

Marsh & McLennan (MMC)

\$114.15 (As of 01/20/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$120.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 04/01/19)

Prior Recommendation: Outperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

4-Sell

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:C

Value: D

Growth: C

Momentum: A

Summary

Marsh & McLennan's shares have outperformed its industry in a year's time. The company is well-poised to grow on the back of significant investments and acquisitions made within its operating units, capital expenditures undertaken for growth, launch of new product and services, enhancements to digital capabilities and branching out into new businesses. Its revenues have been increasing over the past many years. Its robust capital position, which is evident from its balance sheet and financial flexibility also impresses. However, it has been suffering a low investment income phase for quite some time. Its rising operating expenses continues to bother. High exposure to adverse forex is another headwind. It has also been witnessing a rise in its long-term leverage ratio, which raises financial risk for the company.

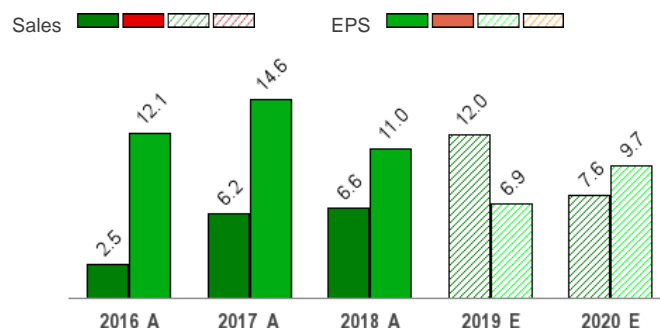
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52 Week High-Low	\$114.41 - \$82.10
20 Day Average Volume (sh)	1,213,750
Market Cap	\$57.6 B
YTD Price Change	2.5%
Beta	0.76
Dividend / Div Yld	\$1.82 / 1.6%
Industry	Insurance - Brokerage
Zacks Industry Rank	Top 7% (18 out of 254)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	11.6%
Last Sales Surprise	-0.8%
EPS F1 Est- 4 week change	-0.0%
Expected Report Date	01/30/2020
Earnings ESP	1.7%

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2020	4,698 E	4,554 E	4,157 E	4,559 E	18,018 E
2019	4,071 A	4,349 A	3,968 A	4,342 E	16,739 E
2018	4,000 A	3,734 A	3,504 A	3,712 A	14,950 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2020	\$1.59 E	\$1.31 E	\$0.85 E	\$1.34 E	\$5.10 E
2019	\$1.52 A	\$1.18 A	\$0.77 A	\$1.18 E	\$4.65 E
2018	\$1.38 A	\$1.10 A	\$0.78 A	\$1.09 A	\$4.35 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

P/E TTM	25.0
P/E F1	22.4
PEG F1	1.9
P/S TTM	3.6

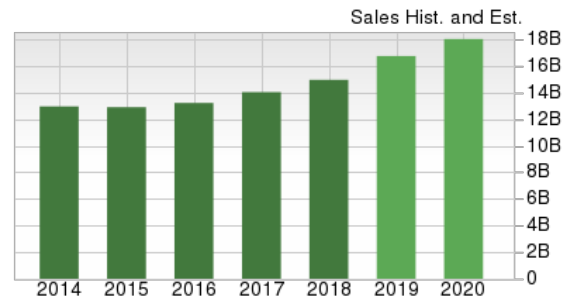
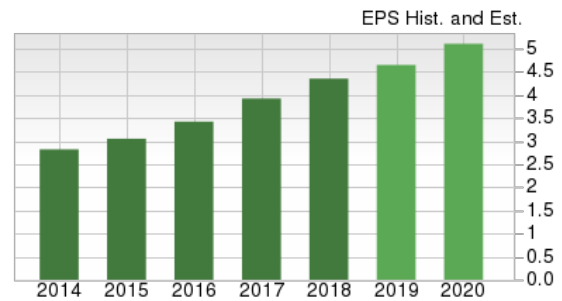
The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 01/20/2020. The reports text is as of 01/21/2020.

Overview

Founded in 1871 and based in New York, Marsh & McLennan Companies Inc. is a globally leading insurance broker. Currently operating under the Marsh and Guy Carpenter brands, the company is a global professional services firm providing risk and insurance services, risk consulting, and employee benefits consulting services to clients worldwide.

Marsh & McLennan provides insurance and consulting services through approximately 55,000 employees worldwide to clients in more than 130 countries. Geographically, 55% of Marsh & McLennan's revenues were generated from outside the U.S. while the remaining 45% was earned in the U.S. The company conducts business primarily through:

- Risk and Insurance Services (Accounted for 55% of revenues in 2018):** This segment is operated through Marsh and Guy Carpenter. Marsh is world leader in insurance brokering, providing risk management, insurance and reinsurance brokering and insurance program management services across public and private entities.
- Consulting (45%):** This segment comprises Mercer and Oliver Wyman Group. Mercer is a leading global provider of consulting, outsourcing and investment services. Oliver Wyman Group delivers advisory services to clients through three operating units, each of which is a leader in its field. Lippincott helps clients create, develop and manage their corporate branding, identity and image. NERA Economic Consulting advises corporations, law firms and government entities on the economics of competition, regulation, public policy, finance and litigation.



Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Growing Top Line:** Marsh & McLennan's operating performance has been favorable for the past many years, driven by its diverse product offerings, a wide geographic footprint and strong client retention. Its revenues have been increasing consistently since 2010 (except in 2015, which saw a revenue dip by just 0.4%). This trend continued in the first nine months of 2019 with the metric rising 10.2% year over year, led by strong segmental growth, acquisitions and penetration into new areas, etc. A number of acquisitions made over past many years, significant capital expenditures undertaken for growth, launch of new product and services, enhancements to digital capabilities and branching out into new businesses will further drive the company's growth.

Strategic acquisitions, growing revenues on the back of diverse product offerings and a strong capital position should drive long term growth for the company.

▲ **Inorganic Growth:** Acquisitions form one of the core growth strategies at Marsh and McLennan. The company has made numerous purchases within its different operating units that have enabled it to enter new geographical regions, expand within the existing ones, foray into new businesses, develop new segments and specialize within its existing businesses. In the second quarter, the company used a total of \$5.8 billion for the acquisition of JLT, which is expected to expand its capabilities going forward. Constant buyouts made by company poise it well for long-term growth.

▲ **Strong Capital Position:** The company has maintained a strong balance sheet and financial flexibility, including consistent cash flow generation, for the past many years. Its disciplined capital management through share buyback and dividend payments has cemented investors' confidence in the stock. In May 2019, its board of directors hiked its quarterly cash dividend by 10%, . Its current dividend yield of 1.59% is higher than the industry's average of 1.35%. The company's initiatives to enhance shareholder value should buoy investor's confidence in the stock.

▲ **Strong ROE:** Further, Marsh & McLennan's trailing 12-month return on equity (ROE) reinforces its growth potential. The company's 29.4% ROE betters its industry average of 25.9%, reflecting its tactical efficiency in utilizing the shareholders' funds.

▲ **Share Price Impact:** In a year's time, shares of the company have outperformed its industry. Its solid fundamentals such as an improving top line and a sturdy balance sheet should help the stock retain its momentum going forward.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ **Low Investment Income:** The company's net investment income remains under pressure. In 2016, investment income was less than \$1 million compared with \$38 million in 2015. For 2017, the same has slightly improved to \$15 million. Following the liquidation of Trident III (in 2015), the company now has a much smaller private equity portfolio. In 2018, the company incurred a net investment loss of \$12 million against its net investment income of \$15 million in 2017. Although in the first nine months of 2019, it totaled \$20 million against the loss of \$24 million in the same time frame of 2018, the low interest rate environment might keep the investment income under pressure.
- ▼ **Escalating Expenses:** The company's operating expenses escalated over the last several years due to higher compensation and benefits. The same further increased 13.2% in the first nine months of 2019 due to higher compensation and benefits as well as other operating expenses. A persistent escalation of expenses might weigh on the company's margins.
- ▼ **Forex Volatility:** Due to its presence in more than 130 countries, the company is exposed to foreign exchange volatility. If the exchange rates stay at the current levels, then the company expects the same to leave an adverse effect of 2 cents per share on the fourth-quarter results.
- ▼ **High Financial Leverage:** Marsh & McLennan has been witnessing a rise in its long-term debt level. The company saw its long-term debt level increase from \$2.6 billion to \$5.5 billion during the 2013-2018 period. Moreover, its times interest earned ratio has declined from 15.2X in 2015 to 8.7X in 2018, signifying that the company's ability to meet its interest payments has waned. Its current debt to equity ratio stands at 147%, higher than the industry's average of 119.2%, which raises a concern.

Low investment income and increasing expenses due to higher compensation and benefits should weigh on overall earnings. Its high debt level also bothers.

Last Earnings Report

Marsh & McLennan's Q3 Earnings Surpass, Decline Y/Y

Marsh & McLennan Companies delivered third-quarter 2019 adjusted earnings per share of 77 cents, surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 11.6% on the back of solid revenues. However, the same dipped 1.3% year over year.

Marsh & McLennan's consolidated revenues of \$4 billion were up 5% on an underlying basis. This upside is majorly attributable to the Risk and Insurance Services plus Consulting Segments. However, the top line missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate by 0.8%.

Total operating expenses of \$3.5 billion in the third quarter were up 18.2% year over year due to higher compensation and benefits as well as other operating expenses.

Quarterly Segmental Results

Risk and Insurance Services

Revenues at the Risk and Insurance Services segment were \$2.2 billion, up 6% on an underlying basis. Adjusted operating income increased 11% to \$313 million from the prior-year quarter's level.

Marsh, a unit within this segment generated revenues of \$1.9 billion, up 5% on an underlying basis. In U.S./Canada, underlying revenues rose 6%.

Underlying revenue growth from international operations of 3% includes 7% increase of the metric in Asia Pacific, 2% rise in the EMEA and a 1% dip in Latin America.

Another unit under this segment, which is Guy Carpenter, displayed 11% revenue growth on an underlying basis.

Consulting

The Consulting segment's revenues improved 4% on an underlying basis to \$1.8 billion. Also, adjusted operating income increased 9% year over year to \$320 million.

A unit within this segment, Mercer, reported revenues of \$1.3 billion, up 3% on an underlying basis. Wealth's revenues were flat on an underlying basis.

Another unit Oliver Wyman Group registered revenues of \$505 million, up 7% on an underlying basis.

Share Repurchase Update

The company bought back shares worth \$200 million in the quarter under review.

Financial Update

Marsh & McLennan exited the third quarter with cash and cash equivalents of nearly \$1.2 billion, up 13.8% from the figure at 2018 end.

In the third quarter, the company repaid \$300 million of senior notes. Cash flow from operations for the first nine months of 2019 totaled \$1.3 billion, down 2.1% year over year.

As of Sep 30, 2019, Marsh & McLennan's total assets were \$31.1 billion, up 44.1% from the figure as of Dec 31, 2018.

Total equity was \$7.8 billion, up 2.8% from the level at 2018 end.

Quarter Ending **09/2019**

Report Date	Oct 29, 2019
Sales Surprise	-0.83%
EPS Surprise	11.59%
Quarterly EPS	0.77
Annual EPS (TTM)	4.56

Recent News

Marsh & McLennan Arm Acquires Ironwood Insurance — Jan 16, 2020

Marsh & McLennan's subsidiary Marsh has acquired Ironwood Insurance Services, LLC, one of the leading independent brokers in the Southeast. The buyout was mainly executed by the middle market agency unit of Marsh, known as the Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC. However, further terms of the deal were kept under wraps.

Marsh & McLennan Declares Quarterly Cash Dividend — Jan 15, 2020

Marsh & McLennan has announced a quarterly dividend of 45.5 cents per share, payable Feb 14, 2020 to its stockholders of record on Jan 29, 2020.

Mercer Global Assets Reach OCIO Industry Milestone — Dec 17, 2019

Mercer has announced that its global assets under management achieved a new milestone of \$304.5 billion as of Nov 30, 2019.

Marsh & McLennan Unit Allies With LIFT for Digital Wellness — Dec 10, 2019

Marsh & McLennan's subsidiary Mercer and LIFT session, an AI-based wellness platform, entered into a partnership to provide tailor-made, on-demand digital fitness for both employers and workers at Canadian workplaces.

Valuation

Marsh & McLennan's shares are up 36% over the trailing 12-month period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry and sector are up 33.7% and 23.8%, respectively.

The S&P 500 index is up 24% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 22.24X trailing 12-month price to earnings ratio, which compares to 20.57X for the Zacks sub-industry, 14.73X for the Zacks sector and 19.2X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 24.11X and as low as 15.21X, with a 5-year median of 18.59X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$120 price target reflects 23.39X price to earnings ratio.

The table below shows summary valuation data for MMC

Valuation Multiples - MMC					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	22.24	20.57	14.73	19.2
	5-Year High	24.11	20.57	16.21	19.33
	5-Year Low	15.21	14.49	12	15.16
	5-Year Median	18.59	16.65	13.98	17.43
P/S F12M	Current	3.19	3.25	6.53	3.57
	5-Year High	3.38	3.25	6.61	3.57
	5-Year Low	2	1.83	5.2	2.55
	5-Year Median	2.68	2.47	6.04	3
P/B TTM	Current	7.39	6.45	2.86	4.55
	5-Year High	7.39	6.45	2.89	4.55
	5-Year Low	3.98	3.31	1.83	2.85
	5-Year Median	5.5	4.41	2.51	3.61

As of 01/20/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 7% (18 out of 254)



Top Peers

eHealth, Inc. (EHTH)	Outperform
American Financial Group, Inc. (AFG)	Neutral
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. (AJG)	Neutral
The Allstate Corporation (ALL)	Neutral
Aon plc (AON)	Neutral
Brown & Brown, Inc. (BRO)	Neutral
Erie Indemnity Company (ERIE)	Neutral
Robert Half International Inc. (RHI)	Neutral

Industry Comparison Industry: Insurance - Brokerage				Industry Peers		
	MMC Neutral	X Industry	S&P 500	AJG Neutral	AON Neutral	BRO Neutral
VGM Score	C	-	-	D	D	D
Market Cap	57.61 B	2.24 B	24.65 B	17.99 B	49.16 B	11.65 B
# of Analysts	8	6	13	6	8	5
Dividend Yield	1.59%	1.27%	1.73%	1.78%	0.83%	0.82%
Value Score	D	-	-	D	D	D
Cash/Price	0.02	0.08	0.04	0.15	0.02	0.08
EV/EBITDA	22.40	18.91	14.11	18.52	23.77	19.99
PEG Ratio	1.90	1.83	2.08	2.38	1.71	2.74
Price/Book (P/B)	7.39	3.51	3.39	3.66	13.93	3.51
Price/Cash Flow (P/CF)	21.15	18.86	13.81	16.68	18.31	25.24
P/E (F1)	22.41	22.36	19.19	23.34	20.46	27.39
Price/Sales (P/S)	3.58	3.02	2.69	2.53	4.51	5.02
Earnings Yield	4.47%	4.47%	5.21%	4.28%	4.89%	3.65%
Debt/Equity	1.47	0.34	0.72	0.78	1.72	0.46
Cash Flow (\$/share)	5.40	1.53	6.94	5.78	11.57	1.64
Growth Score	C	-	-	B	B	B
Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs)	12.17%	12.01%	10.56%	12.01%	10.42%	14.39%
Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0)	9.86%	9.38%	7.57%	14.59%	13.38%	8.46%
Curr. Cash Flow Growth	8.07%	7.57%	14.73%	12.53%	7.57%	18.64%
Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs)	9.31%	10.69%	9.00%	19.23%	5.07%	8.65%
Current Ratio	1.14	1.40	1.24	1.05	1.38	0.97
Debt/Capital	59.45%	24.86%	42.99%	43.72%	63.22%	31.35%
Net Margin	9.34%	9.34%	11.14%	9.69%	13.79%	17.04%
Return on Equity	29.40%	13.05%	17.16%	14.38%	51.63%	12.39%
Sales/Assets	0.56	0.38	0.55	0.39	0.38	0.33
Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0)	7.64%	6.18%	4.16%	8.98%	5.79%	6.33%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	F	F	F
Daily Price Chg	1.18%	0.20%	0.27%	0.42%	0.81%	0.71%
1 Week Price Chg	-0.16%	0.00%	0.39%	0.14%	0.04%	1.89%
4 Week Price Chg	1.73%	1.52%	2.95%	1.20%	1.01%	4.78%
12 Week Price Chg	15.65%	6.29%	7.76%	5.74%	10.72%	12.41%
52 Week Price Chg	38.57%	31.40%	22.29%	30.50%	38.92%	46.95%
20 Day Average Volume	1,213,750	119,152	1,536,375	610,034	620,721	1,198,191
(F1) EPS Est 1 week change	-0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.32%	0.00%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 4 week change	-0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.76%	0.01%	0.00%
(F1) EPS Est 12 week change	-0.06%	-0.06%	-0.40%	-0.72%	0.01%	-0.09%
(Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.56%	0.00%	0.55%

Zacks Stock Rating System

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

Zacks Recommendation

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

Zacks Rank

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

Zacks Style Scores

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

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

Value Score	D
Growth Score	C
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.

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