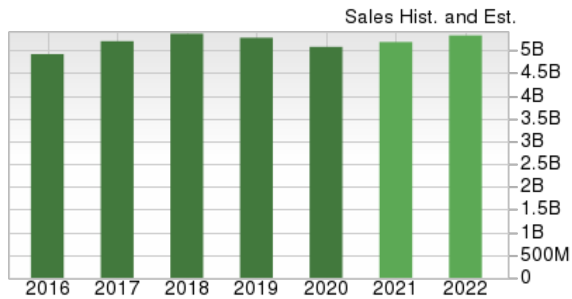
*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and sales estimates, is as of 02/03/2021. The report's text and the analyst-provided price target are as of 02/04/2021.

Overview

Based in Irving, TX, The Michaels Companies, Inc. is one of the leading arts and crafts specialty retailers in North America on the basis of store count. The company provides materials, project ideas and education for creative activities. It delivered $5,072 million in sales in fiscal 2019.





The company's stores offer stock-keeping units (SKUs) in arts, crafts, floral, framing, home decor and seasonal merchandise, and do-it-yourself home decorator. It produces exclusive private brands, which include Recollections, Studio Decor, Bead Landing, Creatology, Ashland, Celebrate It, ArtMinds, Artist's Loft, Craft Smart, Loops & Threads, Make Market, Imagin8, and Sticky Sticks, among others. Michaels' private brands contributed about 60% to net sales in fiscal 2019.

Its crafting classes, store events, store displays, mobile applications and online videos, offer an omni-channel shopping experience that can inspire creativity and build confidence in customers' artistic abilities.

Additionally, the company has partnerships with popular brands such as Crayola, Elmer's and Cricut. It also owns Artistree, a producer of top-quality custom and framing merchandise; and Darice which is a premier wholesale distributor in the craft, gift and decor industry.

As of Oct 31, 2020, Michaels operated 1,272 Michaels stores across 49 states and Canada. Further, the company serves through various digital platforms, namely, Michaels.com, Canada.michaels.com, ConsumerCrafts.com, Darice.com, AaronBrothers.com and the Michaels app.

In March 2018, Michaels decided to close all of its Aaron Brothers stores. In January 2019, it closed all 36 of Pat Catan's stores.

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

Michaels has been gaining from omni-channel capabilities like curbside pickup and same-day delivery. It is also progressing well its Maker strategy.

▲ **Solid Q3 Results**: Shares of Michaels have gained 80.8% in the past three months, outperforming the industry's growth of 12.7%. The company's bottom line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate in third-quarter fiscal 2020 results while sales lagged the same. However, both top and bottom lines improved year over year. Notably, comparable sales improved significantly during the quarter under review. Results gained from expanded omni-channel capabilities, customized marketing strategy and Maker-centric branding. Net sales grew 15.1% year over year driven by comparable store sales growth and sales gain from additional stores opened since the end of third-quarter fiscal 2019. Strength in the core arts and crafts business also contributed to quarterly growth. Initial fourth-quarter sales trend seems encouraging, with mid-single digits growth. We note that comparable store sales rose 16.3%, driven by robust demand in both stores and e-commerce.

The company's adjusted operating income surged 72% year over year, gaining from improved gross profit. Notably, gross margin expanded 530 basis points (bps) to 41.4%. Cumulatively, fiscal third-quarter adjusted earnings of 86 cents per share were up more than two-folds from 40 cents in the prior-year quarter.

▲ **Strategic Initiatives**: Michaels has embarked on a customer-centric, core 'Maker' strategy which aims at; strengthening the company's retail foundation, boosting omni-channel experience and repositioning the business. In this regard, it opened its first Maker store in McKinney, TX. The store offers personalized assortment, better layout, improved services and a host of omni-channel capabilities. Going ahead, the company plans to open more such stores in fiscal 2020. With regards to boosting the retail foundation, the company aims to provide the right products at the right prices. The company is on track with optimizing merchandise flow, thereby ensuring inventory availability. It is also working toward enhancing in-store shopping experience and customer engagement. Management also highlighted plans to transform its acquired AC Moore stores as Michaels stores in 2021. In August, the company revamped the Michaels rewards loyalty program, which has been designed to create long term engagement with program members as well as strengthen relationship across the Maker community. In recent developments, the company is reinventing its store formats with a new in-store layout, inspiration hubs and an innovative checkout design under its core Maker strategy. Per the plan, it transformed two of its existing retail locations in the North Texas suburbs of McKinney and Plano into testing and learning concept stores for a more engaging shopping experience.

Additionally, we note that the company is shifting to store selling culture, crafting a customer-centric assortment, optimizing pricing and promotions, and maximizing marketing productivity to build a better business. It launched a store-selling initiative in August 2019 to shift from a task-based store culture to serving customers and selling. Further, it is progressing well to maximize marketing productivity through its media-mix model, wherein it will shift to higher productivity media options such as digital and addressable TV, without increasing the spending. Michaels also implemented a pricing and promotion strategy, which is likely to help in optimizing discounts and improving customers' perception of the value it offers through discounts, coupons and other promotional activities. Furthermore, the company recently announced its hiring plans for the upcoming holiday season. Michaels expects to hire more than 16,000 associates for seasonal positions across the United States and Canada to prepare for the holiday season.

▲ **Enhancing Omni-Channel Experience**: Michaels remains focused on integrating its e-commerce and in-store operations to enhance the omni-channel experience. Notably, the e-commerce platform has been a growing contributor to sales since its launch in 2014. The company registered e-commerce growth of more than 128% year over year in the quarter on enhanced and expanded omni-channel capabilities. The company's omni-channel efforts included new delivery options, like curbside pick-up; same day delivery; ship from store; buy online, pick-up in store, or BOPIS; in-app purchases and more. Notably, e-commerce accounted for nearly 10% of third-quarter revenues. Management is committed toward expanding omni-channel capabilities to provide a seamless shopping experience. During the third quarter, management introduced BOPIS option to its online app. Also, the company's new online express checkout option offers customers even more convenient shopping experience in just four clicks. The company remains on track with plans to extend the impact of its brands by offering virtual classes and interactive content. Moving further, management foresees e-commerce sales growth to continue in the near term.

▲ **Financial Flexibility**: Michaels ended third-quarter fiscal 2020 with $852 million in cash on its balance sheet, reflecting considerable growth from $118.4 million in the year-ago quarter. Further, long-term debt of $2,483.7 million fell 5.7% sequentially at the end of the third quarter of fiscal 2020 (Oct 31, 2020). Moreover, at the end of the third quarter, the company's debt-to-capitalization ratio was a respectable 2.25 compared to 2.32 reported in the last quarter. In the fiscal third quarter, the company repaid a debt of $150 million. Moreover, the company generated a positive free cash flow of $380 million in the fiscal third quarter. Such efforts make it well poised to remain financially stable in the near term.

Reasons To Sell:

- **Elevated Expenses, A Worry**: Michaels' SG&A expenses increased 15.6% to $373.2 million in the fiscal third quarter. As a percentage of sales, SG&A expenses expanded 10 bps to 26.5% due to compensation related expenses and salary hikes related to several initiatives undertaken in the recent times to drive sales. Also, the company incurred an impairment charge of $9.4 million due to relocation of its support center. Any further rise in costs may hurt its profitability in the near term.

> Michaels' witnessed elevated SG&A expenses in third-quarter fiscal 2020 due to incentive related costs. Also, stiff competition remain a woe.

- **Competitive Pressure**: Michaels operates in a highly fragmented market, which comprises stores in the United States and Canada. As a result, Michaels faces intense competition from multi-store chains, mass merchandisers, independent and local specialty players, as well as online retailers. It competes with these players on grounds of pricing strategies, store location, availability of financial, distribution and marketing resources, breadth of selection and, quality of merchandise and customer service. The company's inability to stay afloat amid such competition may result in loss of market share and adversely impact its business.

- **Dip in Consumer Sentiment May Impact Sales**: Any dip in consumer confidence – a key determinant of the economy's health – may have serious bearing on spending. The company's customers remain sensitive to macroeconomic factors including interest rate hikes, increase in fuel and energy costs, credit availability, unemployment levels, and high household debt levels, which may negatively impact their sentiment. For now, the novel coronavirus has wreaked havoc. The retail sector, in particular, remains under pressure. Again, job losses as well as lower disposable income due to this catastrophe are making things worse. Consumers prefer purchasing essentials before splurging on discretionary items. Also, uncertainty surrounding government stimulus and a contentious November election may impact consumer spending activity.

Last Earnings Report

Michaels Q3 Earnings Beat Estimate, Comps Gain

Quarter Ending	10/2020
Report Date	Dec 03, 2020
Sales Surprise	-0.87%
EPS Surprise	45.76%
Quarterly EPS	0.86
Annual EPS (TTM)	1.99

Michaels posted third-quarter fiscal 2020 results, wherein the bottom line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate while sales lagged the same. However, both top and bottom lines improved year over year. Notably, comparable sales improved significantly during the quarter under review. Results gained from expanded omnichannel capabilities, customized marketing strategy and Maker-centric branding.

Also, the company announced that it will pay $10 million in one-time holiday bonuses to both full-time and part-time associates in the fourth quarter for their remarkable efforts amid the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

The company is progressing well with efforts to manage inventory, streamline store operations and maintain a disciplined approach to pricing and promotions. However, management refrained from issuing any guidance for fiscal 2020, citing unprecedented impacts of COVID-19.

Q3 Numbers

Michaels' adjusted earnings of 86 cents per share were up more than two-folds from 40 cents in the prior-year quarter. Also, the figure beat the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 59 cents.

Net sales of this arts and crafts specialty retailer grew 15.1% year over year to $1,406.2 million but fell short of the Zacks Consensus Estimate of $1,419 million. The increase in the top line can be attributed to comparable store sales growth and sales gain from additional stores opened since the end of third-quarter fiscal 2019, partly offset by a sales decline due to the closure of the wholesale business.

Strength in the core arts and crafts business contributed to quarterly growth. Moreover, the fourth-quarter sales trend seems encouraging. We note that comparable store sales rose 16.3%, driven by robust demand in both stores and e-commerce.

The company registered e-commerce growth of more than 128% year over year in the quarter on enhanced and expanded omnichannel capabilities. The company's omnichannel efforts included new delivery options, like curbside pick-up; same day delivery; ship from store; buy online, pick-up in store, or BOPIS; in-app purchases and more.

Gross profit advanced 31.7% year over year to $581.7 million and gross margin expanded 530 basis points (bps) to 41.4%. This uptick can be attributed to occupancy cost leverage, lower promotions and the continued benefits from ongoing pricing and sourcing initiatives. SG&A expenses increased 15.6% to $373.2 million. As a percentage of sales, SG&A expenses expanded 10 bps to 26.5%.

Adjusted operating income came in at $201.6 million, surging 72% from $117.4 million in the prior-year quarter. This was mainly driven by improved gross profit, somewhat offset by a rise in SG&A expenses.

Financial Position

Michaels ended the quarter with cash and equivalents of $852 million, long-term debt of $2,483.7 million and total stockholders' deficit of $1,389.9 million. In the fiscal third quarter, the company repaid a debt of $150 million. Total merchandise inventory declined 17.8% year over year to $1,170.5 million as of Oct 31, 2020.

Further, the company generated a positive free cash flow of $380 million in the fiscal third quarter.

Valuation

Michaels shares are up 17.2% in the year to date period and nearly 185.5% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 1.9% but the Zacks Retail-Wholesale sector is up 3% in the year to date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and the sector are up 12.7% and 34%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 2.1% in the year to date period and 16.8% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 6.86X forward 12-month earnings, which compares to 16.05X for the Zacks sub-industry, 30.18X for the Zacks sector and 22.49X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 14.89X and as low as 0.66X, with a 5-year median of 7.82X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our $16 price target reflects 7.2X forward 12-month earnings.

The table below shows summary valuation data for MIK

Valuation Multiples - MIK

		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	6.86	16.05	30.18	22.49
	5-Year High	14.89	24.2	34.1	23.8
	5-Year Low	0.66	11.54	19.1	15.3
	5-Year Median	7.82	15.98	23.71	17.83
P/S F12M	Current	0.43	1.14	1.35	4.46
	5-Year High	1.16	1.14	1.35	4.46
	5-Year Low	0.04	0.51	0.84	3.2
	5-Year Median	0.63	0.87	1.02	3.68
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	9.2	14.33	19.1	17.25
	5-Year High	10.57	16.01	20.79	17.38
	5-Year Low	3.38	4.74	11.16	9.55
	5-Year Median	7.38	9.56	13.15	13.24

As of 02/03/2021 *Source: Zacks Investment Research*

Industry Analysis **Zacks Industry Rank:** Bottom 21% (199 out of 253)

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
DICKS Sporting Goods, Inc. **(DKS)**	Outperform	2
Five Below, Inc. **(FIVE)**	Outperform	2
Hibbett Sports, Inc. **(HIBB)**	Neutral	3
MarineMax, Inc. **(HZO)**	Neutral	2
KAR Auction Services, Inc **(KAR)**	Neutral	3
Sally Beauty Holdings, Inc. **(SBH)**	Neutral	3
Tractor Supply Company **(TSCO)**	Neutral	3
Ulta Beauty Inc. **(ULTA)**	Neutral	3

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Retail - Miscellaneous

	MIK	X Industry	S&P 500	KAR	SBH	ULTA
				Industry Peers		
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	4	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	A	-	-	A	A	D
Market Cap	2.25 B	2.35 B	26.72 B	2.46 B	1.80 B	16.28 B
# of Analysts	4	6	13	7	8	8
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.47%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Value Score	A	-	-	A	A	C
Cash/Price	0.37	0.19	0.06	0.56	0.30	0.04
EV/EBITDA	6.09	7.94	14.76	5.74	8.34	13.08
PEG F1	5.25	2.06	2.38	0.91	0.29	2.38
P/B	NA	2.48	3.66	1.53	116.63	8.78
P/CF	4.98	8.66	15.11	7.24	7.18	16.74
P/E F1	6.61	14.33	20.08	12.69	8.62	27.60
P/S TTM	0.44	0.66	2.94	1.06	0.51	2.60
Earnings Yield	15.21%	5.55%	4.89%	7.87%	11.59%	3.62%
Debt/Equity	-1.79	0.20	0.68	1.15	116.36	0.00
Cash Flow ($/share)	3.06	3.53	6.78	2.63	2.22	17.27
Growth Score	A	-	-	C	A	F
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	1.91%	4.84%	9.46%	-11.46%	0.54%	9.86%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	4.39%	4.39%	13.31%	65.63%	51.75%	222.40%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-14.92%	7.95%	4.57%	-41.97%	-34.45%	5.84%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	1.68%	2.23%	8.19%	-4.24%	-5.62%	20.48%
Current Ratio	1.22	1.45	1.38	1.56	2.54	1.82
Debt/Capital	NA%	19.01%	41.49%	53.58%	99.15%	0.00%
Net Margin	4.36%	3.63%	10.47%	1.61%	3.22%	3.63%
Return on Equity	-20.17%	10.74%	14.92%	6.50%	-535.37%	15.94%
Sales/Assets	1.24	1.24	0.51	0.36	1.20	1.21
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	2.80%	2.54%	6.17%	15.91%	7.26%	22.04%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	B	C	C
Daily Price Change	5.10%	1.04%	0.04%	-0.94%	1.20%	0.64%
1-Week Price Change	0.98%	-0.08%	-4.02%	-0.54%	7.93%	-6.72%
4-Week Price Change	4.10%	8.95%	-0.72%	-4.46%	15.57%	-0.76%
12-Week Price Change	98.44%	34.76%	6.66%	6.66%	47.51%	13.14%
52-Week Price Change	185.58%	55.11%	6.16%	-10.56%	-0.13%	3.88%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	5,618,535	818,370	2,065,421	1,695,109	2,120,055	633,653
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%	0.75%	0.14%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	17.32%	6.84%	1.33%	6.84%	-3.52%	-1.83%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.08%	-1.73%	1.16%	0.00%

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	A
Growth Score	A
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	A

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

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.